

SUMMER 2023

SENDING **HOPE** YOUR WAY

How your gifts are creating lasting change for families



A Mother's Educational Journey
Inspires Her Family And Others

To our community:

Typically summer signals a break — an opportunity to step out of our daily routine into something new.

If you're like me, you're planning fun experiences and time to disconnect. But in leading Generation Hope, I'm also planning for the fact that summer is challenging for so many families nationwide between trying to connect the dots financially and not being able to take a break. That's why I continue to be so encouraged and thankful for the work you make possible every day — regardless of the season — with your giving and support.

Reflecting back on this academic year, I'm in awe of what we've accomplished together on behalf of families. Last summer, we welcomed the largest Scholar class to date, allowing us to support 142 young parents in college. This July, a new group of student parents joined Generation Hope in the D.C. region, bringing us to serving 175 young families. At the same time, our very first Scholar class in New Orleans is beginning their journey with Generation Hope. This growth is exciting on every level, and we look forward to keeping you updated on all of our Scholars' achievements.

One of the things I love about our work here at Generation Hope is that not only do we get to walk alongside our Scholars and their children in their educational journeys, we also help to dismantle the many systemic barriers that families everywhere face. Thanks to your support and belief in this vital work, our technical assistance program, FamilyU, is also growing and thriving. Over the past year, we've worked with our FamilyU Cohorts of select higher education institutions to address crucial issues facing student parents around the country. In July, our inaugural 2021 FamilyU Cohort celebrated the end of their two-year cohort experience and shared the transformations that have happened at their institutions to benefit parenting students. You'll hear more about this exciting work in this newsletter.

It takes an incredible team to do this work. We have welcomed new staff members in New Orleans and in the D.C. region, making us a team of 37 and counting. Together we serve student parents across the country through direct service programming, policy and research, and technical assistance. With a lease signed and construction in progress, we are eager to move into our new D.C. home office this fall, which will not only house our staff but will also be a welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for student parents, their families, and our partners. We look forward to sharing more about the new space in the fall. In the meantime, you can find our new address on the back page of this newsletter.

I'm so thankful for a community that sees the importance and urgency of our mission and consistently shows up for families. You have made this profound growth possible. From everyone here at Generation Hope, thank you.



Nicole Lynn Lewis
Founder & CEO, Generation Hope

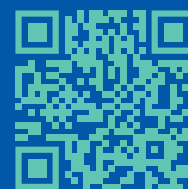


OUR 2023 POLICY AGENDA

In February, Generation Hope announced the release of our **2023 Regional and National Policy Agenda**. Each year, we create a set of national and regional focus areas within our overarching policy priorities of higher education, quality childcare, and economic mobility. The agenda outlines the actions we will take and the collaborations we will engage in to drive change on behalf of and in partnership with student parents.

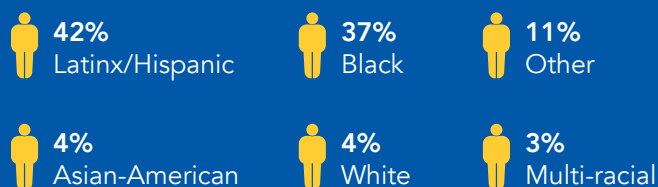
This year, families face significant challenges when it comes to reaching their educational goals and not just surviving — but thriving. By listening to families, we have created a roadmap for 2023 that reflects our values and centers the voices of student parents — especially student parents of color — as we pursue policy change locally and nationwide to upend these barriers.

To read Generation Hope's 2023 Policy Agenda, scan the QR code or visit: generationhope.org/policy-advocacy



OUR 2022–2023 SCHOLAR PROGRAM IMPACT

Generation Hope served **142 teen parents** in college through the Scholar Program and **41 pre-school and early elementary aged children** through Next Generation Academy.




