

# 2017- 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



## FIRST LIGHT

*A Center for Homeless Women and Children*

### 2017-2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**PRESIDENT:**  
**Cindy Coyle, AIA, LEED**  
ArchitectureWorks

**VICE-PRESIDENT:**  
**James C. Phillips**  
Community Volunteer

**TREASURER:**  
**Erol Wallace**  
RSM US LLP

**SECRETARY:**  
**Elizabeth Tucker**  
Community Volunteer

Tiffany Ford  
Spire

Ben Greer  
Protective Life Corporation

Bo Grisham  
Brookmont Realty Group, LLC

Denise Killebrew  
Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz

Staci M. Pierce  
Action Resources, Inc.

Dawn D. Rock, J.D., CHC, CHPC  
Encompass Health Corporation

Darri Scott  
Community Volunteer

Emma Taylor  
Community Volunteer

Rev. Catherine Goodrich, Ex Officio  
First Presbyterian Church

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.





**Ruth G. Crosby**

## Letter from the Executive Director

# FRIENDS,

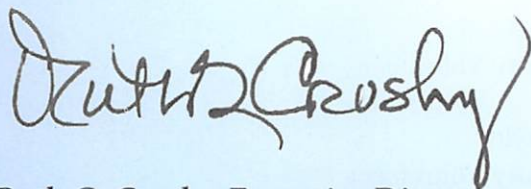
As the months fly by and the days get a little cooler, many of us are starting to think of the upcoming holidays and of the fun we will have with family and friends we love. Our thoughts turn, too, to those we miss—the ones who still humble and inspire us.

So many humble and inspire me at First Light! When a guest in the middle of a life crisis greets me with a brave smile, when a cart overflowing with gifts collected by a church or a business comes rattling through our doors, when I see food lovingly prepared and served to hungry children by caring volunteers—I am grateful and moved.

The demographics of homelessness have changed over the many years since we built this shelter. It wasn't really designed to meet the complex needs of so many women bringing children to our doors. But we insist that every exhausted and frightened woman and each confused and wary child who depends on us gets much more than a safe place to sleep. We do that—we can do that—because one thing has never changed. We are encouraged and supported by dedicated, selfless volunteers who make sure our guests know they are part of a caring community.

I am grateful to share our mission with a wise and dynamic board of directors, a professional and compassionate staff, and a generous community.

Thank you.




**Ruth G. Crosby, Executive Director**

“WHEN A GUEST IN THE MIDDLE OF A LIFE CRISIS GREETES ME WITH A BRAVE SMILE, WHEN A CART OVERFLOWING WITH GIFTS COLLECTED BY A CHURCH OR A BUSINESS COMES RATTLING THROUGH OUR DOORS, WHEN I SEE FOOD LOVINGLY PREPARED AND SERVED TO HUNGRY CHILDREN BY CARING VOLUNTEERS—I AM GRATEFUL AND MOVED.”

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**LEAVE A LEGACY** that expresses your commitment to your community and reflects your personal values.

 Ask your tax and investment advisors how a planned gift to First Light might help you achieve your personal and philanthropic goals while providing security for yourself and your loved ones. And please let us know if you have included First Light in your estate planning.

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## EMERGENCY SHELTER

First Light's emergency shelter has 36 beds and a family room on the second floor of the building in downtown Birmingham. Each night furniture is moved aside and mats and linens are passed out so 15-20 more will not be turned away. So many families with children have turned to First Light in recent years that office space has also been repurposed to provide additional space and to give families some privacy. Guests are offered breakfast each morning, and every night a hot dinner is prepared and served by community volunteers. A qualified professional helps each guest establish and adhere to an individualized plan of action to address the issues that led to homelessness. First Light's social services professionals take a two-generation approach to ensure that every member of the family gets the services and treatment they need—such as healthcare, legal assistance, job-training, GED preparation, clothing assistance, substance abuse counseling, and any government benefits to which they may be entitled.

## PROJECT HEALTHY MINDS

First Light's guests have lost a great deal and struggle to maintain dignity, self-respect and hope. Through First Light's Project Healthy Minds, each adult guest gets a chance to strengthen herself spiritually and emotionally and to learn essential life skills. Guests learn about nutrition, health, and hygiene and participate in group counseling, movie therapy, and art classes. Carefully vetted volunteers supplement the program with health screenings and valuable life skills presentations, as well as bible study for those who choose to participate. This year 108 guests expressed their complex feelings in a safe and nurturing environment in art classes; 54 reflected on their personal issues through movie therapy; 56 engaged in group therapy to discuss their concerns, challenges and goals; and 148 developed their competence and self-confidence through life skills educational presentations.

