



HOPE FOR LIFE

## 2021 Annual Report

Empowering youth to escape homelessness and thrive.







## Letter from HFL Leadership

Dear friends,

2020 and 2021 were undoubtedly the most difficult years we have experienced as an organization due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the many ramifications it had on our programming and funding. 2021 was a year largely focused on survival and recovery. However, as an organization, several milestones and are looking with excitement towards the horizon once again!

For two years, we had to make the difficult decision to not enroll any new children or families into our programs. However, in the final quarter of 2021, this temporary pause was lifted and three new children were supported to leave homelessness and transition into Hope for Life programs!

We are proud to have been able to pivot to providing emergency relief to 1,324 unique individuals in 2020 who were facing immense challenges due to the global pandemic. In 2021, only 16 families were still in need of relief support!

Additionally, we have made significant progress towards recovering financially and as of the beginning of 2022, we have adequately restored our cash flow.

We have rounded many corners in terms of recovery and look forward to resuming all of our regular programming in 2022, we are ready to make a more extensive impact in the fight. Through the completion of our facility expansion project and with your partnership, we are ready to make a more expansive impact in the fight against child homelessness in Rwanda.

Each of the numbers shown and stories highlighted represent real young people and families. Most of us reading this will never get the chance to meet them in person. However, their lives will be shaped long into the future by your partnership. Thank you for standing alongside children and families to equip them with hope and the ability to change the trajectory of their lives.

With gratitude,



**Megan Chao**

US Executive Director / Co-Founder



# About Hope for Life

We are optimistic dreamers who believe no child should have to experience homelessness. Hope for Life was born out of a collaboration and friendship between four Rwandan and American women in 2009 who desperately wanted to see children able to escape the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

Today, that collaboration continues with a focus on local Rwandan leadership and holistic programs for the whole family. As two organizations legally registered in their home countries, we work in partnership to provide Rwandan youth with holistic, family-centered, and trauma-informed interventions to escape homelessness and achieve a flourishing future.

Hope for Life programs empower youth to transition off the streets and back into healthy families.

We are committed to ethical storytelling and anti-racism. In 2021, we:

- Designed and implemented new procedures in storytelling to protect the dignity and privacy of program participants and their families when sharing stories of impact.
- Provided anti-racism training for all US Board members and staff during the onboarding process. US Board members and staff also participated in annual updates to that training.
- Continued to identify Black-owned businesses to purchase from and partner with when possible.
- Participated in regular discussions with staff and Board members focused on the practical ways we can implement anti-racism in our institutional procedures.
- Examined our organizational culture as it relates to white supremacy while also intentionally focusing on increasing representational diversity by removing unnecessary barriers in the staff hiring process and US Board vetting process.





# Impact: COVID-19 Pandemic

Throughout 2021 and the continued COVID-19 pandemic, children and families in Rwanda who were already experiencing displacement and material poverty were more likely to be affected by the rippling impact of the pandemic.

Children experiencing homelessness were more vulnerable, not only to infection, but also to trauma brought on by living on the streets.

Families experiencing material poverty were forced to rely on their savings, as many lost their jobs temporarily or permanently, and those savings were often not enough to prevent eviction or utilities from being cut off.

Rwanda also experienced two governmental lockdowns in 2021, which necessitated immediate support to 16 Hope for Life families through food relief and/or rent assistance. While this isn't a method of support HFL implements often, it was critical in sustaining families through the worst of the pandemic.

**Your partnership was essential in providing these and other interventions.**

# Transitional Program

**Children and youth are empowered to escape homelessness with short-term transitional housing and holistic services.**

24/7 trauma-informed rehabilitative care is provided to each child including education, physical and mental health support, family tracing and reconciliation, and faith formation opportunities.

