

The Platform of Hope

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT: RESILIENCY



Photo by Diyanna Burton

Sharing our story

Dear Platform of Hope community,

Thanks for taking the time to learn about the second year of the Platform of Hope's programming, a year indelibly marked by COVID-19. This is a longer letter than I normally would write but it's because I think it's important to share the story of our 2019-2020 year. There will be so much data to follow, but the narrative is even more important to understand as we all search for connection and understanding in response to social distancing, loss and trauma.

In September 2019, we had begun our second program year with 19 Cohort A families and a new cohort of 20 families in Cohort B-- 40% of whom were referred to us by Cohort A participants. In our first Family Saturday on September 21, 2019, each cohort met to outline their goals for the year. In Cohort B, families shared inspiring personal goals like "be a better person" and "show our children it's never too late to start." In Cohort A, returning for their second year, families were focused on how the group could work together to mobilize and inspire change, brainstorming ideas like "advocacy" "support groups" "voter registration." We had concluded our first year with Cohort A families making progress towards their goals **in every category of our holistic radar chart** and with a 73% increase in connectivity with one another. Life seemed hopeful. We hosted trauma informed care with Ms. Georgette of Mary's Center in October, two absolutely packed November and December Family Saturday holiday gatherings bringing together both cohorts, an inspiring Budget 101 advocacy training with Fair Budget Coalition in February and had just re-launched our signature biweekly Parenting Class with Sylvia.... And then the pandemic hit.

We closed our offices on Friday, March 13th. For the first month of quarantine, like most, we were not quite sure how to pivot. How long would this last? We signed up for a zoom account and began to plan for a (temporary?) virtual model. On April 3rd we hosted two video calls with families to talk about COVID-19. Someone in the Platform of Hope community had tested positive for it and we wanted to share what steps we should all take to stay safe and not infect others.

On April 14, 2020, Sylvia Stokes, our Family Care Lead and the first Platform of Hope staff member, passed away. It was truly devastating. We spent that week in April calling and messaging families, sharing our heartbreak. The sudden passing of Sylvia was deeply destabilizing to families, who lost the person they worked on their goals with, on top of the chaos and confusion of the start of the pandemic. It felt so isolating to be at home with this overwhelming grief and unable to connect with the other members of our community in person. We collected people's messages in a google doc to share with her daughter, Aliya, so that we could reflect on what she had meant to us. On April 18th, our Family Saturday, together with program partners, we hosted two zooms with families to talk about the loss. Through tears, families shared why "Ms. Sylvia" was so special. Throughout April and beyond, so many members of our community shared their feelings of loss and honored Sylvia's incredible memory.

At the same time that we shared this painful loss and entered the abyss of COVID life, something remarkable happened: everyone- families, staff, partners-- recommitted to the promise of the Platform of Hope.

The concept of partnership and collaboration from our strategic alliance partners, created in 2017 after years of informal conversations, proved true. Our program partner staff from Mary's Center, Jubilee Housing, Briya, Jubilee JumpStart and Mary's Center helped make the calls and check on families throughout April while our staff needed time to process and grieve. They kept showing up for calls and for us.

... continued on p. 2

Sharing our story *continued...*

The strategic alliance Executive Directors got on a call with one hour's notice on April 14th and supported me in crafting an emergency plan. Throughout 2020, our partners collaborated with us on programming whether it was our weekly/biweekly support group with Ms. Georgette of Mary's Center, or a conversation on schools reopening with Ms. Dominique and Ms. Patty of Jubilee JumpStart or a zoom art session for mother's day with Ms. Katie from Sitar Arts Center or Ms. Audrey of Jubilee Housing sharing her experiences protesting with her family in support of Black Lives at a "Spill the Tea" zoom..... Our partners showed up.

But most importantly, the families recommitted to the Platform of Hope. They wanted, more than ever, to live up to the vision that Sylvia had help them begin to manifest: a supportive community where families lead, guide one another and make change. Families decided to keep the program going and so we did.

We kept going. Like our families, we were resilient. And that is the story we want to highlight in this report: responsiveness and adaptiveness. With the loss of Sylvia and emergencies created by COVID-19, we decided to extend year 2 of the program by 4 months through December 2020; 100% of families opted in for this 16-month year.

Over the next pages, you will see the programmatic efforts we made to support families whose lives were shattered by COVID-19 and the resulting economic recession. **We illustrate qualitatively and quantitatively the experience for low-income BIPOC families in Washington, DC, who continue to face disparities in employment, health, education, income, housing and more. The pandemic has exacerbated the existing inequities and made our work to support families in pursuing their holistic goals more crucial than ever before.** We must look at the intersection of these fields together and we must acknowledge the additional investment needed to create equitable outcomes for families of color. Families are facing extreme situations. Our data will not show the same success story as our pilot year but this is not to say our program does not work or our families are not successful-- our systems do not work. We are proud of our families and our program for continued resiliency in the face of so many challenges. The themes we collected in Fall 2020 show how families are pivoting to make new plans to accomplish their goals.

