



**CASAVALENTINA**



**FYE** | **ANNUAL**  
**2020-** **REPORT**  
**2021**

# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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If you have traveled with us along this journey in the last two years, you have seen the renovations to our campus. As you know, my vision as Executive Director was to create a comfortable space our residents could call home. I am happy to say that part of my vision is unfolding. It is thanks to your generosity, your volunteer efforts, and your commitment to the work we do that make this all possible.

While this is all happening, our youth are working towards not simply education and employment, but on career paths. With the help of our partner organizations, our young men and women are building confidence as they save and plan for bright futures. I recently spoke with one of the young women who lives on our campus. She says, "I cannot control what happened to me. I need to leave that in the past. I cannot let it stop me. I am going to work hard to accomplish my goals, Mrs. Graham." *This* is what drives us to continue doing the work we do at Casa Valentina.



## WHO WE ARE

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### **MISSION**

Casa Valentina's mission is to provide at-risk and former foster care youth with safe affordable housing, life skills, and continued support so they achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

### **BACKGROUND**

Casa Valentina fosters an environment where Miami-Dade County youth who transition out of foster care develop skills and the know-how to be thriving adults, by providing affordable housing and intensive life skills training.

We also provide opportunities to promote positive outcomes and healthy developmental trajectories that combat the risk of experiencing incarceration, pregnancy, domestic violence or homelessness.



# OUR HISTORY

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In 2005, five concerned Miami-Dade women recognized the need to serve young adults who exit a system detached from community. Facing homelessness and all of the other trappings that could result in failure as adults, they often become invisible to society—moving through an adult world unprepared and alone. Casa Valentina created the foundation, and the Miami community responded raising the seed money to open the doors for the first group of young adults in 2006. We began with our young women, and in 2010 created a successful private/public partnership with Camillus House to provide housing and services to young men at a separate location. During the past 15 years, we have served over 250 youth—giving them the survival tools and support systems they need to successfully transition into independent living.

Since opening our doors, we have expanded our program to include the delivery of these same life skill lessons to school-based at-risk youth ages 13-17, youth 18-24 in other residential programs that do not offer a life skills curriculum, and the enhancement of our after-care program for Casa Valentina alumni. It is our vision to create a continuum of care where foster youth receive the support they need to reach their full potential.

# OUR PROGRAM

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Casa Valentina offers 21 residents fully furnished, comfortable apartments in safe neighborhoods located close to public transportation; academic and career-planning support; help accessing services and life-skills training.

In 2017, we expanded our life skills program to deliver this intensive curriculum to youth ages 13-17 at six Miami-Dade County middle and high schools, residential partner programs that reach youth 18-23, and an ever-growing alumni program that provides resources to youth who have transitioned from Casa Valentina's live and learn community.

# TEAM: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- William Altfield
- Cassandra Arnold
- Renata Benedini
- Oliver Benitez
- Craig Bond
- Pierlus Durandis
- Michael Friedman
- Lynn Hausmann
- Vanessa Joseph
- Diane Krieger
- Susan Lampen
- Sharon Langer
- MaryAnne Lukacs
- Deborah Magid
- Joyce Meyers
- Marcia Reisman
- Nushin Sayfie
- Gregg Spieler
- Cynthia Stafford
- Rita Swichkow
- Kesia Vasquez
- Adrian Villaraos

# TEAM: STAFF

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## **Janice M. Graham, M.S. EDL**

