

# FIRST LIGHT

*A Center for Homeless Women and Children*

## 2020-2021 Annual Report

The mission of First Light is to work with homeless women and their children to create hospitality in a safe and nurturing community, to encourage them to maintain dignity, to find hope, to seek opportunity, and to grow spiritually, thereby achieving their full potential.

### 2020-2021 Board of Directors

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Community Volunteer*

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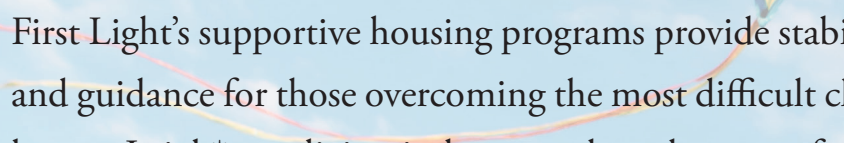
Dorothy Sanders  
*Community Volunteer*

Blair W. Sandford  
*Southern Company*

Emma Taylor  
*Community Volunteer*

Dee Repici, Ex-Officio  
*President, First Light Young Partners*

When Annette\* escaped domestic violence in Atlanta, she was grateful that a friend in Birmingham was willing to take her in. But the small, crowded apartment was simply too small for Annette and her two children to stay with her friend and her three children. Besides, she needed much more than a safe place to sleep. She suffers from severe depression and anxiety, her autistic three-year-old has special needs, and the father of her five-month-old son is refusing to pay child support. When she arrived at First Light's emergency shelter, she was overwhelmed. Before she could find a job and rebuild her life, she needed to rebuild her confidence. Her case manager listened. Then her case manager had a plan and that is what is changing her life. She is getting legal assistance to secure child support for her son. She learned where to get the affordable mental healthcare she needs. She had a job interview—and if she gets that job, she has a public housing voucher and solid plan for childcare. Meanwhile, she and her children will be safe at First Light.



First Light's supportive housing programs provide stability and guidance for those overcoming the most difficult challenges. Leigh\* was living in her car when she was referred to First Light's Trio housing program. She is developmentally delayed and made a bad decision more than three years ago that resulted in a criminal conviction that cost her custody of her children and made it especially difficult for her to find a job. Now she lives in stable housing, has a job she is capable of keeping, and she hopes to regain custody of her two boys.

\*First Light is a confidential shelter. The names have been changed in these true stories.



First Light gratefully acknowledges the important contribution to our mission made by founding Executive Director, Ruth G. Crosby, who retired on December 31, 2021. Ruth's leadership, integrity and commitment to homeless women and children built an organization with a solid reputation for effectiveness and transparency. We wish her every happiness in this new phase of her life. Ruth is succeeded by First Light's former Director of Social Services, Sherry Bray, LGSW, MPA.

# EMERGENCY SHELTER

First Light's emergency shelter for homeless women and their children remained open despite the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic. Extensive safety precautions were taken and protective protocols were followed to protect guests entering or staying in the emergency shelter. Vaccinations were repeatedly made available. First Light's staff stepped up when called upon to run the Shelter Waiting Facility where individuals were tested and quarantined before entering the shelter.

Even though social distancing limited the population at the emergency shelter, 240 unduplicated individuals, including 42 children, found shelter, hospitality, and hope in First Light's emergency shelter during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Each guest worked individually with a qualified social services professional who became her advocate and guide to overcoming the complex issues that led to homelessness.



Necessary safety precautions also limited volunteer activities, but committed volunteers continued to provide meals and gifts to let guests know they are part of a caring community.

# SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

First Light's supportive housing programs were uninterrupted by the pandemic. These programs provide case management for vulnerable individuals and families who could not otherwise sustain housing. During the 2020-2021 fiscal year:

Ten women permanently disabled by severe mental illness were housed on the fourth floor of the shelter in downtown Birmingham.

Forty-nine women with permanent disabilities or who had been chronically homeless sustained stable housing in First Light's permanent supportive housing program called Trio.

Seventeen women and four children got case management necessary to remain housed in the Jefferson County Housing Authority's Shelter + Care voucher program.