 **Nearly 90%** of Scholars are considered low income.


 **79%** of Scholars are first-generation college students.


 **Nearly 8%** of Scholars are DREAMers.

 **93%** of families in Next Generation Academy are families of color.

 **73%** of Scholars earned a GPA of 2.5 or higher each semester last year.

 **86%** of Scholars stayed in college and in our program from year to year.

 **86%** of last year's Scholar graduates were living above the federal poverty line 6 months after graduation.

 **14%** of last year's Scholar alumni were pursuing a graduate degree within 6 months of graduation.





WHY I GIVE **RHONDA BROUSSARD**

In this edition, we were pleased to connect with supporter Rhonda Broussard, founder and CEO of Beloved Community and an early supporter of our Scholar Program in the New Orleans area.

How did you first learn about Generation Hope and our work supporting parenting students?

Nicole and I are both members of the EdLoC (Education Leaders of Color) community and were introduced through the organization years ago. For a long time, we have been connected and sharing resources. Nicole's work resonated with me — I have personal family history with the work Generation Hope does to support young families and college completion. So, I have been a supporter from the beginning. Recently, I received an email from a New Orleans educator who met with the Generation Hope team about the program expansion and wanted to connect me. It immediately felt like a really aligned moment for me with Generation Hope expanding to New Orleans at the same time I was in a position to make an investment in student parents in our area.

How would you describe the New Orleans community?

Family is everywhere here and connections run deep. Whether you are a generational resident or someone new to the area, networks matter. New Orleans is a community of deep joy, deep art, deep culture, and deep pain, with the ability to hold all those things at the same time. We sit at a proud intersection of joy and pain.

What is your hope for Generation Hope's expansion into New Orleans and young parents in the area?

I want them to fly. Being a parent while being a student has so many additional weights and barriers that have to be navigated and overcome. I want them to not only see their own future, but also their children's future. I want them to have all the options available to them — what type of degree they pursue, work they secure, where they can establish roots, community they can build around their children. This is the support Generation Hope can provide.

Why is it important to you to be an early supporter for Generation Hope's New Orleans expansion?

In New Orleans, relationships matter. For much of my career, I was doing national work, which gave me the space and opportunity to build relationships and community in New

Orleans without it being tied to my work. By the time I returned to New Orleans 24 years later, I had authentic, connected, sympathetic partners who were ready to take a chance on my new organization. Now, I can be that for Generation Hope, and help the organization establish the necessary roots to thrive in our area and invest in our student parents.

To you, why is student parent work also race equity work?

What has become endemic for college completion is access to networks. It's no longer just about getting into school, students need to understand who they can call, where they can apply for internships and other opportunities, how to negotiate work studies that are aligned with their schedules, how to prepare for conversations with employers. The list goes on. This network makes a huge difference in graduation rates, especially for first generation college students. Student parents of color lack the support needed and yet they see peers around them are being resourced and coached on how to amplify the college experience and build those networks. Generation Hope is going to make a huge difference in racial equity and career access, supporting Black student parents in building the type of networks that have been handed to other folks for generations.

What does Generation Hope mean to you?

Generation Hope means that instead of a whole generation feeling like they were handed a punishment, they know that there is a different future for them, a different future for their children, and they have the power to choose how they navigate their life.

Is there anything else you would want to tell our readers?

I would invite everyone to think about the ways they can support student parents in their own lives and circles. Extend your social capital, extend your networks, extend your grace in your places of business and organizations. You know that your community is full of student parents. Take time to learn more about their trajectory and joy and how you can be better supporting them. No matter how young or old you are, no matter where you live, there are student parents in your life. Protect them, honor them, uplift them, and make a gift to Generation Hope in their name.