And we as the Platform of Hope **recommit** to the promise of our original founding goals:

- Confront inequity
- Center families
- Be transparent and responsive

Throughout 2020, we returned to these goals to examine how we were doing and how we could move towards them. Like families, we discussed our strategy to get to our "North Star" despite the many challenges ahead. I hope you will continue to follow our progress in 2021 towards these goals: More centering of families. More explicit articulation of racial inequities. More efforts towards systems change. And most importantly: more connection. More love.

Sylvia wrote on a post-it at the conclusion of her 2018-2019 parenting class session that she was inspired by "The strong women in this group that never give up!"

The inspiration lives on. Join us and be connected. Uplift hope.
With deep appreciation,
Judy

*SYLVIA STOKES 1950-2020

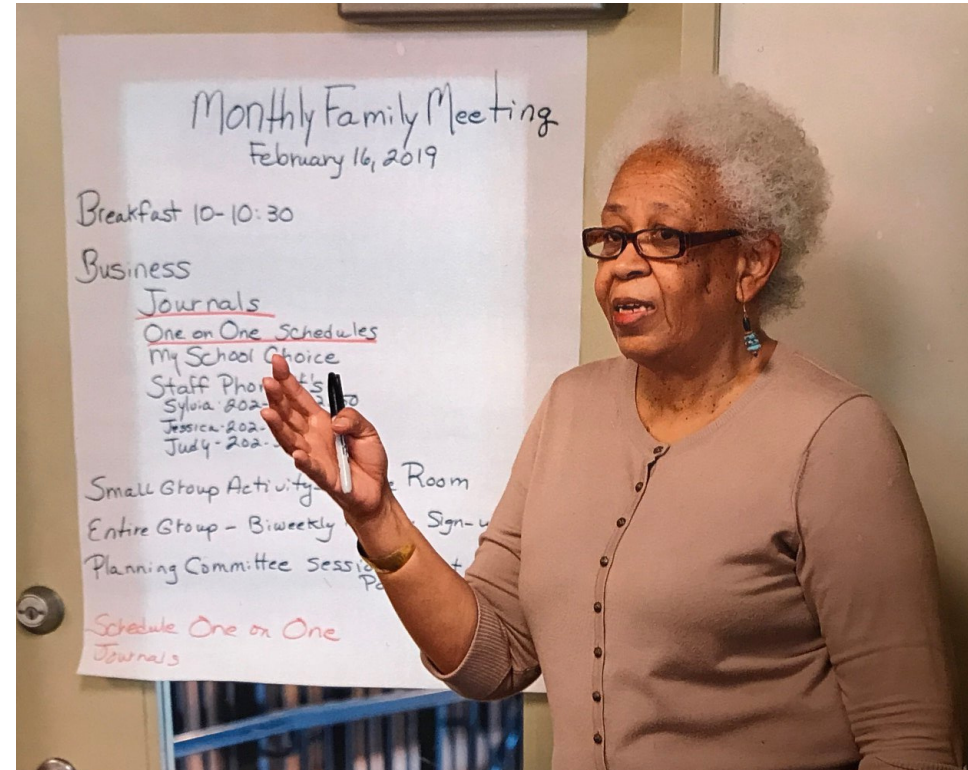


Photo by David Dowling

Please click [here](#) to learn more about Sylvia. We will continue to honor Sylvia as one of the formative parts of the Platform of Hope, forever in our DNA. On September 25th, 2020, her daughter Aliya co-hosted a Celebration of Life zoom with Platform of Hope families and partners in honor of what would have been her 70th birthday month. We thank Aliya for sharing her mom with us.

"She will always be remembered as part of our family, my kids, my husband and I are in shock... She tried to help me as [best] as she can. Something I hate from these days is that we can't [say] goodbye, we can't stay with her as she deserved. All POH members now as a family we have to support each other. No race, no color, no religion makes us different in these difficult times for each person. Thank you Mrs. Sylvia for showing us we are a family. And will always be thanked from here to heaven..."
- POH family member

The Platform of Hope Team 2019-2020

- Judy Estey, *Vice President*
- Jessica Palencia, *Program Manager*
- Sylvia Stokes, *Family Care Lead**
- Beatriz Riggle, *Program Coordinator*
- Pamela Cabrera-Bahay, *Program Manager*
- Humna Ahmad, *Summer 2020 Intern*
- Carmen Aguirre, *Fall 2020 Intern*

Steering Committee 2019-2020

- Brandelyn Anderson, *FLOC *2019 partner*
- Dee Dee Parker Wright, *Jubilee JumpStart*
- Maureen Dwyer, *Sitar Arts Center*
- Jim Knight, *Jubilee Housing*
- Maria Gomez, *Mary's Center*



