

# SENDING **HOPE** YOUR WAY



*How your gifts are changing the lives of families forever*



## **LEARNING & GROWING TOGETHER**

**YOUR IMPACT ON TWO GENERATIONS**

# A MILESTONE YEAR

*YOUR SUPPORT CREATED BIG WINS FOR STUDENT PARENTS*



**NICOLE LYNN LEWIS**  
Founder & CEO

**F**or many of us, the pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges. For Generation Hope, it has also presented opportunities. We have embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process that allowed us to dream big about what our impact can and should be over the next three years. We have grown our team and launched new programming. We have lived up to our mission when our families and student parents across the country have needed it most. And we could not have done any of these things without our incredibly generous, passionate Generation Hope family.

As you will read in this newsletter, your giving allowed us to provide over \$60,000 to our Scholar families in emergency grants over the course of the pandemic -- on top of the normal emergency funding that we typically give to Scholars in crisis situations. Your

giving also supported a 30% increase in mental health services, robust career readiness programming during an economic downturn, and the launch of our national policy and technical assistance work so that the over 4 million parenting students around the country can thrive in college and have a chance to achieve economic mobility for their families.

And I want to thank each of you for supporting the launch of my book, *Pregnant Girl*, this spring. The book is a call to action for others to get involved in this critical work on behalf of young families and student parents everywhere. The messages that we have received from people all over the country who have read it have been so positive and inspiring.

This year has reinforced that together we can do great things that truly make a difference in people's lives when they need it most. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

**Founder & CEO, Generation Hope**



*Snapshot from the Pregnant Girl virtual book launch on May 4, 2021: Author and Generation Hope Founder & CEO, Nicole Lynn Lewis, in conversation with CBS reporter John Dickerson.*

# MANY HANDS D.C.

## WHY I GIVE

In 2020, Generation Hope was thrilled to receive a \$55,500 grant from Many Hands, a women's giving circle and grantmaking organization committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of Washington, D.C.-area women, children, and families in need. Throughout the last year, we have partnered with Many Hands to advance our shared missions.

### **In what ways do you think the values of Generation Hope overlap with the values of Many Hands?**

Many Hands focuses on supporting and empowering women and families, and Generation Hope does just that. Many Hands also seeks out organizations and programs with lasting impact, and Generation Hope transforms lives by shepherding their Scholars through college and into promising careers. Many Hands members look for nonprofits that advocate for reform and build partnerships within the broader community. Generation Hope, seeing that the higher education sector has not effectively addressed the special challenges facing student parents, has launched partnerships with local college administrators throughout our region to assist these students.

### **What about Generation Hope's mission and programming stood out to Many Hands?**

We were impressed by the comprehensiveness of the services that Generation Hope offers their Scholars, including counseling and financial aid as well as educational programs for their children. The value of this approach is demonstrated by the high percentage of participants who beat the national odds by earning degrees and professional certificates and landing good jobs or admission into graduate schools. Another major factor in our consideration was the strong and inspiring leadership of Nicole Lynn Lewis, who overcame the obstacles of being a single mother on a college campus and, after launching a promising corporate career, took on the mission of assisting the next generation of young parents. Not only does Nicole have unique insight into the needs of student parents, but she is an incredible model for young parents building better lives--and for all of us who believe in better futures.

### **What have been some of the most meaningful ways you have partnered with or learned from Generation Hope this year?**

Our relationship with Generation Hope has been a



*Many Hands member Robin Berkley joined Generation Hope as a guest reader for our Virtual Bedtime Stories*

**"We are excited about the potential for changing the national conversation about teen pregnancy and student parents."**

model for the partnership we aspire to build with all grantees. We have learned so much from being part of the Generation Hope community, whether by participating in their formal conversation about racial equity in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector or simply by observing the evolution of the organization in areas like advocacy and technical assistance. We have also been delighted to help raise awareness of Generation Hope through our communications and events. One of our board members, Robin Berkley, participated in Generation Hope's virtual Bedtime Stories series this year, and we welcomed Nicole Lynn Lewis for a conversation with members this spring. We know that Many Hands members have been inspired to support Generation Hope independently and hope to continue to build connections between our communities.

### **What excites you most about the future of Generation Hope and your partnership?**

We have been so impressed by Generation Hope's growth throughout the pandemic and the development of a multi-pronged approach to building the support systems that student parents need to succeed, including the vision for scaling Generation Hope's impact through policy and advocacy. We are excited about the potential for changing the national conversation about teen pregnancy and student parents. We look forward to cheering on Generation Hope for years to come! We also hope that our partnership will inspire more women to become involved in collective philanthropy and to join us in making a difference together!



