President's Perspective

Early in 2020, before any of us really understood what was coming, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated 2020 as the “International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.”

This was done in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. The goal was to use this special designation to highlight a projected worldwide shortage of over nine million nurses and encourage an increase in the global nursing workforce.

If 2020 taught us anything, we all now have a whole new appreciation for the important role of nurses and other healthcare professionals. Did any of us fully appreciate how our individual, family, community, national, and global health and well-being is impacted by having sufficient educated, trained healthcare professionals?

Pandemic lesson 101: Thank the nurses.

If 2020 taught us anything, we all now have a whole new appreciation for teachers. Having children learning from home through non-traditional instruction (NTI) for most of 2020 was a great reminder of how much our children need teachers and how parents rely on teachers as part not only of their children’s classroom learning but also as a guide to help students assimilate into structured environments with their peers. With 174 Family Scholar House K-12 students, we know how much those teachers contribute to our children’s preparation for a strong future and we are all depending upon them as we get back to the classroom. It’s time for us all to thank the teachers.

The Year of the Nurse: My husband and I were only half-way joking when we considered asking the UPS delivery guy to be in our holiday photo. For us, staying healthy at home meant having many things delivered to us. Not once did any of them say, “Seriously, Cathe, you had to have this?” They just kept showing up with my supplies and a smile. As I write this, they are delivering the vaccines that will not only save lives but help us get to a new normalcy. Whether you wave through the window or mask up at the door, be sure to thank them.

The Year of Logistics: My husband and I were only half-way joking when we considered asking the UPS delivery guy to be in our holiday photo. For us, staying healthy at home meant having many things delivered to us. Not once did any of them say, “Seriously, Cathe, you had to have this?” They just kept showing up with my supplies and a smile. As I write this, they are delivering the vaccines that will not only save lives but help us get to a new normalcy. Whether you wave through the window or mask up at the door, be sure to thank them.

The Year of the Educator: Every parent I know has a whole new appreciation for teachers. Having children learning from home through non-traditional instruction (NTI) for most of 2020 was a great reminder of how much our children need teachers and how parents rely on teachers as part not only of their children’s classroom learning but also as a guide to help students assimilate into structured environments with their peers. With 174 Family Scholar House K-12 students, we know how much those teachers contribute to our children’s preparation for a strong future and we are all depending upon them as we get back to the classroom. It’s time for us all to thank the teachers.

In this emPower Magazine Career Issue and as we head into 2021, what designation do you think would be most appropriate? Here are a few of my ideas:

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The Year of Integrated Technology: If we had not done so before, we learned in 2020 that technology is not a luxury. Smart phones, laptops, high-speed internet, and Wi-Fi were essential needs for work, social interaction, virtual medical care, and virtually everything else in 2020. From this we learned that there are many ways to be present with one another, work together and hold meetings, parties, and worship services. It felt strange at first and we spent a lot of time saying “You’re on mute” but we figured it out and we included more people who might not have been able to join us in person. Even as we look forward to in-person and group activities, I believe that we will continue to integrate technology into our lives and become more comfortable with new ways to be together. So, let’s take this a step further and make sure that everyone can participate by enhancing our infrastructure.

Finally, I offer The Year of New Priorities: So much of our routine was stripped away in 2020 and now we have choices about what to add back as our communities return to normalcy. Let me speak for myself in saying that I plan to be intentional about how I spend my time in 2021. Of all the things I miss, hugs from my extended family and from our FSH children is at the top of the list. I also miss traveling to see other parts of the world and learn from other cultures. In 2021, I plan to make more time for hugs and travel and I also want to learn from others and their pandemic experiences.

If you want to share your thoughts with me, please contact me at cdykstra@familyscholarhouse.org. We can schedule a time to video chat or even meet in person over a cup of coffee. I would love to hear from you.

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cover:
Keisha and son Paul, age 5, taking care of each other’s hearts.
Cover Art by: Mac Brown Media, LLC

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Upcoming Events

Sunday, May 9, 2021
mother’s day
Each year, more than 3,000 single mothers seek help from FSH because they want a better life for their children. Mother’s Day is always a special time for us! You can support FSH when you order flowers or gifts from Nanz and Kraft Florists at nanzandkraft.com. Through the Helping Hands program, you can select Family Scholar House to direct $2 for each online order to our program.

