

PROSPERITY REPORT SUMMARY

20 25

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

MAY 2025

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

“You know my son struggled in (his former school) because he was so advanced that he would just be so bored with it...**Moving to Gahanna...he's not bored.** He's challenged. So, I appreciate that.”

- FAMILIES FLOURISH PARENT

Families Flourish was created to help more children reach their full potential by giving their families the supports they need to reach housing and economic stability.

The quote above is just one example of a success story among the dozens our parents tell about their children.

For the seventh year in a row, 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 year, for the first time, the OSU team adds data from Groups 3 and 4, who began in October 2023 and April 2024 respectively, which includes two couples along with the single moms.

These families follow a 10-family Pilot from 2018-2022. The results of our Pilot at OSU produced a 58% average income increase (\$17,000), 100+ credit score improvements, and housing stability that has lasted past the end of the program. The first 5 of the 18 Pilot youth have already graduated or are about to graduate from high school. We are excited to share that 7 of 9 of the women in the Pilot who we spoke to last summer reported that they continued their education during the two years after they exited the program and had an average income increase of another 17%.

As Dr. Reece shares in the full report, available on our website: “The vast majority of families report that the program has had a positive impact on their children and report a positive adjustment to their new school for school age children. More than 65% of families indicated improved grades for their children who were of school age.”

The children are thriving – as we had set out to accomplish. As you will see in the pages that follow, the parents are making gains, achieving goals, and striving toward security that will change generations.

There is much good news in these pages, but we must acknowledge that changes in spending at the federal and state levels are affecting the OTHER support systems in place for our families, including child care and food help. With that in mind, we hope you will choose to act in word and deed in a way that shows WE support our community and WE support the work of Families Flourish.



Amy Klaben,
President and CEO



Kate Giller,
Board Chair

KEY OUTCOMES IN 2025*

- **90% reported improved housing circumstances.**
- About 70% of participants indicated that their economic circumstances had improved.
- Nearly half reported improvements for their families in mental and physical health.
- Participants rated the program highly as it relates to how the move has affected their children.
- Most participants highly rated their interactions with property management staff and neighbors.

Families Flourish offers a 3-year program that transforms the lives of low-wage working families and their children by providing a comprehensive path to economic mobility and wellness. This is accomplished through life coaching, rent support and monthly required programs that promote housing and economic stability, career advancement, and generational change for their children.

*After 1 and 2 years in the program.

