

# THE BIG



FIRST PLACE  
FOR YOUTH  
MORE IS POSSIBLE

# PICTURE

## MISSION

First Place for Youth envisions a world in which involvement in the foster care system does not limit the opportunity to thrive successfully in adulthood. Our mission is to support foster youth to build the comprehensive skills needed to make a successful transition to self-sufficiency and responsible adulthood.

First Place for Youth provides direct support to young people in six California counties—Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Solano—and has affiliate partners in Boston, New York City, Cincinnati, and Mississippi. Last year, we and our partners served 1,583 young people, with 677 receiving housing, education and employment coaching, and comprehensive wraparound supports through our flagship My First Place™ program.

84%

of eligible MFP participants were in postsecondary programs

Less than 20% of foster youth nationally enroll in college

82%

of MFP participants were employed prior to COVID-19

47% of former foster youth are unemployed at age 24

97%

of MFP participants avoided arrest

Over 50% of foster youth are justice involved by age 21

97%

of MFP participants avoided pregnancy

Over 30% of foster youth have children by age 21

96%

of youth who spent at least one year in MFP transitioned to stable housing

73% of MFP participants experienced housing instability prior to joining the program



First Place has been a great opportunity to improve myself over the last year, and I'm trying to take full advantage of everything the program offers. I'm going to LA Trade Technical College for my associate's degree. I'm not sure what I want to do, so my First Place Education and Employment Specialist is helping me explore a lot of career options. I'm also working as a security guard, and my Youth Advocate has motivated me to get my finances and credit in good shape. I've been able to buy a car, and I'm putting at least \$400 into my savings every month. Seeing my savings grow makes me realize I'm really accomplishing something.

To be honest, the future is scary. But I just want the normal American dream. A house in the suburbs, family, a career. I want to make my grandparents proud and show that it's possible. I hope if my friends see me succeed, it will motivate them, too.

# Sergio

# destiny

Growing up having people tell you that you're not going to do anything good with your life made it hard to think about dreams for the future. It was always just one step at a time, making it to the next day. Being part of First Place for the last three years has been really special for me.

It's given me time and space where I can figure things out. I never had adults who would try to take the weight off my shoulders or tell me it was all going to be ok. Now with my First Place Youth Advocate and Education and Employment Specialist, I have people I can talk to who I know will help me put together the life I want.

I just transferred to San Jose State to finish my bachelor's degree, and I plan to get my doctorate in Forensic Psychology. There are definitely more expectations at a four-year school than there were at community college, but I'm getting it done.





There have been ups and downs for me since joining First Place, but I think that's all part of the process. When COVID hit, I had to adapt to being home more, and there was a point where I started getting lonely and depressed. It felt like I didn't have a clear vision of my future or know which steps to take, but my Youth Advocate was amazing. Her emotional support has been priceless. Being able to call on her, be vulnerable with her, and know that she really cared has helped me overcome in the tough times.

Now that barber college has reopened, I'm finishing up my hours to get my license, and I'm also following my passion for restorative justice. Most of all, I've been focused on growing and being the best person I can be. For me, that means being someone with integrity, holding myself accountable, and having compassion and empathy for others.

# tyreece

# beatriz

I have a three-year-old daughter, and everything I do is for her. I want to give her the best life and all the things I didn't have. First Place has given me so much support over the last few years. Anytime I felt like I might give up, my team was right there to remind me how far I've come and to encourage me to keep going. They've motivated me to think bigger and look for more out of life, and they've taught me that doors will open if I keep pushing myself toward success.

This was my last year in the program, and I've accomplished so much. I'm especially proud of myself for finishing my associate's and bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice. I also learned to be much more responsible in managing my money and planning for the future. Now that I'm leaving First Place, my boyfriend and I are looking to move somewhere more affordable so we can rent a house.



## LEARNING & CHANGE

### Fast-Tracking Financial Independence

Earning a living wage is a primary indicator for long-term success. To help My First Place participants achieve this milestone, we have incorporated an evidence-based **Apprenticeship Model** that allows young people to “earn and learn” from day one, connecting them to on-the-job training linked to industry-recognized certificates.