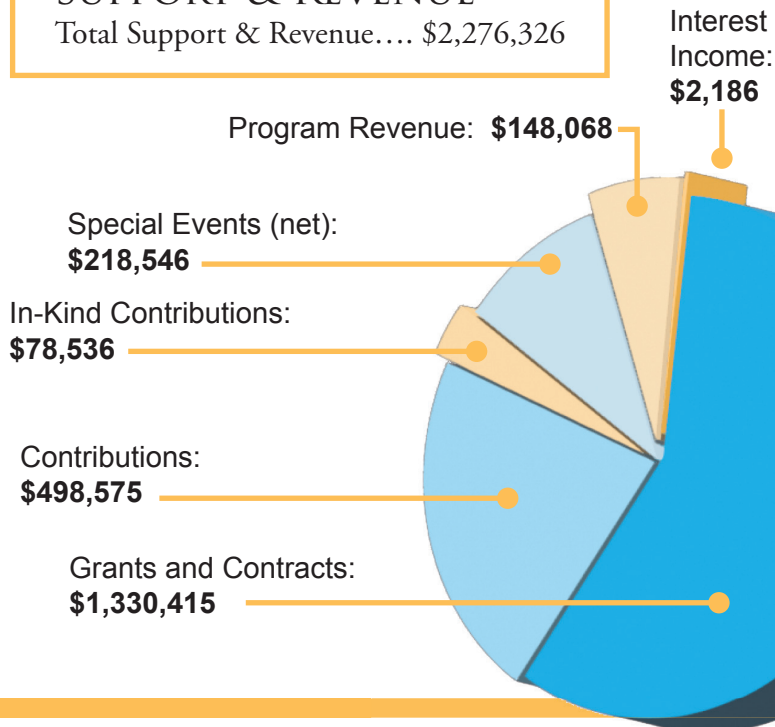
One hundred sixty adults and eighty children were served in First Light's Rapid Rehousing programs to improve housing stability and increase direct services for homeless individuals and families throughout the community.

The pandemic accelerated our nation's affordable housing crisis and exacerbates the shaky housing stability of the most vulnerable in our community. Even before the health crisis, one in four Alabama children lived in families so burdened by high housing costs that they struggled to meet their basic needs. Low-income renters were more likely to lose wages due to the pandemic and are slower to regain employment so even if the economic recovery continues, they will continue to struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Your gifts ensure they find safety and hope at First Light.

# 2020-2021 Financial Statement

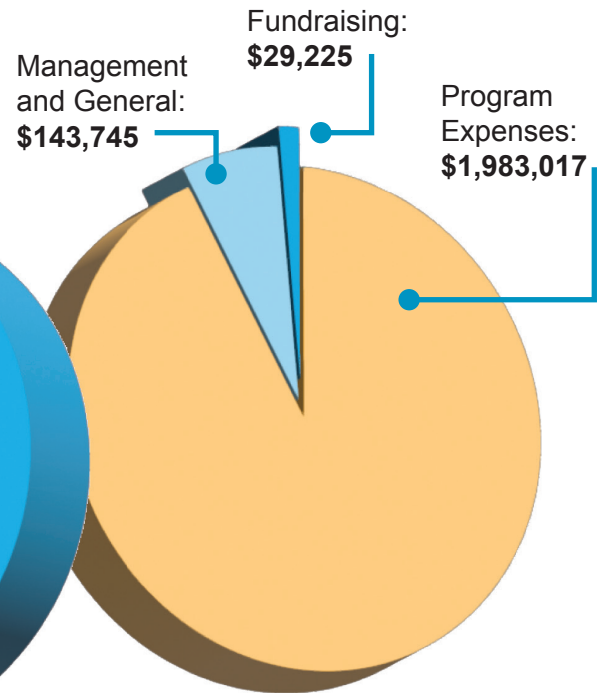
## SUPPORT & REVENUE

Total Support & Revenue.... \$2,276,326



## EXPENSES

Total Expenses..... \$2,155,987



## 2020-2021 First Light Sponsors

### Full Potential Society

Captrust Community Foundation  
 Carolyn King Legacy Trust  
 Charles and Estelle Campbell  
 Charitable Foundation  
 Consolidated Pipe & Supply  
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 The Daniel Foundation of Alabama  
 First Presbyterian Church of  
 Birmingham  
 Hugh Kaul Foundation  
 Independent Presbyterian Church  
 Foundation  
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 Foundation  
 Macy's  
 Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic  
 Church  
 PACE  
 Robert R. Meyer Foundation  
 Saint Luke's Episcopal Church  
 Susan Mott Webb Charitable Trust  
 Trinity United Methodist Church

### Circle of Opportunity

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 Medical Properties Trust  
 Method Mortgage, LLC  
 Protective Life Foundation  
 Ratliff Charitable Foundation  
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### Community of Hope

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 Decas Group, LLC  
 HealthStar Clinic  
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 Spartan Invest

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 Birmingham's First Seventh Day Adventist  
 Church  
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 Edgewood Presbyterian Church  
 Mauldin & Jenkins  
 Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church  
 MPower Fitness, LLC  
 Psychiatry South, Inc.  
 Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church  
 SouthState Bank

### Circle of Community

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 Ferlisi Jolley Associates, Inc.  
 Green Pond Presbyterian Church  
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 Jemison Investment Co. Advised Fund  
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 The Maynard Cooper & Gale Charitable  
 Foundation  
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