

Lifelong Experiences

SPOTLIGHT ON UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES



NATIONAL MENTORING SUMMIT
2020 | WASHINGTON D.C.



"Last year I was able to go to Washington D.C. to attend the National Mentor Summit, and I couldn't be more thankful. My five days there was life changing. I was able to improve as a person and as a mentor so my mentees could get all they could from the STARS Mentoring Program and me. For the majority of my life I have had to deal with mental illness personally and addiction, among other things, within my family. During my time in D.C., I had the terrific opportunity to tell representatives of Congress my background in hopes that they would want to help other kids who have suffered from the opioid epidemic and similar things like myself. The trip was also amazing because of our crew. James, Luis, Simon, and Rachael (FRIENDS FIRST Program Coordinator) made that entire trip an unforgettable experience. They say, "You are who you surround yourself with. I couldn't ask to be around better people." I am forever grateful to donors and FRIENDS FIRST for making the trip possible for me." — Avery, STARS Mentoring Program Mentor

On February 26, 2021 the world lost Avery Roman unexpectedly to natural causes. Avery was one of the most incredible humans to walk this earth and his infectious smile shined like a star. Keep shining Avery!

3,000+ INDUSTRY AND THOUGHT LEADERS IN ATTENDANCE

8 FRIENDS FIRST SENT FOUR STAFF AND FOUR STUDENTS

1 ELYCIA COOK, PRESIDENT & CEO AND APRIL MONTOYA, PROGRAM TEAM MANAGER PRESENTED A WORKSHOP WITH MORE THAN 65 ATTENDEES



PUEBLO FATHER DAUGHTER DINNER DANCE
2020 | PUEBLO, COLORADO.



"My family and I have been attending the Pueblo Father Daughter Dance for years and this year was the best! The theme was fun, the food was great and adding in the activities provided an additional experience along with the dancing. Thank you!" — 2020 Pueblo Father Daughter Dance Attendee

150 MORE THAN 150 FAMILIES ATTENDED AND MADE LIFELONG MEMORIES TOGETHER

\$15,000+ RAISED MORE THAN \$15,000 FOR PROGRAMMING IN THE PUEBLO COMMUNITY

9 THE DANCE INCLUDED FIVE ACTIVITY STATIONS, THREE THEMED SNACK STATIONS AND ONE LARGE DANCE PARTY



ARE YOU READY TO HELP EDUCATE AND MENTOR TEENS
TO MAKE POSITIVE LIFE CHOICES AND DEVELOP HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

Give a Gift

TODAY TO SUPPORT TEENS IN OUR COMMUNITIES.



7100 E. Belleview Ave., Suite 111
Greenwood Village, CO 80111
720.981.9193 | friendsfirst.org





Committed to Youth

A YEAR OF CHANGE AND IMPACT

As we entered the 2019-20 fiscal year, we had just come off the heels of one of our most successful STARS National Conferences ever. Our Board, staff and volunteers were ready to serve and our students were fired up to get involved. One way to involve our youth more was to challenge the mentoring community at large to have more youth voice represented at the 2020 10th Annual National Mentoring Summit and attend Day on the Hill in Washington D.C. Day on the Hill allows those of us in the mentoring field to meet with congressional leaders and share the impact of youth mentoring and the importance of funding mentoring programs across the nation.

FRIENDS FIRST (FF) intern and STARS mentor, James Nitura, presented our Leadership Team with a passionate and dynamic presentation on the need for youth voice representation and potential ways to send four students to the National Mentoring Summit. Through his efforts, FF was able to raise funds and champion for four students and a chaperone to attend the Summit. This was a very special event, for me personally as well, as I was recognized with the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award in Mentoring. Our four students; James, Avery, Simon and Luis stole the show on Capitol Hill with their life stories and the impact mentoring has had on their lives. For these students, two of which were graduating seniors, this was the highlight of their year.

"I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend such a renowned conference with some fellow "game changers" in the making. During the trip, I learned about many different aspects of mentoring, such as the importance of recognizing and appreciating the differences of those you are around and

advocating for your beliefs in a professional manner. After attending the conference, I started to recognize how much potential there is in youth mentoring fellow youth and how there is still so much work to be done in order to reach this model of mentoring to its full potential, but I have no doubt in my mind that youth mentoring organizations, with FRIENDS FIRST at the forefront, can bring the deserved attention to the potential of having youth as mentors." – James Nitura

Shortly after our time at the Summit, the world saw a lot of change and the world shutdown seemingly overnight due to the pandemic. But we did not allow this to deter our momentum and commitment to our students and communities. Over the course of the past year, we continued our programming virtually with 14 schools and were able to facilitate more than 20 community events and workshops; including a students only mental health workshop and a senior candle-lighting ceremony, for students, parents and community leaders. As we continue to serve our students remotely, we had the opportunity to launch our new STARS Mentoring in-person and eMentoring curriculum, which has garnered a lot of great response.

While we were able to continue our mission this past year, our budget did not escape the financial impact of the pandemic. This is a time when our students need positive social and emotional interaction and all gifts to FF make a difference. We hope you and your family are staying safe, healthy and encouraged. I know we will see many lives changed for the better in 2021.

