



LIFT

25th

BUILDING BRIDGES

A MESSAGE FROM LIFT'S CEO & BOARD CO-CHAIRS

"NEVER TO FORGET WHERE WE CAME FROM AND ALWAYS PRAISE THE BRIDGES THAT CARRIED US OVER." -FANNIE LOU HAMER

For 25 years, LIFT has embarked on a journey of evolution and growth, bridging learnings from our earliest years to bring about transformational change for families.

Through the years, LIFT has continuously evolved services to be true to our highest aspiration and promise — breaking generational cycles of poverty. We served as proud pioneers of direct cash transfers, investing directly in families even when unrestricted cash payments were viewed with skepticism; and we shifted our program to a two-generation model, allowing parents to improve their economic trajectory, traverse benefits cliffs, and build bridges of opportunity for their children. We've expanded our reach tenfold through the expansion of our technical assistance program and public policy work. Along this journey, we've been committed to Race, Equity, and Inclusion, vowing to hold ourselves accountable with love by addressing the deep roots of systemic racism.

As we set our sights on crafting a new roadmap for our future, we remain in a constant state of learning, ever evolving, and steadfastly navigating murky and uncharted waters. We continue to strive for policies built on a foundation of Hope, Money, and Love, and encourage those in positions of privilege to be a part of the solution to bridge racial and gender wealth gaps so that all families can thrive. This annual report is dedicated wholeheartedly to our LIFT parents who are the true architects of LIFT's legacy and the future they want to create.



