

PROSPERITY REPORT SUMMARY

20 24

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE OHIO
STATE UNIVERSITY'S INTERIM PROGRAM
EVALUATION OF FAMILIES FLOURISH.

APRIL 2024

Families Flourish, from 2018-2022, was an initiative of Ohio State University's City & Regional Planning Program and community partners, aimed at developing a nationally replicable model for improving the residential and financial stability of low-income families with children ages 13 and under.

The program seeks to support inclusive mixed-income communities in Central Ohio by providing life coaching to encourage success in higher-resourced neighborhoods and improve access to opportunities. The program provides three years of rental support and life coaching to enable families to move to safer neighborhoods with strong schools. The coaching revolves around four key pillars: housing stability, financial literacy, education and career, and health and wellness. The goal of the program is to improve academic performance for children, financial well-being and physical and mental wellness for families. Now an independent 501(c)(3), Families Flourish continues to partner with OSU to evaluate outcomes.

INTRODUCTION FROM FAMILIES FLOURISH

“The opportunities it allows and resources it offers — I feel like this program will teach and help me out a lot and **allow me to provide a great life for my son and I.**”

- FAMILIES FLOURISH MOM

We are pleased to present data from our evaluation partnership with The Ohio State University professor Jason Reece, PhD, Associate Professor of City & Regional Planning and Vice Provost for Urban Research & Community Engagement at OSU and his team. In these pages, you will see how our moms are reporting their progress since Group 1 began in September 2022 and Group 2 in April 2023.

This follows a 10-family Pilot from 2018-2022. The results of our Pilot at OSU produced a 17% average income increase (\$58,000), 100+ credit score improvements, housing stability that has lasted past the end of the program, and the first 4 of those 18 youth have already graduated or are about to graduate from high school.

The good news in these pages is that our new families in Groups 1 & 2 are on the path to duplicate — if not best — those results! Dr. Reece reports: “Outcomes for the first two groups of Families Flourish participant families are similar to outcomes experienced in the Pilot program evaluation. Housing stabilization, enhanced neighborhood safety and higher-resourced public schools were essential to stabilizing families. This stability led to dramatic reduction in stress and improved mental and physical health. In contrast to the Pilot program outcomes, families in Group 1 and Group 2 are experiencing enhanced economic outcomes at a faster pace than Pilot program families.”

Families Flourish helps communities embrace and create housing that is accessible to all. Parents are provided tools to improve life outcomes for themselves and their children through requisite programs. Life coaching focuses on financial literacy, life skills, job and career advancement, health and wellness, and access to quality education for children. Families are also provided tools to achieve financial capacity, housing stability and affordability through rent support.

We are so proud of our families for their achievements. We are so grateful to you for being on this journey with us in support of our families.



Amy Klaben,
President and CEO



Lori Ann Feibel,
Board Chair

KEY OUTCOMES FROM YEAR ONE:

- Change starts by eliminating chronic stress
- Economic improvements require time, with exponential improvements in the past 6 months for many
- Housing interventions are health and educational interventions
- Families’ relationships with Families Flourish staff and coaches are strong
- Success comes from the integration of coaching, program and rent support

The mission of Families Flourish is to create a more equitable community for families by empowering them to achieve and succeed through a holistic support initiative.

OUR FAMILIES

Beginning in September 2022, 15 families joined Group 1 in the program. One family exited in 2023, and another family exited in 2024. Beginning in April 2023, 16 families joined Group 2. Currently, 13 families participate in the program in Group 1. However, we include 14 families in this evaluation report because a participant who recently exited the program participated in the one-year post-relocation evaluation.

Two-thirds of participants had some college education, including four-year and two-year college degrees, while seven participants had a high school diploma or GED.

The program’s families are illustrative of a broader segment of the Central Ohio population—economically vulnerable, living in challenging environments, and receiving limited or no public assistance due to a lack of available funding or benefits cliff* issues. In Groups 1 and 2, participants included 30 single-female-headed households not currently participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program and who had previously resided in low-opportunity neighborhoods, experienced housing instability, or experienced periods of homelessness.

