

Hope & Healing in 2020

IMPACT REPORT





Our Noble Cause

After two decades of transforming lives and healing generations, we believe our work is more than a mission; it's a *noble cause*.

At Amethyst Place, we inspire transformational healing and empower generations of women and children to achieve recovery, reunification, and resilience.

We touched the lives of nearly 200 women and children in 2020, helping them navigate an unprecedented challenge with their recovery, housing, and family in tact.

We live out our noble cause by:

1. Reuniting, stabilizing, and healing previously homeless mothers and children;
2. Removing barriers and individualizing services to promote sustainable recovery and healthy living; and
3. Building the capacity of mothers to achieve economic success and overcome generational poverty.

Our three core programs are designed to help families overcome the interconnected cycles of trauma, substance use, and poverty:



Supportive Housing

provides safe and stable housing through 37 apartment units and access to basic needs

Family Empowerment



supports educational, career, financial, and health and wellness goals to help families overcome generational poverty and lead healthy lives



Therapeutic Services

helps families heal from past trauma, stabilize mental health, improve parenting skills, and build resilience



About Our Families

In 2020, we provided nearly **200 women and children** in Kansas City with truly comprehensive, family-centered care to help them overcome the interconnected cycles of poverty, trauma, and substance use to achieve multi-generational impact.

Entering Amethyst Place, the typical mom is 32, in early recovery from substance use, and without a home for her family. She lacks a high school education, is dually diagnosed with substance use and mental health disorders, and has a history of foster care, parental substance use, sex trafficking, domestic violence, and justice system involvement. Two-thirds of moms have lost custody of their children due to substance use and poverty, yet their families are typically reunified within days or weeks at Amethyst Place.



Through our 37 apartments and on-site programs, families receive safe housing and basic needs, educational and vocational supports, recovery and wellness coaching, and therapy and care management for as long as they need to help the whole family heal and thrive.



The average family lives here two years, during which time the mom often earns her GED, begins college, and/or begins a new and meaningful career path. Meanwhile, her children accumulate positive childhood experiences to help outweigh the damage of prior trauma. This transformational work takes time, which is why no maximum length of stay is imposed and program alumni remain tightly connected to the community and resources after moving off campus.



Breaking the Cycle

From Trauma to Reunification

Families enter Amethyst Place with a history of homelessness, poverty, trauma, substance use disorders, mental health disorders, lack of medical care, poor educational attainment, and justice system involvement. These circumstances create a home life filled with toxic stress and often lead to the children being removed from their mom's custody. Without reunification, the consequences of prolonged foster care placement are dramatic. [1]

Our program offers a chance to break this vicious cycle and change each family's life trajectory. Our safe housing with on-site supportive services create the ideal environment for family reunification, stabilization, and healing. This also results in cost savings to the foster care system. Foster care costs an average of \$32,711 per child per year. [2] With 25 children reunified with their mom after time in foster care, we produced a potential savings of \$817,775 in public dollars in 2020. Once reunified, we offer children the opportunity to develop positive childhood experiences, which can buffer the effects of prior adverse experiences, promote healthy development, and help children achieve their full potential - literally transforming their generation and those to come. [3]



153
women and
children housed
*100% of the 49
families experienced
homelessness prior*

**Breaking generational
cycles of trauma
by reuniting, stabilizing,
and healing families.**

100%
of children
reunified with mom
within first 60 days
*Nationally, only 44%
reunify following mom's
treatment [4]*

19
months was the
average length
of stay
*100% of families improved
in their "Housing" domain*



1,228
hours of therapy
provided to 61
women and children
*80% of moms showed
improvement in their
"Mental Health" domain*

83%
of women showed
improvement in their
"Parenting Skills" domain
when they graduated

88%
of families showed
improvement in the "Safety"
domain when they graduated
*Safety contributes to child permanency and
well-being, keeping children out of foster care*

[1] Pecora et al. (2005). Improving family foster care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. Retrieved from <https://www.casey.org/northwest-alumni-study/>

[2] Nielsen et al. (2019). The unseen costs of foster care: A social return on investment study. Retrieved from <http://www.thetcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Alia-unseen-costs-of-FC.pdf>