Executive Director

## **Charlotte Trawick**

Education & Employment  
Manager

## **Ingrid M. González**

Program & Development  
Manager

## **Alexis Adams, M.S.W, C.C.W.P**

Program Director

## **Dottie Shipskie**

Controller

## **Soldy Mujica**

Program Advocate

## **Janelle Sales**

Senior Life Skills Coordinator

## **Raymond Garcia**

Program Coordinator

## **Shoshana Beitchman**

Program Coordinator

## **Mickael Charles**

Success Coach

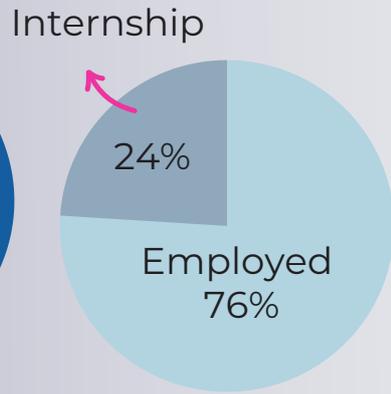
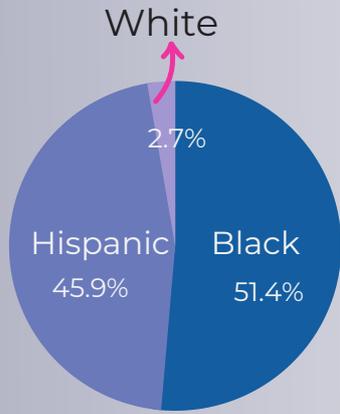
## **Dominique Rosario**

Alumni Coordinator



# Residential Program

We served **37** youth: **13** young men and **24** young women. **16** former foster, **17** who experienced homelessness, and **4** who were former foster and experienced unstable housing.



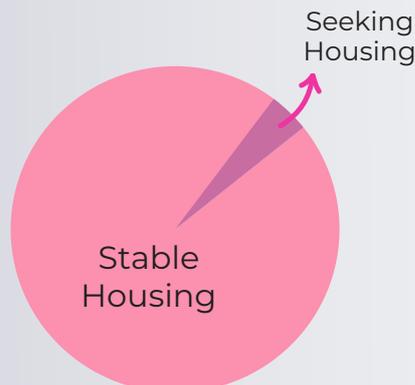
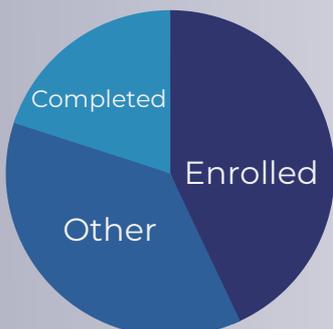
# Aftercare Program

We provided resources and support to **51** alumni youth. In 2022, our goal is to increase our alumni network by engaging them in more educational opportunities and career experiences.

Nationally, less than **3%** of youth who age out of foster care complete their educational goals. Of our 51 alumni, **43%** are currently enrolled in an educational institution and **20%** have completed their goal.

**20%** of youth who age out of foster care will experience homelessness within 3 years. **96%** of our alumni are in stable housing.

Only half of the youth who age out of foster care will have gainful employment by the age of **24**. **69%** of our alumni are employed.



- Enrolled in college, high school or certificate program: 43%
- Completed education goal: 20%
- Other: 37%

- In stable housing: 96% or 49
- Seeking housing: 4% or 2

- Employed: 69% or 35
- Seeking employment: 41% or 16

# Community Programs

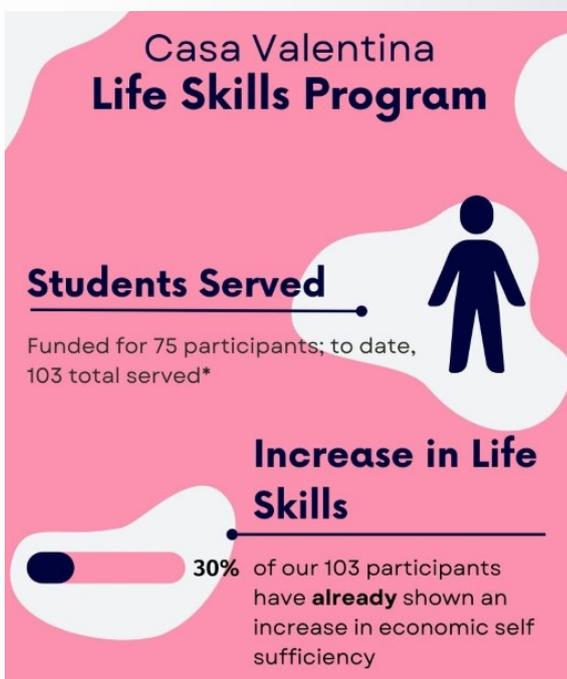
We served 222 youth in our **community program** across 18 schools and community partners. Through a combination of in-person (socially-distanced) and virtual workshops, our youth were able to receive the much-needed instruction and support from our Program Coordinators.