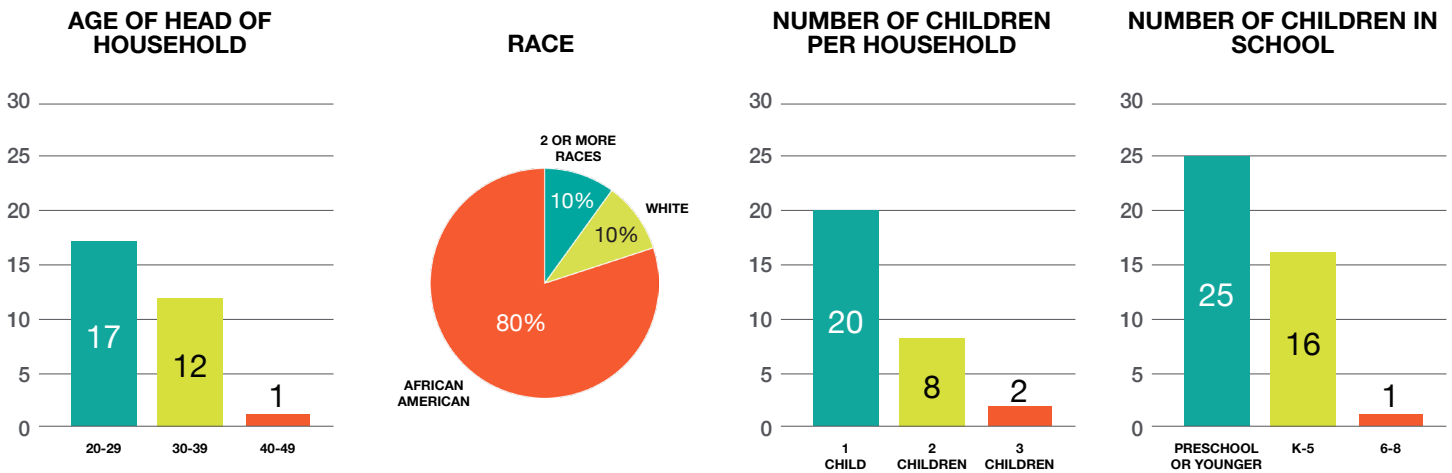
Our vision is to **empower family success** while achieving equity.



OUR VALUES:

1. Driving Equity
2. Passionate
3. Kind
4. Collaborative
5. Authentic

The charts below provide a few key demographics about the 30 participants. All ages and grades are based on program entry:



Why did you join Families Flourish?

“I wanted to change my living situation and be able to afford to maintain it.”

“The chance to grow and learn how to give my child a home in a good community.”

“To have people to help me through my journey of financial stability.”

*The benefits cliff refers to the sudden and often unexpected decrease in public benefits that can occur with a small increase in earnings.

REAL TRANSFORMATION

One-on-one life coaching and monthly programs that bring together all the members of a Group to learn together and build community — these are the heart of the program. It's a critical reason why we changed the name from Move to PROSPER to Families Flourish — the move provides the foundation, while the real work and transformation are with programs and coaching.

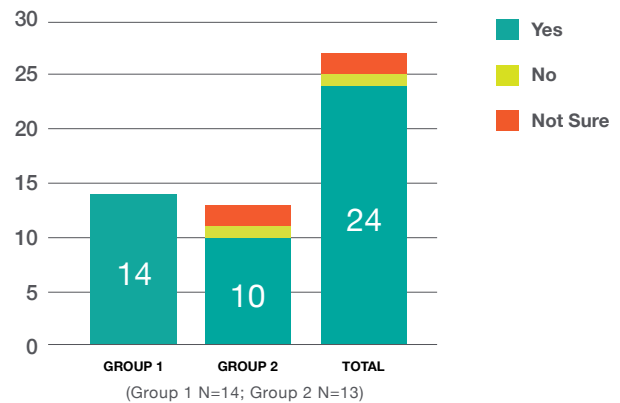
“I never thought I needed a **life coach** until I had a life coach, if that makes sense.”

GOAL SETTING & ACHIEVEMENT

Most participants (24 out of 27) indicated that Families Flourish helped them achieve their goals, while one participant provided a negative response. Coaching activities focus on setting participants' personal goals and developing plans to reach them. Participants' goals span topics such as finance, career development, parenting, health, wellness, and education. These directly relate to the four primary pillars of Families Flourish coaching: housing, finance, health and wellness, and education and career development.