Read more about our history and founding goals at www.platformofhopedc.org

CONDITIONS OF FAMILIES IN YEAR 2

Data from throughout September 2019- December 2020

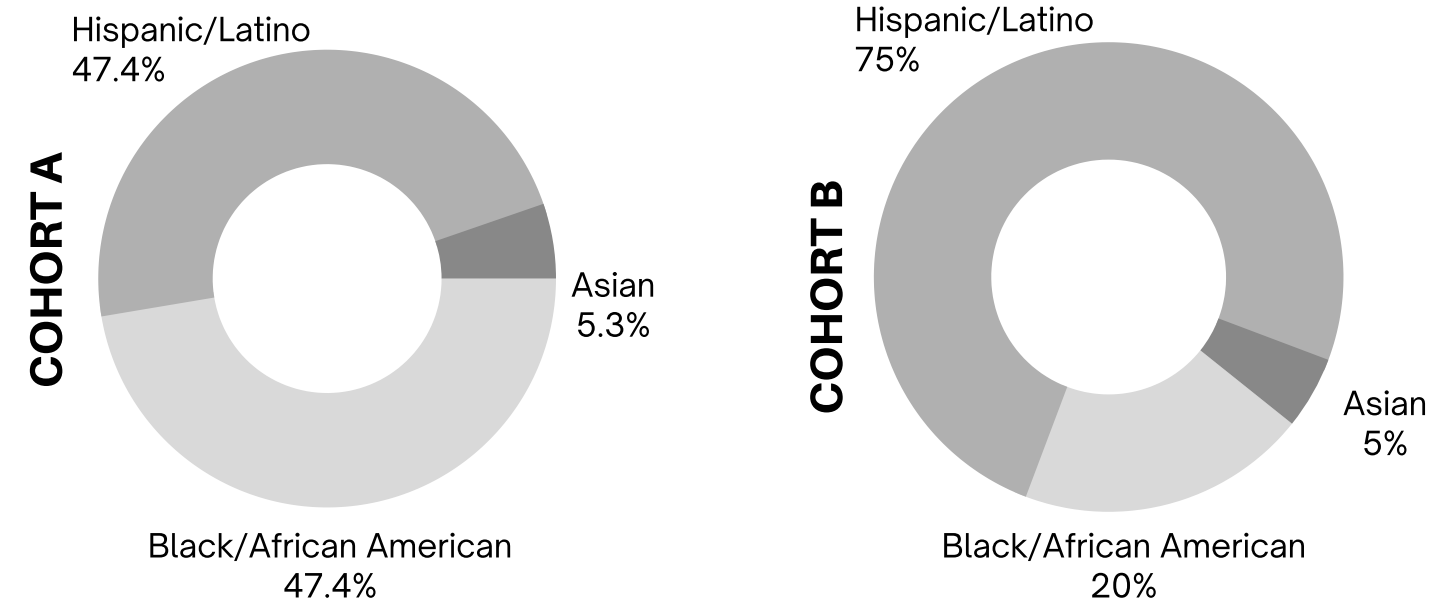
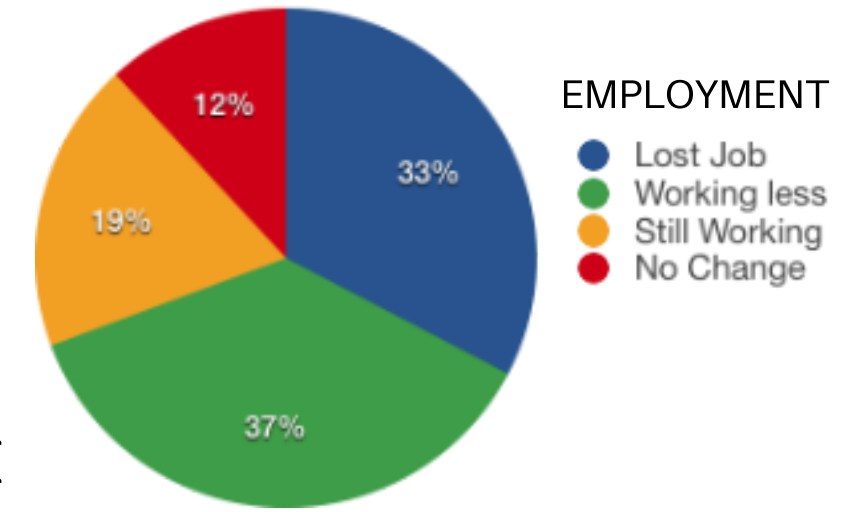


