



25/26

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2026
JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

HEALTH | HOUSING | FAMILY | FINANCES | CAREER

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WE BECAME STRONGER

When I look back on this past year, I am filled with gratitude. Every success story in these pages began because someone chose to care. Whether you gave financially, volunteered your time, served on our Board of Directors, or showed up each day as a member of our staff, you gave families something many had not experienced in a long time: hope.

Time and again, I have watched women arrive at Chattanooga Room in the Inn carrying burdens no one should have to bear. I have also had the privilege of watching them leave with stable housing, meaningful employment, financial confidence, stronger parenting skills, and, most importantly, a renewed belief in themselves. Those transformations don't happen by chance. They happen because people like you choose to invest in people.

This year, we didn't simply grow. We became stronger.

We strengthened the support families receive after graduation, expanded services to meet emerging needs in our community, invested in the professional growth of our staff, and committed ourselves to listening more closely to the voices of those we serve. Every improvement we made had one purpose: helping families build a stronger foundation for lasting success.

One of our most significant investments was strengthening our Aftercare program by hiring our first dedicated Aftercare Coordinator. Families now receive personalized, in-home support that removes transportation barriers and helps them navigate the challenges that often come after leaving our shelter. The results have been so encouraging that we've already secured additional funding to expand Aftercare into a four-year step-down program, ensuring families continue receiving support until they're ready to stand confidently on their own.

This year also brought the opportunity to respond to an unmet need in our community. In partnership with Hamilton County Schools, we launched our pilot Unaccompanied Youth Program for high school students experiencing homelessness without a parent or guardian. Our first participant entered the program after losing her mother and living in her mother's car. Today, she has graduated in the top 15 percent of her class, secured employment, moved into her own apartment, and is beginning classes at Chattanooga State. Her story reminds us what becomes possible when a young person is given safety, stability, and someone who believes in them.

Strong programs require exceptional people. This year, our programming staff began advanced training in Motivational Interviewing, an evidence-based approach that helps families discover their own motivation for lasting change. At CRITI, we aren't here to tell people what to do. We're here to walk alongside them as they rebuild because lasting change happens when people begin to believe in themselves.

Becoming stronger also means becoming better listeners. Through resident surveys, Life Skills evaluations, and our Client Advisory Board made up of former residents, lived experience is helping shape the future of our programs. When families tell us what's working and where we can do better, we listen because the people we serve are often our best teachers.

As we look ahead, I'm more optimistic than ever about the future of Chattanooga Room in the Inn. We will continue strengthening our staff, listening to the families we serve, and building programs that create lasting stability for women and children experiencing homelessness.

The work ahead is exciting. Together, we're building more than programs. We're strengthening an organization that will serve more families, respond to new challenges, and create opportunities for generations to come.

Thank you for believing in this work. Thank you for trusting us with your support. Every family whose life has changed this year is a reflection of what we can accomplish together.

With gratitude,
Taylor Hixson
Executive Director





OUR PROGRAMS

01 SHELTER TO STABILITY

Our flagship six-month residential program provides women and children with safe, trauma-informed housing and the resources to rebuild their lives including case management, counseling, meals, transportation, and help finding permanent housing. Our goal is that every family we serve never experiences homelessness again.

02 CHILD ADVOCACY

Every child in our shelter has a dedicated advocate whose sole focus is supporting them during their stay through tutoring, enriching activities, school advocacy, and parenting classes for their mothers.

03 AFTERCARE PROGRAM

Our commitment doesn't end at graduation. We walk alongside graduates for up to four years through structured check-ins, ensuring that family, career, finances, health, and housing remain stable long after they leave our program.

04 UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

A pilot program developed in partnership with Hamilton County Schools providing shelter, wraparound support, and educational advocacy for teenagers ages 16-18 experiencing homelessness without a parent or guardian.

