



The Gift of Life

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Rooted in the Community





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Lindsay Bass, Director of Compliance &  
Quality Improvement  
Mona Davis, Director of Marketing &  
Community Outreach/CAN Coordinator  
Kristi Gay, Nurse Supervisor  
Nurse-Family Partnership

Kathy Pounds, Nurse Supervisor  
Nurse-Family Partnership  
Annie Rogers, Director of Human  
Resources/Payroll  
Jolanda Sheppard, Director of  
Social Support Services  
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### *A Message From Gift of Life Executive Director Dr. Regina Traylor*

Community is the staple of all we do at the Gift of Life Foundation. Our roots in the community have never been stronger as we waded through the coronavirus pandemic and changes in every facet of our lives. Despite the challenges faced and an uncertain future, we remain steadfast to the Gift of Life mission to improve the health and well-being of at-risk mothers and babies to build stronger communities.

During year two of the pandemic, we took the same approach to service that we implemented when it first began in 2020. Throughout our annual report you will see examples of how we focused on expanding partnerships, serving families, investing in staff, securing funding, reaching the community through outreach and empowering families through education and connection to community resources.

Though we spent the majority of the year working remotely, we've remained deeply connected to the families we serve. Virtual visits, mobile phone check-ins, email and socially-distanced, outdoor or drive-by visits let our families know that we were still there for them. They were assured that we would not leave them alone to navigate their pregnancy and parenting journey.

We've also remained deeply connected to our community partners. Never has it been more true that "we are all in this together", and that commitment to our partners has been beneficial to Gift of Life and added value to those we collaborate with and serve.

Our work is making an impact and I'm proud that it has contributed to the decline in Alabama's infant mortality rate, but we still must do more to address the significant racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality that stubbornly persists. We will continue to embrace the challenge to reduce infant mortality through home visiting services, one-on-one and group education, and coaching. We have grown in ways over the last year that I never thought possible, and we will continue to find innovative ways to reach families that could benefit from our programs.

Thank you for remaining committed to our important work.

## Expanding Partnerships

*Community partnerships were a major area of focus across all Gift of Life programs during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Strengthening current and cultivating new referral relationships, while partnering with area non-profits to provide resources, education and other support to our families helped us further our impact.*



### >>> MY CARE ALABAMA

Gift of Life staff made a successful presentation to My Care Alabama Central, the Alabama Coordinated Health Network (ACHN) entity for the Central Region, and formally established a referral partnership. My Care provides primary care, family planning, and maternity care coordination services with Medicaid recipients and providers, and refers pregnant women to Gift of Life for our home visiting and family coaching programs.

### >>> COPE PREGNANCY

GOL expanded its referral relationship with COPE Pregnancy, a local crisis pregnancy agency in Montgomery, to include offering education and support to expecting mothers by presenting monthly classes on mental health, breastfeeding and other topics at COPE's center. In addition, GOL nurses and family coaches are on site at COPE one day a week to share information about our services and cultivate referrals to our programs. Here, Nurse Home Visitor Brittany Barnes prepares to meet with potential program participants at COPE.



### >>> PAY IT FORWARD

GOL maintained its longstanding partnership with Pay It Forward, a program created by the Dental-Health Network designed to help low-income Montgomery-area citizens who don't have dental insurance get the dental care they need while giving back to the community. Led by Mobile Family Coach Kathy Lightsey, GOL moms and dads have the opportunity to receive dental care at participating dental offices by completing volunteer service hours. Participation waned slightly due to the pandemic, but GOL is committed to working with Hands on River Region, who sponsors the program, to make sure our families can access the dental benefit.





## The Wellness Coalition

### >>> WELLNESS COALITION

Gift of Life's Community Action Network (GOL CAN) partnered with the Wellness Coalition to promote its state-wide Normalizing Breastfeeding Campaign, a year-long project that seeks to highlight the importance of breastfeeding in communities of color where breastfeeding rates have been historically

low. The CAN solicited participation for the campaign and helped deliver life-size breastfeeding cut-outs to physicians' offices, churches and service agencies. In addition, Executive Director Dr. Regina Traylor represented GOL at the campaign's kick-off rally at the Alabama State Capitol on March 14 and GOL breastfeeding moms were given an opportunity to be featured in the cutouts used in the campaign.