June 2021
Virtual graduation celebration
Our team will once again get and coordinate an entire week of celebration for our amazing graduates. The celebration will include a parade through all five campuses, special deliveries, and a Zoom celebration. We are so excited to celebrate our Class of 2021!
shred day  In November we partnered with Docu-Confidential to host a ‘Protect Your Identity’ event at our Stoddard Johnston Scholar House campus. FSH staff, participants and community members stopped by to shred papers, bills, and financial documents that had accumulated while working from home. Docu-Confidential has been an advocate for FSH families for many years: if you are looking to shred items at work or home, consider partnering with Docu-Confidential.

virtual career coaching  Despite a global pandemic, our adult scholars have not wavered in their pursuit of graduation and stable employment. For that reason, FSH career-readiness resources, like all of our services, have simply moved online. Our career coach meets virtually with FSH participants to create resumes, cover letters, and job applications. Working together, our coach pairs community partners with participants for virtual meetings and career-development networking. Additionally, we hosted Virtual Career Talk Panels and even facilitated virtual Linda’s Closet shopping experience to ensure our scholars are able to dress the part as they pursue their dreams.

A COVID Christmas

Though we weren’t able to come together and celebrate the holidays this year, COVID didn’t cancel holiday cheer. At FSH, we believe Santa finds everyone. Our Adopt-A-Family program made Christmas possible for 302 families. Our Louisville community brought magic to Family Scholar House and turned our Louisville campus into Santa’s workshop.

We are so grateful for the individuals that carefully selected each item for their special family. Adopt-A-Family is about so much more than giving gifts to our families. It’s about giving our families support, encouragement, motivation, and most importantly, love. All of the sponsors truly embody the spirit of the season, as they give back and pay it forward.

parenting toolbox.  Navigating parenting is difficult in the best scenarios without adding in a global pandemic, non-traditional instruction (NTI), college courses going online and coping with uncertainty. Our Family Advocates have hosted support groups, toddler book clubs, mindfulness activities, crafts for our families to do together and most recently a discussion and activity for healthy coping mechanisms. Parents and children joined together to talk about “big emotions” and what we do with them. Everyone walked away with “coping strategy wheels,” a realization that we are not alone, and a growing number of “tools” in their toolbox.
Since 2014, Wine Women & Shoes has provided a unique opportunity for our supporters to celebrate the parent scholars of Family Scholar House with an evening of fabulous wines, fashionable footwear, girlfriends, and fun. WLKY’s Vicki Dortch serves as our Mistress of Ceremonies and brings her enthusiasm to every event. 100% of the proceeds raised at this event support the programs and services that empower our deserving families to succeed in education and achieve self-sufficiency.

On March 5, 2021, Cafe by GE Appliances, a Heier company, will present our eighth annual Wine Women & Shoes event, this year a Virtual Party. As Family Scholar House’s first Sustaining Partner, with corporate commitments and gifts surpassing the $1 million level, we send a special thank you to GE Appliances for believing in our families and supporting our mission!

While volunteering may look and feel different, we still need you, now more than ever. The support of community partners is vital in making it possible for us to serve over 4,500 families with over 5,000 children annually. We offer virtual volunteer opportunities for people of all ages and groups of all sizes – you can find a few of them listed below. If you are interested in volunteering, or would like to attend a volunteer orientation, please contact us at GetInvolved@FamilyScholarHouse.org or 502.584.8090.

pantry essentials
As we continue to meet the growing needs of families in our community, we are in need of some specific items that help us address food insecurity. Donations of the following: spaghetti, canned vegetables, fruit cups, small water bottles and individual bags of pretzels/goldfish allow us to make snack packs for our young scholars participating in NTI and meal kits for families across the community in need.

fsh academy
FSH Academy is a collection of online workshops that cover life skills ranging from academic success to financial literacy and career preparation. Videos are short and focus on various topics around a particular theme. This allows participants to conveniently watch videos on-the-go or between classes and easily revisit specific content, when needed. We need your help as subject-matter experts. If you are interested in sharing your expertise through FSH Academy, please contact Sheha Thapa at SThapa@familyscholarhouse.org. Our scholars are eager to learn from you.

job shadowing
73% of our parent scholars are the first in their families to go to college and, even more, the first to have professional careers. While some have an idea of what careers are of interest to them, many do not. Job-shadowing provides a peek into the workplaces and an introduction to workplace behaviors. Due to COVID-19 this can be facilitated virtually or by providing a full or half-day on-site job shadowing, our volunteers have a chance to showcase their companies and skills while helping our students refine their own goals for the future.