A STORY OF PAYING IT FORWARD



FROM RESIDENT TO ROLE MODEL

When one of our recent graduates moved into her new two-bedroom apartment, she did so with clear eyes and a steady hand. She was offered a three-bedroom unit but because she knew it was outside of her budget, she turned it down. That kind of decision-making is exactly what our program is designed to cultivate.

She works in the service industry and has said repeatedly that she would not be where she is today without Chattanooga Room in the Inn. But what strikes us most about her story is not just her gratitude, but her ownership. She understands now that it doesn't take an extraordinary amount of help to change the trajectory of a life. It takes the right support at the right time, combined with a willingness to make good decisions for yourself and your family, and she's done both.

She now stays in close contact with fellow graduates, offering encouragement and support to women who are walking the same road she once walked. Together, they have built a small but meaningful support system of their own, one that exists within the larger community CRITI helped create.

Her story is not just a success story, it's a reminder that the goal of our program has always been to give women the tools, confidence, and community they need to carry themselves forward long after they leave our care.



OUR IMPACT

170 CLIENTS SERVED

AND FOUND SAFETY, STABILITY, AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE SHELTER AND OUR AFTERCARE PROGRAM.

- 141 individuals served through our Shelter to Stability program
- 51 individuals moved from shelter to permanent housing
- 28 individuals remained in the program at year-end, meaning their housing outcome will be reflected in next year's reporting
- 1,300+ direct services provided
- 342 essential items distributed
- 88% maintained or increased income

OUR PROGRAM PRIMARILY SERVES FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN:

- 51% of participants were children under age 11.
- Nearly 1/3 were preschool-aged children (0–5), highlighting the critical need for services during early childhood.
- Adults ages 18–45 made up 33.5% of participants, representing parents and caregivers working toward long-term stability.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES MEANS INVESTING IN BOTH TODAY'S NEEDS AND TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITIES.

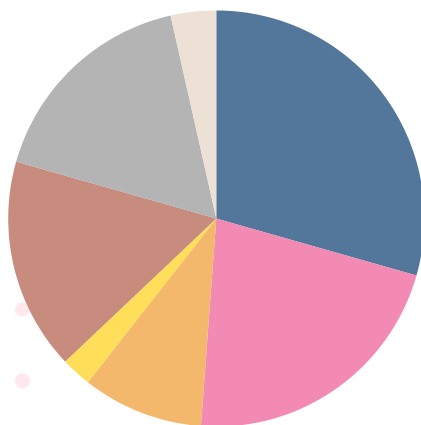
Our team provided more than 1,300 direct services to families throughout the year, addressing immediate needs while building long-term independence.

Children

- 404 enrichment activities
- 101 childcare coordination services
- 55 tutoring sessions
- 37 group counseling sessions
- 31 movement and wellness classes

Adults

- 371 case management meetings
- 234 life skills classes
- 71 transportation services
- 42 individual counseling sessions
- 26 Tech Goes Home participants
- 22 CPR certifications earned



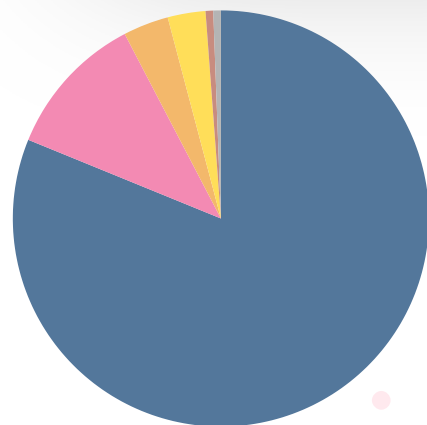
Age Demographics

- 29.41% 0 to 5
- 21.77% 6 to 10
- 9.41% 11 to 14
- 12.35% 15 to 17
- 16.47% 18 to 29
- 7.06% 30 to 45
- 3.53% >46



Race Demographics

- Black, African American, or African 81.18%
- White 11.18%
- Hispanic/Latina/o 3.53%
- Multi-Racia 2.94%
- American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous 0.59%
- Asian or Asian American 0.59%



AFTERCARE: SUCCESS BEYOND SHELTER

Once a resident graduates our program, one of our on-staff Social Workers will follow up with the graduate for up to four years ensuring all areas we focus on during their stay (Family, Career, Finances, Health, and Housing) are still in balance and provide additional resources and tools to intercept the threat of becoming homeless again.