Rhonda's mother, Iris Broussard, showcasing art featuring her grandmother, Jessie Mae Ledet Celestine (created by artist Brittney Boyd Bullock)



“ I want them to have all the options available to them — what type of degree they pursue, work they secure, where they can establish roots, community they can build around their children. **This is the support Generation Hope can provide.**”

BECOMING THE EXAMPLE SHE ALWAYS NEEDED

A MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY
INSPIRES HER FAMILY AND OTHERS



Generation Hope Scholar Alumna Siera Woods — a recent University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) graduate and mom of three — can look back on her life and see the purpose behind the pain she experienced from a young age. Those trials could not dim her light. Instead, she illuminated an alternative path for others.

Siera grew up in Dillon County, South Carolina — a small town that she says lacked basic resources, like a local community center. Her years in Dillon were marked by abuse, neglect, and foster care. While in 5th grade, Siera became pregnant with her first child. Instead of receiving support, she was ostracized. The school removed Siera from her classroom and made her complete her school work by herself with the aid of a library staff member rather than a qualified teacher.

“How people treated me and...how [this school] separated me and stuff like that, made me feel really, really bad,” Siera said.

Just a couple of years after her child was born, Siera, her baby, and her two siblings were placed in foster care and separated from one another. Eventually, needing to ensure Siera was placed with her baby as she maintained parental rights, authorities agreed to allow family in Washington, D.C., to take them in. Yet, her challenges continued in D.C. Siera described complicated interactions with family members, multiple bouts of homelessness, and domestic violence.

In spite of all of this, the spark for college and the desire to help others never left Siera. Throughout her schooling, she was an honor roll student. She knew she wanted to pursue higher education, but she also knew that there was no clear path to get there.

“ **I was scared. I didn’t know anything about college. I didn’t know how to even enroll or start the process, really. But I knew I wanted to go.**”

After high school, Siera wanted to become a neonatal nurse but found herself in a medical assistant certification program at a now defunct for-profit institution. When she found out about Generation Hope’s Scholar Program through a partner organization, the Latin American Youth Center, she was motivated to apply. Generation Hope was the needed catalyst for Siera.

Siera was heartened to find a community in Generation Hope to aid her college journey. She credits a trio of Hope Coaches and Mentors for providing emotional support, and she especially emphasized the care she received from Generation Hope’s Director of Programming, Caroline Griswold Short, who remained a consistent presence.

“She was there pushing me,” Siera said. “I was going through so much in life. And, you know...at times, I wanted to quit.”

But Caroline would not give up on Siera. “There were times where I called Caroline, and I literally just cried on the phone, and she listened. She didn’t have to do anything, but she was there to listen and give me that space to talk about whatever I was going through.”

Her mentors, Erin and Megan, also became people she could turn to “just get clarity.” In addition, Generation Hope’s mental health services and organizational events, such as the annual conference, helped Siera remain in tune with who she was and who she wanted to be. These events were places to work through her life experiences and celebrate how far she and the other Scholars had come.

The internships that she was able to participate in through Generation Hope’s career readiness services were instrumental in her professional journey. While studying at UMGC, she used her general studies major to explore disaster management, earning multiple certifications while completing her bachelor’s degree. These certifications, coupled with connections through fellow Generation Hope Scholars, helped Siera secure temporary employment helping people access rental assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now a UMGC graduate, for the first time in her life, Siera can pay her bills and save a portion of her monthly salary. She is a Community Developer for Prince George’s County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), helping to prevent people who are at risk of eviction from facing the homelessness that she experienced. Reflecting on her upbringing, her heart extends to the community that raised her. Siera often thinks about what it would have meant for her family if her mother had access to the same resources she now has, allowing her to provide a stable environment for herself and her children. She dreams of starting a nonprofit in Dillon County, offering much-needed support to community members. To bring her one step closer to achieving that dream, she volunteers with local nonprofits and meets with a local city council member to talk about her ideas.

Most importantly, Siera’s story offers others a path forward — inspiring her children and other family members, including her sister, who have quietly watched her journey as they faced their own difficult circumstances. As evidence of the generational impact of a parent’s postsecondary success, Siera’s oldest daughter will graduate from high school this year and has decided to go to community college next spring.

