OVERCOMING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

SchoolHouse Connection

4401A CONNECTICUT AVE. NW, #145, WASHINGTON, DC 20008
(202) 364-7392

WWW.SCHOOLHOUSECONNECTION.ORG
OUR MISSION

TO OVERCOME HOMELESSNESS THROUGH EDUCATION

OUR VISION

Children and youth experiencing homelessness will have full access to quality learning, birth through higher education, so they will never be homeless as adults, and the next generation will never be homeless.
The role of the State Head Start Collaboration Director includes a very broad scope of work to support Head Start agencies at the local level. While this role provides space for innovation and partnerships, it can also be a very isolating experience simply by design. Issues like homelessness cross state lines and connect us at a federal programmatic level. Therefore, these calls with School House Connection have been a consistent source of information and peer expertise. Grace Whitney convenes this group around specific issues and spotlights best practice in a way that connects us all in meaningful ways.

Allison Setterlind, State Head Start Collaboration Director, Bright from the Start, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Thank you so much for your insight and your sentiment regarding each situation being unique. I am new to this role so I am learning a ton with every day and truly appreciate being able to share and talk through a situation. I truly appreciate the advocacy, legal work and training that SchoolHouse Connection provides.

Keri-Ann Henson, Homeless Education Program Administrator, Frederick County Public Schools

Kudos to you and your staff for your efforts to advocate for children and families experiencing homelessness. I appreciate all that you do for me as a state coordinator to provide timely information and training materials/resources to share with LEAs.

Suzanne M. Peck, State Coordinator, Title IX-A Homeless Education, Idaho State Department of Education
We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with early childhood programs, schools, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

**Responsive and Effective Policy Advocacy**
- A strong voice for effective and responsive federal and state policies rooted in the realities of local communities
- Timely updates and analyses

**Practical and Technical Assistance**
- Tools and resources for early care, preK-12, and higher education
- Weekly newsletter with Q&A and practitioner voices
- In-person and online training on hot topics featuring national, state, and local presenters

**Youth Leadership**
- Scholarships and support to youth who have experienced homelessness
- Full and authentic integration of young people into all areas of our work

Click [here](#) for more information about our policy work.

Click [here](#) to access our resources from early childhood to higher education.

Click [here](#) for more information about our youth leadership and scholarship program.
I truly LOVE Schoolhouse Connection and all of the services and resources you provide, because you have something for everyone – our kiddos, liaisons, hands-on folks, state coordinators, and policy makers! You are one of my heroes, and even though I didn’t ask, one of my mentors.

Linda Mirabal-Pace, Education Associate, McKinney-Vento State Coordinator/Title I, South Carolina Department of Education

SchoolHouse Connection gave me a strong community and support system that so many homeless youth lack. The other scholars and all the staff are now lifelong friends that have my safety and well-being as a priority, and I am so thankful to take them with me on my journey into higher education and beyond.

Brandon, SchoolHouse Connection Young Leader

A SHC webinar on serving homeless students as they transition to college inspired me to get in touch with SHC with a question about a former student who was told by a college financial aid staffer that she had to comply with a long list of invasive required “proofs” of homelessness in order to qualify as independent for FAFSA purposes. SHC sent me a list of legal citations, which I forwarded to the college financial aid personnel who had just told me they were not going to budge on this requirement, and voila! Person got right back to me saying that the student actually did not have to provide “proofs” of years of homelessness. Thanks, SHC.

Cate Moses, Homeless Education Liaison, Monte del Sol Charter School, Santa Fe, NM
The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program removes barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth experiencing homelessness. More EHCY resources translate directly into more children and youth experiencing homelessness being identified by schools and supported in receiving the education that is their best hope of escaping homelessness as adults.

Click here for more information about the EHCY Program.

North Dakota
“We used the extra funds to work with Native Americans on training to increase identification on reservations sensitively, and to create an interagency response to provide more holistic support.”

Washington
“We went from 29 to 38 subgrants, and also were able to keep a program specialist at the state level to provide more assistance to school districts.”

Montana
“We gave out more subgrants in rural areas and Native American reservations.”

New York
“We increased the number of grants from 39 to 52 – a 25% increase. It’s a game-changer for those districts, because it brings them to the table and empowers their local systems coordination work.”

