



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR 'STRATEGY' DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

by Tim Wayman

I recall an old Saturday Night Live sketch during the 2000 presidential campaign when Will Ferrell, playing the part of George W. Bush, was asked to sum up, in a single word, his approach to problem solving and, in turn, the best argument for his candidacy. His simple answer: "Strategy."

While this bit of satire was all about poking fun at candidates in a presidential debate, developing a strategic plan for a business or, in our case, a nonprofit, is demanding when dealing with a shifting landscape and unexpected developments. Over the past year, the FamilyForward Board of Directors has engaged in a strategic-planning process to re-examine our objectives and identify key opportunities and challenges facing our organization. The following actions and initiatives will continue to move this organization forward in an impactful way:

- A reconfirmation of our mission statement to serve low-income, working families in the northwest suburbs through mentoring, rental assistance and other support services.
- A shift of the executive director role from part time to full time.
- The hiring of an additional case manager to help oversee our program's more complex family situations as we expand the geographical region served.
- A sharpened focus on using digital tools to educate the community about our work in the community: sharing more family-impact stories online, creating engaging digital and video content, boosting online awareness through enhanced search engine optimization, and other marketing initiatives.

As we continue to implement more of the action plans defined during our strategic-planning process, we recognize that new and changing external factors continue to arise. These shifting circumstances affect our client families, our supporters, and our organization. While FamilyForward does not rely on federal funding, worrisome pronouncements coming out of Washington such as job cuts, alteration of business hiring practices, higher tariffs, and more restrictive food-assistance programs could negatively impact our families' ability to succeed in our program. Also, as a fundraising organization, employment uncertainties and stock-market fluctuations could have a significant negative effect on donations from both individuals and businesses, as well as on grant opportunities.

Back to "strategy." Strategic planning is not a magic bullet. Stuff happens and successful organizations need to adapt. Know that we as a board of directors and staff, regardless of outside influences, will relentlessly pursue our mission to serve families in need of our support and guidance.

WE LOVE OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY! THANK YOU, ST. THERESA CATHOLIC CHURCH, PALATINE

For over a decade, the congregation of St. Theresa Catholic Church in Palatine has been an invaluable partner in our mission to strengthen families in the northwest suburbs. This year, the parish chose to support FamilyForward through its Lenten Focus charitable-giving effort in March and April. With the help of special collection boxes (*shown, right*), St. Theresa's caring community collected nearly \$10,000 for FF! Thank you, St. Theresa Catholic Church, for your compassionate generosity. *Read the entire story at family-forward.org/blog.*



FAMILY SUCCESS STORY

MOTIVATED MOM FINDS FINANCIAL STABILITY

Single mom “Grace” had always wanted to become a nurse. She knew her job as a caregiver in a group home for people with disabilities would never pay her enough to support her family independently. But between working full time and parenting her child, there never seemed to be a “good” time to get started on a nursing career. As soon as Grace was accepted into FamilyForward’s two-year program, our staff offered to pay the tuition fee for a certified nursing assistant (CNA) program. Within a few weeks, Grace began the CNA course. Squeezing in classes and clinicals while still working full time meant that Grace had some late nights. But her hard work paid off. When she completed the course and passed the licensing exam three months later, her hourly wage immediately increased.



Making connections, making progress

Grace grew up in a paycheck-to-paycheck environment, and her habit of paying what she can, when she can, continued into adulthood. Grace’s FF volunteer mentors helped her put some structure to managing her money and she eventually became more aware of where her money was going each month. Her mentors helped Grace get on a schedule of paying bills while steadily contributing to her rainy-day fund. Grace’s case manager connected her with a FF participant who graduated from our program several years ago and went on to complete her LPN (licensed practical nurse) certification. She talked with Grace about LPN programs and even shared some of her old textbooks with Grace. And Grace’s momentum continued. When she finished the FF program earlier this year, Grace had less than a year of classes left before completing her LPN certification.

As she completed the FamilyForward program, Grace wrote: “Of course the rent assistance was helpful. But support for school was most important. It got the ball rolling for me. Somebody was believing in me so I knew I couldn’t give up. Even with all the craziness, I kept going. With you guys here, I had to stay on top of my stuff.”