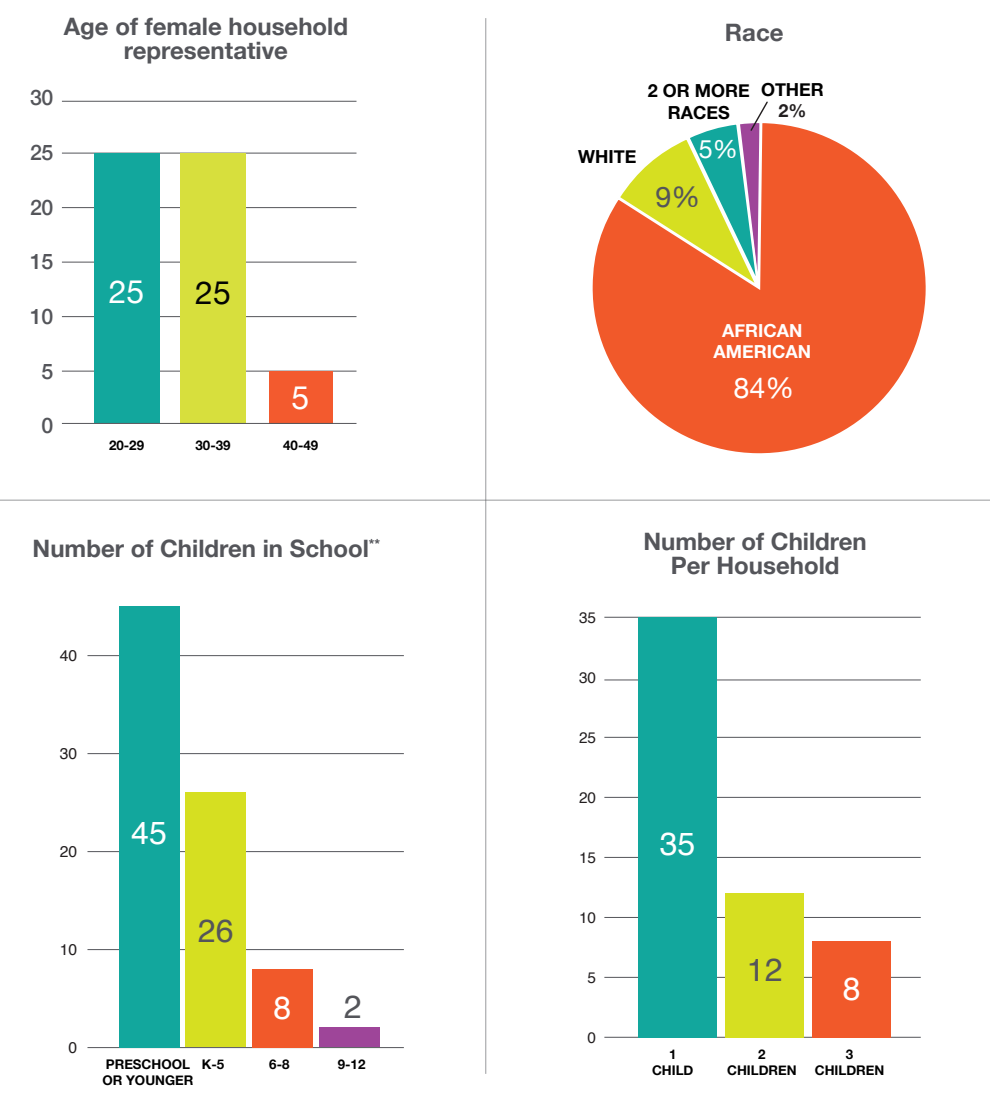
OUR FAMILIES

This second evaluation since the completion in 2022 of the 10-family Pilot captures the initial impacts for Families Flourish Groups 1 through 4 participants, approximately one year (for Groups 3 and 4) and two years (for Groups 1 and 2) post-relocation. Evaluation outcomes were assessed using surveys, interviews, program observations, and administrative data. Of the 55 participants, 52 responded to the survey —26 from Groups 1 & 2 and 26 from Groups 3 & 4. Additionally, 15 participants from Groups 1 and 2 completed one-on-one interviews.

Before moving, nearly half of the families faced unstable housing situations, such as doubling up, renting rooms, or homelessness. Most families lived in substandard housing, often in distressed neighborhoods. The baseline survey for Groups 3 and 4 revealed that nearly half of participants had difficulty paying for housing, and over one-third had trouble securing housing in the six months prior to joining the program. Many experienced housing and financial instability, with nearly half worrying often or sometimes about not having enough food.

Most participants were employed full-time, and program records indicated an average household income of \$35,060, prior to entering the program, according to administrative data families took upon entry. Nearly half of the participant families (25 out of 55) were homeless or not in a space of their own. Nine families exited the program in these four Groups for a retention rate of 85.9%. Two were for personal, family reasons and seven due to housing-related issues.

The charts below provide a few key demographics about the 55 participants and 83 children. All ages and grades as of March 2025 in Groups 1 through 4:



** Data were missing for two children.

“I feel safe. My kids go outside and play. I enjoy the people around me, **just those little things.**”

- FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANT

OUR VALUES:

- 1. Driving Prosperity
- 2. Passionate
- 3. Kind
- 4. Collaborative
- 5. Authentic

DARING TO DREAM

Families Flourish parents bragged mightily to the OSU team about the progress their children are making. The data is aligned with research from Harvard's Raj Chetty that shows that when children are surrounded by a community of high employment, those children tend to be thriving by their late 20s - even if their own parents are unemployed.

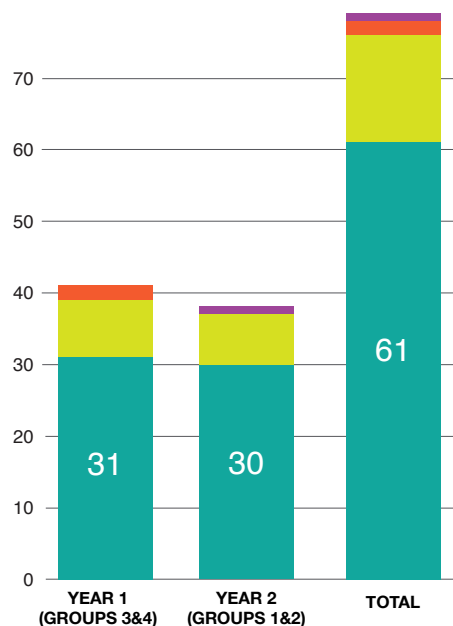


“My son started reading on kindergarten level as a 2nd grader. His school has been very supportive and helpful. He is now on a 4th grade reading level as a 4th grader. He is a confident child and loves his school.”

- FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANT



Overall, how helpful has the program been to your child?



