

# A. Marie Cares Foundation 2025 Annual Report

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*Transforming Lives Through  
Therapeutic Mentoring*



*"When we invest in justice-involved youth with trauma-informed support delivered by people who believe in their potential, healing happens, change becomes possible, and futures become brighter."  
— Dr. Ashawnda Fleming, CEO*

# Letter From the CEO

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude and hope. This year, we witnessed remarkable growth, celebrated powerful transformations, and strengthened our commitment to the young people and families who trust us with their healing journeys. I am proud to share that 78% of our program participants had no further involvement with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services after completing therapeutic mentoring services!

These numbers tell an important story, but the real impact lies in the individual lives behind each statistic. I think of Marcus, a 15-year-old who struggled with anger management and had multiple school suspensions when he entered our program. His therapeutic mentor worked with him weekly, helping him develop healthier coping strategies and rebuild his relationship with his mother. Today, Marcus hasn't had a behavioral incident at school in six months, his grades have improved, and he's exploring vocational training in automotive technology. His mother recently told me, "AMCF gave me my son back."

I think of Jasmine, a 14-year-old who witnessed significant trauma in her home and struggled to trust adults. Her therapeutic mentor showed up consistently, week after week, creating a safe space where Jasmine could process her experiences and begin to heal. She told her therapeutic mentor, "You were the first person who really listened to me."

Our partnerships with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties have strengthened significantly this year. DJS case managers increasingly recognize therapeutic mentoring as an effective intervention for youth who need more than standard supervision but less than residential placement.

These stories represent the heart of our work. Youth involved with the Department of Juvenile Services are not problems to be managed or statistics to be tracked. They are young people who have experienced trauma, who deserve comprehensive support, and who possess remarkable capacity for growth when given the right resources and relationships. At AMCF, we see potential where others see problems. We offer second chances where systems offer punishment. And we provide healing where trauma has left its mark.

This year's growth would not have been possible without our incredible team of therapeutic mentors and our program coordinator. These dedicated professionals show up every day with compassion, expertise, and unwavering belief in young people's capacity for change. The AMCF team meets youth in their communities, build authentic relationships, deliver evidence-based interventions, and walk alongside families during some of the most challenging periods of their lives. Our work is both deeply personal and rigorously professional, combining clinical excellence with cultural responsiveness and genuine care.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are setting ambitious goals. We plan to serve 125 youth, expanding our capacity while maintaining the high-quality, individualized services that drive our strong outcomes. We are also laying the groundwork for statewide expansion, with plans to bring therapeutic mentoring to Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Charles County, Howard County, Anne Arundel County, and Frederick County. Justice-involved youth across Maryland deserve access to trauma-informed, culturally responsive support, and we are committed to making that vision a reality.

As we close this remarkable year, I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who makes this work possible. To our funders and donors who invest in second chances and believe in young people's potential for transformation. To our community partners who refer youth, coordinate services, and support our mission. To the families who trust us with their children during vulnerable times. And to the young people themselves, who show up, do the hard work of healing, and inspire us every day with their resilience and strength.

The need for therapeutic mentoring services continues to grow, and we remain committed to meeting that need with excellence, compassion, and cultural responsiveness. Every young person deserves a chance to heal, to grow, and to build a future defined by possibility rather than by their worst moments. That is the work of the A. Marie Cares Foundation, and that is the work we will continue with renewed dedication in 2026 and beyond.

Thank you for standing with us, for believing in our mission, and for investing in Maryland's young people. Together, we are transforming lives and creating brighter futures.

With gratitude and hope,

*Dr. Ashawnda Fleming*  
Chief Executive Officer  
A. Marie Cares Foundation



# Our Mission and Vision

## Mission

The A. Marie Cares Foundation believes that every young person deserves a chance to thrive no matter where they come from or what they've been through. Our therapeutic mentoring program walks alongside youth during their most vulnerable moments, offering consistent support, guidance, and belief in their potential that many have never experienced. Through evidence-based interventions grounded in real relationships, we help young people discover their strengths, heal from trauma, and build the futures they deserve. We don't just reduce recidivism rates, we restore hope, one young life at a time.