[3] Sege et al. (2017). Responding to ACEs with HOPE: Health outcomes from positive experiences. *Academic pediatrics*, 17(7), S79-S85. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876285917301079#bib3>

[4] Grella, C. E., Needell, B., Shi, Y., & Hser, Y. (2009). Do drug treatment services predict reunification outcomes of mothers and their children in child welfare? *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 36(3), 278-293. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2848488/>

Breaking the Cycle

From Substance Use to Recovery

All women enter Amethyst Place in early recovery from substance use, with many transitioning directly from inpatient treatment. Maternal substance use impacts the entire family and is often passed through generations. To help moms recover from substance use while preventing these cycles among their children, Amethyst Place provides a holistic, long-term, and evidence-based array of wraparound supports to truly heal and empower families.

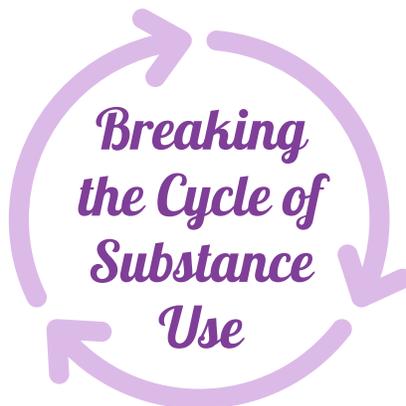
It is said that connection is the opposite of addiction, and that is the foundation upon which our community is built. Living within a community of shared experiences provides the social supports to help navigate the challenges of early recovery. We have several staff in recovery who use their own journeys to support moms. Staff facilitate multiple recovery meetings per week and also provide individual recovery coaching. Random breathalyzer and urine drug tests are administered to help offer accountability. These measures helped us achieve a 90% recovery rate in 2020, which is more than double the national average. [1]



Breaking generational cycles of substance use through coaching and community.

90%
of women maintained recovery
National average is 40-60%

"5-Empowered"
was the average score on the "Substance Use" domain when moms graduated
On a scale of 1-In Crisis to 5-Empowered



55
moms engaged in recovery coaching
We now have two full-time Empowerment Coaches - AP graduates themselves who earned their Certified Peer Specialist credential

37
women in the AP Sisterhood Program, which helps graduates maintain a recovery support system

1,035
hours of recovery coaching and meetings provided

[1] National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). "How effective is drug addiction treatment?" In *Principles of drug addiction treatment: A research-based guide (third edition)*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-addiction-treatment-research-based-guide-third-edition/frequently-asked-questions/how-effective-drug-addiction-treatment>

Breaking the Cycle

From Poverty to Resilience

Families come to Amethyst Place living below the Federal Poverty Level, with recent experiences of homelessness, limited education, poor work histories, and unresolved debt and legal issues - and these experiences often go back in their families for generations.

Once families are stabilized in our supportive housing, reunified, and in the process of healing, attention is placed on building their economic and social mobility so they can eventually overcome generational poverty and change the trajectory of their family's life. Weekly life skills classes, financial literacy coaching, supported employment, educational support, wellness coaching, and mentoring are all utilized to help families overcome poverty, build healthier lifestyles, and sustain positive changes. Many moms become the first in their families to attend college due to our program's long-term support, which allows them to succeed in school. Nationally, around 28% of single moms graduate from college. [1] Investing in education allows moms to pull their families out of poverty, which profoundly impacts future generations. Single mothers with a bachelor's degree earn 62% more than those with a high school diploma. [2] Additionally, our supported employment program connects moms with meaningful career paths that provide livable wages to support their families.



393
hours of life skills programming provided to 58 women

Breaking generational cycles of poverty by advancing education and creating career paths.