**MICHELLE
RHONE-COLLINS**

LIFT
CEO



**EMILIO
DIEZ BARROSO**

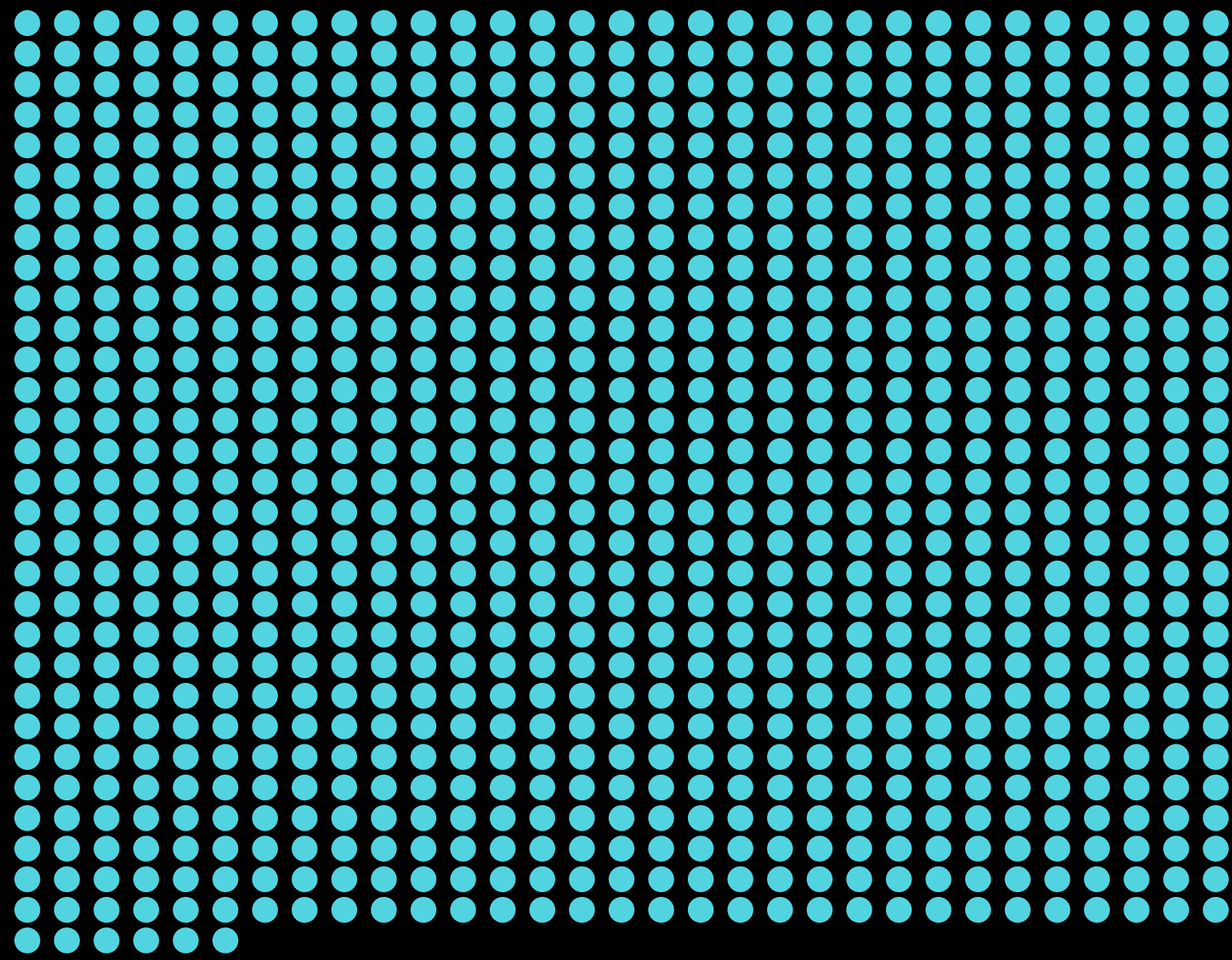
NATIONAL BOARD
CO-CHAIR



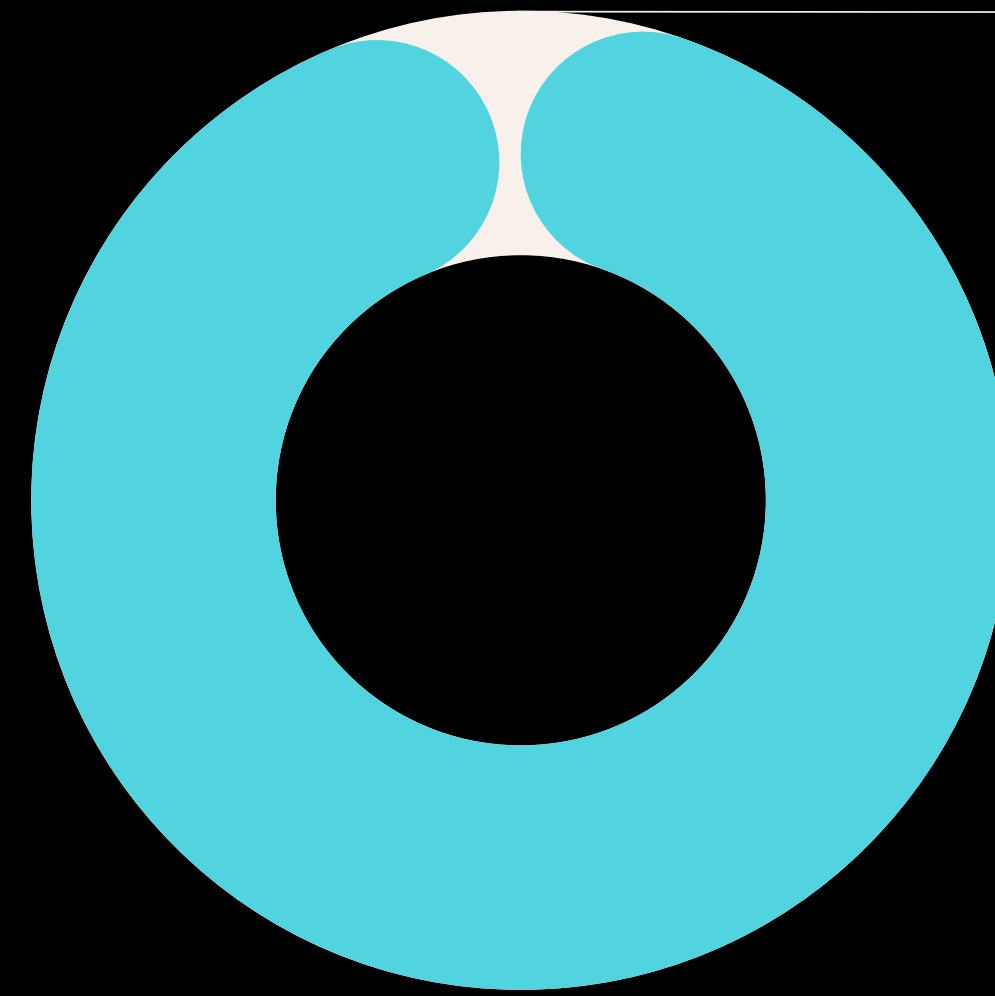
**WILL
DARMAN**

NATIONAL BOARD
CO-CHAIR

LIFT BY THE NUMBERS

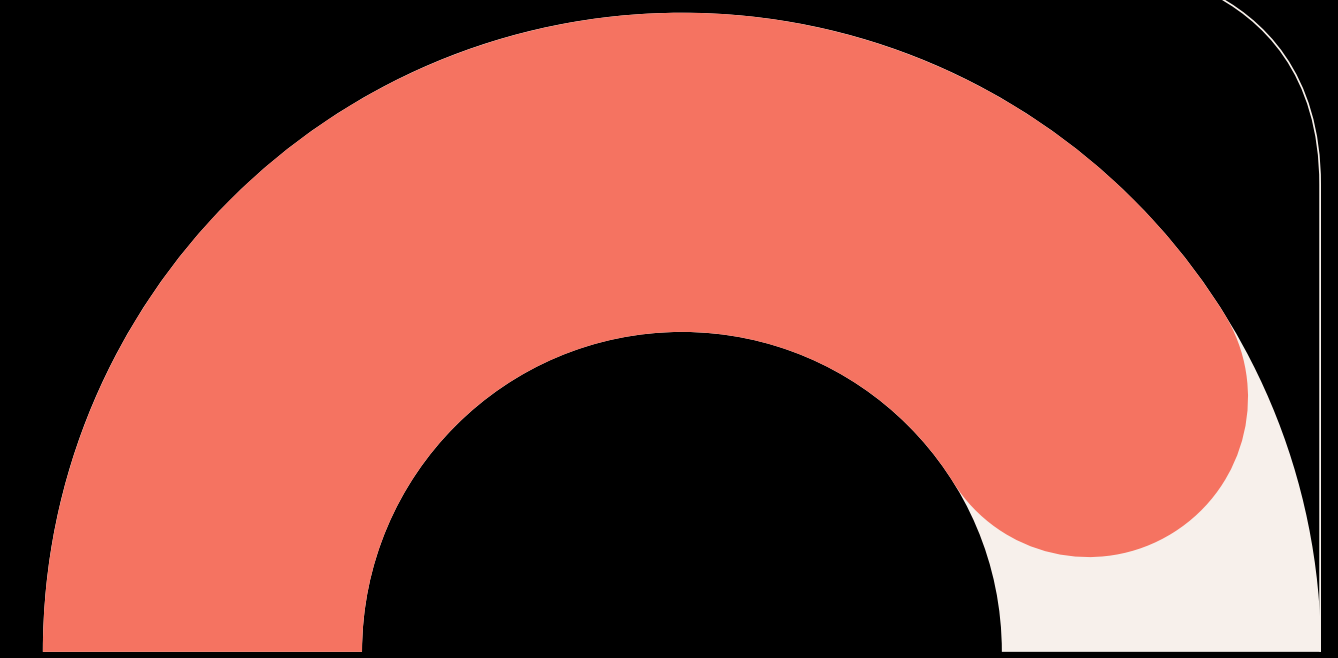


IN 2023, LIFT DIRECTLY PARTNERED WITH 936 PARENTS IN OUR FOUR REGIONS.



99% of members are POC

93% of members are women



90% of members reported that LIFT met their needs and supported their progress towards their goal

THE POWER OF A SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP

Limi - Washington D.C.

Limi first heard about LIFT-DC just after the birth of her now six-year-old daughter. She was struck by the possibilities that LIFT's program offered and was excited to learn more, but life got in the way.

Several years later, during her move back to Washington, D.C., Limi rediscovered the informational folder she had held on to for over five years. "I knew that I couldn't go wrong with reaching out to LIFT." So she did.

Soon after, Limi met her coach, Monique, and they quickly became the "best friends that never were." Through their



discussions, Limi began learning about opportunities she could take advantage of and also about herself. “Everything just came to life. I learned about myself and what I wanted in life... She helped me build my self-esteem.”

Despite several setbacks, including those caused by the pandemic, Monique and Limi made significant progress together. Monique encouraged Limi to take courses in a local housing assistance program and provided the resources to complete the program.

Because of their partnership, Limi became a homeowner, purchasing a 3-bedroom condo less than five years after returning to D.C. “Looking back at that time in my life, it’s almost miraculous how

my life changed for the better. And I could not have done it without the LIFT team, just that push was all I needed.”