### >>> CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL



Cultivating referral partners in Gift of Life's expansion counties has been challenging during the pandemic, but our staff have been proactive by making calls, visiting agencies, physicians offices and attending community meetings to re-ignite partnerships and raise awareness about GOL programs. One key new partnership for our Nurse-Family Partnership is with the Children's Policy Council (CPC). Nurses Pamela Jacobs, Kawana Jackson-Tarbert and Tina Ledbetter have presented and have attended CPC meetings in Macon, Autauga and Russell counties. CPC supports providers as they work collaboratively to develop community service plans to address the needs of children ages 0-19 and their families.

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### >>> A CHILD'S LIFE RESOURCES, LLC

Gift of Life signed a MOU in August 2020 with A Child's Life Resources, LLC to provide clients with mental health services. The partnership utilized master's-level counseling students from local universities to provide mental health support to families receiving home visiting services through GOL. The mental health supports included individual and/or group activities. All activities were provided virtually using Zoom or over the phone and were provided under the supervision of a licensed counselor by an accredited institution.

### >>> ZETA PHI BETA STORK'S NEST



GOL CAN partnered with Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.'s Alpha Rho Zeta Chapter on the roll-out of a new prenatal nutrition program aimed at helping expecting moms incorporate more fruits and vegetables in their diet and address obesity. Funding was secured through national