70
families utilized our household pantry, receiving 32,952 pounds of food



"4-Building Capacity"
was the average score on the "Adult Education" domain when moms graduated

On a scale of 1-In Crisis to 5-Empowered

91%
of moms were employed before COVID-19

After losing their jobs due to the pandemic, many found new career paths or went back to school

35
moms were engaged in educational or vocational programs

250
hours of mentoring provided to 39 moms through EnCompass

477
hours of wellness coaching and fitness classes provided to 85 women and children

[1] Kruevelis et al. (2017). Single mothers in college: Growing enrollment, financial challenges, and the benefits of attainment. Retrieved from <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/student-parent-success-initiative/single-mothers-in-college-growing-enrollment-financial-challenges-and-the-benefits-of-attainment/>

[2] Reichlin Cruse et al. (2019). Investing in single mothers' higher education by state. Retrieved from <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/student-parent-success-initiative/investing-in-single-mothers-higher-education-state/>

Over Two Decades of Impact

Transforming lives from 2000 to 2020

Angel's Story ♥ Reunified in 2000



Angel was one of the first moms to move into Amethyst Place when it opened in 2000.

Separated from her newborn and seven year old son due to substance use and unsafe living conditions, it only took Angel two weeks to reunite with her family at Amethyst Place. Twenty years later, sons Tyron and Ivory vividly remember the day they moved in and how their apartment felt like home.

"I remember the first day we got dropped off," Tyron, now 27, said. "My mom was in there for like two weeks and then we first got dropped off. We knocked at the door, and I was just so happy to be coming back to my mom."

Looking back 20 years later, both sons are grateful for the hard work their mom put in at Amethyst Place to transform her family's life.

"I'm just extremely proud of you," Ivory, now 20, said. "I know where you were and the life you lived. You really did everything and became the best mom I could think of."



Tyron and Ivory are now successes in their own right. Tyron is a math teacher and football coach who comes back to Amethyst Place to do volunteer work, including when he helped build the garage where furniture donations are stored. His brother Ivory is an aspiring real estate agent. Angel and her sons exemplify the two-generation impact of Amethyst Place and its ability to halt the cycles of trauma, substance use, and poverty for good.



Cristin's Story Reunified in 2020

"My life at Amethyst Place is really full here, as opposed to how it was before when I was homeless."



In Cristin's Words

DFS wanted me to go from having nothing to having a 3-bedroom house to get my kids back. I was starting at square one. That really seemed like a giant mountain that I was never going to be able to climb and I felt pretty hopeless. I did get a job at U-haul. I decided that if I didn't have to pay rent somewhere, I could get my kids back faster if I just worked, had as little bills as possible, and I saved up. So I lived in my van during the winter. I did my visits with the kids in the community because I didn't have a home.



And then I came to Amethyst Place in February 2020. Prior to this, I had been in recovery for months, but the court system was talking of terminating my parental rights because I couldn't reach the level of stability they wanted. It went very quickly from me being by myself all the time to being surrounded by all these women

and children and getting my children back almost immediately after moving into Amethyst Place. There's so much support being here and many resources to access. Coming to Amethyst Place just gave me the support I needed to reach that next step for us to be a family again. This program gives me a lot of hope for the future.

One Year of Incredible Progress

Just a little over a year after moving in to Amethyst Place, Cristin has made huge strides in her life. In addition to reunifying with her children, she successfully completed a six-month training at EPEC's The Grooming Project. She is now employed as a full-time groomer at a pet salon in Johnson County, KS.



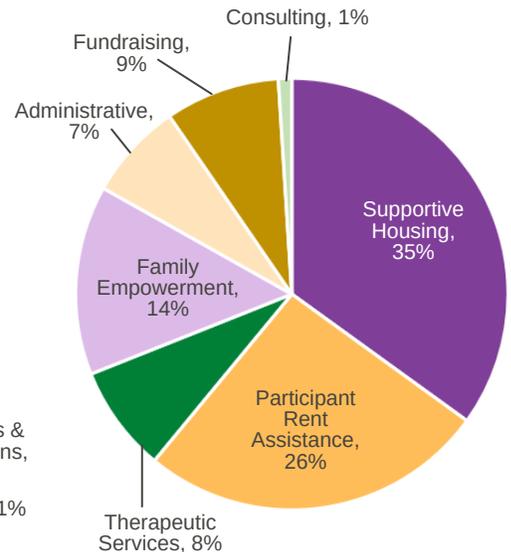
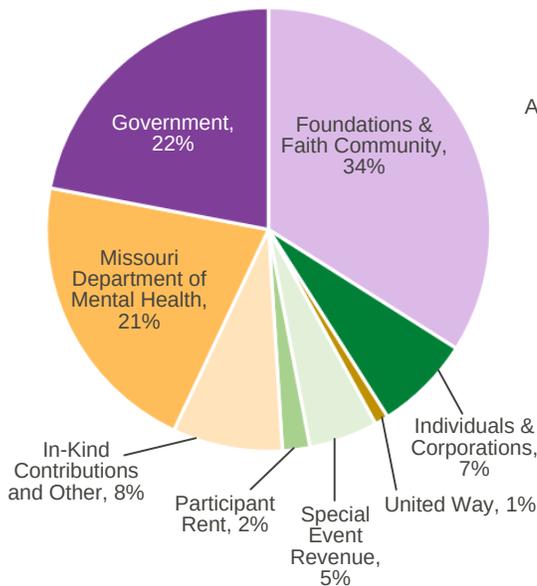
Financial Overview