## WHAT'S NEW:

We are excited to announce in 2021 - through a partnership with the Department of Children and Families - we are now offering life skills to even more school-aged youth, ages 13-23. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve even more youth at Miami-Dade County Public Schools, as well as partners in the community: His House, Citrus Health Network, Florida International University and the Frost Science Museum.

Weekly, we visit five organizations to deliver life skills lessons focusing on self-care, employment, personal finance and daily living. The goal is to ensure that students receive the real-world skills they need to face the challenges as they become young adults.



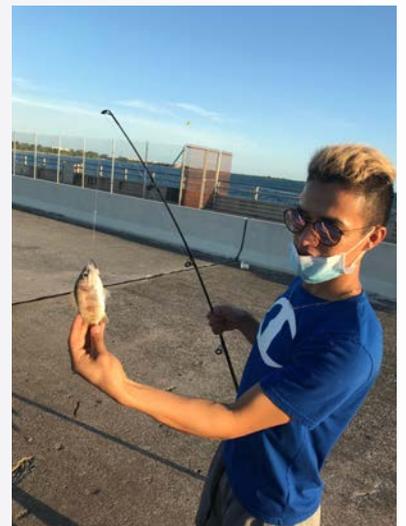
# COVID RESPONSE

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As the world grappled with how to handle the change to our routines and lives, Casa Valentina pivoted with our residents as our focus. Our wonderful Miami community came through with generous donations ranging from groceries to goodies that brought smiles to our residents and alumni.



Productivity continued! we transitioned to a hybrid model of virtual and in-person meetings and life skills delivery, with protocols in place as we met safely outside. We wanted to maintain as much normalcy as we could for our youth. Because of these policies, we had just 3 out of our 18 youth (or 17%) contract covid. We were fortunate to still be able to safely engage our youth in experiential opportunities - such as the Frost Museum of Science!



# UPGRADES & RENOVATIONS

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Through funding from many of our community and corporate partners - such as the Leslie L. Alexander Foundation, Bank of America, and TD Bank - we were able to renovate our apartment bathrooms, as well as our community room!



## Leadership Miami class of 20??

raised funds to purchase home decor items, new bedroom furnishings, and new television sets.

The residents were thrilled to walk into their upgraded spaces. Thank you, Leadership team, for your continued commitment to our youth!



## A huge thank you to our friends for donations & gifts:

Leslie L. Alexander Foundation  
Bank of America  
Capital One  
DEEL Volvo  
Foster Care Review  
Jackson Family Foundation  
Junior League of Miami  
Kellogg EMBA Cohort 127  
LINKS, Miami Dade County Chapter