Helpful/Very Helpful Unhelpful/Very Unhelpful Neutral No Response

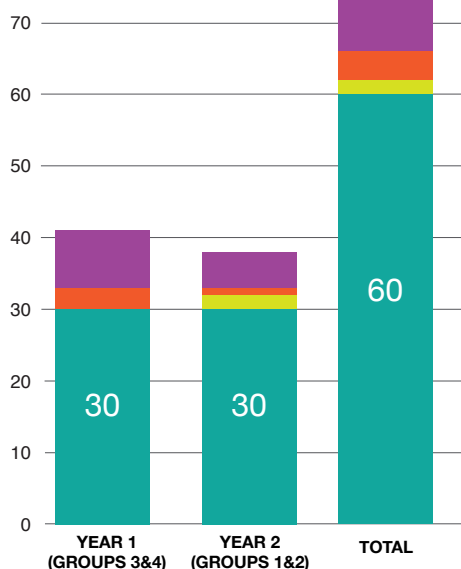
This includes all children, a majority of whom are preschool children. A neutral response is not a negative | (Groups 1&2 N=38; Groups 3&4 N=41).

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

Good/Very Good
Poor/Very Poor
Neutral
No Response

This includes some preschool-age children. Non-responses were from participants with children in preschool or younger.

(Groups 1&2 N=38; Groups 3&4 N=41)

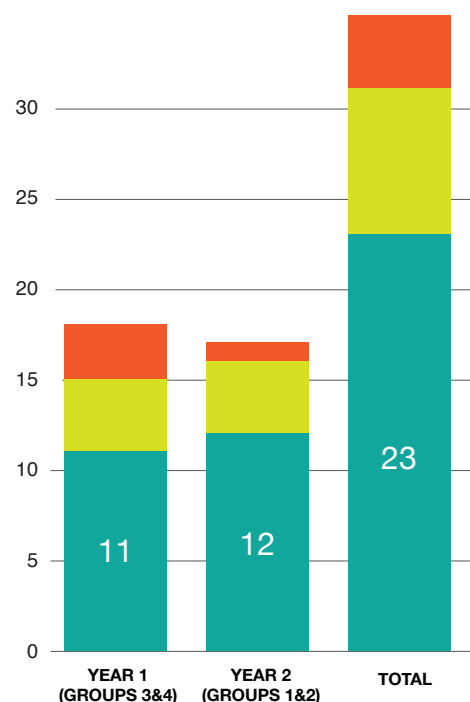


For children in K-12, how have your child's grades changed since enrolling in Flourish?

Positive/Very Positive
Negative/Very Negative
No Change
No Response

In some cases, children were already achieving good grades before joining the program, so maintaining that level of performance can be considered a positive outcome.

(Groups 1&2 N=17; Groups 3&4 N=18)



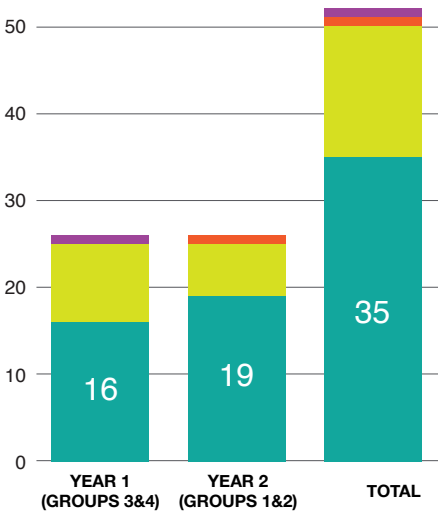
FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

The goal of reaching economic security during the program is steadily being met for most families with three-quarters of those in Year 2 reporting that their income had increased. A majority of participants in Year 2 of the program reported credit score improvements and improved employment circumstances. Credit score improvements and employment circumstances were less likely to be reported by families only in the program for 1 year.

Participants who did not see income growth, were primarily in school finishing a training or degree program. Even with increased income, some families still experience financial stresses from the increasing cost of food, transportation, utilities, childcare and paying off debt.



How would you describe changes in your income since enrolling in Flourish?

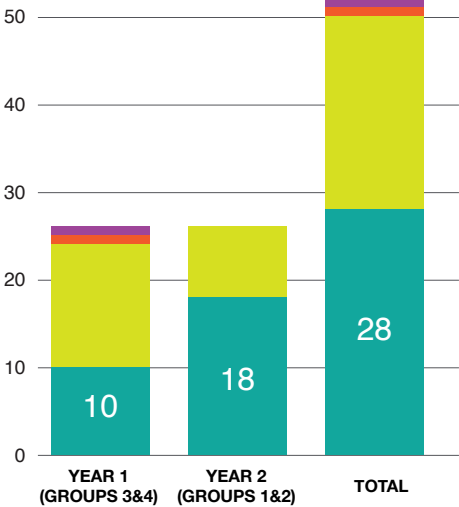


Better/Much Better Worse/Much Worse Neutral No Response (Groups 1&2 N=26; Groups 3&4 N=26)

How would you describe changes in your employment since relocating?

