

## Maria at her FHF graduation party



*“Thank you for being the biggest blessing in my life, for allowing me and my children to have an opportunity in life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!”*

# 2021 UPDATE



A Bridge Communities Partner

### **Dear FHF Friends,**

As I was thinking about what to write here, inspiration walked through my door. FHF Mom “H” stopped by to pick up some donated quarters that she needed for the pay washer and dryer in her building. She shared more of her very personal story, which is heartbreaking. “H’s” mom and dad spent most of her childhood in prison for drug offenses. She grew up in three different foster homes where she was neglected and in one case, abused. Her brother was just released from prison for breaking and entering. “H” is also concerned that her sister’s four kids are being neglected. The sadness of her family’s situation weighs on her heart.

She is determined her three kids will have a secure childhood and opportunities for their future. “H” is a good mom. She goes to teacher conferences, reads to the kids, and takes them to parks. They eat lots of

vegetables and rarely have fast food. I asked her how she knew to do these things since she never had an adult who did them for her. “H” told me she watches what good parents do and tries to copy that.

I then asked her how school is going, and her demeanor changed completely. Going to college has been her dream and she’s doing it! It is hard academically because childhood trauma robbed her of a normal grade school and high school experience. She missed a lot of school and changed schools often. At Aurora University, “H” takes full advantage of peer tutors and the Academic Support Center. Her children see her studying at the kitchen table each night after dinner—what great role modeling this is! In May of 2023, she’ll have a bachelor’s degree—the first in her family.

**This is what FHF is about**—helping a single mom change the trajectory of her

life and breaking the cycle of poverty and abuse for the next generation. There is nothing easy about our program. Every dollar in and every dollar out is scrutinized during the weekly meetings with the mentors. We impose lots of rules and always say “free housing isn’t really free.” The outcome can be life changing.

Our FHF volunteers (we have no paid staff or office) are grateful for your financial support and belief in our mission. Your generosity allows us to do the important work that we’ve been doing for 27 years. Saying thank you doesn’t seem like enough.

We hope to see you at our benefit dinner in February, COVID-19 permitting! In the meantime, be sure and visit our website to see what we are up to! [famhelpingfam.org](http://famhelpingfam.org)

*Vicky Joseph*

## NOTES FROM OUR CLIENTS



- ♥ *Thank you for helping me believe in myself.*
- ♥ *I'm so thankful for everyone and all the donations. I truly do have many angels on earth looking over us.*
- ♥ *I would never be able to do this on my own. You are my team, my family, my support. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.*
- ♥ *Because of what you did for me and my family I'll be sure to pass it along some day.*
- ♥ *I feel so much better about my life. Thank you very much for being there for me.*
- ♥ *Thank you will never be enough for all you have done for me and my kids. You will never know how much I appreciate your kindness.*
- ♥ *Because of FHF I will be able to truly provide a life for my girls. I want to show people that this program changes lives. I prayed for a miracle and found one.*
- ♥ *FHF made me feel like part of the family, more than my own family ever did. FHF believed in me which helped me to believe in myself.*

### *HOW CAN YOU HELP?*

**Monetary Donations:** To pay housing and utility costs. Please make checks payable to Families Helping Families. Our cost is \$35 per day for a family.

**Mentors:** Volunteers willing to go through training and become involved in the day-to-day lives of our clients.

**Cars:** Our families need serviceable cars to get to school and work. Your donation is tax deductible.

**Service Projects:** If your group is looking for a service project, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss it with you: famhelpingfam@gmail.com.

**Professional Services:** Occasionally we need the services of an attorney, physician, dentist, etc.

**Supply closet:** We welcome donations of personal products and cleaning products since our clients cannot buy these with their food stamps. Ask us for a list of needed items: steveandkay2@gmail.com.

**Other donations:** Get added to our LINK email list to see what our clients need and to offer donations of clothing, furniture, etc.: fhflink@gmail.com.

**Gift Cards:** Sometimes our families have budgets that come up short. Gift cards for gas, groceries, Walmart, and Target are lifesavers. Any amount is appreciated!

