

2025

Annual Report

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE
PARTNERSHIP (SHIP) OF FREDERICK COUNTY



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SHIP of Frederick County

Overview:

For more than a decade, the Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of Frederick County has been dedicated to supporting students experiencing homelessness and ensuring they have the resources needed to succeed, both in school and in life.

What began as a community response to an urgent need has grown into a vital, countywide effort. SHIP works collaboratively with schools, local organizations, and government agencies to build effective, compassionate systems of support for some of the county's most vulnerable youth.

At the heart of SHIP's mission is a simple but powerful belief: every student deserves stability, opportunity, and the chance to thrive. Through its core programs, focused on securing housing, self-sufficiency, and essential basic needs, SHIP addresses the complex challenges faced by students without safe or permanent housing. By connecting them to consistent resources and caring adults, SHIP helps create pathways toward academic achievement and personal well-being.

Collaboration remains key to SHIP's success. The organization actively engages community partners and volunteers to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and advocate for systemic change that leads to lasting impact. Together, these efforts form a network of support that meets immediate needs while building foundations for long-term stability.

This year's report highlights the measurable progress and collective achievements made possible through community partnership. As SHIP looks ahead, the organization remains deeply committed to expanding its reach, strengthening programs, and ensuring that every student in Frederick County has the opportunity to realize their full potential—no matter their circumstance.



Students can be referred to SHIP for services anytime from kindergarten through age 24. We find the most success with students who are referred to service early and can follow the full SHIP path. Watch our student at the bottom of each page engaging in services throughout their educational journey.

Student Success at SHIP

In Frederick County, over 1,000 students experience homelessness. Youth Homelessness can present itself in a variety of ways. SHIP offers individualized service to every student, focusing on removing their unique barriers and keeping them connected to education. A youth who does not graduate from high school is 3.5 times more likely to experience homelessness as an adult. SHIP is incredibly proud to share the success of its students and how they strive to continue their education.



5,941 **ONE-ON-ONE SERVICES**

provided to students across all programs.

80 **STUDENTS GRADUATED**

from high school.

17 **STUDENTS COMPLETED**

their first semester of college.

26 **STUDENTS COMPLETED**

drivers education.

72 **STUDENTS GRADUATED**

from New Horizons Summer Academy.



Referred to SHIP
for Services



Basic Material
Needs Program

New Horizons
Program

Thrive Housing
Network

Higher Education or
Workforce Readiness

Secure
Housing

Student
Success

Program Success at SHIP

Basic Material Needs

No student should have to choose between meeting their basic needs and going to school. Through the Basic Material Needs program, SHIP ensures that students experiencing homelessness in Frederick County have access to essentials like hygiene products, clothing, and food. Beyond immediate relief, SHIP connects students to long-term community resources, helping them build stability and independence. When basic needs are met, students can focus on learning, not survival.



238 **ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

and families received material items such as food, hygiene and clothing.

120 **LBS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED**

per week to students.



\$5,390 **WORTH OF HYGIENE PRODUCTS**

collected from November 1-December 31, for Homeless for the Holidays hygiene drive to support students throughout the year.



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Program Success at SHIP

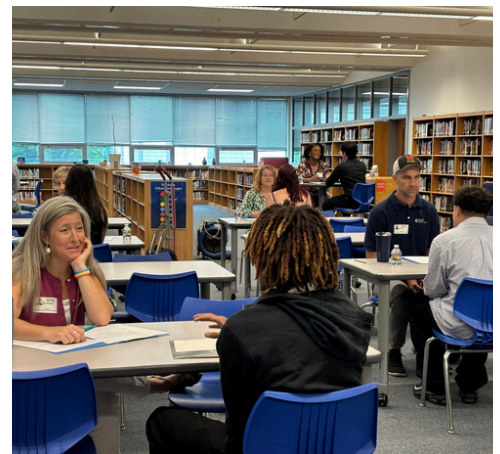
New Horizons

The New Horizons program supports students from middle school to college with case management and service planning. These students receive one-on-one support in setting and achieving goals while gaining financial literacy, including budgeting and the financial aid process. The program also promotes community through extracurricular activities like college visits and service projects, empowering students for future success.



384 STUDENTS SERVED
in the New Horizons Program.

4,428 SERVICES PROVIDED
for students including 1 on 1 case management, resource connections, and basic needs.



541 DENTAL EMERGENCIES PREVENTED
through dental sealants for students.

72 STUDENTS ASSISTED
with college aid.



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Thrive Housing Network

Every young person deserves a safe place to call home. Yet nearly **200 youth** are without a parent or guardian in our community are living alone and without a safe space. The Thrive Housing Network changes that, providing unaccompanied students ages 16–24 with safe housing through host homes and rapid rehousing, along with the caring, consistent support of case managers who help them rebuild stability and hope. With a home and a supportive adult network, these young people can focus on their education and future instead of survival.