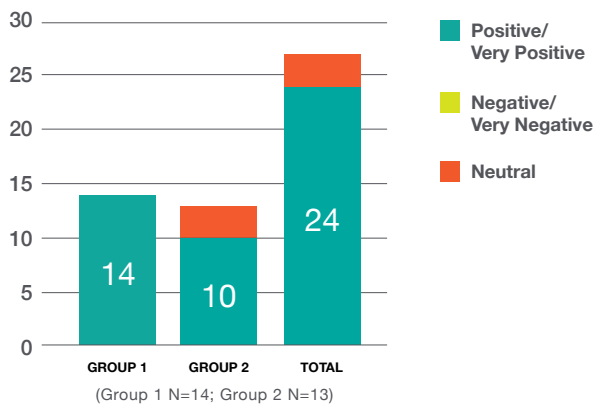


Has Families Flourish **helped** you achieve goals?



MONTHLY PROGRAM SESSIONS

Monthly program sessions were held with participants to provide education, create opportunities for relationship building, and allow participants to share skills or resources. These sessions were mostly held in a virtual format. All but three participants described the monthly program sessions as “Positive” or “Very Positive.” Participants acknowledged that a virtual format was easier to accommodate for families, considering travel times, work conflicts, and childcare or extracurricular activities. Several participants expressed, however, that they desired in-person interactions among families a few times a year.



How would you describe your experience with the Families Flourish monthly programs?



“To be a part of a large group where you really appreciate every single person, **we all have our unique personalities, our stories, our backgrounds...** I really appreciate the group of women that I came in with.”

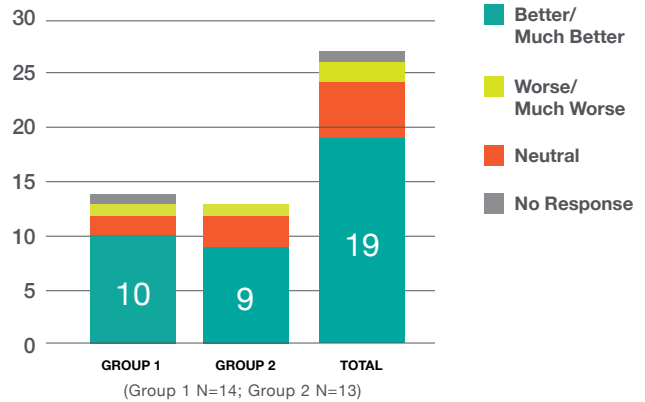
FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Almost half of the participants polled for this report came from homelessness, be it couch surfing with family and friends or living in a shelter or their car. Some reported food insecurity because their monthly bills were forcing the family to skip some meals each month.

With the infusion of partial rent support and the support and guidance of a coach to help them start working toward their personal financial goals, the moms are making progress toward building economic well-being.

The majority of participants (19 out of 27) indicated that their economic circumstances were either “Better” or “Much Better” compared to their situation prior to entering the program. Two participants reported that their economic circumstances were “Worse” compared to their situation prior to entering the program, while five participants reported no significant changes.

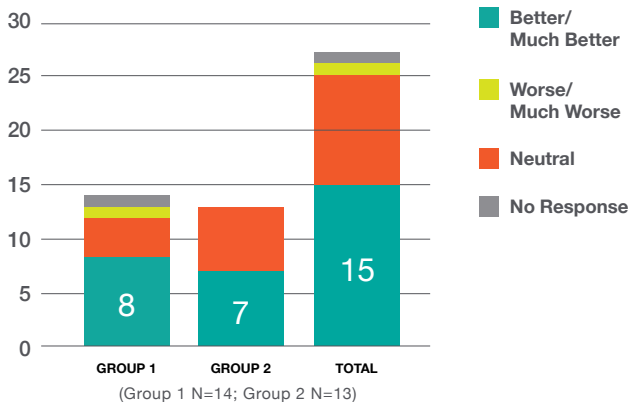
How would you describe your family’s **economic circumstances** since relocating?



Credit Scores Improve

Nine participants reported that their credit scores have improved since enrolling in the program. The majority of participants (16 out of 27) indicated no change in their credit scores, while one reported a decline. Participants who responded that their credit score improved noted an increase ranging from 20 to 122 points.

