

FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN

OUR 2GEN APPROACH

SUPPORTING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Friends of the Children has known for more than 30 years that the presence of a Friend in a child's life has ripple effects to their parents, caregivers, siblings, friends and communities.

Now we are taking a more intentional and proactive Two-Generation (2Gen) approach, which will continue to build family well-being by simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together.

OUR GOAL

We are impacting change across generations – for both youth and their families. We are doing this by empowering families to move beyond obstacles such as poverty, foster care and criminal justice involvement, and toward health, well-being and community.

OUR APPROACH

We are piloting an innovative 2Gen approach in Los Angeles and New York City with the goal of scaling it across all Friends of the Children chapters by 2025. Our approach is focused on building social capital, improving family stability and empowering families with critical parenting skills.

This approach enhances our work with youth by intentionally providing support to parents and measuring impact. Because we know that generational change takes time, we will work with youth and their parents throughout the 12+ years in the program. Below is a snapshot of what we are doing and how we are doing it.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

Building positive parent/child relationships



Strengthening parenting skills



Empowering youth and family voice



Improving family stability



Building social capital



“ When [my son's] mentor Andre comes to see Jaylan* every week, it gives me time to breathe and catch up. Friends of the Children is like part of my family. They even took our first father-son family photos. ”

- Javier, a parent whose son is in the Friends of the Children - Boston program

**name changed to protect privacy*

HOW WE'RE DOING IT

Supporting parents to understand their child's needs and strengths

Equipping parents with social and emotional learning skills

Promoting self-advocacy through understanding of and advocacy within complex systems such as education and child welfare

Connecting families to concrete supports, like housing and education/employment pathways

Creating opportunities for culturally-responsive community and peer-to-peer connections

FRIENDS of the CHILDREN

Generational Change,
One Child at a Time

“ Friends of the Children has helped me become a better parent and person. They have assisted me in becoming a better advocate for myself and my children and they have let me know that there are endless possibilities! ”

- Los Angeles chapter parent

EARLY RESULTS SHOWING PROMISE

We will continue seeing improved well-being for both youth and parents as we continue scaling our 2Gen approach across our network. We are measuring our 2Gen approach through an annual caregiver survey which is currently being conducted in six locations. We are also collecting data that will be evaluated, with intermediate and long-term outcomes in mind.

While still early, our first annual caregiver survey results are encouraging. Parents are reporting that their child's Friend:

- Supported them in learning more about their child and helped them reach goals that they have for themselves and their child;
- Provided support with educational assistance such as books in the home, tutoring or library access;
- Helped the family deal with unexpected problems; and
- Connected them to a job, education or training.

These results are consistent with preliminary results from our randomized controlled trial which showed that parents or youth in our program have a more positive view of their child, which helps them be more engaged and supportive parents.

Raising twins: A positive relationship with Friends

When Raymond* and Keisha* (7-year-old twins) were referred to Friends of the Children–Portland by their case worker, it was clear that Jade*, Raymond and Keisha's mother, loved her children deeply. When Jade was arrested for a minor offense, the lack of a larger support system led to Raymond and Keisha being placed in foster care.



Jade did every possible thing she could to get her children back, and ultimately the family was reunited.

When Jade wants to give up, her twins' Friends are there to encourage Jade's positive parenting and offer concrete supports to keep the family together. The Friends also work with Jade to build a support system that includes trusted relationships with neighbors and community organizations. While Jade continues to overcome obstacles, she has been able to focus more on her family's overall health and well-being. She also sees a more positive and hopeful future for her and her children.

**names changed to protect privacy*