## Impact:

- 23 youth served
- 4 youth supported to obtain formal identification cards to be able to access governmental services
- 3 new youth admitted
- 19 young people enrolled in traditional school
- 4 youth participated in intensive tutoring before enrolling in traditional school
- 23 youth provided with physical and mental health services
- 19 residents vaccinated against COVID-19



## Matt's\* Story:

When Matt was first admitted to the Transitional Center, he showed signs of low-self esteem, depression, and psychosomatic symptoms. For several months, he preferred to be alone and was reluctant to engage with others.

Over time and with support, Matt was able to work through his traumatic experiences. He slowly learned to love himself, trust others, and be hopeful for the future again. Matt's leadership qualities began to flourish as he began leading group activities, advocating for the needs of others, and helping younger children at the Transitional Center. His leadership skills helped him be elected as an executive member of the Center's Child Council.

Furthermore, Matt discovered he had a natural talent for carpentry and began making chairs and benches for the Center without any professional training. Matt worked with his case manager to develop goals for the future that led to him transferring to vocational school to study welding. He has one semester remaining before he graduates.

\*Name changed for confidentiality





# Reintegration Program

HFL’s Reintegration Program empowers youth and families to heal through psychosocial and economic training and support.

After a youth is reunited with their family, they are provided with regular follow-up and monitoring to ensure their reintegration is successful long-term.

Reintegration is implemented through two sub-programs - **Family Support & Monitoring**, and **Family Economic Empowerment**.

## Family Support & Monitoring (FSM) Impact:

50	youth and their families provided with year-round services
2	families of youth traced and located
1	new family reintegrated
74	school scholarships provided
153	school monitoring sessions conducted for reunified youth
249	home visits conducted 44 caregivers provided with mental health services
26	caregivers received training in parenting best practices
17	caregivers registered for health insurance
7	couples provided with marriage counseling

## Nadine’s\* Story:

In 2021, FSM staff located the family of a youth named Isaiah\* who was living at the Transitional Center. Isaiah’s mother, Nadine, was found experiencing homelessness with her two other children and her mother. She was dealing with many personal challenges, including the incarceration of her husband, eviction from their house, and having no source of income. Unfortunately, Nadine had developed maladaptive behaviors and unhealthy coping skills as a result of having survived multiple traumatic events with no support to help her address the negative impacts of those events.

At first, Nadine was fearful and untrusting of HFL’s staff. The HFL team was gently persistent and continued to reach out to Nadine, understanding how traumatic events can affect various aspects of a person’s life and functioning. After a few months, Nadine grew to appreciate that HFL was on her side and wanted the best for her and her family, and together, they began addressing the issues facing them. At her request, HFL helped her enroll her two other children in school, move into a rented house, and start an income-generating activity.

Today, Nadine has a job and is able to pay her rent, feed her children, and support their education. Equally important is her understanding of her role as a parent and her commitment to being present for her children. Both she and her son are working towards reunification in 2022, and Nadine is excited to show her son all the progress she’s made since he was placed at the Transitional Center.

## Family Economic Empowerment (FEE) Impact on parents/caretakers:

35	families were provided with financial assessment and evaluation services
30	parents/caretakers participated in economic trainings
22	parents/caretakers equipped with specialized financial plans
18	parents/caretakers trained in small business management
6	completed in-depth business plans
29	parents/caretakers increased their savings in 2021
14	parents/caretakers supported in starting an income generating activity or finding a new job
42	loans provided to support parent/caretaker’s small businesses





### Anne's\* Story:

Anne is a single mother of two boys. She is also deaf, which has caused her to be ostracized in her community. Her entire adult life, she had difficulty finding work. Before Hope for Life, Anne didn't have a regular income and her children didn't have reliable sources of food. When her two boys moved to the Transitional Center, Hope for Life helped her find a stable job and secure a consistent monthly income.

One of the family's barriers to success was communication as well as accessible training for the hearing impaired. Hope for Life partnered with a sign language interpreter to train Anne and her oldest son in budgeting, finances, and savings. Together, they opened their first bank account and are working each month to develop a family budget.

Today, Anne earns enough to provide daily food and supplies for her entire family, and she is working towards creating and achieving long-term savings goals.

