THE EDUCATION ISSUE: 
CHANGING LIVES, FAMILIES & 
COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION
I have been thinking about sewing machines lately, specifically my mostly unused one and the very used ones of my grandmothers.

I have let go of any guilt associated with not using my sewing machine (a gift from my mother) as often as the women in my family tree; however, I recognize that, for them, sewing was tradition, experimentation, rebellion, and faith. Their ability to sew was an extension of their love for their families and desire to provide more than just basic clothing, a canvas for the expression of their creativity, a bonding activity with other women in their sewing circles, and a life philosophy of infinite possibility and second chances. They knew when to yield and discard worn or undesirable material but could see a future for even the smallest of remnants to become a patch or part of a baby quilt.

With their sewing machines, my grandmothers could mend anything or make something brand new from the scraps they had on hand. Think about that for just a moment. Mend anything. Make something new.

In June, through the generosity of a dear friend, we held our first Kintsugi workshops for our participants. Kintsugi is the Japanese art of mending broken things into beautiful art by replacing the desire to hide the repair with a desire to honor it. It is a beautiful lesson in healing that transcends broken pottery. Learn more about this participant workshop on page 4.

Whether repairing broken pottery with gold epoxy, draining socks with colorful tread, stitching together a torn seam, or designing and making something new, isn't that what life is about. We try things that work out or don't. We create new things that work out or don't. We pick up the pieces and bond or sew them together and start a new.

Coming out of the pandemic, while I may not spend much time with my sewing machine, I am keenly focused on how we heal AND honor the brokenness, what we hold onto and what we bless and release, and all the possibilities that come from the fresh start we have been given. This is the philosophy of our work.

This is Family Scholar House.
Birthday Buddies

Birthdays are special; the day you came into the world is a day that should always be celebrated. For our single parents, their children’s birthdays are not only a celebration of their life, but also the day our scholars became parents themselves. That parent-child bond is sacred and we enjoy honoring it by celebrating our children’s birthdays. The Birthday Buddies program, ensures that every FSH parent has the supplies they need to celebrate their child’s special day. Members of the community make this possible by donating $10 a month or assembling birthday bags filled with a cake mix, icing, balloons, decorations, and personalized birthday cards to give each of our children a special birthday experience. This kind act takes tremendous pressure off of our single parents because they know they will have all the ingredients to make that extra special birthday treat.

If you are interested in becoming a Birthday Buddy, contact us at GetInvolved@FamilyScholarHouse.org.

Chalking for graduation

We wanted to be sure our graduates felt special and know that we recognize all of their hard work. Our staff, participants, and their children all came together to decorate the sidewalks of our campuses so graduates could be reminded of their accomplishment, each time they walked out of their front door. In addition to chalking, we delivered special treats to our grads and ended the week with a celebratory caravan through all five of our Louisville-area campuses.

Virtual: Career Fair & Health Fair

During pre-pandemic times, FSH would host in-person career and health fairs for our participants to attend. These large, crowded events were not COVID-friendly, so our staff had to reinvent how we could still gather to support our scholars. Throughout March, every Friday afternoon, multiple professionals from across the city of Louisville met virtually to discuss their career paths with FSH participants in a Virtual Career Fair. Each “room” would host one company and a group of scholars to engage in career-related discussions. Our scholars had the opportunity to meet with at least five different professions at each event. Similarly, in April, our Health Fair transformed into a week of virtual interactive workshops and activities, including yoga classes, cooking demonstrations, and sessions on women’s and pediatric health. Different can be good. The virtual format allowed for more volunteers and scholars to participate with convenience and safety in mind.

Kintsugi

It has been a very long year with very little human interaction, but at the beginning of June, our participants experienced our first in-person workshop of 2021.

Ten of our student mothers and several of our staff members came together to practice the art of Kintsugi. Kintsugi (“golden repair”) is a form of Japanese art that involves repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with glue and gold powder. Through this Japanese tradition, treasured broken objects are repaired by filling the cracks with the gold. The belief is that when something has suffered damage and has developed history, it becomes even more beautiful. Understanding the impact of domestic violence and poverty, Camille Perches, a friend of Family Scholar House from Amsterdam generously donated Kintsugi kits so that we could practice this art of healing together and related it not only to the damage done to things but also to the damage our participants have both experienced and overcome.