### Deepening Collaboration

Despite the pandemic, our affiliates in Boston, New York City, and Cincinnati provided safe housing and wraparound services to 80 young people, while 78 youth in Mississippi received support building their financial independence. Launched to allow My First Place Network leaders to share strategies for adapting program services under COVID-19, the **Affiliate Learning Network** has evolved into a space for ongoing discussion of best practices.

### Elevating Youth Voice

Our **Young Adult Leadership Council** (YALC) is bringing together youth representatives from across all our California regions to share their perspective and input on our programs. YALC members have been an active part of the discussions around strategies to prevent crises from escalating, creatively engaging with participants virtually during the pandemic, and helping First Place think about our next strategic plan.



## Your support has made all the difference this year!

To see the full list of our FY2020 supporters, please visit [firstplaceforyouth.org/2020-annual-report](https://firstplaceforyouth.org/2020-annual-report).

### DEAR FRIENDS,

This has been a year like no other. The global pandemic, economic recession, ongoing fight for racial justice, and widespread wildfires truly put our resilience to the test—both individually and collectively.

The young people we serve have already experienced lives full of upheaval and instability. In the face of new unprecedented challenges, it was more vital than ever for First Place to offer them safety, support, and connection. With difficulties mounting, we remained committed to helping our young people navigate every twist and turn. As you've seen in this year's outcomes and stories, our care and dedication never faltered.

When COVID-19 lockdowns began, we immediately pivoted to remote services, finding new ways to maintain young people's links to staff, peers, and community resources. In the early days of the crisis, your support of our Emergency Fund enabled us to distribute groceries and protective gear to keep our young people healthy and safe. And as schools moved online and we began virtual workshops, your continued generosity has helped us provide the technology and coaching that empowers them to achieve.

Through it all, we never lost sight of the big picture: the need to remove barriers to success and change the odds for all foster youth. This year, we successfully advocated for California's budget to recognize the true costs and benefits of high-impact, results-driven services and close the funding gap for providers. We also supported new legislation that temporarily extends foster care eligibility, ensuring no young person will be at risk of homelessness during COVID-19 simply because they "age out" of care.

Everything we do, we do together. Thank you for your continued commitment to First Place and our young people at this crucial time.



Nancy Heinen  
Chair, Board of Directors

## STRIVING FOR EQUITY

Since our inception, First Place has been dedicated to ending the poverty and homelessness facing so many foster youth as they approach adulthood. We predominantly serve young people of color, and they have all been deeply impacted by their experiences within foster care, juvenile justice, and other systems still struggling to overcome histories of entrenched racial discrimination.

Our work requires more than a “colorblind” or race-neutral approach.

First Place launched a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative** to address how race, power, and privilege operate within the organization and impact the experiences of our youth and staff. Our Core Equity Team has recently completed an in-depth evaluation of our program services, advocacy efforts, and hiring and retention, providing our Executive Team with their recommendations for how the organization can move toward greater equity.

As we continue this work, it is with the knowledge and understanding that we do so in service of our young people, to provide them with the most supportive environment in which they can grow and achieve.

## FINANCIALS

### Revenue


Government	\$20,132,758
Foundation, Corporate, and Individuals	\$3,336,274
Donated/Miscellaneous	\$381,124
Net Assets Released from Donor Restrictions	\$3,832,170
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$27,682,326</b>

### Expenses

Program	\$23,820,255
General/Administration	\$3,140,931
Fundraising	\$835,780
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$27,796,966</b>

### Statement of Financial Position

Current Assets	\$13,239,953
Fixed Assets	\$311,944
Other Assets	\$1,277,777
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$14,829,674</b>
Total Liabilities	\$3,730,279
Net Assets	\$11,099,395
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$14,829,674</b>



I've always tried to do things on my own, but when I didn't have a place to lay my head, First Place was there for me. Now I'm focused on the long term—a career, a house, stability.

angel

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