“I would like to think me going to college and getting a better education inspired her to do so,” Siera said. “This journey has been to set an example for my children, set an example for any other family members who might have thought that I couldn’t do it or don’t have a mind that they could do it.”

A LOOK INSIDE FAMILYU

FamilyU, Generation Hope's technical assistance program, aims to accelerate student parent success by helping higher education institutions and organizations truly embrace and support this population.

A critical part of the program is our FamilyU Cohort, which provides a comprehensive, two-year capacity-building experience by engaging higher education leaders in transformative systemic change that leads to sustainable improved outcomes for student parents at their institutions. Since launching in 2021, our FamilyU Cohorts have welcomed eleven institutions nationwide through two cohorts, reaching an estimated 60,000 student parents across the country, and we are excited to welcome a third cohort this summer.

As our inaugural cohort completed their experience in July, we are beginning to amplify the achievements of these institutions: Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), Montgomery College, Trinity Washington University, and George Mason University. Here is a special look at how NOVA is creating a family-friendly environment that truly embraces and supports student parents, broken down along the four core competencies of the FamilyU framework:

Data: Over the past two years, NOVA has developed a strong data collection system that surveys students at multiple points to identify student parents and to address critical needs.

Policy: NOVA's FamilyU team has reviewed several institutional policies to make them more inclusive of student parents' unique experiences, including ensuring that their Title IX website clearly communicates pregnant and parenting student rights. This evaluation has brought the institution closer to implementing policies that allow student parents to balance their academic and family responsibilities.

People: Now an annual event, NOVA also started holding a FamilyU Day to inform student parents about available

resources on campus, including financial aid, child care services, and academic support programs. This event has not only been instrumental in helping student parents feel more supported on campus, but also in helping faculty and staff understand the diverse and intersectional needs of their students, and how they can best provide additional resources to them.

Culture: Connecting students to resources and making them aware of those resources is crucial in developing a culture of inclusivity and belonging. In the last two years, NOVA has created maps that highlight family-friendly resources available on all six of their campuses. These maps will help student parents locate resources that are essential to their academic success, such as lactation rooms, child care services, and quiet study areas.

Each FamilyU Cohort institution welcomes a Student Parent Fellow to their team as a part of the second year of the cohort experience. The Fellow is a currently enrolled parenting student who provides expertise and insights to share the college's student-parent work. Mercy Osei-Hwedie, NOVA's Student Parent Fellow, has created a Student Parent Alliance at the institution — an affinity group with the explicit purpose of creating and sustaining a sense of belonging for student parents. This group allows student parents to connect with each other, share their experiences, and receive support and encouragement.

These accomplishments are just a sample of the many milestones NOVA has achieved in the last two years.

At our final celebration in mid-July, we celebrated all of their accomplishments, as well as the many achievements of the other three inaugural Cohort schools. Though July marked the end of this two-year cohort experience, it represents a significant step in the larger transformation across higher education to remove barriers for student parents nationwide.



“ The convenings provide an opportunity for all of our team members to truly work together without the distractions...Excellent team building for us!”

FamilyU Cohort member

“ This work with FamilyU has been the most heartfelt part of my career.”

FamilyU Cohort member



INTRODUCING THE **NEW FAMILYU SEAL**

In May, Generation Hope announced the launch of the FamilyU Seal, a national certification for higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations making significant strides in intentionally serving parenting students.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SEAL PROGRAM IS TO:

- 1 Identify institutions and organizations that are actively investing in student parent success across the country
- 2 Inspire other institutions and organizations to invest in student parent success
- 3 Increase awareness of the student parent population

Through all of our work, we have seen the importance of investing in parenting students and centering their voices in all that we do; the connection between student parent work and racial justice work; and the evidence that when institutions and organizations intentionally support student parents, everyone benefits. We hope that this national designation will bolster these efforts and strengthen the ecosystem of institutions and organizations that are unlocking economic mobility for families.