As we repaired our pottery, we discussed the symbolism of this art form. Putting the plate back together was messy and frustrating at times. Some of the pieces weren’t repairable and we were forced to leave those pieces behind. Like Kintsugi, healing can be messy. Healing can be frustrating. Healing often involves choosing what to save and what to let go. At times, healing may be uncomfortable but necessary in order to achieve progress. Healing takes time. Healing looks a little differently for everyone, but healing is always beautiful!

If you are interested in a Kintsugi kit, you will find Camille’s store on Etsy at MoraApproved. Please let her know that you are a Family Scholar House supporter.

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Our scholars work hard to earn their degrees and set an example for their children. Balancing online classes, navigating non-traditional instruction (NTI) for their children, and keeping up with their normal day to day responsibilities was not ideal for their final semester before graduating. However, our Class of 2021 overcame yet another obstacle, and graduated. We are celebrating 60 degrees this year; 19 of these grads have entered healthcare-related careers. This brings the total number of degrees earned to date to 638! We could not be more proud of our student parents and the hard work they put in to achieving their success.

Their resilience is inspiring to us all.

Congratulations FSH class of 2021, you did it!

Imani Allen
Kaelin Alison
Jasmine Ammons
Lakeia Bailey
Corneisha Barnett
Lareka Boyd
Kristina Bryant
Tatiana Burners
Casey Church
Tonshay Clark
Gabrielle Clemmons
Aleace Courtney
Frances Edwards
Alize Gittens
Heather Glidewell
Spechelle Goodwin
Sherika Harris
Anna (Rekah) Hildabrand
Jasmine Horton
Jasmin Johnson
Larrita King
Briona Lee
Abria Lennon
Kendall Link
Alayna Lolgren
Bea Lake Lusco
Kenyatta Martin
Kiara McElroy
Ja’Lisa Meaux
Rachel Meredith
Jennifer Montgomery
Crystal Mozer
Maria Patterson Wilson
Emily Perkins
Lashawnda Pilgrim
Anastasiya Pohorilets
Chatanya Porter
Kim Rogers
Shinyah Rogers
Chyna Sands
Jasmine Smalls
Arriana Smith
Christany Smith
Khaiyah Thompson
Crystal White
Lisa White
Mia Wilcox
Calina Williams
Patricia Williams
Tiffany Young

*For safety reasons, nine additional graduates, all survivors of domestic violence, could not be included in this publication

Our Second Generation:
While most of our children are too young to enroll in college, these children of our graduates have followed in their parents’ footsteps to become graduates themselves.
1. Janae Boyd (college)
2. Meara Ivy (high school)
3. Timmia King (high school)
4. Nevaah Scott (high school)
5. Gigi Snyder (high school)
6. Auliyah Singfield (high school)
Family Scholar House launched a pilot program in 2015 to serve young adults that have previously been in the foster care system. The foster alumni program is an opportunity for FSH to provide wrap-around services for young adults (18-24) that do not yet have children. In 2019, we celebrated the opening of our fifth Louisville-area campus, the Frank and Paula Harshaw Riverport Scholar House. This campus is home to 32 single-parent families and - for the first time in program history - Harshaw Haven, providing 32 one-bedroom apartments for foster alumni. While this pre-parent program is a unique opportunity at FSH, the focus remains on education and career-track employment. Although Spechelle has come so far, she will be the first to let you know that she’s not finished yet. Spechelle is continuing her education at the Kent School of Social Work, pursuing a Master’s of Science in Social Work and specializing in Marriage, Couples and Family Therapy. She will graduate again in May 2023 and we will be there to celebrate with her. Spechelle recognizes the need for family therapy in low-income and minority communities, saying that, because of her own personal experiences, she will be able to make a positive impact in the lives of those most in need in our community. Spechelle’s resilience is inspiring; her determination is unmatched; and Louisville is lucky to have her skills and talents serving our community.

Congratulations, Spechelle!

We are so proud to say you are a part of our family.

Through this new opportunity, we met Spechelle. From our first interaction with her, we could tell Spechelle had big dreams for her future, as well as the determination and resilience that showed there was no doubt she would achieve them. Spechelle is an exemplary student with a passion for advocating and supporting those in our community that often don’t have a voice.

When we asked Spechelle how she felt turning in her last assignment and closing the chapter on her bachelor’s degree, she said, “I feel proud and grateful that I was able to be the first in my family to graduate from college and earn my degree.” She advises those who are considering attending college to “take advantage of every opportunity [and] get involved on campus and in your community. Never give up because the outcome is worth it.”
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.