## Vision

We envision communities where all justice-involved youth have access to comprehensive, trauma-informed support that addresses the root causes of their behaviors, honors their cultural identities, and creates pathways toward healing, opportunity, and positive futures. We see a future where young people are defined by their potential rather than their past, where families are empowered to support their children's growth, and where communities are strengthened by investing in second chances.

## Core Values

- **Trauma-Informed Care:** We recognize the impact of trauma on young people's lives and deliver all services through a trauma-informed lens that prioritizes safety, trust, empowerment, and healing.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** We honor each young person's cultural identity and deliver services that are responsive to diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Evidence-Based Practice:** We integrate research-supported interventions including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and Social Skills Training to ensure effective outcomes.
- **Relationship-Centered:** We believe authentic relationships are the foundation of healing and invest significant time building trust with youth and families.
- **Family-Focused:** We recognize that sustainable change happens within families and provide support, education, and empowerment to caregivers.
- **Community-Based:** We meet young people where they are, delivering services in communities, homes, schools, and settings where they feel comfortable.

# 2025: A Year of Growth and Impact

2025 marked significant expansion for the A. Marie Cares Foundation. We served more youth, strengthened our partnerships, and continued demonstrating powerful outcomes that change the trajectories of young people's lives. These numbers tell the story of our impact:

## Youth Served and Outcomes

98

**Justice-involved youth received comprehensive therapeutic mentoring services in Montgomery County and Prince George's County, representing a 61% increase from 2024.**

78%

**Of youth who completed the program had no further involvement with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, demonstrating significant recidivism reduction.**

85%

**Average attendance rate for scheduled sessions, reflecting strong youth engagement and the quality of relationships therapeutic mentors build.**



# Program Highlights: Therapeutic Mentoring in Action

The AMCF Therapeutic Mentoring Program integrates evidence-based clinical interventions with the relational power of mentoring, delivered in community settings where young people feel comfortable and where healing can happen authentically. In 2025, we continued refining and strengthening this model, ensuring every youth received individualized, trauma-informed support.

## Three-Component Framework

### Individualized Goal Setting

Each young person's treatment plan reflects their unique strengths, challenges, and aspirations. Therapeutic mentors work collaboratively with youth and families to identify goals addressing emotional regulation, family communication, academic engagement, peer relationships, and decision-making skills. This individualized approach ensures services remain responsive to each young person's evolving needs.

### Relationship Building

Authentic relationships form the foundation of all therapeutic work. Mentors invest significant time building trust through consistency, respect, cultural responsiveness, and genuine care. They show up reliably, follow through on commitments, and demonstrate that they see each young person as more than their justice system involvement. These relationships create the safe space necessary for healing and growth.

### Cultural Enrichment Activities

Positive experiences expand young people's sense of possibility for their futures. Cultural enrichment activities might include college visits, career exploration, engagement with cultural institutions, community service projects, and connection with positive role models. These activities strengthen therapeutic relationships, reinforce cultural identity, and provide opportunities for skill development in supportive environments.

## Evidence-Based Interventions

Our therapeutic mentors integrate multiple research-supported approaches:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** techniques help youth identify connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, recognize problematic patterns, and develop healthier responses.

- **Motivational Interviewing** supports youth in exploring ambivalence about change, strengthening their own motivation, and developing concrete action plans.
- **Trauma-Informed Care** ensures all interactions acknowledge trauma's impact, prioritize safety and trust, emphasize empowerment, and avoid retraumatization.
- **Social Skills Training** provides explicit instruction in communication, conflict resolution, emotion regulation, and decision-making.
- **Restorative Justice** principles help youth understand the impact of their actions, make amends where appropriate, and develop accountability alongside empathy.

## Stories of Transformation

Behind every statistic is a young person whose life has been transformed through therapeutic mentoring. These stories illustrate the power of consistent, relationship-based support delivered with cultural responsiveness and clinical expertise. (Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.)

### Marcus: From Anger to Achievement

When Marcus entered our program at age 15, he had been suspended from school three times for fighting, had strained relationships with family members, and was struggling to manage intense anger. His therapeutic mentor met with him weekly, helping him identify triggers, develop healthier coping strategies, and practice new ways of communicating his feelings.