Like many other social services agencies, 2020 was challenging for Amethyst Place staff and families. We made intentional investments in our families to keep them financially stable and healthy during the pandemic, including covering families' portions of rent, providing emergency financial assistance, and beginning a virtual classroom staffed with educators. This led to over \$100,000 in unanticipated expenses in 2020 and they continue to grow as the pandemic continues into 2021.

Despite these challenges, we helped 56 families meet their emergency needs and took our investment even further by helping resolve families' significant past debts so their futures could be brighter. Our direct assistance costs increased by more than 100% - and every cent was worth it. We will continue to make significant social investments to keep our families housed, healthy, and together, pandemic or otherwise

Revenues = \$1,750,350

Expenses = \$1,958,834



Volunteers

2020 was a year that disrupted many of our normal volunteer opportunities, but was also a year for exploring new options and ways to keep community members engaged - in person and virtually. Through creativity and flexibility, Amethyst Place was able to engage more than 20 new volunteers through in-person support in our virtual learning hub and virtual tutoring, opportunities that hadn't existed before the pandemic. In addition to those new volunteers, we continued to offer EnCompass, our mom's mentoring program, online via Zoom and log more than 250 hours of mentoring time and an expanded partnership with the Junior League of Kansas City. While safety was a key priority, we quickly figured out how to make good use of the outdoors in nice weather and offered family fun options like tie dye t-shirts and masks, Trunk or Treat, family kickball games, and chalk art. In total, 2020 saw us work with about 200 volunteers who served more than 1,200 hours, building relationships with our moms and kids and providing much-needed support for families during a challenging year.



Our Funders

FUNDING PROVIDED IN PART BY:

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Original Amethyst Place location on Benton Boulevard



STAFF



Starla Wulf Brennan,
Executive Director



Shanda Moon,
Director of Admin.
Operations



Sarah Knopf-Amelung,
Director of Resource &
Program Development



Renee Harris,
Sr. Empowerment
Manager



Tyler Carlson,
Virtual Classroom
Manager



**Mandy Caruso-
Yahne,** Volunteer
Manager



**Lauren Clifton-
Thompson,** Dev. &
Events Manager



Olivia Deeken,
Family Support
Therapist



Laurie Evans,
Donations
Coordinator



Mollee Flores,
Wellness
Empowerment Coach



Gina Green,
Supportive Housing
Coordinator



Delaney Hall,
Child Therapist



Erin Hestand,
Financial
Empowerment Coach



Janet Hargarten,
Program Manager

Program Techs:

- Christina Benz
- LaTonya Evans
- Carmen Johnson
- Arzealia Graham
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- Aime T.
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- Amber J.
- Amber O.
- Corey N.
- Lawanna C.
- Tabatha P.
- Tiare T.



Staff Representatives:

Starla Brennan, Erin Hestand, Mollee Flores



A Message from Our Executive Director



To our wonderful supporters,

2020 was not the year that any of us imagined. We anticipated big 20th anniversary celebrations, large social gatherings, and other festivities to build upon the great successes of Amethyst Place. Instead, we were faced with an unprecedented pandemic that tested the resilience of our families, staff, and agency in so many ways.

In true Amethyst Place fashion, not even a pandemic could keep us from achieving our goals. Through our resilience, we have made it to 2021 and can now look back on all of the incredible feats we have accomplished as a community - of which each of you is an important part.