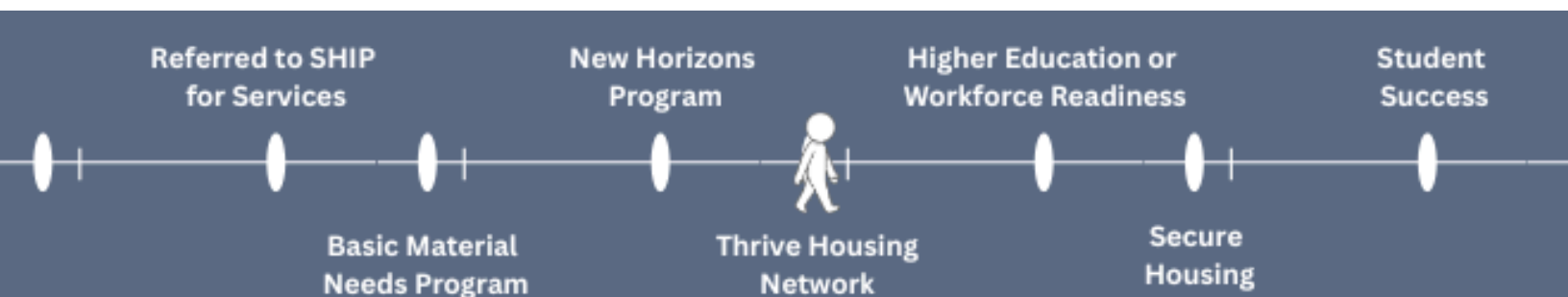
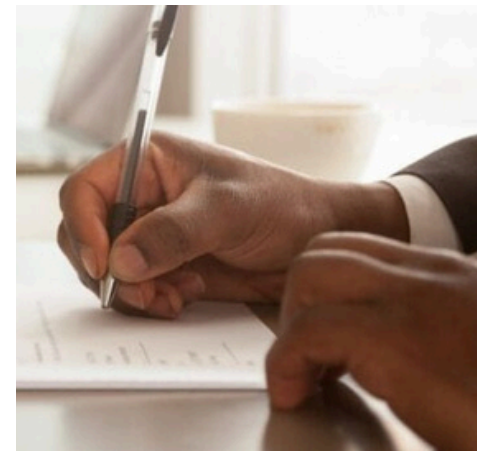
20 UNACCOMPANIED STUDENTS
housed by the Thrive Housing Network.

1,513 SERVICES PROVIDED
to students enrolled in Thrive Housing Network.



7 STUDENTS
signed their first lease and have their own apartment.

13 INCREASED INCOMES
for students since beginning in the program.



Program Success at SHIP

Community Partnerships

In Frederick County, student success is defined not only by what happens in the classroom but by the strength of the community that surrounds each young person. Across the county, schools, local organizations, and residents work hand in hand to ensure that every student has the support they need to reach their full potential.

This collective effort provides more than academic assistance, it offers stability, encouragement, and access to life's essentials for those who need it most. For students experiencing homelessness, these partnerships can mean the difference between isolation and opportunity. Together, our community creates an environment where every child has the chance to succeed—in school, in relationships, and in life.



14,144 **LBS OF FOOD DONATED**
by community partners.

78 **LIBRARY CARDS ISSUED**
for students as a resource for their education.

206 **CONNECTIONS TO HEALTHCARE**
made for our students.

88 **GYM MEMBERSHIPS**
issued for student wellness at no cost to SHIP or the students.

41 **JOB EXPLORING CONNECTIONS**
throughout Frederick County.

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“Where are they now?”

Success of our Students

We’ve followed our student’s journey along the timeline, and he has now reached student success and is thriving. We’re taking a moment to share some student success stories and emphasize where they are today. These are a few of our students who benefited from at least two programs during their time with SHIP.

Rodney

Rodney connected with SHIP at age 16 as an unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness after the loss of his mother and his father’s incarceration. Living with a friend and navigating life largely on his own, he found stability and guidance through his New Horizons Case Manager, who helped keep him on track educationally. Rodney accessed SHIP’s Thrive Housing Network programming, enrolled in driver’s education, and connected with critical supports.

Driver’s education proved life-changing. Reliable transportation removed a major barrier to school and work, replacing long walks along Route 40 with new independence. With SHIP’s support, Rodney also applied for scholarships and grants and is now attending Allegany College on scholarship, studying IT and Cybersecurity. Along the way, he prepared for adulthood by securing essential documents and insurance. Today, Rodney is focused on building financial stability, saving toward housing, and working toward a future that includes independence and family.