Limi built a better life for herself and her two children, and didn’t limit herself to the work she has done in the past. “Monique gave me the push to continue to pursue education and improve my résumé. She opened my eyes to better opportunities and gave me the chance to say, ‘I am capable.’”

It is these experiences of perseverance, courage, and self-discovery that Limi is passing down to her two children, six-year-old daughter Jennah and a nine-year-old son Zakaria. Her biggest hope for them is to accomplish their goals

“
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”

as responsible and independent individuals. Just like their mom. “To my children: Don’t get discouraged when things don’t align to your liking in the moment. When one door closes, continue to pursue other opportunities.”

Looking back on the years before LIFT, Limi now views them in a positive light. “Those years were an opportunity to keep hope alive, to see the light at the end of the tunnel...It was a blessing in disguise...The past has taught me a lot...it has opened my eyes to make me a stronger person.”

Currently, Limi is working with Monique on her application to pursue a Master’s degree in Public Health and is excited about even more accomplishments ahead.

“I can proudly say that I took that first step to move

forward, even though there were some dark days...I want to give kudos to Monique, and all of the LIFT team, for literally being a bridge to improving my life.”

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WHEN FAMILIES FIRST COME TO LIFT...

- They have an average total debt of **\$18,183**
- They have an average household income of **\$18,624**

- **LIFT families increased their annual household income by \$21,720 on average**
- **The average increase in these members' savings was \$3,936**
- **The average decrease in debt for these members was \$3,132**

LIFT INCOME, SAVINGS, DEBT STATS

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF HOPE

Sharike - New York

LIFT-NY member Sharike has become a master of changing courses and adapting.

Arriving in New York City in 2015 from St. Vincent and The Grenadines was her first major hurdle. She worked to gain stability and, after a few years in courtrooms, was granted asylum through the Violence Against Women Act. Through all of this, she was also mothering her newborn, Vincent, born in 2017.

Sharike was used to hard work, having started working at age 15, eventually owning her own business



in the Caribbean while managing a restaurant. “I always just wanted to work, so I didn’t go to college. When I moved, it was a transition. I realized the things I wanted I couldn’t do as a chef. So, I went to college to learn construction administration. But being a parent, going to college, and working to make ends meet is hard.”

Despite this incredible challenge, Sharike managed to get financially stable, obtain stable housing, be an amazing single mom to her son, and graduate with a 3.44 GPA with a degree in business management – all during the height of the pandemic.

Balancing education with work and parenthood proved challenging for Sharike. “Self-care was the most

important thing. LIFT came in at a point where I was struggling. Mentally, I was struggling. Financially, I was struggling. It saved me.”

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It was during this time that Sharike was introduced to LIFT through connections at her federal work-study program at Baruch College. “It was a game changer.” She worked with her LIFT coach to not only set and accomplish her academic and financial goals but to learn how to balance her work life, time with her son and class time, as well as re-prioritizing her mental health.

Connecting her with resources like therapy and the Family Goal Fund helped her cover some of her monthly expenses and reclaim time with her son.

Looking back, she can see just how far she's come, having earned several certificates and a degree in construction management.

Now they can focus on their future. Sharike hopes to eventually own her own restaurant, preferably a B&B, so she can share her love of food. She also hopes to see her son grow into a good adult, doing what he loves to do, and she hopes that seeing her complete her education will encourage him to finish school and go to college as well.

"LIFT lifts you. The higher you want to go, the higher they will lift you."

“

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DIRECT CASH STATS

LIFT has distributed more than


\$1,000,000

of unrestricted cash since
2018

In the past year, more than

100 MEMBERS

were monetarily compensated for
sharing their stories, insights, and
lived experiences



BRIDGING SYSTEMS: HOW LIFT IS CREATING WIDER CHANGE THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

LIFT's technical assistance (TA) work shifted our approach from supporting any individual that walked into our brick-and-mortar sites to focusing on influencing systems to provide long-term coaching for ALL parents of young children.

Throughout the past decade, we have reflected upon and honed our coaching model, most notably by codifying training materials and equipping frontline staff within social service organizations with the training and support needed to provide holistic economic mobility coaching services directly into their existing programs to amplify their impact.