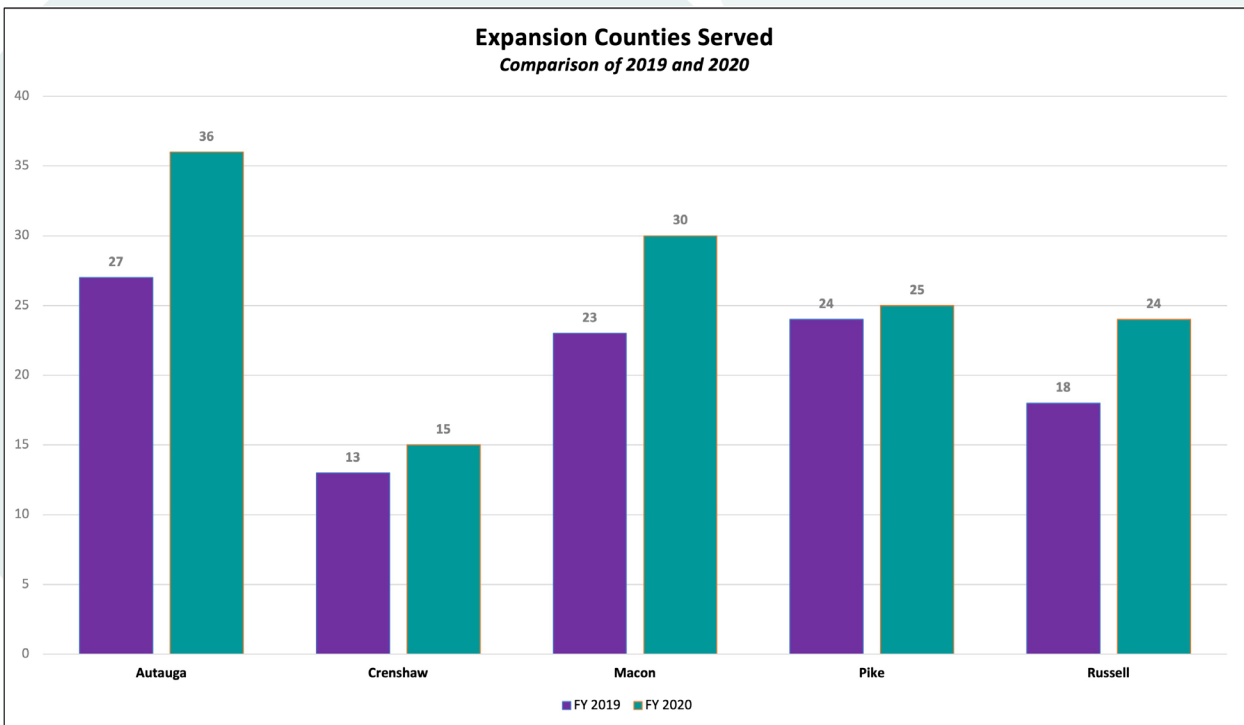
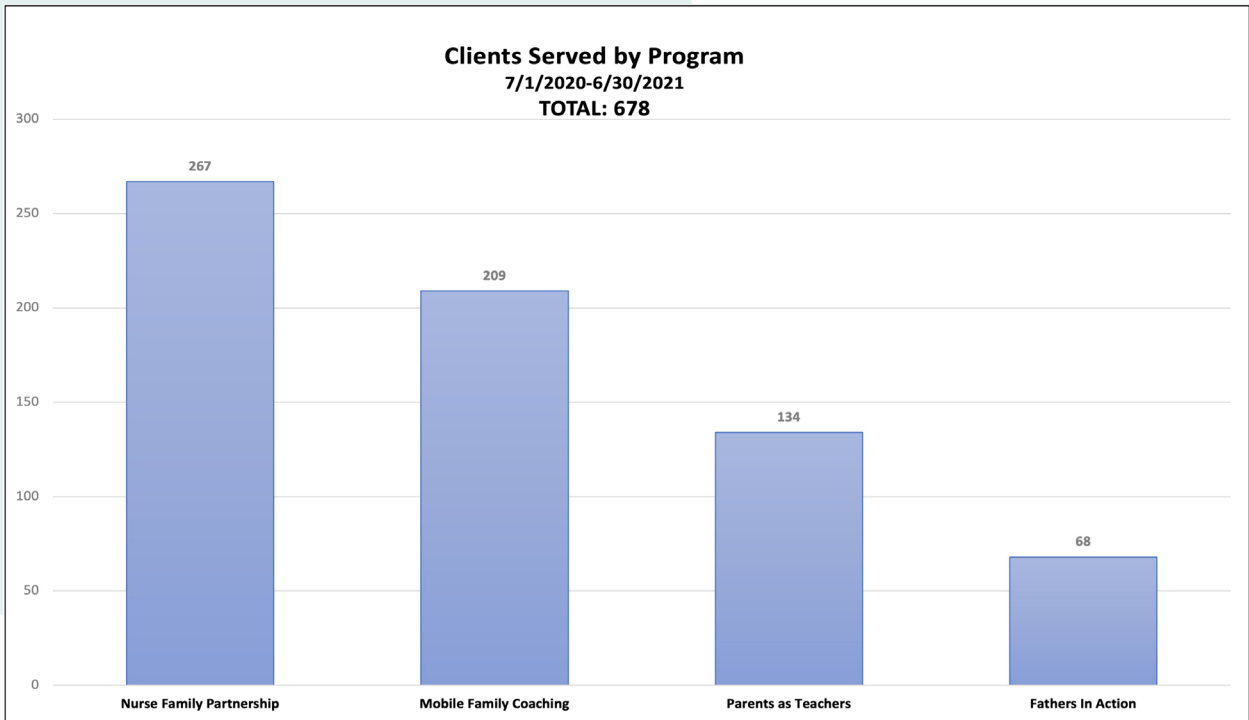
Zeta Phi Beta in partnership with other corporate donors. About 28 Montgomery moms, including several GOL moms, signed up to receive \$25 gift cards to purchase healthy food and attend two free virtual prenatal nutrition classes.

### Other Referral Partnerships:

- First Choice
- Montgomery County Public Health Department
- Montgomery Public Schools
- Montgomery County Women's, Infants and Children's (WIC) Program
- Current and former Gift of Life families

# Serving Families

*Cultivating referral partnerships, radio and television ads, the strategic use of social media and client recommendations helped GOL maintain enrollment levels during FY 2020-2021.*



*Participation in Nurse-Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers in our five expansion counties grew from 105 in FY 2019 to 130 in FY 2020 or 23%.*