Seal recipients will be announced publicly in September. One higher education institution and one nonprofit organization will be chosen as an exemplar and will receive an award of \$25,000 and \$15,000 respectively to continue their student parent work.

To learn more, visit:
generationhope.org/familyu-seal



EXCITING NEWS

Nicole recognized as a Boulder Fund Recipient

We are thrilled to share that our Founder and CEO, Nicole Lynn Lewis, was named one of EdLoC's 2023 Boulder Fund recipients! She is one of nine innovative national leaders of color who were awarded grants (over \$110,000 each) to further their vital work to end disparities in education, build generational wealth, and reduce systemic barriers for children of color. This grant will help Generation Hope in our expansion to New Orleans, impacting more young families than ever!

Learn more: edloc.org/2023-boulder-fund



Generation Hope featured on "Good Morning America"

Watch our segment on "Good Morning America" to hear from our Scholar Alumna, Nakwari, who shared her experience as a single mom in college, and our Founder and CEO, Nicole Lynn Lewis, who spoke about her journey and how it inspired the founding of Generation Hope in 2010. Opportunities that bring student-parent voices to the national stage are incredibly special so we hope you take a moment to watch and to share this with your networks.

SCAN TO
WATCH HERE:





SUPPORT OUR WORK

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 first class of Scholars in New Orleans.

- **\$1,000** ensures 8 Scholars can participate in career readiness services
- **\$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

To make in-kind donations, please contact Angie Sanchez: angie@generationhope.org

MENTOR A SCHOLAR

Looking for a way to make a tangible difference for a family in your community? Mentor a Generation Hope Scholar and help a young student parent family thrive! As a Mentor, you'll invest emotionally and financially in the success and wellbeing of a local teen parent in college. We welcome mentors from all walks of life and all backgrounds — all you need is a big heart. We are currently recruiting mentors in the D.C. Metro region. Learn more about our mentorship opportunities at generationhope.org/mentor

SPONSOR A SCHOLAR

We are looking for individuals to sponsor a scholarship for a Generation Hope Scholar! This direct-giving opportunity allows you to make a tangible difference in the life of a young family. You'll have the opportunity to follow their journey through regular updates. For more information on sponsoring a scholarship, feel free to reach out to our Community Engagement Manager, Sanah Jivani, at sanah@generationhope.org

VOLUNTEER

Apply to be a childcare volunteer! We have an urgent need for childcare volunteers for our upcoming Fall events in the D.C. region and New Orleans area. Please sign up online at bit.ly/GHvolunteerDC for D.C. region events and bit.ly/GHvolunteerNOLA for New Orleans area events. If you have any questions about these opportunities or eligibility, please reach out to Volunteer Coordinator J'Reisz Garcia at j'reisz@generationhope.org. Thank you in advance for volunteering with us!



SAVE THE DATE
MARCH 13–15, 2024

hope
2024

Where change happens for
student parents and families.

SCAN TO
LEARN MORE:



Join us for **our first national conference** in New Orleans, LA, as we help make economic mobility possible for the millions of student parents and families across the country.



WE'VE MOVED!

Generation Hope has a new home in Washington, D.C.! As of March 2023, we have secured a new, larger office that will allow us to customize a work and community space catered to families and our mission.

Our new Washington, D.C. home office address is:

1401 Okie Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002

Although we are receiving mail at this new address, our office space is under construction until fall 2023, and the staff is working fully remotely until that time. For our supporters who need to drop off items for our Scholars and their children, please contact Angie Sanchez, Generation Hope's Program Assistant, at angie@generationhope.org to coordinate in advance.

Please note that mail is being forwarded from our old address, and our phone numbers are still the same.

We look forward to hosting you in our new home in the fall.

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CONTACT US

202.734.5838

info@generationhope.org



generationhope.org