Photo by Diyanna Burton

COVID-19 IMPACT FROM MAY 2020 SURVEYS OF COHORTS A AND B

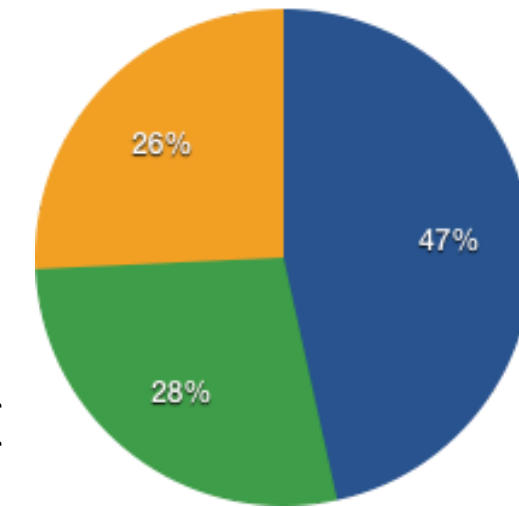


EMPLOYMENT

- Lost Job
- Working less
- Still Working
- No Change



Photo by Diyanna Burton

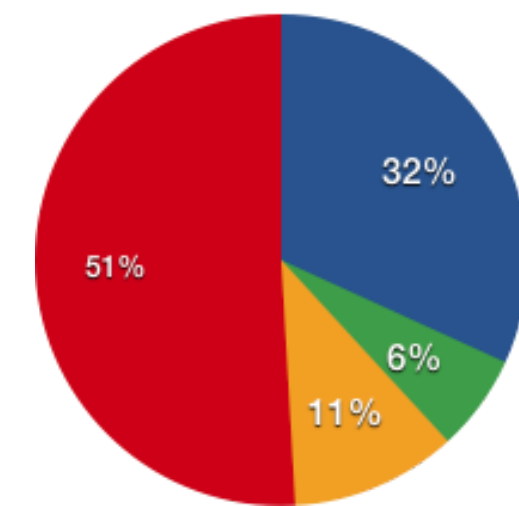


FINANCES

- Lost majority of income
- Lost some income
- No change



HALLOWEEN 2020



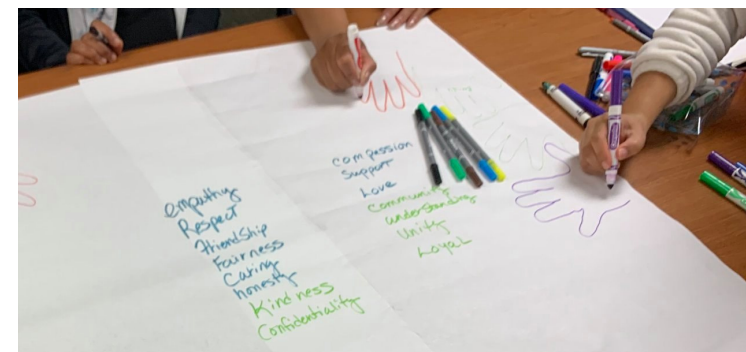
SUPPORT

- Economic stimulus
- Unemployment Insurance
- Other (Events DC)
- Nothing

FALL 2020 THEMES

HOUSING: Rental Assistance	Families in need of rental assistance	10 (26%)
	Families ineligible/ facing barriers to public programs	5 (13%)
	Total amount given towards rent from programs and/or donors- 11/10/20	\$14,606
	Public programs	\$6,000
	Private program	\$8,606
EMPLOYMENT	People seeking employment	16 (41%)
	Parents seeking employment but unable to work without childcare for their kids	8 (21%)
ADULT EDUCATION	Restarting, continuing, or first time enrolling in adult education program	7 (18%)
	Graduating from workforce development program	2 (5%)
LEGAL	Families referred for legal assistance (housing, eviction, family law, benefits)	8 (21%)

Photo by Diyanna Burton



COHORT B VALUES STATEMENT

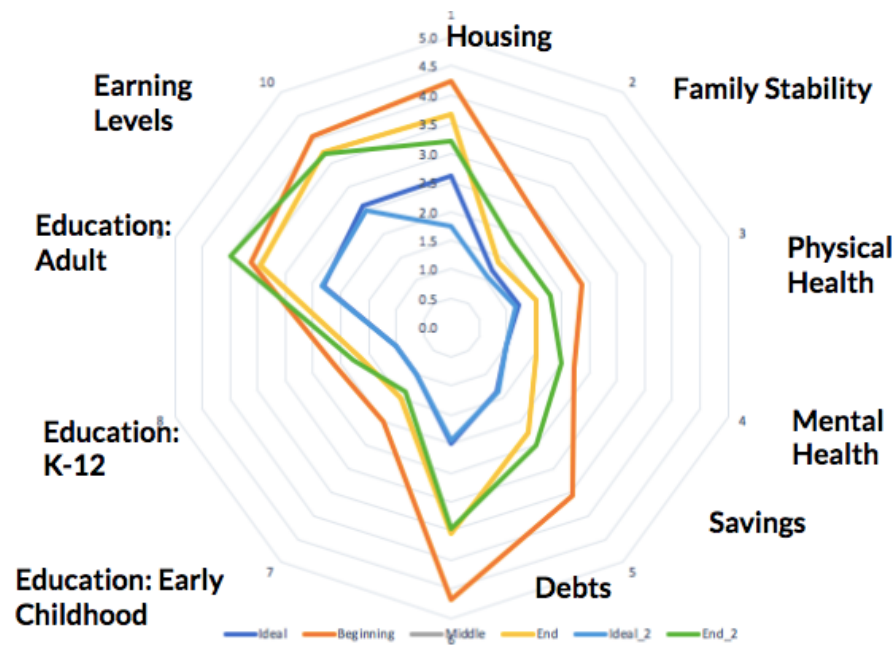
THE PLATFORM OF HOPE PROGRAM RESULTS: How We Responded