Across the organization, LIFT is fostering technical assistance partnerships within four priority sectors where parents already show up in high volume.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

HEALTHCARE

Our longest Technical Assistance partnership is our Medical-Financial Partnership with Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, where we provide training and support for coaches to integrate financial coaching within the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services clinics' prenatal and pediatric services. A third-party study published in Pediatrics in February 2023 highlighted the impact of LIFT's financial coaching on pediatric preventative care, revealing a significant reduction in missed visit rates and improved vaccination rates among economically stressed low-income families. The success at Harbor-UCLA led to an expansion of our partnership to Olive View Medical Center.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Since 2019, LIFT has partnered with the National Center for Parent Family and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) as the National Office of Head Start's Family Economic Mobility subject matter expert. LIFT collaborates with 1,000 community-based organizations, providing webinars and training. Together with NCPFCE, LIFT revamped the [Family Economic Mobility Toolkit](#), building on years of key learnings to enhance its user-friendliness for frontline staff and families. Additionally, LIFT has worked with Acelero Learning to build the capacity of Head Start center staff in providing holistic economic coaching through "small groups," fostering community and shared learning among families.



Acelero
Learning



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Through a pilot partnership with CUNY's Bronx Community College EDGE program, LIFT adapted its TA model for community colleges and extended it for all 18 CUNY schools. In Chicago, LIFT transitioned from a direct service referral partnership with City Colleges of Chicago's Kennedy-King College to a technical assistance partnership. Recently, LIFT established a new TA partnership with Dallas College and University North Texas-Dallas, training student advisors in the LIFT coaching model to enhance support for student parents' academic completion.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

GOVERNMENT

In 2021, LIFT-DC launched a Technical Assistance partnership with the Department of Human Services to train Temporary Assistance for Needy Families case workers and staff in transitioning from traditional case management to a holistic coaching approach. Previously, TANF case managers primarily focused on compliance checklists for retaining their public benefits, neglecting parent’s economic mobility goals. After LIFT TA, case managers can now confidently engage in discussions about finances with families and prioritize relational engagement on parents’ aspirations.

Following success within TANF, the SNAP Employment & Training team sought a similar TA partnership with LIFT-DC in 2023. And in Richmond Virginia, we launched successful work with the city’s Office of Community Wealth Building. Based on these successes in government systems, LIFT was awarded a grant from Aspen Ascend to expand this model nationwide.



THE POWER OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Lynn - Los Angeles

Lynn Guzman plans to be the first in her family to graduate with a college degree.

Growing up as the daughter of immigrants, Lynn and her family couldn't access a lot of resources. Lynn also has a learning disability, and her early education was often difficult for her and discouraging for her parents in her early education. Her memories of her parents' frustration navigating her schooling all those years ago made her introduction to LIFT that much more profound. She was struck by how LIFT not only provided coaching for parents but also provided direct support for kids.



Lynn wanted to pursue more for herself and her growing family and decided to go back to school to obtain a degree in Business Administration with a focus on Marketing. It isn't easy going to school with a little one. Balancing school, work, and family time is a daunting task. But Lynn says it is all worth it. "I had my daughter, Deborah, during the pandemic. It was overwhelming, but I knew I wanted to do more with my life. I figured out what I wanted and I'm working towards it by continuing my education."

Now that Lynn is back in school, she has gained valuable insights and learned about different resources available for her daughter's education, laying the groundwork for her success from

an early stage. "I can be more involved with Deborah's education. I hope she can be inspired by my journey and learn that the only one who can limit you is yourself. She can be whatever she wants to be."

“
One of my proudest moments was passing my Business Calculus class with a B, and it was because I was able to find tutors and go to office hours to get the help I needed.
”

While she could have done it on her own, Lynn says that her LIFT coach, Lauren, helped her figure out how to balance her workload between school and family and create action plans to pass her classes. "One of my proudest moments was passing my Business Calculus class with a B, and it was because I was able to find tutors and go to office hours to get the help I needed."

Lynn also highlighted another essential aspect of LIFT's

program: the Family Goal Fund. “The stipend I get really makes a difference. It’s a huge relief to have that little bit of extra money each month. One year, I was struggling to afford Christmas presents and a tree, and LIFT even helped me get a tree and a couple gifts for my daughter. I’ll never forget it.”

Lynn is already thinking about how she’ll be able to help other families move from one phase of their lives to another. “Once I graduate, I want to give back. I want to help other parents who are in similar situations learn that they can do it too.”

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BRIDGING THE GAPS: HOW LIFT IS ELEVATING PARENTS VOICES WITH POLICY & ADVOCACY

LIFT's policy and advocacy goals stem from the humanity that underpins our direct service model and recognizes the inherent inequities perpetuated by our current social service systems. Working in concert with influential policy shops, we educate legislators, shift media narratives, and advocate for eliminating barriers to economic mobility and reducing poverty for all.