Georgia
“We were able to fund two additional districts, from 44 to 46. That funding allowed a full-time dedicated homeless education position and/or program in those districts. The ability to have full-time liaisons dedicated to this work is powerful.”
We led federal policy advocacy on three bipartisan bills to remove barriers to education and housing, which are making their way through the legislative process.

1. Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act (S.789/H.R.1724)
2. Homeless Children and Youth Act (H.R.2001)
3. Housing for Homeless Students Act (S.767/H.R.4865)
From late February through late May, 2019, SchoolHouse Connection worked closely with the U.S. Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on ten regional listening sessions on family and youth homelessness. The listening sessions brought together youth and family service providers, school district homeless liaisons, regional ACF program directors and staff, and faith-based organizations.

The purpose of the listening sessions was for ACF policymakers and program staff to hear directly from front-line practitioners on their challenges in effectively serving families and youth experiencing homelessness, and to solicit recommendations for how ACF could improve its programs and policies. SHC continues to support ACF’s overall efforts to support locally-driven, community-based efforts to address youth and family homelessness.

“I was really delighted to be a part of the forum. I’ve had lots of follow-up emails from people asking for our Steps to Independence model. I have exchanged emails with people at the office responsible for the Runaway and Homeless Youth program and we are planning to explore an application with them to better engage the young moms who are harder to engage in Early Head Start or Rapid Rehousing services. Also the folks over Child Care Development Fund are intervening (so that instead of having to ‘register’ with a homeless service provider, families can self-certify as homeless. This is a big change in our community and will allow better access to services).”

– Carol Klocek, CEO, Transforming Lives, Ft. Worth, TX
EDUCATION LEADS HOME CAMPAIGN

SchoolHouse Connection is a core partner of the Education Leads Home (ELH) campaign — a multi-year, national campaign launched in 2018 to improve educational and life outcomes for students experiencing homelessness with three goals.

By 2026, young children experiencing homelessness will participate in quality early childhood programs at the same rate as their housed peers.

By 2030, the national homeless student high school graduation rate will reach 90%.

By 2034, the national homeless college student postsecondary attainment rate will reach 60%.

Image above: Our Executive Director, Barbara Duffield with SHC Young Leader Elaine Williams, Fairfax County Public Schools McKinney-Vento Liaison Kathi Sheffel on a panel moderated by John B. King, CEO of the Education Trust and former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

Image above: Our Education Leads Home Program Manager, Katie Brown with our Young Leader, Hannah, presenting at the National Mentoring Summit in Washington, D.C.

Five Core Partners
STATE PARTNERSHIPS ON STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

In 2019, ELH spurred action at the state and local levels to improve educational outcomes for homeless students. Through ELH’s State Partnerships on Student Homelessness project, six governors (CA, HI, KY, NV, OR, WA) launched projects to increase educational attainment for children and youth experiencing homelessness. State leadership teams implemented activities that will result in measurable progress toward ELH goals. Activities included:

- Improving access to high-quality early childhood education
- Expanding existing host home programs for unaccompanied youth
- Piloting school-housing partnerships to facilitate high school graduation
- Improving state policies and practices to address challenges including chronic absenteeism, suspensions, and high school credit accrual.

The lessons from these states will be taken to other states.

“ELH’s support has allowed Building Changes to build a strong statewide partnership between early learning and housing providers. We hope this partnership will continue to lead efforts that prioritize the educational needs of young children and families experiencing homelessness.”
- Washington Team

“Exploring the range of host home options available and learning how to expand them has introduced us to people, agencies and data that are supportive of this cause. Host homes for youth have been demonstrated to be a viable part of the housing continuum in other states, and will soon be a feature of Oregon’s response to homelessness.”
- Oregon Team

"The immediacy with which we can lend [financial assistance to students] is new to us...The ability to serve our families and students in this capacity has been very rewarding. We are looking forward to standing together as we help others to identify this hidden population and gain a greater understanding of the educational and social-emotional effects related to homelessness as defined by McKinney-Vento."
- Kentucky Team
OUR IMPACT: STATE POLICY

The new state laws will directly impact 605,700 youth—making specific, tangible improvements in their lives in a variety of areas, from increasing high school graduation and postsecondary attainment, to increasing access to health care, shelter, housing, and employment.