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

First Light's **permanent supportive housing programs** help guests leaving the shelter who could not sustain housing without support. Permanent supportive housing residents continue to have access to all the services and activities at First Light and a social services professional provides case management to ensure they successfully transition from homelessness to a life of dignity in safety and security.

Women permanently disabled by severe mental health disorders make a home for themselves on the **fourth floor of the shelter** with their little dog, Bruno. A social worker monitors their well-being.

Women in apartments throughout **Bessemer and East Birmingham** get the social services and guidance they need to thrive and sustain their best level of independence and self-sufficiency.

Through **Shelter Plus Care**, First Light's social services professionals screen, select, and provides case management for families and individuals receiving housing vouchers through the Jefferson County Housing Authority.

First Light also established a project unique in our community which provides **transitional housing for victims of domestic violence with no income**. Funded by the U. S. Department of Justice and done in collaboration with area professionals and social services organizations, First Light's Director of Social Services helps these guests establish and adhere to short- and long-term goals, provides life skills education and directs them to child care, counseling, job training, financial literacy education, healthcare, medication and transportation assistance—and eventually to permanent housing.



**Forever Home** moves emergency shelter guests with children into housing as quickly as possible to prevent or reduce the physical, psychological and cognitive impact of homelessness. It is the only privately funded rapid-rehousing program in our community. It provides diminishing financial assistance over six months and social services for at least a full year.

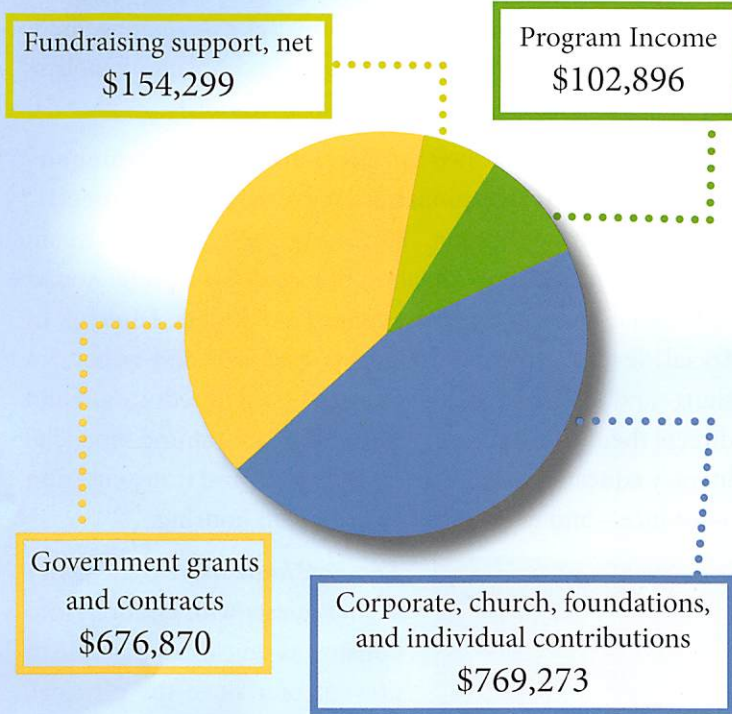
“WRAPAROUND SOCIAL SERVICES” IS A TERM OF ART REFERRING TO INTENSIVE, INDIVIDUALIZED CARE PLANNING AND COMPREHENSIVE, HOLISTIC SERVICES ADDRESSING A WIDE RANGE OF NEEDS. THIS LEVEL OF SERVICE IS THE BEDROCK OF FIRST LIGHT'S MISSION. THE RELATIONSHIP A GUEST DEVELOPS WITH A CARING, EDUCATED, EXPERIENCED SOCIAL SERVICES PROFESSIONAL IS INSTRUMENTAL TO HER SUCCESS IN PROVIDING SAFETY AND STABILITY FOR HERSELF AND FOR HER CHILDREN.