RADAR CHART RESULTS

Check out our Radar Chart Key [here](#)

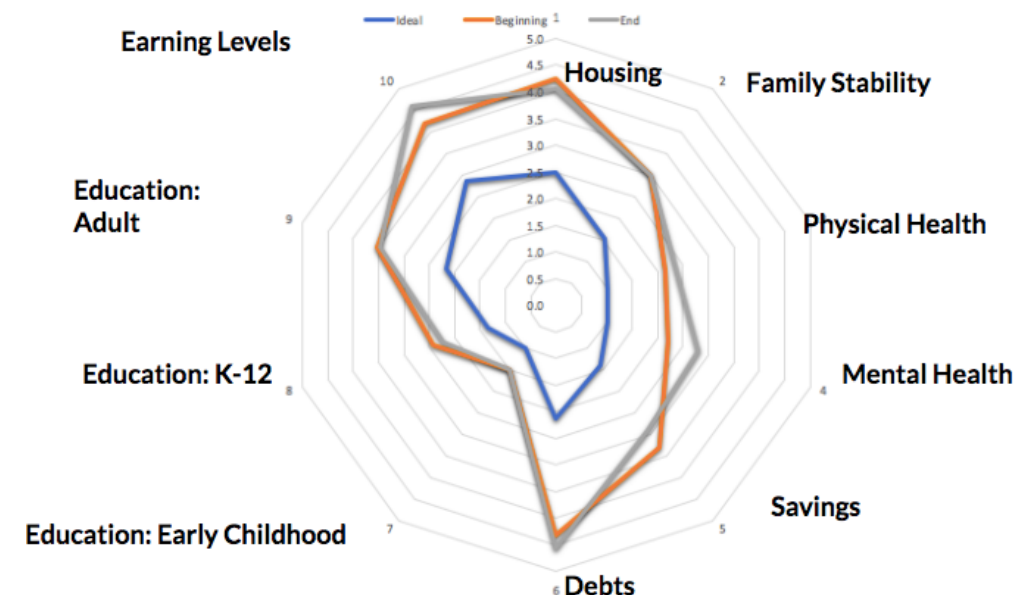
Cohort A: Year 1: 2018-2019; Year 2: 2019-2020

Cohort A saw progress towards goals (blue) in all categories by the end of year 1 (orange to yellow) but little progress in year 2 (yellow to green); however, due to the strides in year 1, they concluded year 2 in a more stable place despite the pandemic. All categories saw net improvement over two years with the exception of adult education.



Cohort B: Year 1: 2019-2020

Cohort B saw little progress towards their goals (blue) from beginning (orange) to end (gray) of their first year and in fact, the pandemic year caused regression in certain categories, most notably a 27% decrease in Mental Health.