Image above: The signing of SB 464 in Indiana. Now unaccompanied homeless youth can get a driver’s license, state ID, and birth certificate and take the high school equivalency exam without parental consent and without a fee.

Image on the left: Some of our North Carolina HB 613 bill team after it passed unanimously in its House Committee: Dr. Carrie Dow-Jones, Professor Mary Haskett, our Director of Program Advancement and Legal Affairs, Patricia Julianelle, and our Peer Leader Tia Joyce.
“HB 371 [allowing unaccompanied homeless youth 15 and older to consent for shelter and services] has allowed for continuity of care - allowing us more time to connect with parents, create safe transitions back home, or into safe care placement. We gain the luxury of time as a service provider, and are allowed more time to gain trust, get a real pulse on what their story is, and align services with the youth.”  
*Cydnie LaCour, Youth Resource Center, Utah*

"In terms of partial credit, due to the change in the law [HB 378], two of my seniors graduated early and one of my juniors did not have to repeat a dreaded math class! The students who graduated early are working full-time and getting ready for college.” *Shelley Werner, McKinney-Vento Liaison, Kentucky*

"One young lady needed to get her driver’s license. When I explained how she could get a birth certificate, her grandmother was so grateful, she cried. A second student had an opportunity to try out for athletic scholarships for college, but needed an ID in order to get there. [Thanks to HB 2303], I was able to help him get his birth certificate, so he could then get his state ID.” *Kim Snell, McKinney-Vento Liaison, Tennessee*

“[HB 1000] opens the door for more students to continue their education. This law allows an individual point of contact for student to turn to in pursuing higher education. I think we will see a rise in this population of students actually attending and succeeding in higher education. When you take away their worry of housing, food, or just someone to talk to, they can actually focus on school and complete the degree they’ve chosen.” *Becca Smitty, Associate Director, Middle Tennessee State University*
OUR IMPACT: PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

We provide hands-on help to meet real needs of people who work with children and youth experiencing homelessness. Our close relationships with school district homeless liaisons, state coordinators, educators, advocates, and service providers allowed us to tailor our assistance to meet emerging needs.

We received an email regarding a high school senior in Ohio, who won a college scholarship based on her academic achievement. After becoming homeless, she had excessive absences because she had to work to support herself. She was failing two classes shortly before graduation. She did not need those classes to graduate, and failing grades would have made her ineligible for her college scholarship. However, her school district did not want to allow her to drop the classes. We provided legal support and technical assistance that convinced her school district to allow her to drop those classes. She graduated on-time in May and kept her scholarship.

Image above: We are helping the Hawaii Department of Education and their fantastic liaisons with "All the Things." There's a lot of work to do, but we are working hard to improve policy and practice for children and youth experiencing homelessness.
OUR IMPACT: HIGHER EDUCATION

2019 was filled with innovative approaches to support college students experiencing homelessness. We interviewed over 60 higher education professionals from across the country to learn about available services and innovative programs for these students. We created presentations and resources to share these best practices. In return, other institutions reached out to us to help build or further expand their programs for students experiencing homelessness to improve identification and housing supports. Additionally, we had over 50 direct interventions with young people and providers to remove financial aid barriers.

“"We invited a few financial aid office staff, including their director, to a shared learning opportunity over a catered lunch using the SchoolHouse Connection-NASFAA webinar. It was our way to build stronger relationships and shared language/understanding about financial aid procedures for homeless/brink of homeless students. It really has helped my office when referring students to the financial aid office, and walking them through the proper processes using a trauma-informed lens.”

- Miguel Arellano Sanchez
Basic Needs Navigator, Human Services Resource Center, Oregon State University
Receiving this scholarship has quite literally changed my life. Yes, it helped to receive the funds, but it goes beyond that. Receiving this scholarship was how my school became aware of my homelessness and began to aid me in any way they could. When my college admission was rescinded because I could not afford to pay for the housing deposit, SchoolHouse Connection stepped in and helped me get reinstated. When I was being stonewalled by the Office of Housing Administration regarding my request to be exempted from the on campus living requirement, SchoolHouse Connection called with me and we received an answer within minutes. When I was struggling with my physical health and could not afford my medical bills, SchoolHouse Connection reimbursed me. Not only this, but the bonds, formed not only with the other scholars but with the staff and peer leaders, are bonds that I am confident I will have for the rest of my life. SchoolHouse Connection has quite literally become a family for me and I am forever grateful that I was selected.