# 2017-2018 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

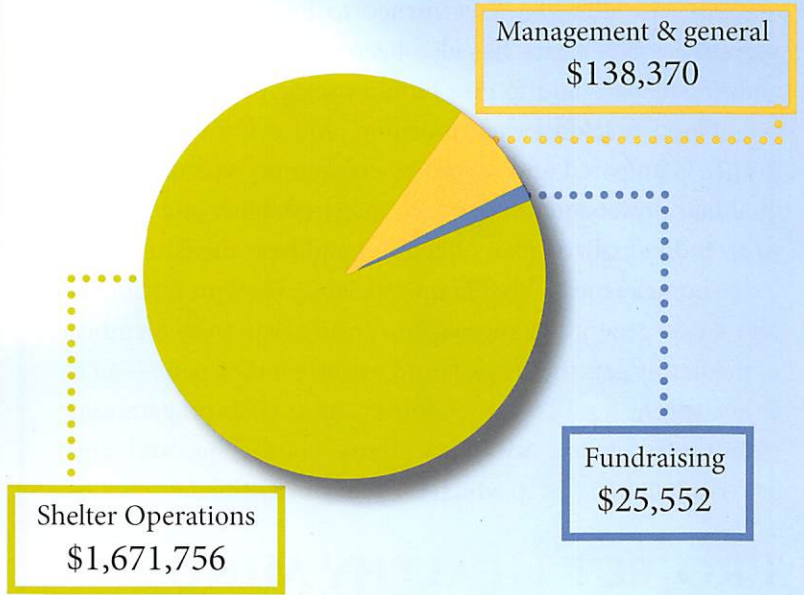
## SUPPORT & REVENUE

Total support & revenue..... \$1,704,120



## EXPENSES

Total expenses ..... \$1,835,678



Change in unrestricted net assets..... (\$131,558)  
 Unrestricted net assets, beginning of year ..... \$2,233,914  
 Unrestricted net assets, end of year..... \$2,102,356

## 2017-2018 FIRST LIGHT SPONSORS

### FULL POTENTIAL SOCIETY

Carolyn King Legacy Trust  
 Consolidated Pipe & Supply Company, Inc.  
 The Daniel Foundation of Alabama  
 First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham  
 Hugh Kaul Foundation  
 Independent Presbyterian Church Foundation  
 Medical Properties Trust, Inc.  
 Navigate Affordable Housing Partners  
 PACE  
 Protective Life Corporation  
 Protective Life Foundation  
 Robert R. Meyer Foundation  
 Saint Luke's Episcopal Church  
 The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham

### CIRCLE OF OPPORTUNITY

The Caring Foundation  
 C. Eugene Ireland Foundation  
 Church of the Highlands  
 EBSCO Industries, Inc.  
 The Gratitude Foundation  
 Independent Presbyterian Church  
 The Stephens Foundation  
 Surgical Care Affiliates  
 The Thompson Foundation  
 Trinity United Methodist Church

### COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Alabama Power Energizers Birmingham Division  
 Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and Berkowitz, P.C.  
 Balch & Bingham, LLP  
 Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, LLP  
 Bressler, Amery and Ross, P.C.  
 Burr & Forman, LLP  
 Dominion Management, LLC  
 Edgewood Presbyterian Church  
 Lucas Foundation for Better Living  
 Riverchase United Methodist Church  
 Riverpeak Partners of Raymond James and Associates, Inc.  
 Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church

### CIRCLE OF DIGNITY

Constantine International Foods, Inc., dba Naji's Pita Gourmet  
 Cowin Equipment Company  
 Dunn-French Foundation  
 Hare Wynn Foundation  
 JM Farm and Reclamation  
 Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation  
 Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church  
 Partners Direct Invest, LLC  
 Saint Francis Xavier Church  
 Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church

### CIRCLE OF COMMUNITY

Alabama Equipment  
 ArchitectureWorks, LLP  
 Brasfield & Gorrie, LLC  
 Charity House Foundation  
 Concepts & Associates, Inc.  
 JP Morgan Chase  
 Lewis, Feldman & Lehane, LLC  
 Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church  
 National Bank of Commerce  
 R.J. Mechanical, Inc.  
 Starnes Davis Florie, LLP  
 Stifel Investments  
 Wells Fargo Foundation

### CIRCLE OF DIGNITY

Brandino Brass Company  
 The Chicago Community Foundation  
 Cory Watson, P.C.  
 Crown Castle  
 Energen Foundation  
 Ferlisi Jolley Associates, Inc.  
 Gardendale Mount Vernon United Methodist Church  
 Marx Brothers, Inc.  
 Montevallo Presbyterian Church  
 Saint Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church  
 The Women's Network  
 Womens Ministry of Mount Calvary