**Gift of Life Foundation  
New Enrollments  
7/1/2020- 6/30/2021  
TOTAL: 331**

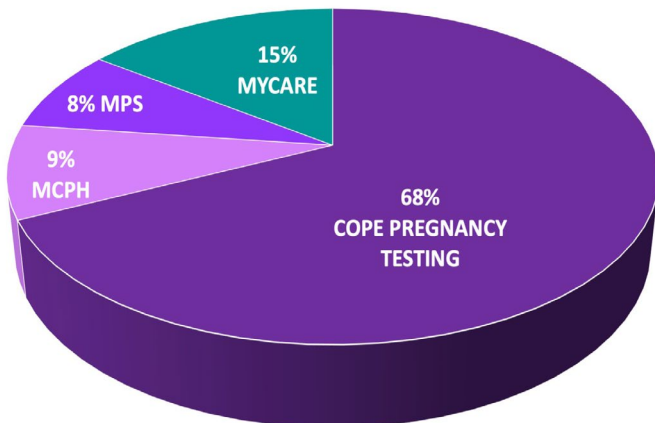


**New Enrollments  
(7/1/2020- 6/30-2021)**

NFP-Autauga	12
NFP-Macon	12
NFP- Montgomery	166
NFP- Russell	7

Fathers in Action	22
PAT- Montgomery	53
PAT- Pike	1
PAT- Crenshaw	3
MFC- Montgomery	55
<b>TOTAL: 331</b>	

**Top Referral Sources**



**Top Referral Sources**

- 68% Cope Pregnancy
- 9% Montgomery County Health Department
- 8% Montgomery Public Schools
- 15% My Care Alabama

**Total Clients Served:**

FY 2019: 672  
FY 2020: 678

# Investing in Staff/Human Relations



*Gift of Life's Human Resources Department took on the challenge of developing a crisis management plan and formalizing our hiring policies and procedures. These efforts were designed to enhance employee recruitment and retention, and offer guidance for managing emergencies. In addition, HR Director Annie Rogers established her department's first-ever monthly employee Spotlight Award. Launched in January 2020, supervisors and staff nominated an employee who has made a special contribution to GOL that month while recognizing and reinforcing the behaviors and values that are important at GOL. Recipients received a beautiful basket filled with office supplies, a \$10 Starbucks gift card, and a motivational plaque.*

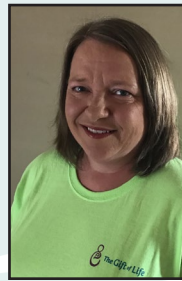
## FY 2020-2021 Spotlight Award Recipients:



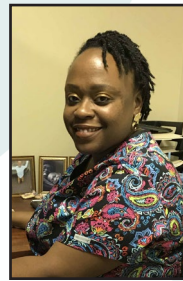
Jenni Bass



Carrie Wadsworth



Patrice Lockhart



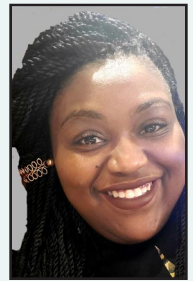
Autumn Ellis



Jessie Yates



Kawana Jackson-Tarbert



Brittany Barnes

## EOTQ Award Recognizes Excellence

Human Resources continued the tradition of recognizing outstanding employees through GOL's Employee of the Quarter Award (EOTQ). EOTQ recognizes high-performing employees who not only excel in their duties, but possess a positive attitude, are creative, and go above and beyond in their service to clients and/or Gift of Life. Each employee may submit only one nomination per quarter. Recipients receive a certificate, \$50 and one half-day of leave.

### *Our FY 2020-2021 winners were:*

Mona Davis, Director of Marketing and Community Outreach

Jody Sheppard, Director of Social Support Services | Laura Collins, Parent Educator, Parenting Forward

Laura Whatley, Administrative Assistant, Nurse-Family Partnership | Tina Berry, Parent Educator, Parenting Forward



*Mona Davis*



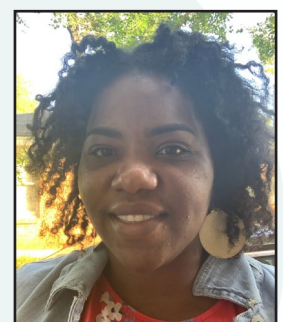
*Jody Sheppard*



*Laura Collins*



*Laura Whatley*



*Tina Berry*



# Securing New Funding

*Gift of Life aggressively pursued new funding sources during FY 2020-2021, as well maintained existing relationships with current funders.*

## Notable Grant Awards

### >>> Daniel Foundation of Alabama

GOL was awarded a \$225,000 grant from the Daniel Foundation of Alabama to improve pregnancy outcomes for first-time mothers. GOL will receive \$75,000 per year for a period of three years to support Nurse-Family Partnership.

