

FAMILIES FLOURISH 2016-2036

10 YEARS



Looking *back 10 years*; planning the *next 10 years*

April 2016 marks the date of the first “official document” we can find for what was, at the time, called “Housing Opportunity Pilot.” The meeting notes dated April 25, 2016, did not include an attendance record, but they show that the group was **already discussing key program elements** – such as helping participants understand tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, how credit scores, savings and income would shape program criteria, and much more.

This publication **honors the 10-year milestone in 2026** of our founders’ and collaborators’ decade-long dedication to serve low wage earning families and give them the tools to improve their children’s lives.

It is also a chance to share the way we think about the **next 10 years** through the lens of our strategic plan, and to report out on how far we have already come to implement it.

It’s a **snapshot of everyday life at Families Flourish** – assessing what we’ve learned through data, conversations with parents and graduates, the team at OSU, and Families Flourish team knowledge – with an all-hands-on-deck determination to serve more families, and to serve them even better, over time.



STEVE HEISER

AMY KLABEN

RACHEL KLEIT



Hear about those first milestones directly from our founders

“Do you realize that every 18 years we lose a generation of children if they're living in [low opportunity] neighborhoods?”

That was the question that *launched* the Families Flourish you know today.

Co-founder and commercial realtor Steve Heiser asked it of **Amy Klaben**, who had recently left the CEO position at Homeport to work on policy.

“Interesting idea,” she replied and then went silent. Amy often takes long pauses while she thinks.

But she moves very quickly, and **soon she and Steve were taking Bill Riat from CASTO and Michael Kelley from Kelley Cos. to lunch.** The two companies own a lot of multifamily units in Central Ohio, and were a crucial early partner.

It wasn't long after meeting that **Dr. Rachel Kleit**, OSU Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, was invited to talk about how to **evaluate this brand-new program.**

“I remember thinking that, wow, this is a really cool idea,” Rachel said. “As a result of the literature review we were doing and these people coming to ask us questions, **we came up with a preliminary logic model for how the program would work.**”

They gathered – almost weekly – with different experts and thinkers for nearly a year. Soon, they were getting the approval to create a pilot with 10 families under the Ohio State umbrella.

In August of 2018, **10 families** were welcomed into a this unique program with **just 3 basic ingredients: coaching, workshops and rent support in higher-resourced neighborhoods.**

“I thought at the time if we graduated 5 of those families we had a successful formula,” Amy and Rachel agreed.

The **tremendous success of those first families fueled the co-founders initial fire** to – first, prove the model works – and then move full-speed ahead to serve MORE families. In May 2025, the goal to expand the program to serve 100 Central Ohio families was met, and just four months later, the goal to expand across Ohio planted its first flag in the Miami Valley Dayton area.



Investing in families?

It *really* pays off.

Over the years, we have seen countless reasons to celebrate the successes of our families. Here are just a few...

One participant entered the program carrying **\$4,000 in credit card debt** and struggling to cover everyday expenses. With the help of her coach, she **developed and followed a financial plan and budget** that allowed her to pay off her debt entirely. She's now **building her savings toward the goal of buying a home.**



Another participant shared that her son **entered the program in second grade** at a kindergarten reading level. With support from his new school, **he was brought up to grade level** and has since thrived. **He's not only reading, but has even published his own book.**



For some participants, the Families Flourish program provides the support to pursue an **entirely new career path**. One mother worked with her coach to land a job in aviation, and she's not the only one with her sights set on the sky. **She and her 10-year-old daughter are now logging flight hours together to become licensed pilots.**



“This has been a life changing and transformational experience.” Families Flourish Participant

10 Years Out: Double the Participants in Central Ohio

Entrepreneurial Operating System – or EOS – is an approach to leadership that **helps provide clarity and focus to teams** and is used by more than 100,000 organizations. **Families Flourish adopted the methods of EOS officially in the first quarter of 2024**, with members of leadership drafting the first vision and then gaining board buy-in.

EOS calls on leaders to set a **10-year vision**, then a 3-year goal. Subsequently, teams break that work into full-year and quarterly goals to help them reach the bigger goals. At Families Flourish, we can credit it with helping us successfully support the launch of the Miami Valley affiliate, and securing our first municipal grant from the City of Columbus. It also helps keep track of the granular, like recruiting and onboarding families, regularly updating coach training, securing our technology systems, and stabilizing our income streams.

The 10-year audacious goal: doubling our number of participants by 2034.

That means, instead of two groups of 16 families onboarding each year, and two graduating – we would welcome and celebrate **FOUR** groups in and out each year.

The budget would continue to expand to **\$5M/year**.

And more communities would continue to adopt our model.

EOS required us to define:



Our core focus: *Empowering family success and prosperity.*

Our Promise: *Generational change through coaching, programs and homes to create inclusive communities.*

An Investment In Families Flourish Kids Produces Exponential Benefits

Every \$1 invested in a Families Flourish family creates up to \$7 in social benefits and economic impact for Ohio, according to Scioto Analysis. Imagine a future where we serve 1,000 Ohio families, generating \$320M in value!

INVEST TODAY: familiesflourish.org/donate