



FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR TO DEFINE SUCCESS, LOOK AT THE WHOLE STORY

by Sarah Harte

‘What’s your success rate?’

This is a question we are often asked at FamilyForward, usually with the expectation of a clear percentage or statistic. In truth, the answer depends on how you define “success.”

Defining success quantitatively

For the parents in our family program, some of their success stories are measurable — landing a higher-paying job, reducing debt, or building up savings. For example: In the most recent program cycle (2023-2025), 86% of families successfully completed the full two-year program, demonstrating sustained commitment to the hard work of change.

Furthermore, the 18 families completing the program within this cycle achieved an average 29% increase in earned income and an average 61% reduction in debt through strategic budgeting and debt-reduction support. Families also increased their savings by an average of \$5,500, creating an essential cushion for future emergencies and reducing the risk of housing instability.

Looking at the whole story

But many success stories are qualitative and deeply personal. Every family has their own story, their own circumstances, and their own goals. That’s why each family has their own volunteer mentors — to help them identify a path that works for them. FamilyForward volunteer mentors understand that success is not a single milestone; it is the consistent effort families put into moving forward. It is seen in the small steps: chipping away at the to-do list, staying engaged, and refusing to remain stagnant. At FamilyForward, success is the steady accumulation of those small actions that lead people closer to their goals.

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JULY 16: JOIN US FOR HOPE FOR HOMES DAY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THIS DAY OF ACTION TO HELP FAMILIES

FamilyForward will participate in a day of giving on Thursday, July 16. In its third year, Hope for Homes Day is a statewide giving movement that unites nonprofits across Illinois in the fight for housing justice. This initiative is more than just a fundraiser — it’s a collective effort to ensure every person has a safe, stable place to call home.

More information will be coming your way about how you can get involved and support FamilyForward. This 24-hour call to action raises critical, flexible funding that supports our work to keep families housed while building the skills and confidence needed to move toward financial stability. Hope for Homes Day offers a meaningful way to stand in solidarity with those who need it most. It’s a moment to say, “We believe everyone deserves a safe place to call home,” and to back that belief with action. We hope you will join us!



FAMILY JOY STORY

CLEARING OUT THE CLUTTER ALLEVIATES EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL DRAIN



Mom B had rented a public storage unit for several years. When her FamilyForward volunteer mentors proposed the idea of eliminating that monthly expense, Mom B felt overwhelmed at the idea of sorting, organizing, donating or purging all that “stuff” from previous chapters in her life.

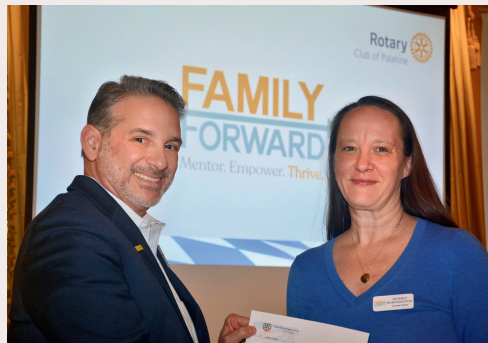
There was a time when Mom B felt emotionally unable to part with any of that stuff. But slowly over time, with the support she received from FamilyForward, she developed the motivation to tackle the contents of that storage unit and move forward with this current chapter in her life.

Early in the year, she set the goal of emptying the storage unit before the June rental payment was due. Every weekend for several months, Mom B spent time at the storage unit to discover what was actually in there — what she had been holding onto for so long — and to decide what to do with it. She was surprised at how much she chose to throw away or donate. In the third week of May, Mom B texted her volunteer mentors to let them know that the storage unit was finally empty and closed, and she now has \$75 per month to put toward other bills. Achieving this goal was an emotionally powerful achievement in her journey toward financial stability.

As each participant in our family program works, in their own way, to learn new life skills, move toward financial stability, and find new and significant ways to build a better life for their children, FamilyForward is there for them, every step of the way. Visit family-forward.org/blog for more Joy Stories.

WE LOVE OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY!

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of both new and longtime FamilyForward supporters, including individuals, businesses, and organizations. We are delighted to thank and highlight several local organizations that have contributed to FamilyForward in recent months, including Laughing Acres Family Foundation, St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights, Schaumburg Township, and the Rotary Club of Palatine. Your gifts make it possible for families in our communities to access the guidance, resources, and stability they need to move forward with confidence.



The Palatine Rotary Club recently presented FamilyForward with a \$2,000 grant.
Shown: Club President Joe Mazzocchi and FF Executive Director Beverly Worthington.