Even before the pandemic, our families faced many obstacles to sustaining their recovery and mental health stability, reunifying their families, and achieving economic stability. COVID-19 created a host of new challenges. When the pandemic began in March, most Amethyst Place moms lost their jobs and shifted their focus to supporting their children through virtual school in an uncertain world. In many situations, these circumstances would have led to very poor outcomes, including loss of housing, recovery, and reunification. However, because these families lived within the supportive confines of Amethyst Place, they were able to navigate these challenges.

Quickly adapting to the new needs created by COVID-19, we dispatched campus-wide digital message boards displaying our COVID-19 risk zones and policies, began a virtual classroom and hired a full-time educator, shifted to virtual programming, added a second recovery coach, added new wellness programming for moms and kids, and provided additional financial and food assistance, while continuing to offer all of our existing services.

This support helped families achieve phenomenal things. After significant job loss at the start of the pandemic, moms used this opportunity to chart new paths. Many enrolled as first-time college students in the fall, while others began vocational training programs and started new career paths through 100 Jobs. 90% of moms maintained recovery throughout 2020, defying national trends that showed significant increases in relapses and overdoses. Through the crisis of on-campus COVID-19 cases and creative solutions to safely overcome social isolation, we regained a stronger sense of community among families and staff.

The pandemic continues on in 2021, but I hope that the perseverance of Amethyst Place families will encourage us all to keep working toward our common good. Connection is the opposite of addiction, and your connection to our cause means the world to the moms and kids of Amethyst Place. Without it, we would have a very different story to share.

With eternal gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Starla Brennan".

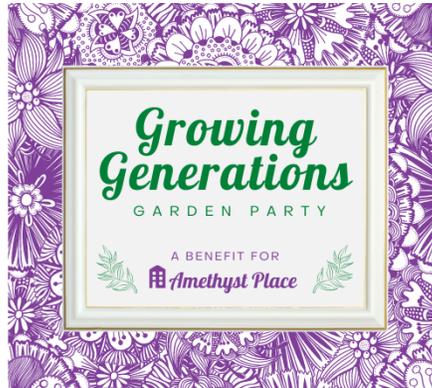
Starla Brennan



Help Our Cause in 2021

Ways to Get Out and Give Back

Attend an Event



We've partnered with Buttonwood Art Space to present **Home: An Art Benefit for Amethyst Place**. A VIP gallery event for supporters is on **July 15**, followed by a First Fridays event on **August 6**. Special artwork created by Amethyst Place families will be on display and for sale, along with pieces from local artists.

Our fall fundraiser is sprouting in a new direction this year! The **Growing Generations Garden Party** will be an indoor/outdoor tea party and brunch-style event. Save the date for the afternoon of Sunday, **September 26**. It will take place at The Fire House Event Space on 45th and Troost.

Invest in Our Families

From monthly giving, year-end gifts, major gifts, planned giving, peer-to-peer fundraisers, grants, and stock donations, we have options for everyone to support our noble cause. We also have an Amazon Wish List to donate items directly to our families and accept gently used clothing and home furnishing donations. To learn more, please contact Development and Events Manager, Lauren Clifton-Thompson, at lauren@amethystplace.org. You can also invest directly on our website at www.amethystplace.org or text **HOME2HEAL** to **44-321**.

Volunteer

Amethyst Place offers many opportunities for volunteers to support our noble cause. From helping move furniture and setting up apartments, to sharing expertise in a life skills program, there is something for everyone. We can host individual and volunteer groups and provide an initial orientation for all volunteers to learn more about our program before getting started. All of this is pending COVID-19 safety protocols. Opportunities are adjusted to keep everyone safe. Please contact Volunteer Manager, Mandy Caruso-Yahne, at mandy@amethystplace.org for more information.

Spread the Word

Make sure to follow our social accounts and spread our uplifting stories of resilience with your family and friends! You can also register for our e-newsletter, Families in Focus, to receive messages of hope straight to your inbox. Sign up at www.amethystplace.org.

Follow us on:     @AmethystPlace





Amethyst Place

where families come home to heal

www.AmethystPlace.org

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