- Better/Much Better
- Worse/Much Worse
- Neutral
- No Response

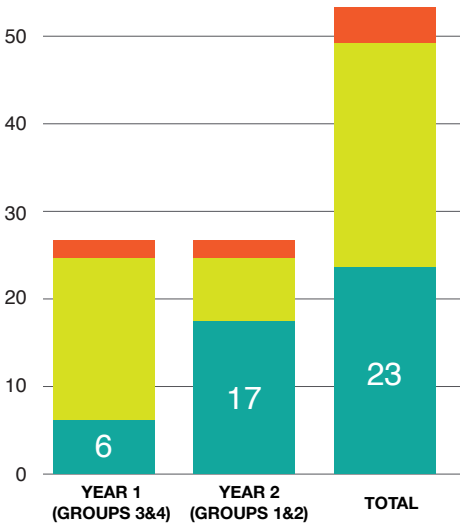
(Groups 1&2 N=26; Groups 3&4 N=26)



How would you describe changes in your credit score since enrolling in Flourish?

- Better/Much Better
- Worse/Much Worse
- Neutral
- No Response

(Groups 1&2 N=26; Groups 3&4 N=26)

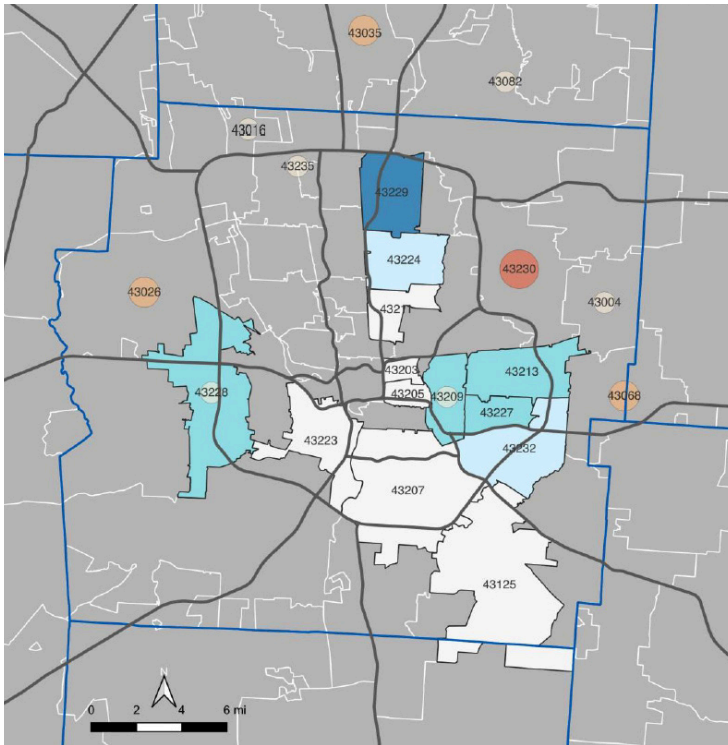


“I didn’t have financial stability growing up, and (my coach) knows that’s a big thing I want to provide to my child, and I want him to be able to have and do whatever he wants and money will not hold him back.”

FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANT

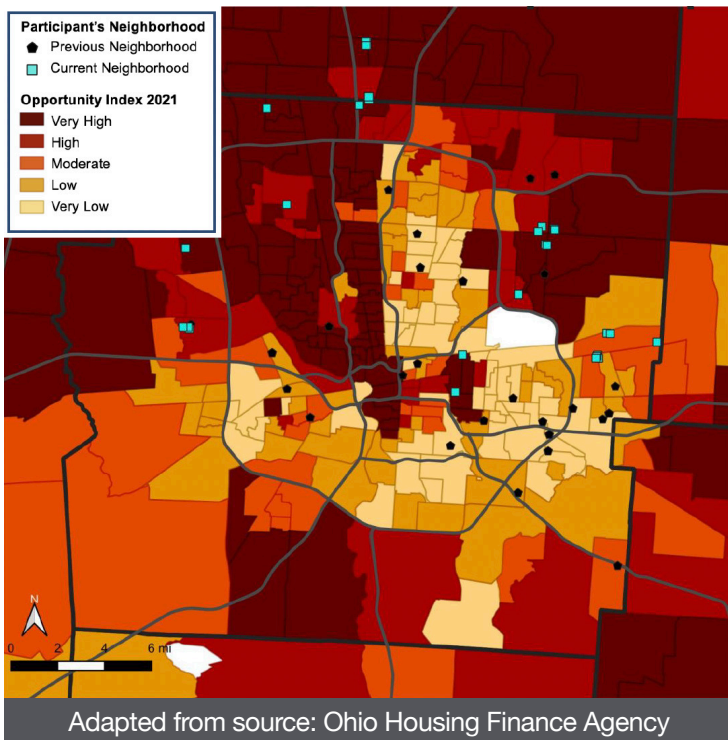
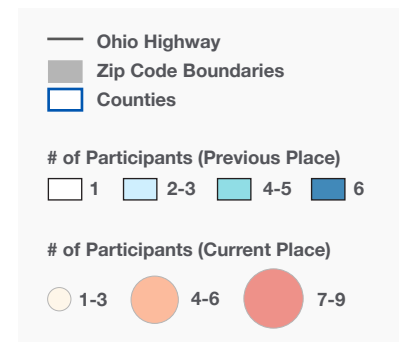
ZIP CODES MATTER

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.