Despite all the ups and downs in Grace’s life throughout her time in the FamilyForward program, she was still able to reach her goals. Her strong motivation, combined with the relentless encouragement and support of FF staff and her volunteer mentors, made all the difference as she worked to gain financial stability. *This article has been abridged. Read the complete story at family-forward.org/blog.*

A BELATED THANK-YOU

Each year, we recognize our wonderful financial donors in our newsletter. This past February, we inadvertently omitted the following supporters. We apologize for this error and thank you for your impactful contributions! Together with all our supporters and partners, we are making a real difference in the community, helping local families gain financial stability and a better life. Thank you to **First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights, Presbyterian Women; The Presbyterian Church of Palatine, Presbyterian Women**; and the following individuals and families:

Craig Brooks

Joy and Roger Fick

Connie and Peter Landwehr

Noel and Andy Walton

Tamera and Brian Walton

MISSION STATEMENT

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

STAFF

Executive Director
Beverly Worthington

Program Manager
Sarah Harte

Case Manager
Pam Van De Walle

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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.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

WELCOME, DOUG HALL



We are very happy to welcome Doug Hall to the FamilyForward Board of Directors. With deep ties to the northwest suburbs of Chicago and a strong desire to empower people, Doug brings his analytical mindset and fiscal-management experience to help FamilyForward continue to grow and serve more families.

Stepping up to make a difference

Doug has been a supporter of FamilyForward for over 10 years. He first discovered this organization (then known as Faith Community Homes) after his niece's birthday party, when he learned that one of the party guests and her family were living in their car. Instead of just dropping off their child like the other parents, these parents told Doug's sister-in-law that they decided to stay for the party in an attempt to just "feel normal, even for a short time." Feeling called to do something to help the family, Doug and his wife, Maria, discovered FamilyForward. Then, they made a significant donation on the family's behalf when the family entered the FF program. "FamilyForward has been part of our giving plan ever since," says Doug. Now having recently retired, it was a natural progression for Doug to join the board in February 2025, allowing him to contribute to FamilyForward through his time and talent in addition to financial giving.

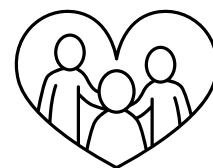
Throughout Doug's career, he held roles focused on using data-driven insight "to help organizations make better decisions. I believe bringing this thinking to FamilyForward will help it grow and improve effectiveness of donations." Doug aims to contribute his frugal mentality and life experience with smart money management to the board. His goal is to bring another analytical voice to the table, "to help the organization meet its needs in the challenging economic environment." Doug believes that by "empowering those who have struggled financially, FamilyForward strengthens the broader community as a whole." And he is excited to join this effort. "In today's environment — marked by rising costs of housing, food, and everyday living — FamilyForward's work is more important than ever."

This article has been abridged. Read the complete story at family-forward.org/blog.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FAMILYFORWARD MENTOR?

FamilyForward thoughtfully matches families with volunteer mentors based on location, schedule availability, and rapport. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer mentor, please contact Program Manager Sarah Harte at sarah.harte@family-forward.org.



NOW COLLECTING DONATIONS OF LAUNDRY DETERGENT

Did you know FamilyForward maintains a small pantry of household and personal-care supplies for the families participating in our program? Currently, our pantry is low on laundry detergent. Through the end of the month, please stop by our Arlington Heights location to drop off donations. A collection box is in the reception area at First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights (302 N. Dunton Ave.), which is open Monday – Thursday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Thank you!

LEAVE US A REVIEW! ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Want to help more families and supporters find FamilyForward online? Give us a positive review! Did you know that the websites of organizations with many positive reviews show up higher in Google searches? That means people can find those organizations more easily. To help us rank higher, Google us! First, type *FamilyForward Arlington Heights* into your browser. Then, click on the Review button on our FF organization page that shows up. Another option is to leave a review on our Facebook page. Click on the Reviews tab under the banner image at the top of our page. ***Why not add a positive review in both places?*** Thanks for helping to boost our online presence. Your reviews will help more families find us.



FamilyForward

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Arlington Heights, IL 60004

family-forward.org
847-342-0846

Follow us on social media:



@FamForward | FamilyForward



Scan this code for instant
access to news and events!

Scan here to donate.



COMING EVENTS

FamilyFOREward Golf Outing

THURSDAY, JUNE 12 — REGISTER BY MAY 23!

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

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

REGISTRATION

Foursome: \$750
Individual Golfer: \$195



REGISTER TODAY!

Scan this code or
visit [family-forward/golf-outing](https://family-forward.org/golf-outing)



Giving Hope Is Coming!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 | 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Cotillion Banquets | 360 S. Creekside Dr., Palatine, IL 60074

We're planning a fantastic afternoon to celebrate and raise funds for our mission to strengthen low-income, working families. Stay tuned for the Big Reveal of our fun theme. We hope you will join us for this memorable day, so be sure to save the date!