- Destiny Dickinson
SchoolHouse Connection Young Leader
In trying to learn everything possible about the experience of parents and young children in homeless shelters, I came across (the Zero to Three Journal, which included the article on) the Bell Project. I commend your work, it speaks so eloquently to the impact of homelessness on young children and parents living in homeless shelters. We would love to learn from your work, and I'm hoping as we move forward you might be willing to be a resource for us.

- Angela Capone Ph.D., VP of Early Education, Para Los Ninos, Los Angeles
The monthly Learning Community created by School House Connection for Head Start Collaboration Directors has been an invaluable opportunity for us to discuss critical issues impacting young children in unstable housing, as well as share innovative initiatives and best practices happening in states/nationally with one another. This venue for information and resource sharing, facilitated so ably by Grace Whitney of SchoolHouse Connection, has motivated me personally and expanded my thinking as to what might be possible to replicate in my state. The regularity of the calls and the follow-up provided after the calls help keep this critical work a priority for many of us who must deal with a myriad of other issues as part of our role as Collab Directors. Mahalo to Grace and to SHC for their leadership and mentorship through this Learning Community!  

-Chris S. Jackson, Head Start State Collaboration Director, Executive Office on Early Learning, Honolulu, HI
OUR IMPACT: YOUTH VOICES

A bipartisan Congressional Briefing with over 100 people in attendance.

We organized a DC Youth Summit and a bipartisan Congressional Briefing featuring our scholars and young leaders. The room was filled to capacity, with over 100 people in attendance, including staff from 40 Congressional offices.

Click here for more information about the DC Youth Summit.

Our young leaders spoke directly and personally about the barriers created by federal housing and education policy, and how those barriers stand in the way of their goals of self-sufficiency.

The briefing helped to inform a subsequent legislative hearing on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as it educated the Congressional staff who were responsible for selecting witnesses and drafting questions.

Image above: SchoolHouse Connection’s 2018 Scholars preparing to speak in front of Congressional Staff.

Click here for more information about the DC Youth Summit.
“I was at the panel discussion held in the CVC on the Hill, and was impressed and inspired by the students who spoke. I asked a question to the panel about participation in extra-curricular activities, and after the event had a very productive discussion with Stormy, one of the panelists, about how her participation in extra-curriculars helped her find structure and resources that allowed her to excel through high school into college.”

- Attendee reflecting on the Congressional briefing
At SchoolHouse Connection, we believe that young people are the experts on their experiences, needs and strengths. We are also proud to offer a scholarship program to help youth achieve their dreams. The program provides scholarships to youth who have experienced homelessness to ensure their completion of a post-secondary education program; builds a stable, long-term peer and adult support network; and offers young people meaningful opportunities to engage in advocacy.

Assistance provided to our young leaders includes food, clothes, housing, books, beds, mental health care, medical care, legal help, tax help, transportation, job support, pillows, calculators, computers, GRE fees, grad school applications, and tuition.
“The SchoolHouse Connection scholarship is more than just an acknowledgement and money. It’s an entire family that loves and supports you no matter where you are in the country, no matter what time it is. These people are who I turn to when I’m sad and who I turn to when I don’t know what else to do. I turn to you when I want to celebrate life.”

- Aseret Hesse, SchoolHouse Connection Young Leader

"Having the opportunity to serve as a peer leader, although heart-heavy, was therapeutic, empowering and good for the soul. Amidst all of the work and planning, I was able to spend some one-on-one time with a few of the students. Each student that I spoke to inspired me. The perseverance and determination of these amazing students was met with an endless well of compassion and love for them that I didn’t even know I had. I wanted to wrap up each student tight, and take all of their burdens away. These students have all faced so much in their own right, and have come out on the other side shining, whether they see it yet or not. I am so lucky to have had a role where I could help them see it."

- Tia Joyce, SchoolHouse Connection Peer Leader
MOVING FORWARD
In our third year, we extended the depth and breadth of our reach in ways both tangible and intangible. From bills passed to lives changed, we exceeded our goals and began to dream of new ones.