Previous and Current ZIP Codes of Participants Who Were Not Homeless or Doubled Up (Groups 1-4)

The map to the left shows the ZIP codes of the previous residences of all families from Groups 1 through 4 who were not homeless or doubled up (34 out of 64 families, 53%) and their current residences after joining the program.



Previous and Current Neighborhoods of Participants Who Were Homeless or Doubled Up (Groups 1-4)

This map shows the pre- and post-relocation residences of all participant families from Groups 1 through 4 who were homeless or doubled up (30 out of 64 families, 47%). Each corresponds to one participant household, with a black pentagon indicating their previous neighborhoods and a blue square representing their new locations.

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 opportunities, while a few families relocated to neighborhoods with the same opportunity level as their previous ones, as they had been doubled up and living in moderate or high-opportunity areas.

Note. The map does not show the previous neighborhoods of four households due to their previous homelessness.

NEIGHBORHOODS MATTER

Housing Experience

In Year 1, the vast majority of participants in Groups 3 and 4 (21 out of 25, excluding one with no response) reported a positive experience (“Very positive” or “Positive”) with their new housing, three rated it as neutral, and one rated it as negative. Similarly, 21 out of 25 participants (excluding one with no response) described their housing circumstances as “Better” or “Much better” compared to their housing prior to Flourish, while three rated it as about the same, and one rated it as worse.

In Year 2, the vast majority of participants in Groups 1 and 2 (22 out of 26) reported a positive experience (“Very positive” or “Positive”) with their current housing, three rated it as neutral, and one rated it as very negative. All but one participant (25 out of 26) described their housing circumstances as “Better” or “Much better” compared to their housing prior to Flourish, while one rated it as about the same.



What families say.

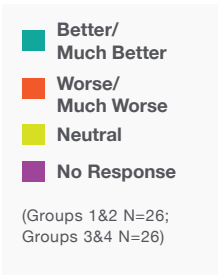
“I feel very safe to walk my daughter outside, she has made new friends and everything is nearby”

- FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANT

How would you describe your experience in your new home?



How would you describe your family's housing circumstances (housing quality, location, and cost) since relocating compared to your housing prior to Flourish?

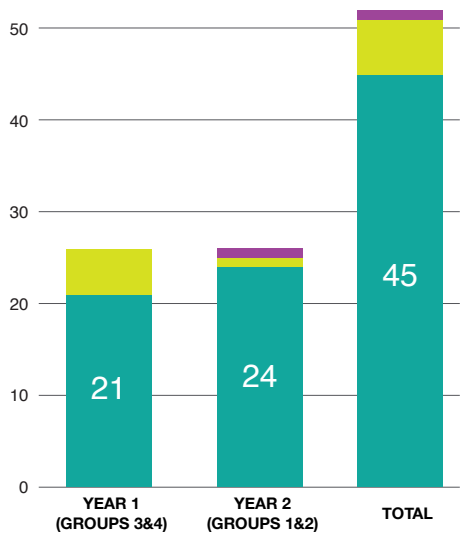


Neighborhood Experience

In Year 1, the vast majority of participants in Groups 3 and 4 (21 out of 26) rated their current neighborhood as “Better” or “Much better” compared to their neighborhood prior to joining the program. Five participants reported that their current neighborhood was “About the same.”

In Year 2, almost all participants in Groups 1 and 2 (24 out of 25, excluding one with no response) rated their current neighborhood as “Better” or “Much better” compared to their neighborhood prior to joining the program. One participant reported that their current neighborhood was “About the same.”

Is this new neighborhood better, worse or about the same as your old neighborhood?

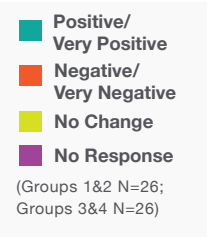


PROPERTY INTERACTIONS

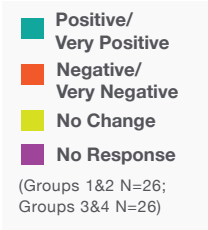
Property Management and Interactions with Neighbors and Staff

In Year 1, most participants in Groups 3 and 4 (21 out of 26) rated their experience with property management as “Positive” or “Very positive.” Two rated it as neutral, and three had a “Negative” or “Very negative” experience. Most participants (20 out of 26) indicated positive interactions with their neighbors, other tenants, and property management staff, while five had neutral interactions and one had negative interactions. In Year 2, half of the participants in Groups 1 and 2 (13 out of 26) rated their experience with property management as “Positive” or “Very positive.” Ten rated it as neutral, and three had a “Negative” or “Very negative” experience. Most participants (20 out of 26) indicated positive interactions with their neighbors, other tenants, and property management staff, while four had neutral interactions and two had negative interactions. Neutral responses to these questions should not be viewed as a negative response.