More than half of participants (15 out of 27) stated that their income has improved since joining the program. One participant reported that their income has worsened compared to their income prior to entering the program, while 10 participants reported no significant changes. *Some of those who have not yet seen income increases are actively engaged in furthering their education.*



How would you describe **changes in your income** compared to when you started?



“It changed a lot of things. **I became more ambitious.** I have wonderful people in this program who kept pushing me to do more and reach my goals.”

PROGRAM IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Current Families Flourish children are younger than the 18 youth who were part of the Pilot program from 2018-2022. The average age of the current children is 4 years of age. For overall health, all but one reported either Positive /Very Positive change or No Change. Regarding emotional wellness and behavior, moms are noting positive change in their children, with some reporting no observed changes in these categories.

Regarding the program impact on children, 27 participants responded for each of their children (totaling 35 children). Participants indicated that 23 out of 35 children had a Good or Very Good adjustment to their new school, which includes preschool to middle school, and in some cases, daycare. One participant indicated that her child had a poor adjustment to their new school. Additionally, most of the participants with children younger than preschool age did not answer this question.

Participants indicated that since enrolling in Families Flourish, 13 out of 17 K-8 children's academic outcomes improved either positively or very positively. Four children's academic outcomes showed no changes since enrolling. This question did not apply to parents with children in preschool or younger.

What moms tell us.

"My son has adjusted well. His school embraced him. They encourage him so much. His confidence has grown, and he received support services immediately and he increased all of his test scores. He loves school. I enrolled him in aftercare to spend more time at the school meeting new friends. He has a lot of friends."

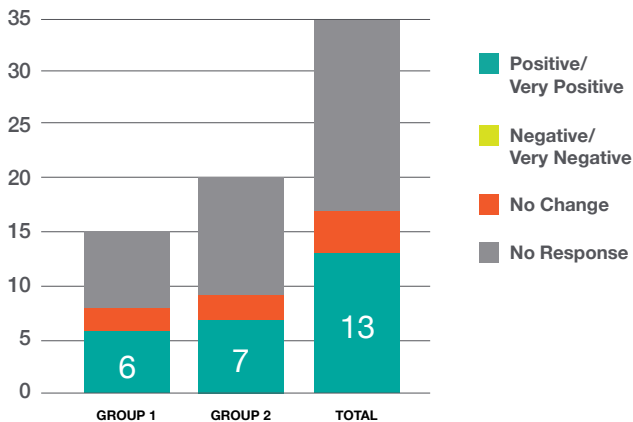
"His confidence has improved."

"His gross motor skills have improved due to having the space."

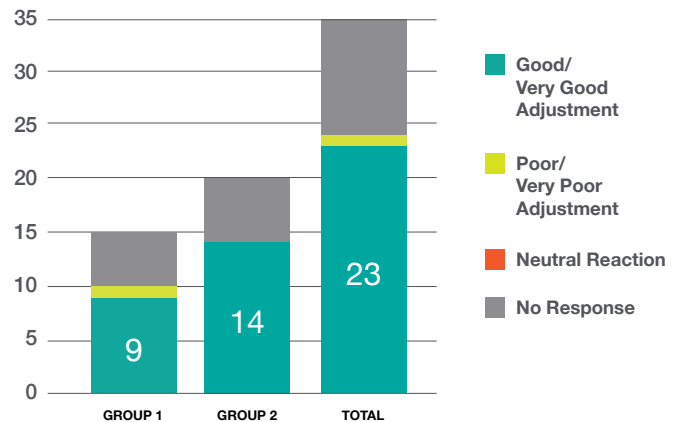
"No changes, he's always been positive and eager to learn."



How has your child adjusted (or reacted) to their school?



(Group 1 N=15; Group 2 N=20)
*This question did not apply to parents with children at preschool or younger.



(Group 1 N=15; Group 2 N=20)
*Most participants with children younger than preschool age did not answer this question.



How has your child's (or children's) grades changed since enrolling in Families Flourish?

PROGRAM IMPACT ON MOMS' HEALTH

The stress often created by living on the financial edge in a violent neighborhood and raising a child alone can become toxic when experienced over months and years. Many of the families enter the program with high levels of stress, which also trickles down to their children. Early childhood experiences play a large role in how the brain develops and functions. Interactions with the child and his or her environment affect long-term learning, behavior, and health. Healthy brain architecture relies on responsive caregivers and positive relationships that help children learn to handle stressful experiences.