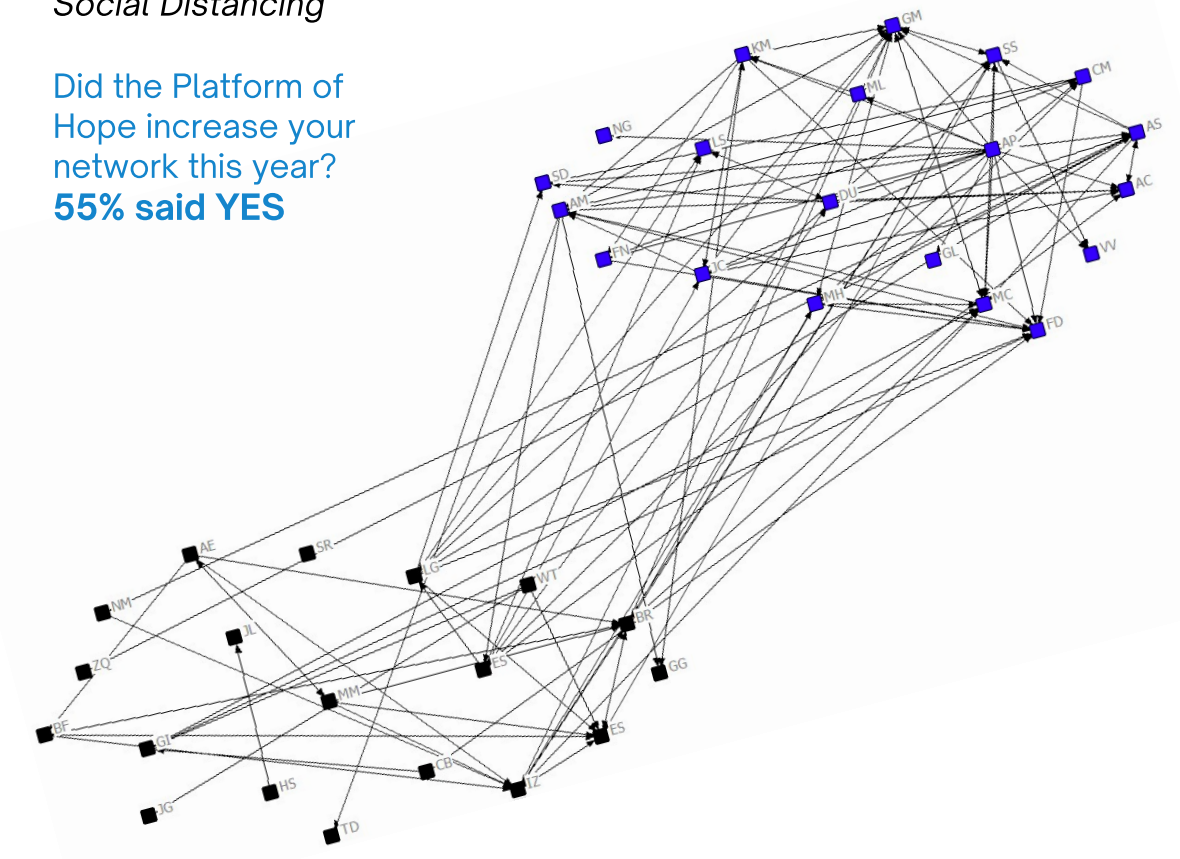


OUTPUTS

- **56 workshops** in person + on zoom (Parenting Class, English Cafe, Support Group with Mary's Center, Know Your Rights, Financial Wellness, Resume Building + Interviews, Self Care, Family Art Class, etc)
- **28 Family Saturday events** in person + on zoom
- **624 hours** of one on one appointments offered
- **32 referrals** to strategic alliance and other partner organizations' services
- **48 computers/hotspots provided** since the start of the pandemic

Cohort A (24 months) and Cohort B (12 months) Social Capital Map Together: Social Capital Growth in the time of Social Distancing

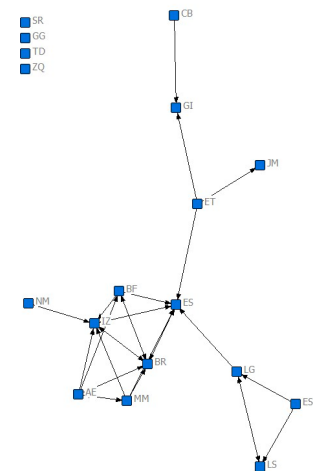
Did the Platform of Hope increase your network this year?
55% said YES



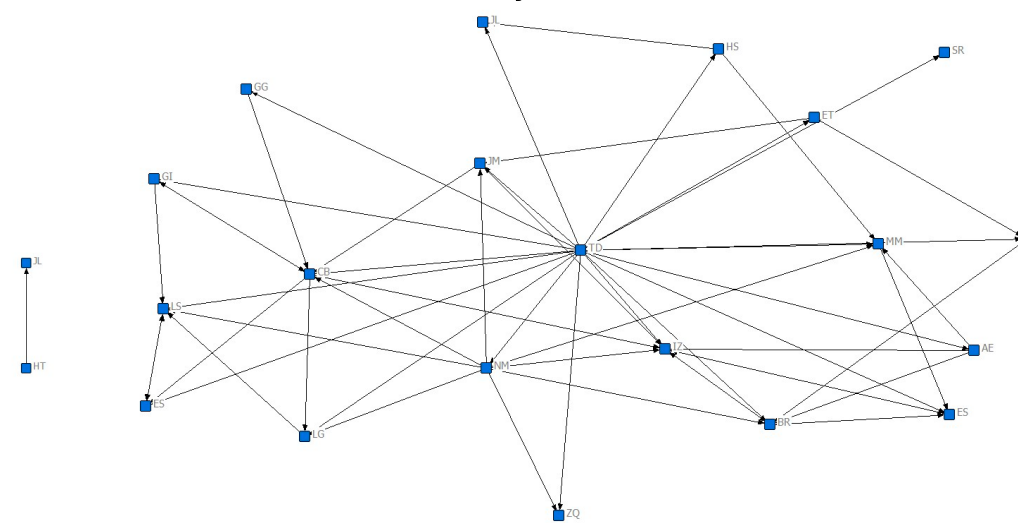
SOCIAL CAPITAL-- CREATING CONNECTION TO COMBAT ISOLATION

Cohort B Social Capital Map (Right) 6 months into their first year

Each square represents a family member in Cohort B-- based on who they selected, this map shows a line connecting family members who reported a connection in response to "Who in the cohort could you go to for help?" For those with no lines, it means they didn't indicate anyone.



Cohort B Social Capital Map (Below) 12 months into their first year-- 93% GROWTH!!!