How would you describe your experience with property management?



How would you describe your interactions with neighbors, other tenants, or property management staff?



Landlord Satisfaction with Families Flourish

Landlords participating with Families Flourish are overall satisfied, with 100% rating the quality of their experience with Families Flourish as good or excellent (n = 7, m = 3.3'). One hundred percent of landlord survey respondents for program year two agreed that Families Flourish staff are responsive and that they are satisfied with both the Families Flourish participants as tenants and their impact on these tenants. When asked about the benefits Families Flourish has brought to their business, one landlord highlighted the ability to offer a hand-up to a deserving individual or family. Another landlord encouraged marketing to other landlords in a way that emphasizes how easy the process is while ensuring that landlords will receive rent payments in a timely manner.

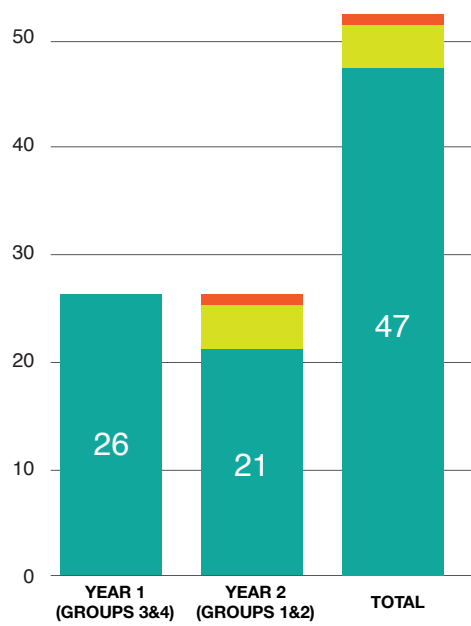
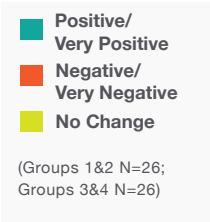
This is from a survey conducted by Measurement Resources (2024). p.17
*Rated on a four-point scale: “poor” being 1, “fair” being 2, “good” being 3, and “excellent” being 4.

OUR LANDLORD PARTNERS

- Andrew & Michelle Tucker
- CASTO Communities
- Dietz Property Group
- Gay Street Realty Co.
- Homestead America
- JBM Investments
- Kohr Royer Griffith
- Morgan Properties
- Myers Real Estate
- Oakwood Management Co.
- Oxford Commercial Real Estate
- P&E Real Estate
- Nikki & Eric Ransom
- REALIZE
- Schottenstein Property Group
- Stonehenge Company Inc.
- T&R Properties
- Thomas H. Lurie & Associates
- Thrive Companies
- Wallace F. Ackley Co.
- Westwood Collective

COACHING

How would you describe your experience with the Flourish coach?

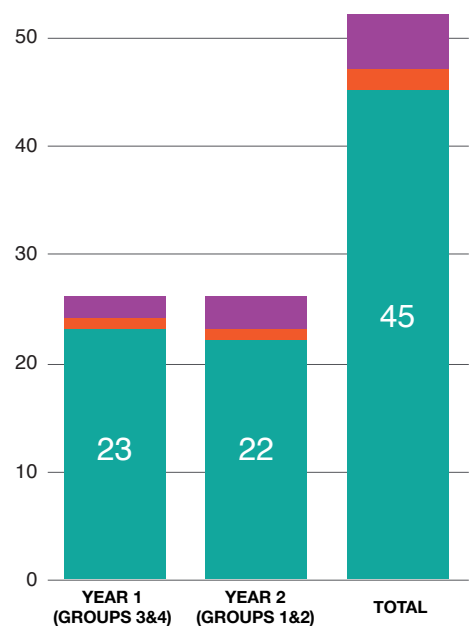
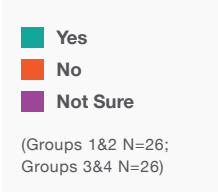


Impact of Coaching Program

Participants were generally satisfied with the Flourish coaching program. In Year 1, all participants in Groups 3 and 4 described the coaching program as either “Positive” or “Very positive,” with 25 rating it as “Very positive.”

In Year 2, most participants in Groups 1 and 2 (21 out of 26) described the coaching program as “Positive” or “Very positive,” with 15 rating it as “Very positive.” One participant reported a negative perception, and four reported neutral perceptions.