The majority of participants (18 out of 27) reported improvements in their mental health since relocating, while eight participants noted no changes. One participant reported negative changes in their mental health. Additionally, four participants reported experiencing zero days of poor mental health in the preceding month, while eleven participants noted 1 to 5 days of poor mental health. Five participants reported experiencing more than 10 days of poor mental health.

Physical health has improved, too, with 14 out of 27 participants reporting that they see improvements since moving. Twelve have noted no changes. One participant reported negative changes in their physical health.

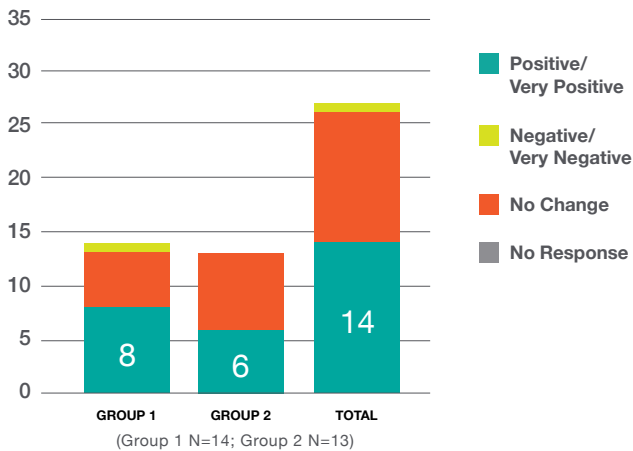
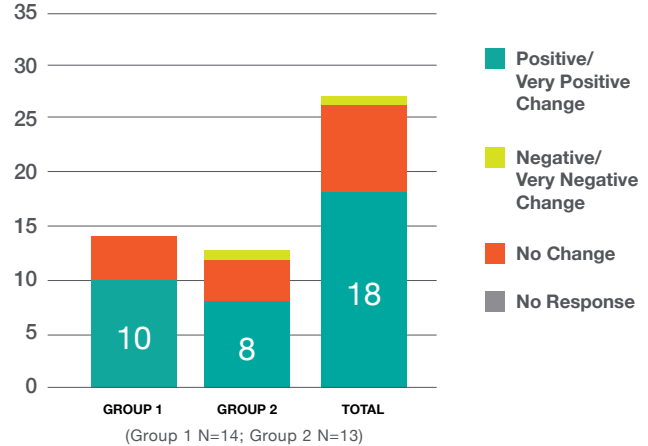
What moms say.

“I would say my mental health has definitely improved. A lot of the things that I’m processing and dealing with mentally are positive or on the positive side now.”

“My physical health has improved, too. Just again, having those conversations about eating better and choosing healthier choices and using our time wisely by walking and things like that. Just planting those seeds, my physical health has gotten better.”



How has your **mental health** changed since relocating?