PLATFORM OF HOPE FAMILY STORIES

The Mom Finding New Possibilities with Adult Education

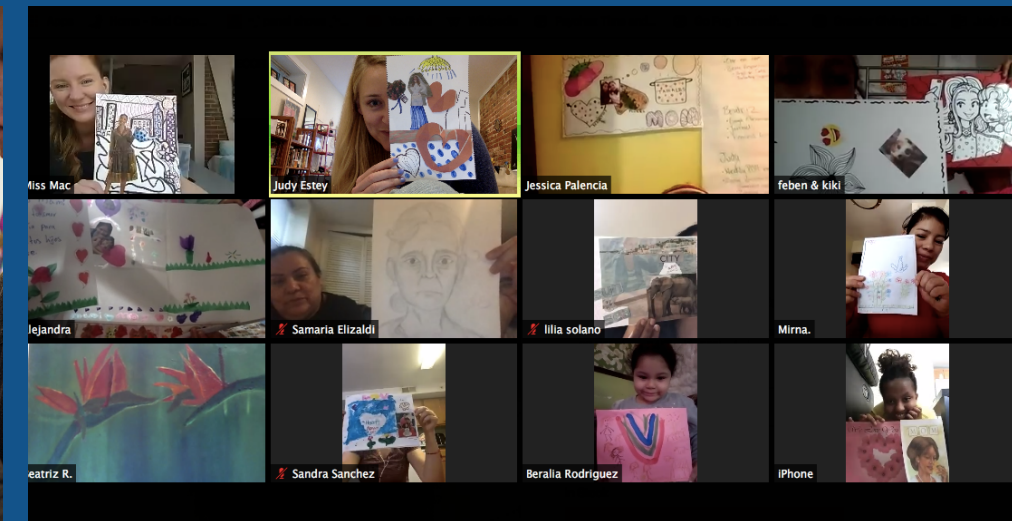
This hard working **Cohort B** mom started in September 2019 at POH with ambitious goals for education, job and finances. She joined the Planning Committee and was full of fun ideas for team building and games. With the start of the pandemic, things immediately shifted: right away, she lost her full time job working as a waitress. With her daughter struggling with virtual learning, her focus became in seeking resources to support her. A game changer was enrolling her daughter in tutoring through FLOC, which dramatically improved her performance in school. Slowly, work shifts came back at the restaurant, but sporadically and part-time. Like many of our families, this mom re-evaluated her time and her priorities given the changes in the world. In Fall 2020, she was motivated to find time for school again, enrolling as an advanced student at Briya Public Charter School with the goal of taking her GED classes. Being enrolled at Briya has really expanded her options for higher education and meaningful employment. She's closer to her education goal than ever before and simultaneously she's worked hard to piece together funds to pay the rent and keep up with her expenses. One of the things she had worked on before the pandemic was savings, which helped her to feel less overwhelmed when she was out of work. She's back to work part-time at a restaurant and finding the balance between work and virtual learning for herself and for her daughter.

The “Connector”

During Year 1 of the program, this **Cohort A** mom worked diligently to increase her savings and saw a huge accomplishment towards her goal there. This mom is deeply connected to the POH program and a natural leader, including participating in Planning Committee, Parenting Class and many other workshops. She's been an important “connector” for POH, including referring many of Cohort B families to the program back in 2019 and attending many of their meetings when her schedule allowed. In Year 2, this mom faced new circumstances due to the pandemic: in March 2020 she lost her job at a restaurant and has been out of work since. Pivoting to being at home, she became incredibly focused on supporting her children with distance learning. Focusing on her savings in year 1 really made the difference in year 2, as she utilized these funds, in addition to pandemic unemployment insurance and emergency rental assistance, to pay her expenses for many months. Her goal remains to purchase a home but she realizes this will be more difficult because her savings have gone towards paying the rent and groceries. In quarantine, she has relied on POH for social connection and as a way to understand what is going on in the world. She participated in English Cafe and “Spill the Tea” as well as the Financial Empowerment series to ensure she is continuing to learn and support her community. She continues to be a member of the Planning Committee and is looked to as a leader amongst her peers.