Almost a decade ago, LIFT introduced direct cash assistance into its financial coaching model, investing directly in parents. After years of implementation, evidence from the LIFT's Family Goal Fund proves that coupling strong coaching support with small cash infusions — while entrusting parents to make informed choices for their families — enabled families to make more progress towards their goals. This past year we've revamped our Policy & Advocacy department, hiring a new Director to work in our regions to bring systemic legislative change to life.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

GUARANTEED INCOME IN ILLINOIS

In 2021, LIFT-Chicago worked with the Economic Security Project to develop policy statements, engage policymakers, and facilitate testimonies from LIFT-Chicago parents on the importance of guaranteed income. This collaborative effort resulted in the City of Chicago funding a new guaranteed income pilot program, and LIFT now co-leads the pilot-to-permanent working group with the goal of establishing a Guaranteed Income program in Illinois well into the future.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

LIFT MEMBER VOICE

Member voice plays a pivotal role in changing the narrative and affecting policy and with that, LIFT recognizes the importance of defining ethical storytelling practices to ensure that we utilize and share members' stories with dignity, integrity, and respect. In the past year, LIFT held a listening tour to collect members' insight into proposed policy priorities, determine how members would like to engage in advocacy, ascertain what support they need to do so, and better understand what success looks like for parents in our policy and advocacy work.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

CHILD TAX CREDIT IN WASHINGTON D.C.

In the fall of 2023, LIFT launched a pilot in Washington D.C. to put our policy practices into action to enact legislative change, identifying legislative momentum for a local Child Tax Credit in the District. We listened to our members and learned that offering coaching alongside the direct cash payments would provide the best opportunity for families to take advantage of that breathing room that CTC payments would provide. In support of our member's feedback, Khadijah Williams, LIFT's National Director of Policy and Advocacy, and Neils Ribeiro-Yemofio, LIFT-DC's Executive Director, testified at the DC Council's Public Hearing to advocate for the District's Child Tax Credit Bill, incorporating insights from LIFT members and advocating for cash+coaching models.

THE POWER OF FINANCIAL STABILITY

LaShundra - Chicago

LaShundra was homeschooling her two children Y'Isreal and Hannah, going through a contentious divorce, and struggling to gain financial independence when she learned of LIFT.

When she first met with her LIFT coach, Samantha, LaShundra's biggest goals were regaining financial freedom for herself, paying off her debt, and helping build her children's finances for them to pursue their future dreams, whatever they may be. LaShundra sang the praises of Samantha for helping her reconcile unresolved trauma and helping her find resources and



information when she needed it the most.

“Bridging from the chaos of the mental and emotional abuse to the peace and the calm of knowing I can just focus on my two little children and be a great parent to give us a happy life was eye-opening.”

LaShundra also tapped into Samantha’s background as an education professional to learn about homeschooling communities to engage with and places to find affordable learning materials. “I have four bookshelves full of books for my kids now. We can go on field trips with other families. And if I don’t know algebra or trigonometry, I can find

someone to help teach my kids.”

“
Bridging from the chaos of the mental and emotional abuse to the peace and the calm of knowing I can just focus on my two little children and be a great parent to give us a happy life was eye-opening.
”

But LaShundra doesn’t just excel in teaching her kids academics; she’s also teaching them useful life skills. “I can’t control what happens when they leave my house, but they know what to expect here and I can arm them with their own boundaries.”

She models healthy communication, financial responsibility by meeting her saving goals and investing her money, and, above all else, kindness towards others.

“Children learn through example; they latch

onto actions more than words. By being my natural self, I hope to ingrain in them the kindness they should have in all things and cultivate that bond for family.”

Moving forward, LaShundra hopes to teach her children more about entrepreneurship and financial literacy by helping them open and run their own Etsy shops. She also wants to keep building their emergency savings. “I want them to be happy, whatever that looks like, and make sure they have some fall-back money just in case they have the rug pulled out from under them.”

