



Young Families

WHY COVENANT HOUSE

At Covenant House, our commitment to youth facing homelessness goes way beyond their first moment of crisis. In order to truly help a young person change their life, we know that opening a door is just the initial step in a long journey. We must provide transformational programs that give our youth the tools and support they need to build a future of their own.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Homelessness is extremely traumatic for young families, often leading to serious and lifelong effects for the child and the parent. Young children are particularly vulnerable as the first five years of a child's life are critical for brain development. More than half our young parents and their children emerge from our crisis care program to independent and stable living situations; that figure rises to more than 75% for those young people who journey with us from short-term residency through our longer-term transitional living program, known as Rights of Passage.

We are supporting a national initiative to expand evidence-informed services for young families overcoming homelessness. This multi-year initiative will pilot new interventions to improve outcomes for both young parents and their children and help to break the cycle of homelessness for young families.

IMPACT

Through this project, we will refine an enhanced model of comprehensive care, expanding our capacity to serve and be a bridge to hope for young families, and improving long-term outcomes for parents and their children. The project will build on our specialized young families programs currently operating in 11 cities in the United States: Anchorage, Atlanta, Atlantic City, Elizabeth, Ft. Lauderdale, Houston, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, and Santa Clara.

SERVICES



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covenanthouse.org/program-investment



MEET ZOILA

My mom never wanted me around, and she let me know it. She was always making me stay at my friends' houses. When I was home, she'd leave and make me take care of my younger siblings, even when I was only 10 years old. And when I was 16, I got pregnant. After I had the baby — my son Jeremy — my mom started treating me worse than ever. Then she kicked me and my son out of her house.

I had no idea where to go. I thought my son and I would have to sleep on the streets, but my guidance counselor at school helped me find a shelter called Covenant House. They told me I could have a bed of my own and a crib for Jeremy for as long as I needed. I cried right there when I heard that. It felt like this really big weight was lifted off my shoulders. They took care of the things I needed, like food and a bed, so that I could focus on taking care of my son and going to school.

Every day I'd get up early, drop Jeremy off at Covenant House's day care, and go to school and my internship. Then, I'd get back to Covenant House, pick up Jeremy, do my homework, and do the same thing the next day. It was amazing being able to learn and work during the day and know that Jeremy was safe and happy with the staff at Covenant House.

A few weeks before my graduation, my guidance counselor called to tell me that I was the valedictorian! I was so overwhelmed, I jumped around my room! My Covenant House family was so happy for me. It was amazing to look out at the crowd while I gave my speech and see them smiling back at me. And the way my little boy, Jeremy, jumped up and down while people were cheering for me — it was really cute.

I could have ended up on the streets like a lot of young moms without a home and never set foot in a school again, but Covenant House gave me a chance to work hard and graduate at the top of my class. On top of that, they helped me with college admissions and job placement. I'm on my way to providing a fulfilling life for me and my son, and I wouldn't be able to do it without Covenant House.

ABOUT COVENANT HOUSE

Covenant House builds a bridge to hope for young people facing homelessness and survivors of trafficking through unconditional love, absolute respect, and relentless support. Our doors are open 24/7 in 34 cities across six countries and our high-quality programs are designed to empower young people to rise and overcome adversity, today and in the future.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

About 44% of young women and 18% of young men, ages 18-25, who face homelessness report being a parent or pregnant.

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago estimates that as many as 1.1 million children have a young parent who experienced homelessness during the past year.

Covenant House is one of only a handful of centers for youth facing homelessness and survivors of trafficking that offer residential services and holistic care to young families.