Our Board of Directors

BABAK FADAEIPOUR | President/Board Chair
JEROME BLACKWELL | Vice President
LESLIE L. JUNIEL | Secretary
TJ BERT | Treasurer
COREY BROWN | Member-at-Large

ANGELA HAN | Member-at-Large
SHANNON HEMPLEMAN | Member-at-Large
DOUG RUDIG | Member-at-Large
JOY THOMAS | Member-at-Large
ELYCIA COOK | President & CEO



3,304

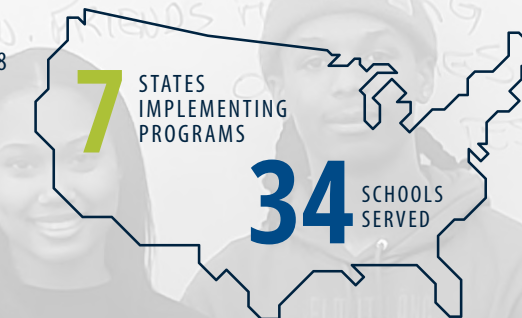
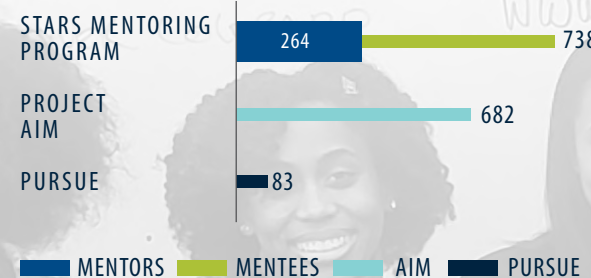
TOTAL PROGRAMMING IMPACT

*Includes programming, assemblies, community and student events and our partners



1,767

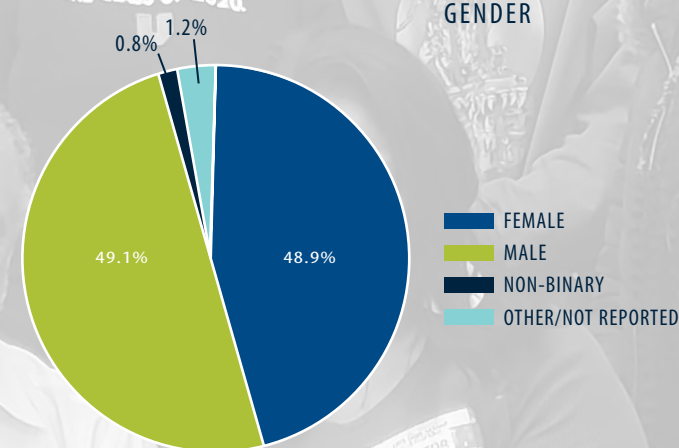
TOTAL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



RACE & ETHNICITY



THE CLASS OF 2020



STUDENTS reported that what they **LEARNED ABOUT HEALTHY OUTLETS IN STARS WAS USEFUL DURING THE PANDEMIC**, particularly in being able to talk about their feelings with others.

Both **MENTEES AND MENTORS** reported that they have embraced MentorLife®, with at least **80%** saying they **FEEL CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO FIND A MENTOR OR BE A MENTOR.**

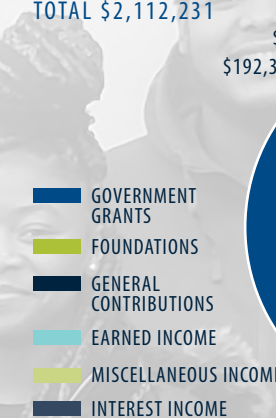
PROJECT AIM participants showed significant gains in **GRIT, SELF CONTROL, AND SELF AWARENESS**, as well as decreases in anti-social behaviors.

PURSUE participants showed significant gains in **FUTURE FOCUS** outcomes, as well as a decrease in several risky behaviors.

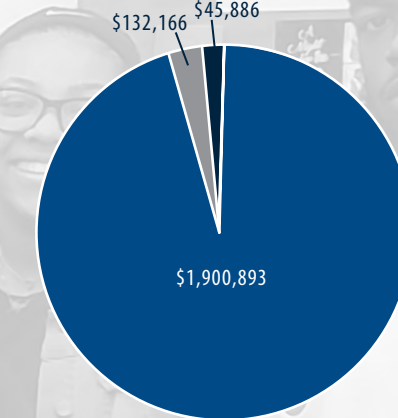
Our Impact

2019-20

REVENUE
TOTAL \$2,112,231



EXPENSES
TOTAL \$2,078,945



THE FUTURE IS US
63

STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND THE MENTORLIFE® SUMMIT IN JANUARY

FRIENDS SUPPORT FRIENDS

RAISED MORE THAN
\$11,000
 ON COLORADO GIVES DAY TO SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMMING

MENTORLIFE ALWAYS INVEST IN SOMEONE. ALWAYS HAVE SOMEONE INVESTING IN YOU.
 FRIENDSFIRST MENTORLIFE

14 CONTINUED 14 PROGRAMS VIRTUALLY DURING THE SPRING



FACILITATED MORE THAN 20 VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

"STARS gave me MentorLife®. It's about being intentional in paying it forward and always having a mentor and mentoring others."
 - Former STARS Mentoring Program Participant

"Being a part of STARS provided me the opportunity to connect with other teens... being a mentor held me accountable to higher standards and allowed me to help others grow too."
 - Former STARS Mentoring Program Participant