### >>> Children's Trust Fund of Alabama

GOL was awarded a \$150,000 grant from Children's Trust Fund of Alabama for Nurse-Family Partnership. The grant will fund salaries for three NFP nurse home visitors.

### >>> Alabama Power Foundation

GOL received \$20,000 from the Alabama Power Foundation to purchase personal protective equipment, supplies for respiratory hygiene, enhanced use of telehealth, safety barriers, thermometers and sanitation supplies.

## Donations/Fundraising During FY 2020-2021

Operation Christmas Bottoms: \$1,500

Holiday Gifting Program: \$4,600

Giving Tuesday: \$275

Joint Public Charity Hospital Board: \$60,000

Alliance Insurance: \$396.88

United Way of Greater Philadelphia: \$315.41



*Corporate donations helped us cross the finish line in 2020 and fund special projects that are not covered by grant funding. Parent Educator Keonia Rogers approached Home Depot Chantilly Appliances Manager Keesha Sankey about nominating Gift of Life as a local agency to support during the holidays. Impressed with GOL's work, the store manager Lee Davis and human resources director Kristen Cheek presented GOL with a check for \$1,000 to be used to purchase diapers and baby wipes to support our annual Operation Christmas Bottoms Drive. Thanks to Home Depot, we were able to meet the needs of GOL families who experience diaper need. They also helped promote our hashtag #nowetbottoms2020*

# Reaching the Community through Outreach

## CAN/CAT Team Provides Law Enforcement Training

ADPH's Alabama Death Review System, River Region Community Action Team and Gift of Life Community Action Network collaborated on two trainings for law enforcement officers in Birmingham and Montgomery on how to complete Sudden Infant Death Reporting Forms and how to respond to child death incidents that take place in a home. The goal is to improve the accuracy of SIDS reporting cases across the state.



## Helping Families During the Holidays

Gift of Life hosted a Christmas Holiday Pop-Up Shoppe on December 7-8, 2020 to support our families and give back during the pandemic. About 75 GOL families had an opportunity to select new and gently used infant and toddler clothing, hats and shoes, warm blankets, coats and jackets, toys and other baby gear that were donated to GOL throughout the year. The event was organized by Mobile Family Coach Lawanda May and Marketing and Outreach Director Mona Davis.



GOL Nurse-Family Partnership partnered with Auburn University Montgomery's School of Nursing to create opportunities for nursing students to shadow our nurse home visitors and learn about the services Gift of Life provides families.



## PF Launches Community Literacy Project



The Gift of Life  
Parenting Forward Program

### March is Reading Month

Join our Parenting Forward moms in reading for at least 20 minutes a day with your baby!

#### Benefits of Reading

- Boosts Brain Development
- Improves Language Skills
- Enhances Bonding

[www.golfound.org](http://www.golfound.org)



Jordan & Baby Reginald, 3 months

GOL's Parenting Forward (PF) Program created a month-long literacy project during the month of March to encourage moms across the community to dedicate 20 minutes each day to read to their babies. The project was supported by Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc.'s Mu Chapter, a partner with the PF program, and featured six PF moms and their babies reading. Other activities during the month included a community reading shower event where participants had an opportunity to read to each other, and receive free books and a talking Mother Goose! In addition, the Iota's donated books to help PF create a Lending Library, where moms can check out developmentally appropriate books to read to their baby. The community project was led by Parent Educators Tina Berry and Laura Collins.

## Marketing Activities/Community Events



Gift of Life employed a number of marketing strategies to raise awareness about our services and increase referrals. At left, large outdoor signs were used in Crenshaw County to draw potential clients to our Parents as Teachers Program. Billboards were installed in Pike, Russell and Montgomery counties; and radio and television spots currently air on WSFA, WCOV and WZHT-FM.