Six months into the program, Marcus's transformation was remarkable. He hadn't had a behavioral incident at school, his grades began to improve, and he began exploring vocational training in automotive technology. His mother shared: "AMCF gave me my son back. He's learning to talk instead of fight, and our home is peaceful for the first time in years."



## Jasmine: Rebuilding Trust

Jasmine, age 14, witnessed significant domestic violence in her home and struggled to trust adults. When her therapeutic mentor first reached out, Jasmine was guarded, skeptical, and convinced that adults would eventually let her down. Her mentor persisted, showing up consistently week after week, creating a safe space where Jasmine could process her trauma at her own pace.

Over ten months, Jasmine gradually opened up. She began talking about her experiences, developed healthier ways of managing anxiety, and rebuilt her relationship with her grandmother who had custody. When Jasmine successfully completed probation, she told her therapeutic mentor: "You were the first person who has ever listened to me." Jasmine is now communicating more effectively with the adults in her life and is no longer involved in the DJS system.

## The Williams Family: Strengthening Bonds

When 16-year-old Terrence entered the program, his relationship with his mother was strained to the breaking point. Communication had broken down, trust was eroded, and both felt hopeless about improving their relationship. AMCF's family engagement sessions brought them together, teaching communication skills, helping them understand each other's perspectives, and creating space for healing.

Ms. Williams shared: "The family sessions saved our relationship. I learned how to listen without judgment, how to support Terrence's healing, and how to take care of myself while being there for him." Terrence added: "My mom and I actually talk now, like really talk. I know she's in my corner and that has changed everything." The Williams family's transformation demonstrates that healing happens within families when they receive the right support.



# Meet the Team

The A. Marie Cares Foundation's success is built on the dedication, expertise, and compassion of our team. Each member brings specialized knowledge and a deep commitment to transforming the lives of justice-involved youth through trauma-informed, culturally responsive support.

## **Dr. Ashawnda Fleming, Chief Executive Officer**



Dr. Fleming possesses more than twenty years of nonprofit management experience. She has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the American Psychological Foundation and the Executive Director of the Hetrick Martin Institute New Jersey. She has also served as Chief Development Officer for national nonprofits including the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Prevent Child Abuse.

Her career of service began when she was appointed to the position of Vice President of Clinical Compliance for the largest substance abuse and mental health provider in the Mid-Atlantic region, which included managing a staff of 150. She has written, secured, and supervised national research initiatives funded by the National Institutes of Health, The United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the United States Department of Justice. Dr. Fleming served as a working member on the Campaign for Mental Health Reform with the late Senator Kennedy and other national legislators. The Campaign was instrumental in passing the National Mental Health Parity Act. Dr. Fleming was selected as 1 of 10 National Fellows by the New York Women's Foundation. The Fellowship entitled: "Leading the Way: Building the Pipeline of Women of Color Leaders in the Social Sector" represented a capacity-building and leadership initiative designed to support the efforts of women of color who are emerging leaders working in the field of social services in the United States. Dr. Fleming holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from The American University in Washington, D.C., a master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from St. Thomas University in Miami, FL, and a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications from Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, FL.

## **Angelica Brodeur, MS, Program Coordinator**



Ms. Brodeur earned her Master of Science in Training and Development, with a concentration in E-Learning, from the University of St. Francis. She also holds the SHRM-CP certification from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and a Human Resources Management Certificate from Florida Atlantic University. She is responsible for managing the logistics and coordination of the program, ensuring that all operational elements align with the initiative's objectives and timelines.

She coordinates with stakeholders to ensure seamless communication and collaboration for the program. She handles scheduling, resource allocation, and the implementation of project milestones to ensure that the program runs smoothly. As a skilled project manager, Ms. Brodeur oversees the development of program manuals, materials, and resources to support staff in meeting the needs of mentees and their families effectively. Her extensive experience in fostering productive relationships with vendors and stakeholders is instrumental in coordinating service delivery across locations. She maintains a focus on efficiency and effectiveness by managing schedules, resolving logistical challenges, and ensuring that program activities are executed on time.