**Volunteer:** If you would like to volunteer, contact famhelpingfam@gmail.com.



Looking for an unusual Christmas gift idea for the person who has everything? How about a case of paper towels or toilet paper in their name? We maintain a Resource Closet with basic needs items that can't be purchased with Food Stamps. All items are donated, and our families are invited to "shop" in the closet free of charge. Our biggest mover (pardon the pun) is toilet paper! To donate yourself or in someone else's name, please contact Kay at: steveandkay2@gmail.com.

## Family Updates

### MP

After 10 years of living with her abusive partner, “MP” finally escaped with her three small children. It was only with police intervention that she was able to retrieve her kids’ clothes and toys. “MP” and her family lived with a friend for several months, but it was too crowded. Her small FHF two-bedroom apartment feels luxurious by comparison! “MP” has found a full-time job and is working with an FHF attorney to get child support. Her goal is to get a degree in Health Information Technology. We are happy she has joined the FHF family.

### S

"I know this is what I am supposed to do." "S" is halfway through her nursing program and working part-time while dealing with health issues, but nothing stops her! "S" is one determined woman. She says her motivation comes from wanting opportunities for her darling 3-year-old son.

### H

Having experienced abuse, neglect, and poverty throughout her childhood, "H" is determined that her three children will grow up with hope and opportunity. Her FHF mentors are providing the role models she never had growing up. Since joining the program, “H’s” credit score has increased 125 points and her debt has been reduced to education loans only. Her dream of going to college is happening! She has 3 more semesters at Aurora University, and she’ll be working in a field about which she is passionate—therapeutic recreation for seniors.

### New FHF Mom “V” with her mentors

### Congratulations to “T” and “M”

#### T

“T’s” abusive husband left after 20 years of marriage and four children. Though she was working full time, she was not able to keep her housing. There were many tears at the beginning of her journey as she struggled to find the self-confidence to be a successful single mom. It was never a role she had anticipated. Since joining the program, “T” repaid/negotiated \$55,000 in debt, raised her credit score 150 points, saved money, and bought a condo for her family. She told us her mentors were the first people who ever believed she was worthy of love.

#### MM

Congratulations to "MM," who just graduated from Families Helping Families and accepted a job in logistics paying \$50,000 a year plus benefits! "MM" and her four children were living in their car when we first met them. Because "MM" completed her four-year college degree, drastically improved her credit score, and saved money, this family's future will look nothing like their past. She plans to buy her own home soon.

*I came with nothing and leave RICH. Rich in education, friends, and unconditional love. MM*



## The Bruce Terlep Memorial Education Fund

Bruce Terlep was an enthusiastic supporter of FHF. Sadly, he passed away in 2017. His wife, Ginger, who is a FHF mentor and board member, and his three sons established this fund to help FHF moms and their kids go to college.

### Educating the Second Generation

'With the help of The FHF Bruce Terlep Education Fund, which provided generous scholarships, "R" graduated from Bradley University. He took a job in San Diego as a bank examiner. "R's" recent thank you call to FHF was simple— "thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Congratulations to "D", who completed her master's in accountancy at the University of Texas. "D" is now working as an Audit Associate for Deloitte in Dallas and plans to buy her mom a home. She wrote "I am beyond thankful for the Bruce Terlep Education Fund which allowed me the luxury of an education."

"A" just sent us a lovely message. "I would like to say thank you again, a million times over, as I can never express enough gratitude for all FHF has done for me. It truly means the world and I would not be here if it wasn't for you!" "A" will be a nurse in a few short months! She received a grant every semester from the FHF Bruce Terlep Education Fund, without which she could not have pieced together enough grants to complete her bachelor's degree.

*"One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone."*

— Shannon L. Alder

Please mail this form with your donation to:

**FHF/Sally Meno, 1164 Dickens Ave., Naperville, IL 60563**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (needed for emailing your receipt):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Donation: (Check made out to Families Helping Families)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Bruce Terlep Memorial Education Fund  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(If your company offers to match your donation, please include this information with your check.)

Visa/MasterCard (circle one):

# \_\_\_\_\_

Verification Code \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized amount to charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***We have no paid staff or overhead...***

***We are all volunteers!***

- **\$35 Provides housing for a family for 1 day.**
- **\$245 Provides housing for a family for 1 week.**
- **\$1050 Provides housing for a family for 1 month.**

For questions or to make a payment via phone, call Sally Meno at 630-778-0981 or email [sallymeno@gmail.com](mailto:sallymeno@gmail.com).