Gift of Life Fatherhood Coach Jessie Yates and Jolanda Sheppard, Director of Social Service Programs, appeared on WVAS-FM's "Perspectives with Rob Taylor", a public affairs show, to discuss the important role fathers have in the development of a child and how our Fathers in Action Program supports them. It was one of many outreach activities for dads.

Gift of Life kept its tradition of celebrating families that complete our programs by hosting our first-ever virtual graduation ceremony on September 18, 2020. The pandemic opened the event to a broader community audience and was viewed pre-recorded live on Facebook and Youtube by more than 500 viewers. About 91 families were recognized. The ceremony included a keynote address by former NFP graduate Machara McCall, who passed the Alabama Bar and is now a practicing attorney. The board also presented the Martha Jinright Resilience Award to five outstanding moms who overcame significant challenges during their time in our program to achieve their goals.

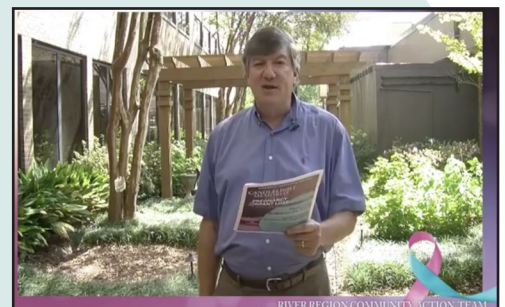


**The Gift of Life**  
**We're Celebrating You**  
 at The Gift of Life Foundation's  
 first-ever Virtual Graduation Program  
**9.18.20 @ 11 a.m.**

Watch our salute to Gift of Life's 2020 graduates live on our YouTube channel at The Gift of Life-MGM or watch a repeat showing later that day on our Facebook page @GOLFound.

Go to our website at [golfound.org/2020-virtual-graduation](http://golfound.org/2020-virtual-graduation) to see photos and a list of our graduates. Register on the page to let us know that you, your family and friends plan to watch. When you register you will automatically be entered to win raffle prizes and will receive an event reminder to watch.

GOL co-presented the 2020 State Infant Mortality Summit "Examining the Roots of Maternal and Infant Mortality" virtually on September 9, 2020 in partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health and Birmingham Healthy Start Plus. More than 200 health and social services providers and community agencies attended the event which included presentations on infant and maternal health in Alabama; telemedicine as a tool to empower rural moms; health equity and birth justice; and conversations on maternal, fetal and infant loss.



GOL CAN and River Region Community Action Team presented its annual Candlelight Memorial in honor of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day virtually on Facebook on October 15, 2015. The event offered families who have experienced infant or pregnancy loss an opportunity to remember loved ones in a supportive online community. More than 200 viewed the event and participated in the live chat. Faith Radio Ministry Relations Director Billy Irving, pictured above, served as emcee.

**LEARN HOW TO KEEP ME SAFE WHILE I SLEEP**

**Alone-Track-Crib**

YOU MUST REGISTER AT [WWW.GOLFOUND.ORG](http://WWW.GOLFOUND.ORG) BY MARCH 15 TO RECEIVE YOUR LINK. FOR MORE INFO, CALL (334) 399-0158

**The Gift of Life**  
COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

Expectant and new moms, dads and grandparents are invited to attend our **FREE 30-minute Safe Sleep Class** and learn how to reduce the risk of SIDS & sleep-related causes of infant death.

**VIRTUAL SAFE SLEEP CLASS DATE:**  
**MARCH 19, 2021**  
**11:30 - NOON | VIA ZOOM**

All attendees will receive a Safe Sleep course & brochure and will be entered into a drawing to win a portable crib. Winners will be announced at the end of each class.

GOL CAN presented two virtual safe sleep classes as part of its Safe Sleep Sundays project. Safe Sleep Sundays seeks to promote safe sleep awareness to faith-based communities to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death. Onesies, portable cribs and hand fans are given to participants to reinforce the safe sleep message. The project is funded by a grant from the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery.



**The mission of The Gift of Life Foundation is to improve the health and well-being of mothers, babies and families to build stronger communities.**