We listened deeply to educators, providers, and young people, and helped them become agents of change.

We paid tremendous attention to practice, knowing that no law, regulation, or rule ever implemented itself on behalf of vulnerable students and families.

We put a premium on building and sustaining relationships across differences, understanding that common core values can be harnessed for a greater collective good.

All of these actions resulted in the many accomplishments detailed in statistics and stories on the previous pages of this annual report.

And now, with a new decade barely dawning, the coronavirus outbreak and school closures have put us to the test. For children and youth experiencing homelessness, education is more than a classroom: it is a safe haven, a refuge -- a ladder up and out of homelessness and into their fullest future. The loss of school and the economic disruption caused by the outbreak have the potential to be catastrophic for generations to come. But we won’t let them -- not without a fight. We believe in the endless creativity and boundless innovation of our educators and service providers, and above all, in the ferocious spirit and tenacity of our children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. And we will fight to get them the resources and support they need to be successful.

We will summon all we’ve learned, and all we’ve built, to do more in 2020 than simply mitigate losses. We will turn nimbly and resourcefully to the future, and, with your partnership, emerge from this humanitarian crisis with better systems and solutions for those whose promise is most in peril.

We invite you to join us on this mission, so that next year’s report is equally full of accomplishments -- of surviving, thriving, and overcoming homelessness through education.
### 2019 AUDITED FINANCIALS

#### REVENUE & SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions &amp; Grants</td>
<td>$1,085,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>98,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td>3,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue &amp; Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,187,770</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal and State Policy Advocacy</td>
<td>$251,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>60,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Leads Home</td>
<td>504,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>86,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Leadership &amp; Scholarship</td>
<td>106,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,009,374</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Support Services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>$67,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>12,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$79,909</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$98,487</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NET ASSETS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning of Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td><strong>$811,884</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NET ASSETS AT THE END OF THE YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End of Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td><strong>$910,371</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DONORS

Adam Sloane
Amy Gilbrough
Andrew Smoot
Andy Espinoza
Anne Giordano
Anne Mulbach
Ardis Steinmetz
Athena Simpson
Ava Kornblum
Barb Dexter
Bob Medinger
Carlie Donovan
Carol Wagner
Catharine Minichino
Catherine Knowles
Christopher Taylor
Christopher Thunes
Colleen Sheridan
Dena Lane-Bonds
Denis Dougherty
Diane Nilan
Dona Bolt
Donna Perez
Elana Konstant
Ella Deverse
Emily-Sue Sloane
Eunsoo Choi
George Scribner
Giselle Anatol
Hannah Johnson
Heidi Marcinik
Heidi Slater
Hiep Patrick Ma
Ingrid Bryan
Irene Saucedo
Jacky Lehoullier
Jana Allen
Janet Levin
Jeff Lowe
Jennifer Jones
Jennifer Pokempner
Jennifer Pringle
Jill Sallows
Joanne Miro
Joseph Willard
Judith Deedy
Julia Oconnor
Julie & Glenn Zullo
Julie Monteleone
Karen Fessler
Karen George
Kate Ventura
Kathleen Romine
Kathryn Rose
Kathy Wigtil
Katie Pringle
Kelly And Seth Hawkins
Kerry Sullivan
Leona Mcdaniels
Lizzy Pinto
Loreto Martinez
Lorraine Allen
Lynda Thistle Elliott
Lyz French Pickette
Marianne Hockin
Marisela Santiago
Marla Whalen
Marsha Basloe
Mary Haskett
Mary Kurniawan
Marybeth Gilbrough
Maureen Davis
Meghan Mead
Melinda Dyer
Mike Harman
Nancy Fahey
Nicole Sequeira
Pallavi And Tom Gullo
Patricia Julianelle
Peggy Carlson
Phillip Lovell
Ranjini Goonewardane
Rebecca Sorani
Rodd Bert
Ruth Graeter
Ryan Strack
S P
Sandee Byus
Sandra Vela
Shirley Noel Williams
Stacy Strasser
Susan Paredes
Teresa Stetler
Thomas Gullo
Timothy Cruz
Vicky Dill
Victoria Paschich
Viviana Otoya
Wendy Fehlauer
Willa Rosen