Every contribution — whether a first-time gift or a continued commitment — demonstrates the unwavering care and compassion surrounding our neighbors and reminds them that they are not alone. Because of you, hope becomes practical, support becomes consistent, and progress becomes possible. Thank you for believing in and being a part of our mission!

MISSION STATEMENT

Strengthening northwest suburban families to achieve financial stability and independence through mentoring, rental assistance and support services.

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To opt out of newsletter mailings,
email us: info@family-forward.org.

Special thanks to Elk Grove Township, Palatine Township, Schaumburg Township, Wheeling Township, and the Villages of Arlington Heights and Palatine for providing significant financial and other assistance to our client families.

DEBT-REDUCTION MATCHING PROGRAM

**YOUR SUPPORT HELPS FAMILIES DO MORE THAN MANAGE THEIR BILLS BETTER:
IT HELPS THEM RECLAIM THEIR FINANCIAL FUTURE**

At FamilyForward, our debt-reduction matching program gives parents the opportunity to cut debt twice as fast by matching their payments, dollar for dollar, up to \$500 each month, on debt they carried before entering our two-year family program. For families working hard to stabilize after years of financial strain, this match creates immediate momentum and a powerful sense of possibility. Underlying it all is a new sense of hope.



Because of donor generosity, families have been able to reduce credit card balances, medical debt, auto loans, tax debt, legal fees, and student loans while also strengthening the financial habits that lead to long-term success. As balances fall, many families begin to see meaningful improvements in their credit scores — opening doors to safer housing, lower insurance costs and greater financial flexibility.

Since its inception in July 2023, families in the program have received critical help through \$28,500 in debt-reduction matching support, empowering them to achieve an average 15% reduction in debt by the time they complete the program. These gains create more than financial relief; they restore confidence, reduce stress, and allow parents to focus on building savings, advancing careers, and creating greater stability for their children.

When paired with FamilyForward’s mentoring and rent support, the debt-reduction match becomes a catalyst for lasting change — turning generosity into measurable progress and helping families move from crisis toward long-term self-sufficiency.

DEFINING SUCCESS, *continued from page 1*

With the encouragement of their mentors, families work hard to reach small, but often significant goals. Cumulatively, these small success stories create a holistic story of remarkable growth and change. Here are some examples:

- Opening a savings account and arranging for 5% of each paycheck to be directly deposited into the savings account.
- Calling the financial-assistance department of a hospital to apply for a reduction in a hospital bill.
- Applying for a secure credit card, and getting approved. Making regular, monthly payments on that credit card to boost the credit score.
- Completing the FAFSA application as the first step in going back to school.
- Calling the collections agency to negotiate a pay-to-remove settlement for an old bill.
- Submitting paperwork to begin the process of seeking child-support payments from the child’s father.
- Saying “no” to a family member who asks to borrow money and has a track record of never paying it back.
- Making a will so the child will be protected, just in case.
- Calling around for quotes and eventually switching to a less-expensive car insurance carrier.
- Making morning coffee at home instead of relying on the drive-through.
- Reducing discretionary spending for three months in a row.
- Arranging for the child to be evaluated for possible developmental delays by early-intervention professionals.

These success stories do not translate into pie charts, graphs, or fancy statistics. But the reality is that these regular, gradual accomplishments are what bring confidence and hope to the family as they work, every day, to build a brighter future.

FamilyForward

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**YOUR VOICE MATTERS TO OUR MISSION
PLEASE COMPLETE OUR SUPPORTER SURVEY**

We're working to build more meaningful connections with the people who make our mission possible. We'd love to better understand what matters most to you and how you'd like to stay connected. *Note: If you can't access the form, please contact Beverly Worthington for an alternative format, at beverly.worthington@family-forward.org.*



Scan this code to
provide your feedback.

**JOIN US THURSDAY, MAY 28:
FamilyFOREward Golf Outing**

Chevy Chase Country Club
1000 N. Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling, IL 60090

Gather your foursome now (or sign up as an individual) and get registered for this exciting day of golf (scramble format) with friends, new and old. All are welcome, from expert golfers to novices. It will be a great time on the links, all for a wonderful cause — helping FamilyForward families!

SCHEDULE

11:00 AM: Check-In Begins, Lunch Included
12:30 PM: Shotgun Start
5:30 PM: Program, Prizes & Buffet Dinner

REGISTRATION

Foursome: \$750
Individual: \$200
Dinner Only: \$50



Register by May 20!

We are grateful to our sponsors! Stop by family-forward.org/golf-outing to learn more.



REGISTER TODAY!

Scan this code
or visit the event page:
family-forward.org/golf-outing