### **Ryan Washington, MS, Senior Therapeutic Mentor**

Mr. Washington's career reflects a deep commitment to both science and education, woven together by a thread of continuous learning and a passion for fostering growth in others. His journey began with a strong foundation in science, earning a Bachelor of Science in Physiology-Neurobiology from the University of Maryland College Park in 2001. From 2010 to 2011, he shared his knowledge as an Adjunct Instructor at Brown Mackie College, marking the beginning of his formal teaching career. This experience ignited a passion for curriculum development and student engagement, which he further cultivated during his time as a Science Teacher in Prince George's Public Schools from 2018 to 2020. Here, he designed and implemented innovative biology curricula, incorporating interactive experiments and real-world applications to boost student comprehension and foster a love of science. He spearheaded science fairs, secured funding through grant proposals, and revitalized the AP Biology curriculum, preparing students for future academic success. His commitment to his students extended beyond the classroom, as he prioritized transparent parent interaction and analyzed student performance data to refine his teaching methodologies, resulting in measurable improvements in course outcomes.



### **Sola Fakinlede, MS, Therapeutic Mentor**

As a graduate of Full Sail University's prestigious Master of Fine Arts program in Film Production, Ms. Fakinlede's educational background has equipped her with advanced skills in visual storytelling, filmmaking, video production, and script analysis. Ms. Fakinlede leverages her expertise in creative production, communications, and leadership to inspire and support mentees in the Mentoring Program. With over eight years of professional experience in marketing, communications, and film production, she brings a unique and innovative approach to fostering engagement and personal development among mentees. Her experience as a teacher at the Georgetown Day School enhances the skillset that she brings to the project. With a focus on multimedia, Ms. Fakinlede engages mentees through hands-on experiences that ignite creativity and foster skill development. One of the most effective ways that she achieves this is through project-based learning, where mentees take ownership of their ideas by creating short films, podcasts, animations, or digital portfolios. These projects not only allow them to express themselves but also build technical proficiency and storytelling skills whether through blogs, social media content, or digital storytelling platforms. She works with mentees to teach them how to craft narratives that resonate with audiences. Above all, she encourages mentees to explore digital media freely, pushing their creative boundaries and experimenting with different forms of multimedia expression.



### **Philip Krabill, MA, Therapeutic Mentor**

Mr. Krabill brings a unique combination of peacebuilding expertise, youth development experience, and conflict transformation skills to his work as a therapeutic mentor. He holds a Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, where his coursework focused on mediation and facilitation, nonviolent mobilization for social change, and community conflict analysis techniques. He also earned a Bachelor's degree in Peacebuilding & Development and Bible, Religion and Theology from Eastern Mennonite

University, graduating with high honors. Most recently, Mr. Krabill served as Program Coordinator at Little Friends for Peace in Washington, DC, where he designed and taught curriculum for all ages concerning how to find peace on personal, communal, and political levels. His experience as Interim Youth Pastor at Asbury United Methodist Church involved planning weekly lessons, organizing monthly community engagement events, and providing spiritual guidance to young people navigating challenging life transitions. Mr. Krabill holds a Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience Level 1 Certificate and an Alternatives to Violence Project Certificate, equipping him with specialized knowledge in trauma-informed care and conflict de-escalation. His fluency in Spanish translation and interpretation, combined with his international experience working with youth development programs in Guatemala and South Africa, enhances his ability to provide culturally responsive support. Mr. Krabill's approach to therapeutic mentoring integrates conflict transformation principles with youth development practices, helping young people develop healthy communication skills, process difficult emotions, resolve conflicts constructively, and build positive relationships with peers and adults.