## Family Economic Empowerment Impact on youth:

**18** youth graduated from vocational school and found employment

**41** youth accessed ongoing mentorship while transitioning into the working world

**4** youth supported to begin or continue their college education

**23** youth completed internships

**32** youth trained in leadership and effective communication

**29** youth trained in budgeting and savings

**15** youth opened savings accounts

**10** youth reached financial independence

### Martin's\* Story:

In 2021, we had our largest ever group of youth who were transitioning into the working world either via an internship, getting their first job, and/or living on their own for the first time. One such youth is Martin, who completed his vocational training in culinary arts. He attended with 17 other students from Hope for Life, and each of them secured internships in their respective fields to gain experience and find a potential place of employment.

After Martin completed an internship at a restaurant in the capital city, he was offered a job there. He completed training in budgeting and saving with HFL staff and after almost a year of work, he has saved \$1,000 US!

He rented his first home, bought basic housing materials, and supported his mother in repairs at her home. He has been able to consistently pay his rent and cover all of his expenses and needs, and is dreaming of one day opening his own business.



# Finances

Revenue	
General Donations	\$234,613 (45%)
Grants	\$119,258 (23%)
Campaigns (A Week of Hope & End of Year)	\$86,859 (16%)
Capital Campaign	\$51,500 (10%)
Child Sponsorship	\$31,347 (6%)
Total Operating Revenue	\$472,077
TOTAL REVENUE	\$523,577

Expenses	
Programs	\$451,339 (82%)
Programs	\$333,311
Capital Campaign	\$118,028
Fundraising	\$67,558 (12%)
Management / Admin	\$34,598 (6%)
Total Operating Expenses	\$435,467
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$553,495

# Partners

285	72
Total financial partners	New partners
1,109	\$165,258
Donations processed	Grant funding.
\$12,175	
Church partnership funding.	





# Changemakers

In 2020, we launched our monthly giving community, the Changemakers.

This is a group of passionate and determined individuals all over the world whose ongoing support sustains HFL’s programs. Because Changemakers are vital partners creating real impact, they receive special communications and invites to Changemaker-only events. During 2021, **45 households gave over \$45,000 as part of the Changemakers program.**

# A Week of Hope

**Each year, we usually hold an in-person fundraising Gala in the greater Seattle area that typically results in raising 30% of our annual income.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an in-person event was not possible. Instead, we pivoted to an online giving week called A Week of Hope. We were immensely grateful for the 97 households that participated and contributed over \$88,000 to sustain Hope for Life’s programs. We appreciate the flexibility and generosity of our A Week of Hope partners including our Event Sponsors:

**Presenting Sponsors:**  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,  
KeHE Cares Foundation

**Gold Sponsor:**  
Cascadia School

**Silver Sponsor:**  
Coastal Community Bank

**Bronze Sponsors:**  
Anthera Floral, Live Oak Audio Visual



# Capital Campaign

In 2019, we announced plans to expand our programs via a second Transitional Center, an on-site administrative facility, and fencing around the perimeter of our property.

Little did we know that the next few years would be so tumultuous world wide! Timelines had to be adjusted numerous times as we navigated pandemic lockdowns and capacity restrictions, national supply shortages, and increased prices, as well as unprecedented weather conditions. Despite these challenges, we persisted together.

As of the end of 2021, the second Center is approximately 90% complete and is fully funded, the administrative facility is approximately 65% complete and requires an additional \$45,000 in funding, and the fencing is approximately 60% complete and requires an additional \$9,000 in funding to complete. The second Center is estimated to be fully completed and ready for new children in the summer of 2022.

Special thanks to all of our financial partners for this project, as well as our construction partner, GA Collaborative, for your continued generosity, flexibility, and understanding through this journey.

## Fun Fact:

One of the things we love most about GA Collaborative (GAC) is their emphasis on supporting our local community. They intentionally hire construction support workers in our neighborhood, providing training opportunities, pension contributions, and lunch, ensuring workers can take their full compensation home to their families. GAC has included past HFL participants in training opportunities and has even hired several of them!