AMONG ACTIVE FAMILIES

Our Aftercare program served 21 families, with 16 families actively participating at year's end.

Among active families:

- 100% remained housed
- 93% employment rate among active Aftercare families
- 69% reported confidence managing household finances

100%

of active Aftercare families remained housed after graduation.



MOM, DEPARTMENT HEAD, AND FUTURE HOMEOWNER ✨

We've mentioned that two of our graduates are working toward purchasing a home, and we want to introduce you to one of them.

This graduate has been with her company for three years, working full time while raising five children on her own. Anyone who's done either of those things knows it's no small feat. Doing both at once takes a kind of quiet, everyday strength that doesn't always get recognized.

Recently, it did when she was promoted to Department Head, and the moment landed differently than she expected. It was not just exciting, it made her think that if she could work her way up over three years while managing everything else on her plate, what else could she do if she put her mind to it?

She turned that question into action. Through our aftercare program, she connected with our partners at Trust Federal Credit Union, and together they are working on a plan to build her credit and put her in a position to purchase a home for her children one day. It is a long game, but she also knows exactly why she is playing it.

The hard days still come and she's honest about that, but she keeps getting up, going to work, coming home to her kids, and putting one foot in front of the other. That kind of determination is what got her the promotion, and it is what's going to get her a house.

FROM RESILIENCE TO RENEWAL

Just two weeks before her high school graduation, a young woman in Chattanooga Room in the Inn's Unaccompanied Youth program experienced the devastating loss of her mother.

In the midst of unimaginable grief, she was determined to walk across the stage.

For many graduates, commencement is a celebration surrounded by family and friends. For youth experiencing homelessness, that kind of support is not always guaranteed. On graduation day, our staff proudly stood beside her, celebrating the diploma she earned, and the resilience and determination that carried her there.

Today, she has secured stable housing, is employed, and is preparing to begin college this fall to study social work. Inspired by her own journey, she hopes to one day help others overcome challenges like the ones she faced.

Because of the generosity of our donors and sponsors, young people like her are building brighter futures and becoming a source of hope for others.



2026

CHATTADERBY

Our annual ChattaDerby event took on a new and meaningful shape in May 2026. After careful consideration, we transitioned the event from a traditional fundraiser to an appreciation gathering for our major donors, annual sponsors, board members, and staff, and the result was a more powerful evening than we could have imagined.

By removing the pressure of fundraising, we were able to do something far more valuable: stay entirely focused on our mission. Guests were reminded of what Chattanooga Room in the Inn does, and why it matters through conversation, connection, and the kind of authentic storytelling that only happens when the goal is gratitude rather than a giving ask.

The evening's most memorable moment was when Melissa Hillebrandt, one of our graduates, took the stage to share her story. In her own words, she described the journey that brought her to our doors, the hard work she put in while she was with us, and the life she was building on the other side. The room was moved in a way that stats and program descriptions simply cannot achieve. When she finished, every person there rose to their feet.

Melissa's standing ovation said thank you to her for her courage, thank you to every donor and sponsor in the room for making her story possible, and it reaffirmed for our entire team why this work matters every single day.

ChattaDerby 2026 was a reminder that the most powerful thing we can offer our supporters is the truth of what their generosity makes possible in the lives of real women and children right here in Chattanooga, not just tickets or a silent auction.

GREAT DEALS GREATER PURPOSE

Opened in September 2025, the CRITI Thrift Store serves as a direct fundraiser for our shelter programming, with one hundred percent of proceeds supporting the women and children in our program.