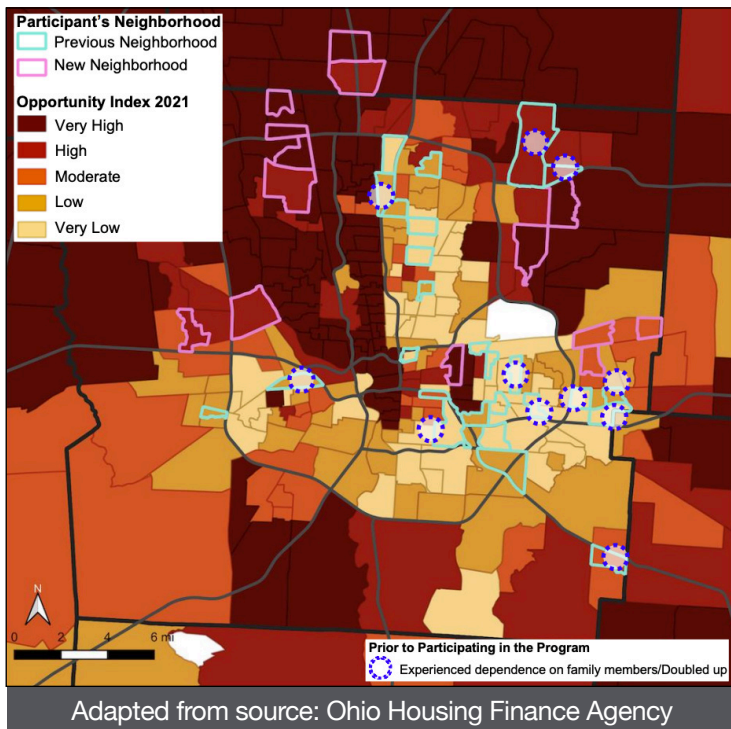
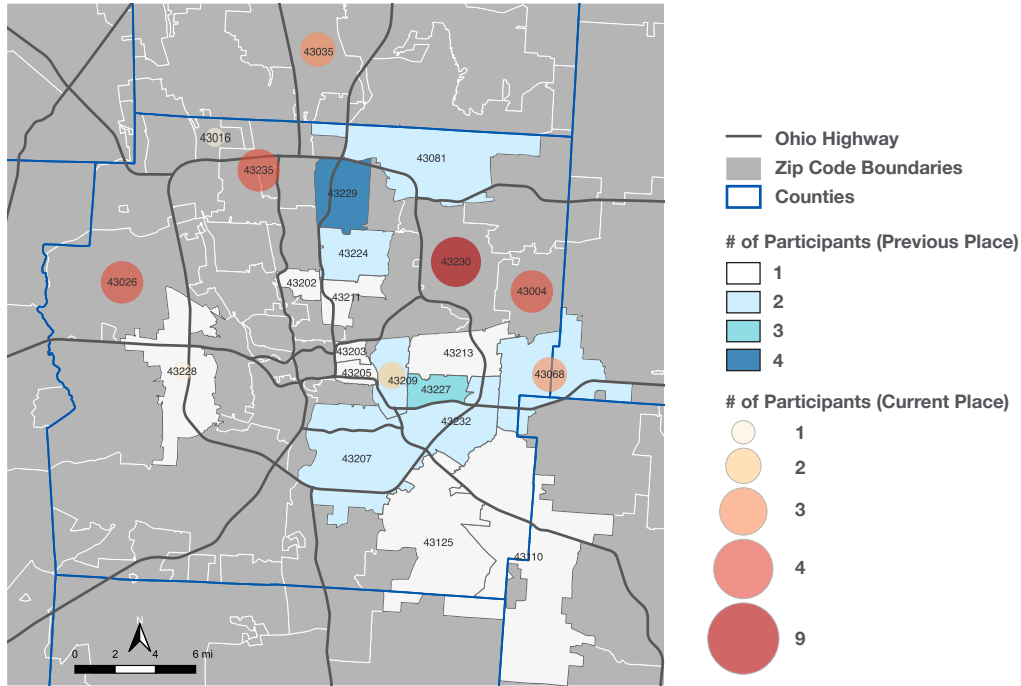


How has your **physical health** changed since relocating?

ZIP CODES MATTER

Not every neighborhood has the same access or amenities — a fact Dr. Reece called “forgotten neighborhoods” in an early report on the Families Flourish Pilot program. The neighborhoods that do have a higher quality of life are gated communities; they have been planned to offer better schools, better recreation, better socioeconomics, and higher quality housing, but not everyone can access those communities.

The map below shows the zip codes of where families moved from when they entered the program and where they moved to after joining. The map does not show the previous place of four participants due to their previous homelessness, including one participant who left the program in 2023.



The map does not show the former neighborhoods of four participants due to their previous homelessness, including one participant who left the program in 2023.

Partial rent support allows access historically denied to low-income families.

This map shows the pre- and post-relocation residences of participants from Groups 1 and 2 (including one participant from Group 1 who exited in 2023). Each highlight corresponds to one participant household, with blue highlight indicating their previous neighborhoods and pink highlight representing their new locations. Interestingly, the majority of participants relocated to apartment complexes near their former neighborhoods.

The residential location data overlays the 2022-2023 Urban Suburban Rural (USR) Opportunity Index, developed by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at OSU, which identifies educational, employment, housing, health, and transportation opportunities. Most families moved to neighborhoods offering better opportunity levels, while one relocated to a neighborhood with the same opportunity level.