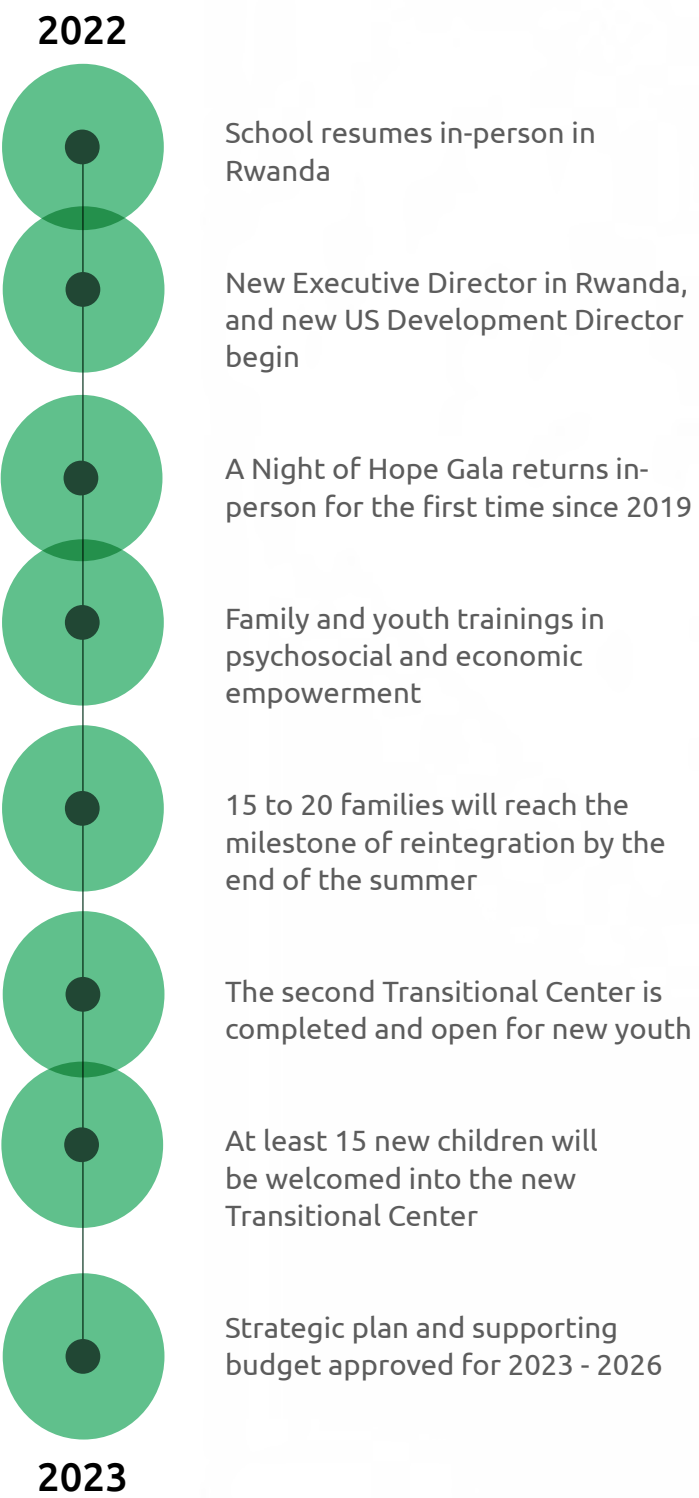
This emphasis on putting resources back into the community is the holistic transformation that we are proud to be a part of!



# Looking Ahead

In 2022, our strategic priorities include expanding programmatic impact in Rwanda through the second Transitional Center opening, ensuring we have a minimum three-year strategic plan in place with a maximized and sustainable financial model, and ensuring a healthy and high-performing team.

In 2022, we will return to our normal programming and expect to see at least 20 families reintegrated, at least 15 new children transition out of homelessness, and over 500 unique individuals served through our holistic year-round programming.



Thank you  
for partnering  
with us!

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