Though Wine Women & Shoes 2021 will look much different, we understand the importance of protecting our supporters and volunteers from the spread of coronavirus and are eagerly preparing a fun, interactive evening full of surprises, wine, Shoe Guys and of course, our fantastic graduates. This is also your chance to join us virtually at this usually sold-out event!

As circumstances and safety allow, sponsors will have the opportunity to host their own Wine Women & Shoes Watch Party complete with wine, glasses, swag bags, face masks, desserts, plates, napkins, and everything needed for a fun, exclusive evening with friends to support Family Scholar House. We will broadcast the event live so that our House Parties can watch together on a TV or individuals can join in the fun from their homes.

While we are still finalizing the exact details, we know that it will still include a high-impact fashion show sponsored by Oxmoor Center, silent and live auctions, our outstanding graduates, entertainment, and the live Key-to-the-Vault, sponsored by Churchill Downs and Merkley Kendrick Jewelers, where one lucky supporter will win a $10,000 shopping spree to Merkley Kendrick Jewelers. Raffle tickets are $100 and only 200 will be sold.

Now, more than ever, your support is important, and we hope that you will make plans to join in the fun of Wine Women & Shoes 2021 – a virtual party! Sponsorship, reservations, and Key-to-the-Vault Raffle Tickets are available NOW at: www.WineWomenandShoes.com/Louisville.
**Graduate Spotlight**

Keisha recognized very early that parenting Paul would be difficult as a single mother. She knew she had to further her education to provide him with a life of possibilities; however, she was quickly faced with a difficult dilemma. Returning to school would require her to juggle classes between work shifts and she would rarely see her son, not to mention the challenge of childcare.

That’s when Family Scholar House and Keisha teamed up to create the future that Keisha had only dreamed possible. Keisha worked hard during the pre-residential program, earning points by attending workshops, meeting with coaches, and creating her road map to career placement. After Keisha and Paul moved into FSH housing, she dedicated herself to all of the programs and activities that supported them both on her way to a degree and a career.

In September 2019, Keisha graduated and is now employed as an LPN, providing compassionate care to her patients. She will be the first to tell you this wouldn’t have been possible without Family Scholar House. The read was not easy but she is proud to say that with odds stacked against her, she was able to graduate with Paul watching. While he is only 5 years old, she believes he will remember the sweat and tears she put into giving him a better life. Keisha showed him that no matter what and against all odds YOU CAN DO IT. Keisha’s biggest dream for Paul is that he accomplish his dreams. She wants Paul to be an upstanding, respectable man that never settles and shoots for the stars.

Keisha’s success is a success for the entire community. As she shares her resilient, compassionate heart with those that need her most. We look forward to seeing Paul discover his passions and make his mark on our community. If he is anything like his mother, he is sure to make a huge difference!

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**LouieConnect.com**

2020 has taken a toll on millions of people across the globe, leading to more people than ever needing support with record-breaking unemployment during a global pandemic.

Our community’s safety net web-app has provided thousands across our community with up-to-date, reliable, free resources they needed most during these difficult times. It directs people to help with essentials (food, diapers, shelter) as well as programs and services (medical, education, parenting programs, addiction) and so much more.

As one community member looked through the resources for those in her situation, her eyes welled up with tears and she responded, “I didn’t know there were so many people who cared about people like me.” That’s what LouieConnect.com does. That’s what our community does. We let people know that there are others who care and want to help. Everyone deserves that kind of support.

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**For Information About Sponsorship Opportunities, Please Contact Kellie Johnston Moore at KJohnston@FamilyScholarHouse.org**

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**502.584.8090**
(text content not provided)
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LOUIECONNECT PROJECT MANAGER
Rev. Matthew Kelley, D.Min.

Mission Statement
To end the cycle of poverty and transform our community by empowering families and youth to succeed in education and achieve life-long self-sufficiency.