# LEARNING & GROWING TOGETHER

## YOUR IMPACT ON TWO GENERATIONS

**“It was mostly the scholarship at first. Then I started doing my research and thought, ‘Ok, I would probably fit in here.’ As a young mother you don’t encounter many organizations that focus on student parents.”**

When Syeedah White, a Generation Hope alumna and recent Bowie State University graduate with a major in psychology, first learned about the organization, she was initially motivated to apply because of the financial aid component. After being accepted into the Scholar Program and enrolling her now 6-year-old daughter, Raegan, in Next Generation Academy, Syeedah quickly recognized the impact of Generation Hope’s two-generation model that helps both parent and child thrive together.

Next Generation Academy was designed with tailored supports for both teen parents pursuing their college degrees, and their Pre-K little ones. Statistically, children born to mothers younger than 18 years old

score significantly lower on measures of school readiness, are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, and are less likely to complete high school than the children of older mothers. Additionally, the children of teen parents are less likely to read simple books independently and to demonstrate early writing ability compared to the children of mothers aged 20-21. Generation Hope exists to upend these statistics for young families by supporting college completion for young parents (fewer than 2% of teen mothers earn a college degree before age 30) and early learning success for their children.

Because of their shared journeys as young parents in college, Syeedah says Generation Hope Scholars are “able to connect, and we all understand each other. We all go through our struggles, and we’re all able to be there for each other.”

Syeedah felt this support during Generation Hope’s monthly “Family Dinners,” which bring together Next Generation Academy Scholars and their

**“AS A YOUNG MOTHER YOU DON’T ENCOUNTER TOO MANY ORGANIZATIONS THAT FOCUS ON STUDENT PARENTS.”**

children in smaller geographic cohorts in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. During the dinners, Scholars build community by sharing their struggles and successes and offering advice to each other on parenting and persisting in college.

"It was one of the most meaningful parts of the program," Syeedah says.

Raegan loved being a part of Next Generation Academy, too. She enjoyed receiving brand new books each month to build their home library, and the monthly in-person (virtual during the pandemic) home visits with Generation Hope's Senior Family Program Coordinator, Sophie Nathanson. "Raegan really had fun with the projects. Usually after Sophie left she'd be like, 'When is she coming back?'" Syeedah recalls.

In the first two years of the Next Generation Academy pilot, Generation Hope has seen promising metrics: 100% of children in Next Generation Academy score "on track" for their age group in personal-social development after one year in the program, and 100% of Next Generation Academy parents would recommend the program to a friend.

Even though Raegan and Syeedah have stayed on track this year, navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has not been easy. At times, Syeedah was juggling working long days in retail at a women's clothing store, Raegan's virtual learning, and finishing out her senior year at Bowie State University. Some of her professors were flexible when challenges came up, but others held only synchronous classes that made it hard for students to attend. Still, things are looking bright for Syeedah and Raegan. With the support of Generation Hope, Syeedah interviewed for and secured a summer internship at a nonprofit called Project Create, and she has since been hired as a teacher's assistant and program coordinator working with their elementary-aged students.

"I'm getting a lot of resources," Syeedah says, referring to Generation Hope's career-readiness program. Working with Generation Hope's College and Career Success Manager, Sam Sgourakes, has connected her "with people who were either in my field or close to it to share what I would need in order

to be a school counselor...Being able to get these tips has been very helpful, as well as having external people reviewing my resume."

And adding one more achievement to Syeedah's plate: she was recently accepted into Bowie State University's master's in school counseling program, which she began this fall. She is well on her way to becoming a school counselor so she can support high school students--including young moms facing many of the same decisions and challenges that she has. With excitement for this next step, Syeedah says, "I hope I will excel

in my master's program, just as I did in undergrad. I have to mentally prepare myself because this is a whole different ballgame. And I am looking forward to Raegan starting first grade next school year!"

**"I HOPE I WILL EXCEL IN MY  
MASTER'S PROGRAM,  
JUST AS I DID IN UNDERGRAD."**



*Syeedah on her graduation day with her daughter Raegan*



Last spring, Generation Hope shifted all programming to virtual delivery. Since then, we have directly tailored our support to meet the ongoing and pandemic-related needs of our families. This support has included:

- Ongoing case management aligned with the experiences and goals of each Scholar.
- Our first Career Week with 15 sessions including panels, resume reviews, and mock interviews.
- Career exploration days, internships, and one-on-one career coaching.
- More than 180 one-on-one home visits and 26 “Family Dinners” for Scholars and children in Next Generation Academy.
- Over 50 Bedtime Stories on Facebook Live with guest readers for our families and the broader community.
- A 30% increase in our one-on-one mental health counseling sessions in addition to providing mental health workshops and therapeutic groups for Scholars and their children.
- The collection and distribution of items like diapers, laptops, and school supplies, and gifts to help make the holidays bright for our families.
- Multiple rounds of COVID-19 emergency grants to our families, totaling over \$60,000, to help meet urgent, short-term needs.
- Virtual events, including conversations on race equity and a virtual field trip with Scholars’ kiddos to make no-bake chocolate chip cookies and read “If You Give A Mouse A Cookie.”
- A pen pal program, organized by Scholars, to help cope with the isolation and stress caused by the pandemic.