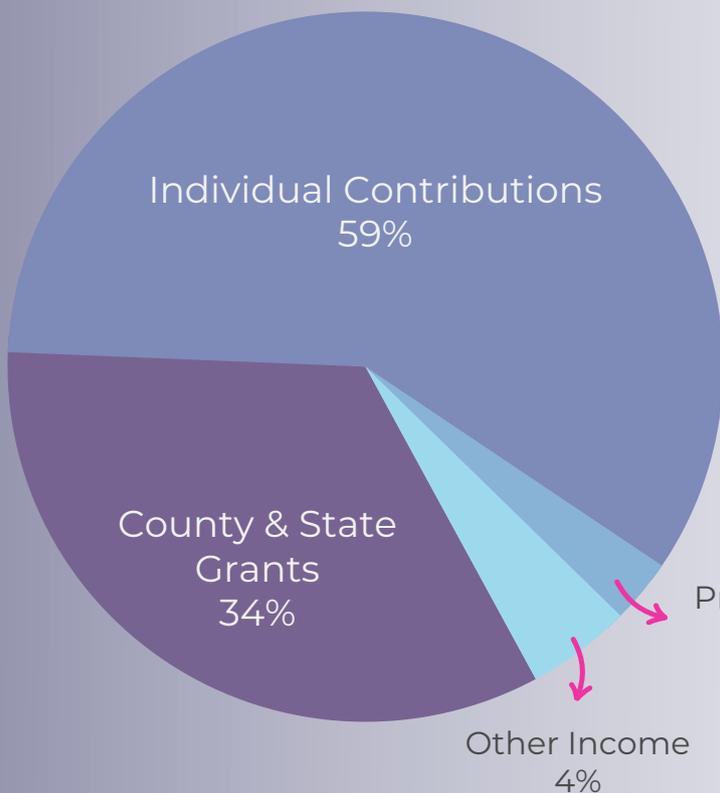
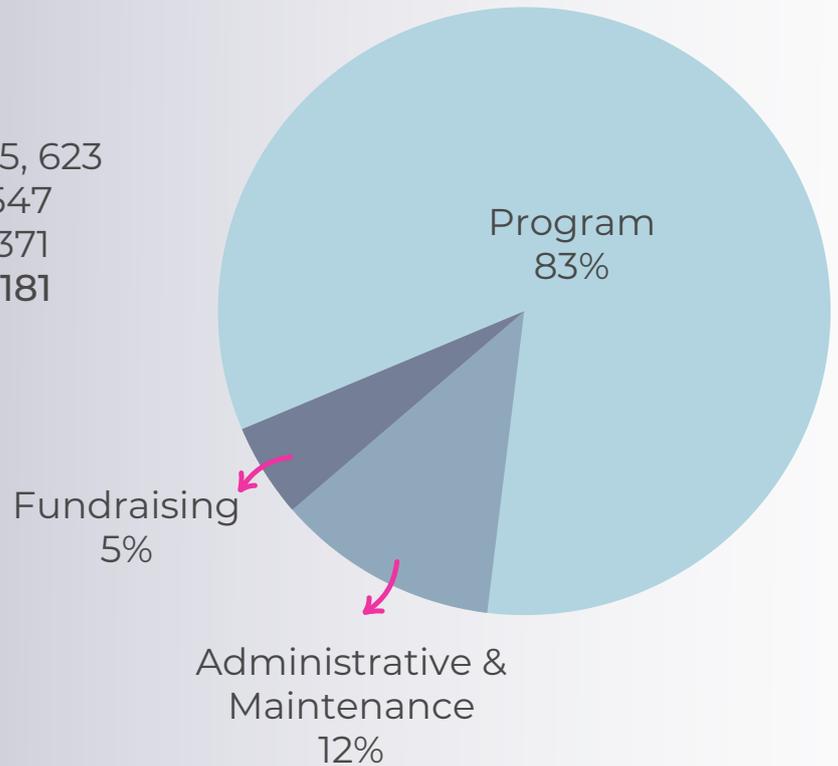
Miami Dade College  
Mr. Emanuel Palgon  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Sharing is Caring Foundation  
St. Michael the Archangel School  
St. Stephen's Episcopal Day School  
TD Bank  
Temple Beth Am  
Temple Judea



# FINANCIALS

## Functional Expenses for FYE 20-21

Administrative & Maintenance...	\$95,623
Fundraising.....	\$40,547
Program.....	\$678,371
Total.....	\$814,181



## Revenue for FYE 20-21

County & State Grants.....	\$506,662
Contributions.....	\$888,138
Program Fees.....	\$43,975
Other Income \$71,502	
Total.....	\$1,510,237

# YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

## DANIELLE STEENKAMER

*Casa Valentina helped me start over.*

Casa Valentina helped me grow into myself. When I first arrived, I was really shy. I didn't talk much and I was closed off.