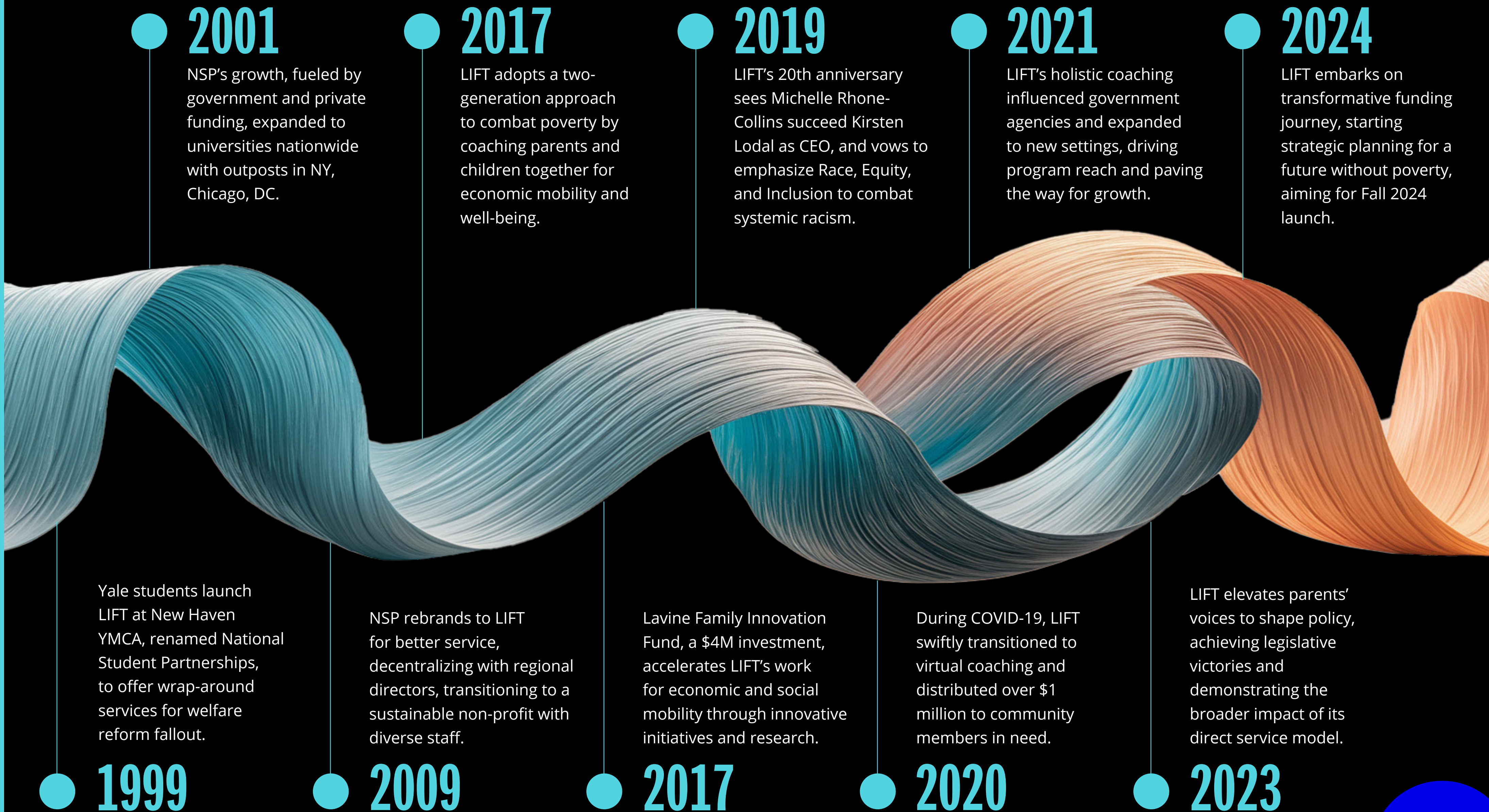
It has been a long walk over troubled waters, but LaShundra is proud of everything she has learned. “I want my children to see a strong and kind person. I’m going to continue to be me.”

“

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”

25 YEARS OF LIFT





THANK YOU FOR LIFTING

We are grateful to everyone in the LIFT community who generously contribute their time and resources for LIFT families. Your dedicated support has truly been a game-changer, providing LIFT families essential resources and a robust network of social support crucial for advancing their journey toward economic mobility and wellbeing.

Your contributions — whether big or small — serve as the driving force behind our mission to break the cycle of poverty.

We believe in the power of community and know that by coming together, we can turn dreams into reality. Thank you for supporting our mission to break the cycle of poverty. Let's keep building a future where every family, no matter their race, ethnicity, or zip code, can thrive!

[**Link to FY23 Audited Report**](#)