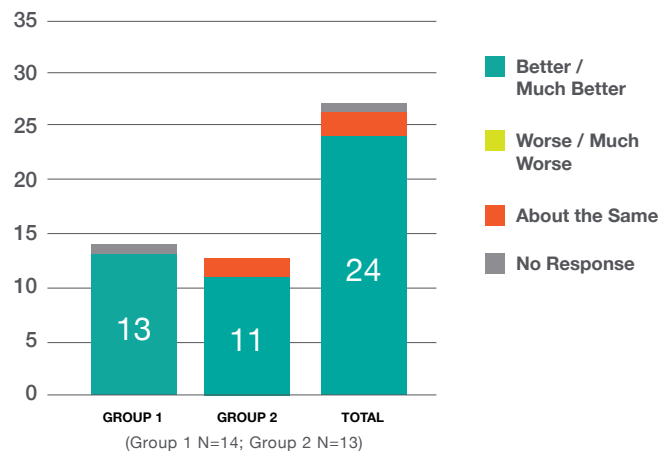
NEIGHBORHOODS MATTER

Most of the participants expressed a positive experience with their new housing. Twenty-three participants rated their experience as Very Positive or Positive, while four participants indicated a neither positive nor negative experience. Most participants (24 out of 27) rated their housing circumstances as “Better” or “Much Better” compared to their housing prior to Families Flourish. Two participants rated their housing circumstances as “Neither worse nor better.”

Satisfaction in their new homes and communities was not universally positive, but participants did report an increase in overall housing satisfaction.



How would you describe your family’s **housing circumstances** (quality, location and cost) since relocating?



The move also allowed 12 respondents to join local social, political or school groups, which most had not previously done. Moving posed certain transportation difficulties for 7 of 26 respondents. Noted among them were access to family or friends’ homes, school, workplace, shopping and medical care.

Most of the participants (19 out of 27) described their experience with property management as “Positive” or “Very Positive.” Six participants described it as “Neither positive nor negative,” and two participants described a “Negative” experience. Most participants (21 out of 27) indicated positive or very positive interactions with their neighbors, other tenants, and property management staff. Five responses indicated a neutral interaction, while no responses indicated negative interactions.

In interviews, participants emphasized several themes related to neighborhood satisfaction. These included **increased safety**, access to **highly resourced schools** and access to other **neighborhood services and amenities**.

“Schools, of course, are great. And we’re near everything. So I’m able to access everything within a short distance.”

“So it’s much cleaner, less police sirens, and everything is right there, Everything is literally 5 minutes from my house. Hospitals, libraries. Literally, everything is by my house.”

“Kids can literally be kids out here and you don’t have to worry.”

“My old neighborhood, I wouldn’t even let my daughter go outside.”

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Families Flourish is a multi-faceted program, involving program delivery and resources, life coaching, improved housing, and improved neighborhood environments. In interviews, participants were asked about what elements of Flourish were most important to their success in the program. Participants almost universally felt that all of the program components were important to program success. Participants noted the importance of staging in the program design, with the initial move and housing stabilization being critical, but also noting that the sustained coaching and monthly programs were critical to sustaining success.

Only one year into the program, the majority of participant families have reported improved economic circumstances, with more than half reporting increased income and improved employment conditions. Most participants indicated physical health improvements, mental health improvements and reduction in stress, as well as reduction in emergency room usage. Participants are very satisfied with the Flourish monthly programming and coaching program. In the past year, participants have made extensive progress in meeting personal goals related to finances, employment, education and health or wellness. Participants also reported positive adjustments and academic outcomes for their children in new schools. Several children experienced increased self-confidence and health outcomes (including physical, mental, and emotional health). Participants felt that the unique multi-faceted and holistic program design is critical to the program's success. Relocation and housing stabilization is a critical first step, while programming and coaching are critical to sustaining personal improvement and goal achievement for families.

”

“Mentally and emotionally, **it's been challenging to break some old habits.** You know, get away from toxic relationships. Because when you're in a program like this and everything that's coming at you is positive, and **you're learning new things or you're even learning new things about yourself,** like, you're also faced with some old bad habits that you may have had. So it's definitely been a process for me realizing that my last situation was not the best situation and that I wasn't really making the best of it for myself, and it wasn't, like, a healthy situation.”

FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANT

What participants say.

“I mean, you know, obviously, we wanted housing, the housing piece. But I didn't realize how much being a part of this program would bring, you know. Improvement in other areas.”

“If the program was missing one of those key components, I'm trying to imagine what life would be like for me.”

“Really, all of them. They all have benefited me and my children.”



FAMILIES FLOURISH TEAM

Amy Klaben

President & CEO

Tahtianna Alston

Social Services Manager

Paige Bashaw

Social Services Manager & Coach

Kathleen Fox

Building Inclusive Communities
Coordinator & Landlord Outreach

Gabby Lane

Social Services Manager

Racheal Pack

Coordinator

Jamie Sager

Senior Program Director

Kassim Sindyheruka

Development Coordinator

Hilary Skunda

Administrative Assistant

Shiloh Todorov

Development & Communications
Director

Paiton Walker

Donor Outreach Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kim M. Campbell

Vice Chair

Nationwide Children's Hospital

Carl Faller

Community Volunteer

Lori Ann Feibel

Chair

Bexley City Council

Brendan Foley

Treasurer

Community Volunteer

Kate Giller

Cutler Homes Vutech-Ruff

Steve Heiser

SVN Wilson Commercial

Keith Jones

Secretary

Oakwood Mgmt. Co.

Amy Klaben

President

Families Flourish

Rachel Kleit

The Ohio State University

Bob Long

Vision 1 Realty

Debbie Manos-McHenry

Community Volunteer

Antoine Matthews

Robert Weiler Companies

James McDougal

KEMBA Financial Credit Union

Bonnie Milenthal

The Milenthal Group

Cathy Presper

Community Volunteer

Jo Ann Quinif

Diamond Hill Capital Management

Precious Singo

Community Volunteer

Ernie Sullivan

Who's Who Publishing Company

Tracie Cleveland Thomas

KeyBank

Donna Wares

The Huntington National Bank

Jim Wilson

Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP

Se Se Yennes

Azurity Pharmaceutical

FAMILIES FLOURISH COACHES

Jonathan Bentley

Leslie Bowman

Kerstin Carr

Lavesea Clardy

Susan Colbert

Dr. Tina Diggs

Daphne Dodson

Lisa Everson

Phree Finney-Durham

Kathy Horack

Bridgette Mariea

Bri Marshall

Rob Mullins

Christina Rattleff

Karissa Sharp

Gina Smith

Dr. Kellie Van Pelt

Deirdre Ward

Kelly Williamson

Kim Rice Wilson

Julia Wiseman

Natalie Zimmerman

We cannot offer families healthy housing in safer neighborhoods without the partnership of our participating landlords. **We are honored to work with the following companies:**

CASTO Communities

Dietz Property Group

Gay Street Realty

Kohr Royer Griffin

Oakwood Management Company

Oxford Real Estate

P&E Real Estate

Schottenstein Property Group

T&R Properties

Thomas H. Lurie & Associates

Thrive Cos. (Wagenbrenner
Development)

WHERE WE ARE & WHERE WE'RE GOING

Since completing the 10-family Pilot in July 2022 with OSU, we have become an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. In September 2022, we began accepting groups of 16-18 families approximately every six months. To date, we have accepted 66 families into the program — the newest 18 families began their 3-year journey together in April 2024 to bring us to 65 families.

If our ability to expand our number of landlord partners, coaches and funding stays on track — we will have 100 families in the program by April 2025. All of those 100 families will be surveyed and interviewed by OSU evaluators throughout their 3-year program and for two years trailing their exit. We will sustain at that level — with 33 families entering and 33 families graduating — for the next 3-5 years.

Our vision in the medium term is to invest a portion of the state's \$1M investment in our work into exploring expansion into communities outside of Central Ohio. We want families across the state to have access to our program model.

By 2034, our goal is to double the number of families we serve in Central Ohio to 200 simultaneously — with 66 entering and 66 graduating each year.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Pledge your financial support
- Host a friendraising event
- Invite us to community groups
- Volunteer
- Introduce us to a landlord
- Introduce us to a coach

Spread the Word

Contact Shiloh Todorov to talk about how to help:

614-787-7129

shiloh.todorov@familiesflourish.org