Over the two years I was there, I blossomed into a beautiful young woman. And I'm certain the staff would also agree. As new residents came in, I knew I had to be their support system. I wanted to show them that when you start, while you may feel unsure about yourself, you can learn and grow. Being that role model, in turn, helped me grow. *"When you help youth like me successfully transition into adulthood, we can contribute back to our community."*



## DEANDRA JOSEPH

*From homelessness to marine biology*

The people at Casa Valentina care so much; they want to see you succeed and accomplish your dreams.

I wouldn't know the future if not for Casa Valentina, but I beat the odds. I beat the statistics that society places on young Black women. I could've dropped out – and I almost did – but I kept on going, because I knew since I was a little kid that I will change the world one day. I write in my journal every day to stay focused on my dreams – because "I believe that I can achieve anything I set my mind to and I've overcome many obstacles and become resilient."

To read their full stories, please visit our website at [casavalentina.org/our-supporters/](https://casavalentina.org/our-supporters/)

# OUR PARTNERS

We proudly acknowledge our supporters and partners in this critical work. We are grateful for another year of success!



National Council of Jewish Women



# OUR CHAMPIONS

Our community of dedicated donors provides the important lifeline to be able to continue to provide the full range of services and resources. We cannot do this work without each and every one of you!

- Amazon Giving Fund
- American Express Charitable Fund
- Bank of America
- Bank Leumi
- Capital One Services
- Carlo & Micol Schejola Foundation
- David Silvers Cornerstone Solutions
- Episcopal Charities of Southeast Florida
- The Fine & Greenwald Foundation
- First Housing Foundation
- Greater Miami Jewish Foundation
- GWJ Charitable Foundation
- The Jill & Neil Berman Philanthropic Fund
- June & Julian Foss Foundation
- Leslie L. Alexander Foundation
- The Louis C. Skinner Foundation
- The Marcia L. Toby Charitable Fund
- The Miami Foundation
- Michael Grieco Campaign
- Miguel B. Fernandez Family Foundation
- Peacock Foundation
- PepsiCo
- The Ronald & Glenda Herzog Fund
- St. Philip's Episcopal Church & School
- TD Bank
- TD Charitable Fund
- Theodore Christakos Foundation
- Wendy's Foundation
- Wendy's International Team
- Aitfield, William
- Benedini, Renata
- Bernstein, Alan & Jayusia
- Canero, Antonia
- The Deane Family
- Dominguez, Eduardo
- Gouveia, Michaela
- The Graham Family
- Green, Nancy
- Hall, Sallie
- Hausmann, Linda
- Herzog, Ronald & Glenda
- Commissioner Sally Heyman
- Kislak, Jonathan
- Krieger, Diane
- Lampen, Susan
- Langer, Sharon
- Lukacs, MaryAnne
- MacLachlan, Cheryl
- Magid, Deborah
- Meyers, Joyce
- Milo Jr., Alberto
- Moxley, Julie
- Naidich, Michele & Thomas
- Raskin, Barbara
- Commissioner Raquel Regalado
- Reisman, Marcia
- Sanchez, Anais
- Sandler, Diane & Lee
- Sayfie, Nushin
- Schejola, Linda
- Schejola, Lisa
- The Shikany Family
- Singalla, Praveen
- Socol, Sharon
- Soto, Edward
- The Trawick Family
- Villaraos, Adrian
- Watkins, Jocelyn
- Weitz, H. Jordan





**CASAVALENTINA**



## CONTACT US:

2103 Coral Way, 2nd Floor  
Miami, FL 33145

(305) 444-0740  
info@casavalentina.org

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