### **Haley Warren, BS, Therapeutic Mentor**



Ms. Warren brings a strong foundation in STEM education, peer mentorship, and youth development to her work as a therapeutic mentor. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Howard University, where she distinguished herself as a 2023-2024 DOW-SURE Research Scholar and presented her research at prestigious venues including the NIH Symposium, ABRCMS, Society for Neuroscience, and Howard University Research Symposium. Her extensive mentorship experience began as a Peer Tutor in Howard's Chemistry Department, where she provided academic and personal support to diverse students in General, Organic, and Biochemistry through regular check-ins and individualized feedback. As Vice President of the Howard University American Chemical Society Student Chapter, Ms. Warren led STEM programming, promoted peer connection among students, and developed a structured mentorship program for underclassmen that emphasized consistent weekly engagement between mentors and mentees. Her commitment to community service is demonstrated through her volunteer work bringing cards and gift baskets to nurses, patients, and parents at the National Children's Hospital, where she gained experience working with families navigating challenging circumstances. Ms. Warren's skills in organization, mentorship and communication, public speaking, and youth engagement translate directly to therapeutic mentoring, where she helps justice-involved youth set and achieve goals, build confidence in their abilities, develop positive peer relationships, and recognize their potential for academic and personal success. Her experience supporting students through academic challenges and personal development parallels the holistic, relationship-based approach central to AMCF's therapeutic mentoring model.

### **Maggie Bliss, MS, Administrative Assistant**



Maggie Bliss serves as Administrative Assistant AMCF. She provides essential operational and administrative support that ensures the organization's programs and grant funded initiatives run with efficiency and precision. In this role, Maggie manages the organizational systems, documentation, and communications infrastructure that allow AMCF's program staff to remain focused on delivering high quality services to youth in the DMV region. Maggie holds an M.S. in Sustainable Resource Management from the Technical University of Munich and earned a Fulbright Scholarship in

recognition of her academic excellence and research contributions. Her scientific training and fluency in both German and AI powered research tools equip her with an exceptional ability to synthesize complex information quickly and communicate it clearly, skills that translate directly into producing precise and well organized administrative and programmatic materials. Her background in data integration and research further strengthens AMCF's capacity to track program outcomes and support evaluation activities with rigor and care.

## Looking Ahead and Beyond

As we celebrate 2025's achievements, we look toward an ambitious future that will expand therapeutic mentoring services across Maryland. Our vision is clear: every justice-involved youth in Maryland should have access to comprehensive, trauma-informed support regardless of their county of residence.

### 2026 Goals

- **Serve 125 youth** in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, representing a 28% increase in service capacity while maintaining our 78% recidivism reduction rate.
- **Strengthen evaluation** frameworks to capture more detailed outcome data, track long-term impacts, and continuously improve service delivery based on evidence.
- **Expand family-centered programming** with enhanced support groups, parent education workshops, and family strengthening activities.
- **Develop transition-age youth services** specifically designed for older adolescents aging out of the juvenile justice system who need continued support.
- **Build university research partnerships** to rigorously evaluate program outcomes and contribute to the evidence base for therapeutic mentoring.

### Program Expansion

Beyond 2026, AMCF plans to expand therapeutic mentoring services to seven Maryland counties. This expansion will bring our evidence-based model to: Washington, DC, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Charles County, Howard County, Anne Arundel County and Frederick County.

This geographic expansion will require sustained investment, strategic partnerships with DJS and local school systems in each county, and careful attention to maintaining program quality while scaling services. We are committed to growing thoughtfully, ensuring that expansion enhances rather than compromises the individualized, high-quality services that drive our strong outcomes.

# Thank You to Our Partners and Supporters

The work of the A. Marie Cares Foundation is only possible because of the generous support, collaboration, and commitment of our partners, funders, and community members. We extend our deepest gratitude to:

## Government Partners

- Maryland Department of Juvenile Services - Montgomery County
- Maryland Department of Juvenile Services - Prince George's County
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Prince George's County Public Schools

## Foundation and Corporate Supporters

Thank you to the private foundations, corporate sponsors, and individual donors whose financial support makes our work possible. Your investment in justice-involved youth creates second chances, transforms lives, and strengthens communities.

## Community Partners

Thank you to the mental health providers, employment programs, educational institutions, legal services organizations, and community-based organizations who work alongside us to support youth and families. Your collaboration ensures comprehensive, coordinated care.

## Most Importantly: The Families We Serve

Thank you to the young people and families who trust us with their healing journeys. Your resilience inspires us every day. Your willingness to do the hard work of growth and change demonstrates remarkable courage. Your success is our success, and your futures are the reason we do this work. Together, we are transforming lives and creating brighter futures.

***Together, we are transforming lives and creating brighter futures.***



**For information about supporting our work, partnering with AMCF,  
or referring youth for services, please contact us.**

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