More than 25% of Generation Hope Scholars have lost work due to COVID-19



More than 10% of Scholars have been essential workers, struggling to balance parenting, going to school, finding childcare, and working on the front lines during the pandemic



Scholars have experienced food insecurity, housing instability, domestic violence, isolation, COVID diagnoses, mental health challenges, and other new and magnified crises

# TRANSFORMING HIGHER ED FOR STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS



**In April, Generation Hope launched FamilyU, our technical assistance program for higher education institutions to enhance their supports for parenting students across the country. The first major effort under the FamilyU umbrella is our two-year cohort, which will engage a select group of institutions to transform their campuses to better serve this population. The first cohort commenced in July and is comprised of institutions in the Mid-Atlantic region, including: George Mason University, Montgomery College, Northern Virginia Community College, and Trinity Washington University.**

The FamilyU learning community will address the systemic barriers faced by the nearly 4 million parenting students pursuing their college degrees and economic mobility for their families.

“We have been doing incredible work with young parents in the D.C. region for the past eleven years,” says Generation Hope Founder and CEO Nicole Lynn Lewis. “Now we’re taking our lessons learned in terms of what truly helps parenting students make it to the finish line out into the higher ed community to drive change across the sector.”

Generation Hope developed the FamilyU cohort model after years of partnering closely with higher ed

institutions and identifying consistent needs: more student parent data, more family-friendly institutional policies, and a fundamental shift in campus culture. Through the cohort, colleges and universities will learn how to enhance their student parent supports in ways that work for their campus communities, and these transformations will ultimately benefit *all* students. Participating institutions will also have access to individual work plans, one-on-one coaching, and field experts as they work to shift the student parent experience at their schools.

We believe in centering the experiences of student parents in our work, and FamilyU is no exception. This program was created through conversations with student parents and practitioners across the country to keep their needs and lived experiences at the forefront of this work.

As our Scholar alumna, and class of 2021 University of Maryland graduate, Yoslin Amaya Hernandez, says often, “If you’re not at the table, then you are on the menu.” FamilyU will bring both higher ed professionals and student parents to the table.

# Fall Needs

YOU CAN IMPACT A YOUNG FAMILY  
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

## donate

Make a donation to power Generation Hope's two-generation solution to poverty. Your support makes a difference now more than ever as we welcome our largest class of Scholars in Generation Hope history, and they navigate challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Make your gift here: <https://bit.ly/ghdonate21>

- \$1,000 ensures 8 Scholars can participate in career-readiness programming
- \$500 provides training for new Scholars and their Mentors to equip them with the tools for successful, supportive mentoring relationships
- \$100 provides culturally-relevant, age-appropriate books to build the home library of a Next Generation Academy family
- \$25 provides a gift card to help a Scholar access critical needs like gas and groceries

## mentor

Mentor as a group by becoming a Resource Family. You will build a supportive, lasting relationship with a young parent pursuing their college degree and their Pre-K little one.

Learn more and apply via the Group Application here: [www.generationhope.org/mentor](http://www.generationhope.org/mentor)

# Exciting News



Nicole Lynn Lewis was selected in April as one of five inaugural "luminaries" -- all innovative Black leaders in education from around the country -- to receive a \$1 million grant from The 1954 Project, an initiative of the Cleveland Avenue Foundation for Education. Nicole was selected as a Luminary in Economic Mobility for her leadership of Generation Hope's work to ensure all student parents have the opportunities to succeed and experience economic mobility by engaging education and policy partners to drive systemic change and by providing direct support to teen parents in college as well as to their

children through holistic, two-generation programming. This significant, three-year investment represents our largest gift to date. It comes at an exciting time as we begin implementing our 2024 Strategic Plan, which will be Generation Hope's most ambitious and game-changing strategic plan yet. We look forward to sharing more about those plans for growth in the coming months.

## TO DONATE ITEMS OR GET INVOLVED:

Please contact  
**Sanah Jivani**  
[sanah@generationhope.org](mailto:sanah@generationhope.org)  
(202) 642-5218

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