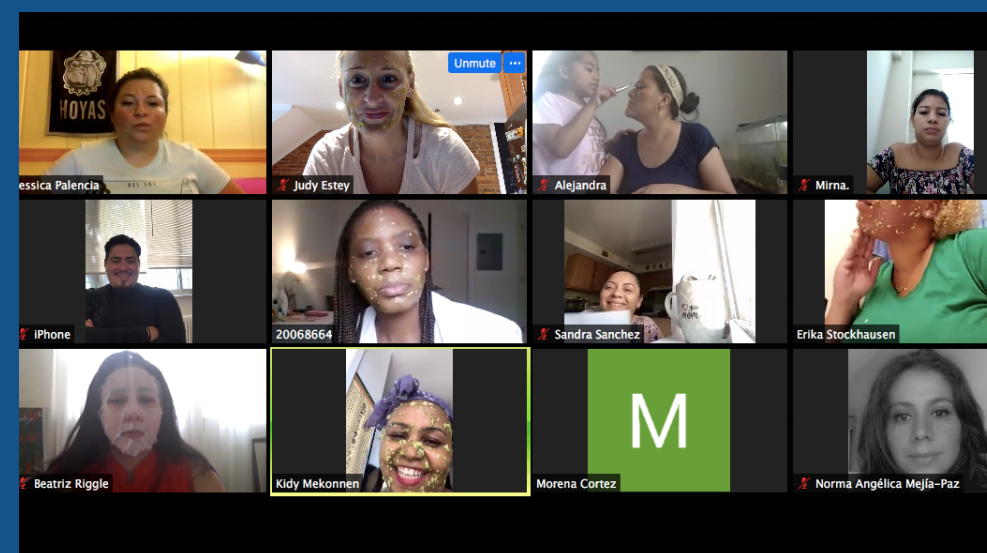
Photo by Diyanna Burton



Mothers Day Arts Workshop

The Mom Balancing Work and Parenting

This **Cohort B** mom entered our program in September 2019. When the pandemic hit, she was one of a few that continued working throughout the pandemic-- which had its own stresses, particularly early on. She wrote to us about her concern about bringing COVID-19 home: “For more than a month I have not hugged my son because I go out to work and nobody knows what one can bring from the outside.” One of the other challenges was in supporting her son with difficulties in distance learning while he's home alone but she has to be at work. As a single mom in quarantine, she became his sole source of in-person social connection and educational support. With the support of Ms. Terry and our Parenting Class, we are supporting this mom in addressing her son's needs at school. POH has also been a source of critical social connection, an outlet for her to express frustrations about her job and parenting. In light of the pandemic, she's now changed her goals from hoping to rent a new apartment to purchasing a home and is excited for exploring a way to get to this goal in 2021. It's amazing to see how focused she remains despite the challenges of the past year.



Self Care Zoom Session



Photo by Diyanna Burton

THANK YOU TO THE PLATFORM OF HOPE SUPPORTERS!

*Donations made September 1, 2019- December 31, 2020

Institutional Donors

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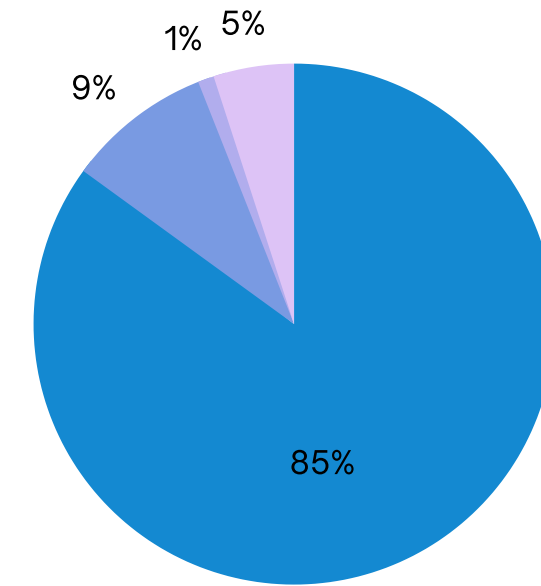
And thank you to those who purchased items in our online community auction!



FINANCIALS

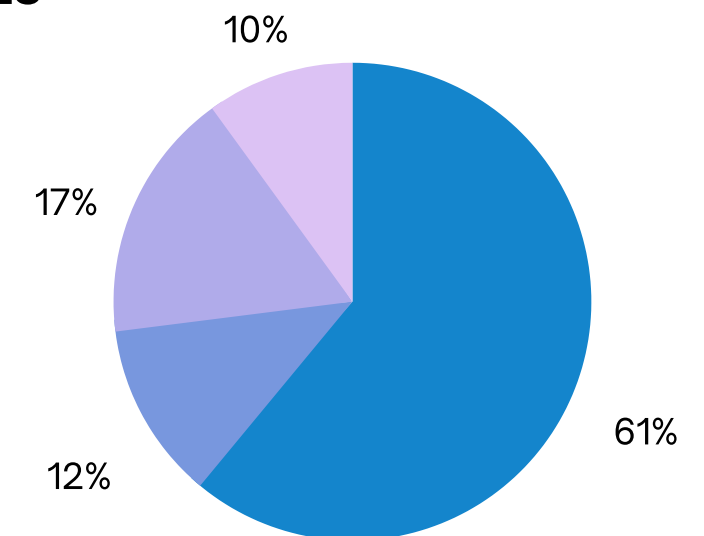
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

INCOME



Foundations	414,750
Corporations	45,715
Government	4,000
Individual Giving	23,011
Total	487,476

EXPENSES



Personnel	221,654
Consultants	42,330
Family Services	59,094
Program Services	2,510
Administrative	35,042
Total	360,630