Rodney receives the keys to his first car



ALLEGANY COLLEGE
of MARYLAND
ENGAGE YOUR FUTURE

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“Where are they now?”

Success of our Students

Ahmad

He connected with SHIP during his senior year of high school while experiencing homelessness with his brother. As a first-generation student facing family challenges, the path to college felt uncertain. Through consistent guidance from his case manager, and access to necessities, SHIP helped him stay focused on his future.

With SHIP’s support, he earned a scholarship to Hood College, became actively involved on campus, and stepped into leadership roles. Now a finance major and President of the Black Student Union, he is helping create inclusive spaces and meaningful dialogue on campus. His journey reflects the power of stability, support, and belief in a student’s potential.



Ahmad commits to attending Hood College in 2023



Ahmad visits SHIP office, now in his junior year at Hood

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“Where are they now?”

Success of our Students

AJ

During his senior year of high school, he was forced to leave home through no choice of his own, placing his future at risk. With support from New Horizons, he received guidance navigating housing instability while planning for college and a career. Although he had long dreamed of joining the Army, the path felt uncertain until his SHIP Case Manager began to eliminate the barriers that kept him from moving forward.

Today, he is proudly serving in the U.S. Army, having spent a year stationed at Guantanamo Bay and now serving in Leavenworth, Kansas. Looking ahead, he hopes to attend West Point or the University of Maryland to pursue a degree in Criminal Justice, with long-term plans to earn a master’s degree.



AJ in his Army uniform



A year later, AJ prepares to attend a social event on behalf of the Army

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A letter from our *Executive Director*

"I was recently asked to share a bright spot in my year, something that stood out as a win for SHIP. Reflecting back on 2025, I found myself feeling grateful to have so many happy moments to choose from. Our team grew, which allowed us to serve more students experiencing homelessness than ever before. More than 30 SHIP students not only reached graduation, but went on to further their education. The number of students experiencing homelessness in our local schools actually decreased for the first time in over 5 years, a clear sign that our services are having lasting long-term impacts.

Even with so many gems to choose from over the last year, one theme really rose to the top of my mind. In 2025, students who left SHIP years ago came back. They didn't come back for help or additional services, they came back to show us that they'd made it. They came back because their case manager had helped them so much that they couldn't wait to tell them where they are now. College students who are now several years into their educational journey came back to tell us about leading political organizations on campus. Members of the US Air Force came back to show us pictures of them piloting rescue missions abroad. Registered nurses came back to celebrate paying off a car they never thought they'd be able to afford.

I've always known that we won't see the long term difference SHIP makes in most students. We see our community improve and the number of people we've helped who are still in need decrease, but we often lose track of the individual after they've left our services. The work we do aims to break the cycle of homelessness by building enough capacity in students to eventually reach their own personal goals. SHIP helps them to launch, but the landing is still far in the future. That's really the point. Once they've launched, homelessness should be a blip on their radar rather than a defining trait.

Knowing how hard it is for many to revisit a traumatic part of their past, I was incredibly touched by the many who chose to return this year. Those who came back to share their success all gave our team the same message in their own words. The youth in our community have such tremendous potential. If we break down the barriers and surround our students with support, they can and will do incredible things they never thought were possible.

I am thankful for an amazing team here at SHIP who live this mission every day. As we enter 2026, I look forward to seeing our team help our community's youth dream big and reach their goals. Whether we get to find out where they land or not, it is work worth doing."

Thank you,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected loops.

Melissa Muntz
Executive Director
SHIP of Frederick County

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING



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Introducing: Kenny

Kenny is a 19-year-old student who first came to SHIP for services when he was 10, entering 4th grade. Over his time with SHIP, he has experienced numerous life challenges and overcome many obstacles including couch surfing at age 11, when his parents were incarcerated, experiencing food-insecurity, sleeping in his family's car at 16 years old for a year due to COVID, and determining his education path.

Because of SHIP's services, he was able to complete driver's education, open his own bank account, graduate from the Summer Academy, build and review his resume, and practice his workforce skills to gain employment. Through all the transitions in his life, Kenny knew he was going to be okay (even in moments that were unsure) because of his connection to SHIP. Interested in more of his story? See below for highlights of each program he's experienced through SHIP and follow along!

Basic Material Needs

- Food Insecurity
- Clothing Accessibility
- Hygiene products

Thrive Housing Network

- Gaining resources for Employment
- Purchasing his first car
- Securing his first apartment

New Horizons

- Drivers Education
- 4 years of Summer Academy
- Case Management Services

Community Resources

- Swim lessons at the YMCA
- Gained Health Insurance
- Opening his own Bank Account