Has Flourish helped you achieve new goals?



Goal Setting and Achievement

In Year 1, most participants in Groups 3 and 4 (23 out of 26) indicated that Flourish helped them achieve their goals, while one participant provided a negative response.

In Year 2, most participants in Groups 1 and 2 (22 out of 26) indicated that Flourish helped them achieve their goals, while one participant provided a negative response. The coaching activities focused on setting personal goals and developing plans to achieve them, with goals covering topics such as finance, career development, and education.



VOICES OF OUR PARENTS

“My life coach, she’s so consistent and she’s always there to provide another perspective. She’s always the supportive one. I find that when talking to her about situations, I always get another perspective.”

“I love my coach. To be honest, I think that it was a great match. She’s something that I want to, like my field that I’m studying now she’s a part of, and she kind of aligns. We do have goals that I’ve actually accomplished.”

“Before I started with Families Flourish, I was in a really abusive relationship with my babies’ father, and I honestly did not have my GED or nothing like that. And when I started this program with my coach and stuff, I was able to get my GED and get my Phlebotomy License (and) my CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) license. I have, like, 5 months left into nursing school.”

- FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANTS



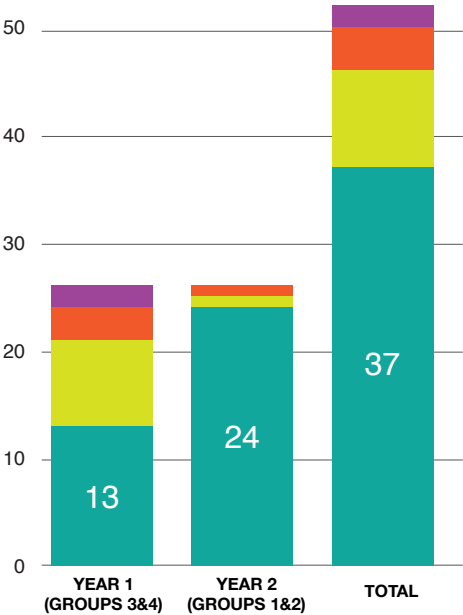
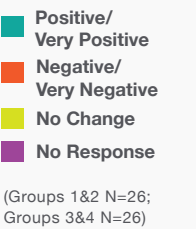
PEACE OF MIND

Changes in Participant Mental Health & Physical Health

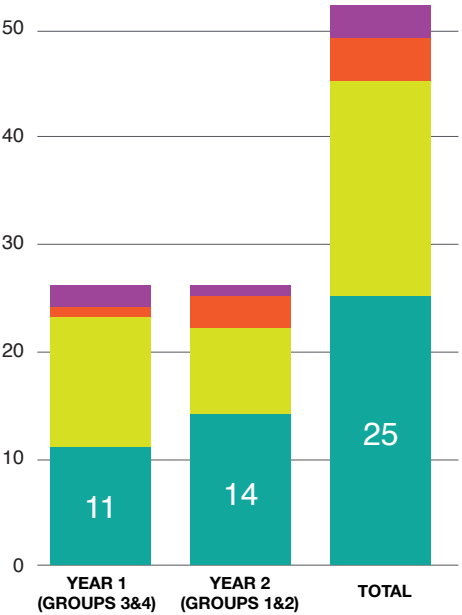
In Year 1, more than half of the participants in Groups 3 and 4 who responded (13 out of 24) reported improvements in mental health since relocating, eight noted no changes, and three experienced negative changes. In Year 1, nearly half of the participants in Groups 3 and 4 who responded (11 out of 24) reported improvements in physical health since relocating, 12 noted no changes, and one experienced negative changes.

In Year 2, over half of the participants in Groups 1 and 2 who responded (14 out of 25) reported improvements in physical health since relocating, eight noted no changes, and three experienced negative changes. In Year 2, all but two participants in Groups 1 and 2 (24 out of 26) reported improvements in mental health since relocating, one noted no changes, and one experienced negative changes.

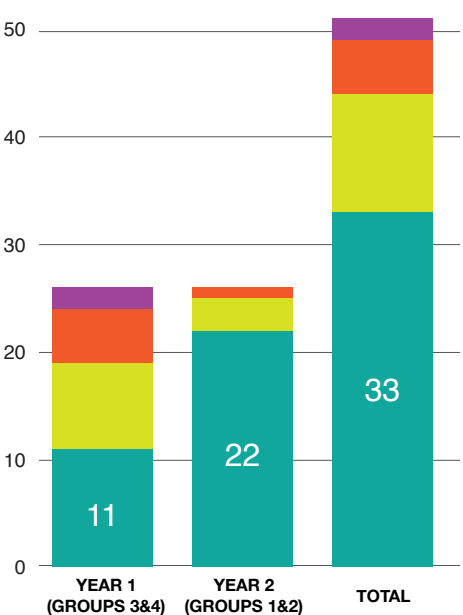
How has your mental health changed since relocating?



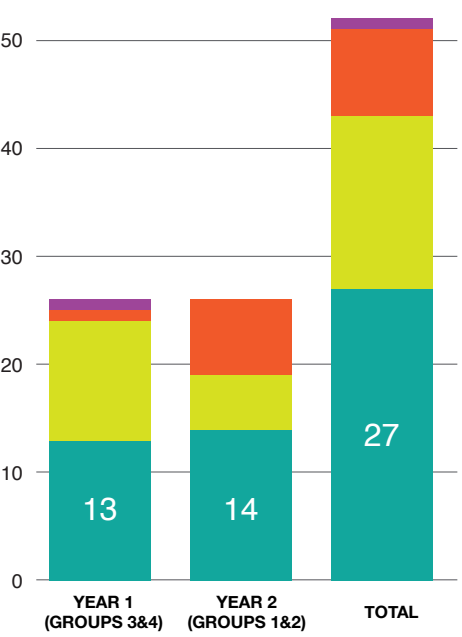
How has your physical health changed since relocating?



How has your stress changed since relocating?



How often do you get the social and emotional support you need?



ANALYSIS & CONCLUSIONS

Research consistently demonstrates that housing insecurity is associated with poorer health outcomes. A recent longitudinal study examining housing insecurity from ages 1 to 15 found that adolescents exposed to housing insecurity (e.g., multiple moves within a year, eviction, homelessness, or doubling up) during childhood had lower odds of reporting excellent health outcomes (Pierce et al., 2024). **Moreover, growing up in high-opportunity neighborhoods has been shown to positively influence children's future education, economic outcomes, and economic mobility** (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016; Chetty et al., 2024).

Providing affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods is therefore critical, particularly for supporting children's health, well-being, and future outcomes (Luke et al., 2025). However, building affordable housing in these neighborhoods remains challenging due to zoning regulations, lengthy development timelines, and limited resources.

The program's model, which combines partial rental support, mobility coaching, housing in higher-opportunity neighborhoods, along with monthly programming and life coaching, promotes housing stability and supports families in sustaining personal improvement. **According to Year 1 outcomes for Groups 3 and 4 and Year 2 outcomes for Groups 1 and 2, the majority of participant families reported improved economic circumstances, including increased income and better employment conditions.** Participants also reported improvements in physical and mental health, reduced stress, and decreased emergency room usage.

Participants expressed high satisfaction with the Flourish monthly programming and coaching. Many participants have made extensive progress toward personal goals related to finances, employment, and education. **In addition, they reported positive school adjustments and academic outcomes for their children, along with improvements in children's physical, mental, and emotional health.**

Overall, outcomes from Year 2 (Groups 1 and 2) reflect similar or improved results compared to those from Year 1 (Groups 3 and 4). In particular, a greater number of participants in Groups 1 and 2 (Year 2) reported increases in income and/or credit scores, and nearly all reported improvements in mental health.

The results here align with and build upon trends observed in the previous year's report. Taken together, the findings support the program's continued effectiveness across groups and over time. These early outcomes are promising and suggest that families will continue to experience increased economic stability as the program progresses.



My experience with Families Flourish has been a blessing to me and my family. My son doesn't experience the life I had to in my environment. There's not anything negative I would say about this program."

FAMILIES FLOURISH PARTICIPANT

"When we went into this program, it really made me change."

FAMILIES FLOURISH CHILD, S

S was 12 years old when she and her mom entered the Families Flourish program. "I feel like I didn't see a future for myself, I didn't see anything I wanted to do, that I was capable of," S said. "When we went into this program and I went into a community where people are excited about their future, it really made me change."

S is now throwing herself into all kinds of school and after-school activities. She's on the stage with the drama team and in the classroom studying science with a new fervor. "I want to go to college and after this, this is what I want to do. College, marine biology and then move near the ocean and study wildlife. I want to continue to find my purpose," she said.



YOU CAN HELP

The year 2025 has put governments into a different relationship with many nonprofits as funding priorities shift. But there's no need to fret. Our community is rich in resources – of time, talent AND treasure – and now is not the time to sit on the sidelines. Let's act in word and deed in a way that shows WE support our community and WE support the work of Families Flourish.

EVERY. SINGLE. INVESTMENT. COUNTS.

Start a \$5/month recurring gift. Tell a friend to join you. Host us at your home or office so we can get to know more people. Volunteer.

Because we KNOW we're changing lives – and we don't have to have government support to make it work. Let's be the change we want to see in the world.

Learn more about how to help at familiesflourish.org/support.

FAMILIES FLOURISH TEAM

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Spread the Word

Contact Shiloh Todorov to talk about how to help:

614-787-7129 | shiloh.todorov@familiesflourish.org