The store is more than a retail operation. Women living in our shelter shop for clothing at no cost, and graduates receive a voucher to shop for household goods as they move into their new home. Our mission is made tangible, right on our sales floor.

In its first year, the store grew steadily in both revenue, grossing more than \$200,000 in just 9 short months, and community presence, demanding store hours be expanded to serve more of the community.



SALES AND PROMOTIONS

Sunday & Monday - 50% off select items

Tuesday - Thursday - 75% off select items

Wednesday - Seniors and Veterans receive 10% off purchases

Friday & Saturday - 90% off select items

Last Saturday of every month - 50% off all clothing

As the store continues to grow, it remains one of our most powerful tools for community awareness and sustainable funding for the programs that change lives every day.



chattanoogaroomintheinn.com/thriftstore

Sunday, 1pm-6pm

Monday to Saturday, 10am-6pm

**3807 Ringgold Road
East Ridge, TN 37412**

423-269-7672

@critithrift

We also have Poshmark!

THANK YOU TO OUR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 ANNUAL SPONSORS



AND DONOR SOCIETY MEMBERS

- Wayne and Sarah Anthony
- Lisa Carroll
- Susan Davenport
- Brenda Eason
- Julie and Chris Edmondson
- Jordan Farmer
- Rachel Geddes
- Roeland Haynes-Bencosme
- Jacob Hennings
- Taylor Hixson and Brian McDonald
- Hixson First Baptist Church
- Deborah Hulse
- Ashley Keith-Lynch
- Steve and Meredith Klein
- Jack McKee Family
- Thomas McNeill
- Diane Meadows
- DeeAnna and Greg Petree
- Justin and Hannah Phillips
- James Roides
- Erin Rountree
- Mitzi and Scott Ruth
- Karen Scott
- Malissa Talbert
- The Anderson Family
- Pamala and Robert Thompson
- Delores Weaver
- Anonymous (x92)

THANK YOU TO OUR FISCAL YEAR 25/26 STAFF AND BOARD

CHATTANOOGA ROOM IN THE INN STAFF

- Melinda Bowman, *Thrift Store Manager*
- Cassidy Boyd, *Thrift Store Assistant Manager*
- Jessica Brackett, *Child Advocate*
- Sara Collier, *Director of Operations*
- Taylor Hixson, *Executive Director*
- Sabrina Hubbard, *Administrative Assistant*
- Barbara Johnson, *Aftercare Program Coordinator*
- Adrienne Koon, *Director of Development and Thrift Store Operations*
- Tiffany Mathis, *Thrift Store Associate*
- Gina Moss, *Lead Case Manager*
- Libby Preston, *Volunteer Coordinator*
- Joelene Rimes, *Thrift Store Associate*
- Michiba Smith, *Workforce Development and Safety Specialist*
- Cheyenne South, *Program Assistant*
- Lindy Thornton, *Thrift Store Associate*
- Airiyanna Whisnant, *Case Manager*

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

DeeAnna Petree, *Chair*
Scott Smith, *Vice Chair/Chair-Elect*
Alex Lemons, *Treasurer*
Donna Pryor, *Secretary*

Board of Directors

Ashby Angell
Jim Cantanzaro
Krystal L. Collins
Luis De La Torre
Holly Jo Haynes
Steve Klein
Charlotte Mattingly
Diane Meadows
Amber Mueller
Angie Souther

CRITI CORE VALUES

Dignity - We honor the inherent worth of every individual, fostering an environment of respect and trust.

Equality - We commit ourselves to providing a welcoming, safe place that fosters ethical practices. Safeguarding these practices ensures everyone equal opportunities for individual success.

Integrity - We act with honesty, professionalism, and a deep commitment to doing what is right.

Growth and Innovation - We believe in the power of growth, setting bold goals and embracing new ideas to build a stronger future.

Compassion - We lead with empathy, offering wholehearted kindness and care to every person we serve.





26/27

STAY CONNECTED

CHATTANOOGAROOMINTHEINN.COM

Mission

Empowering women and children experiencing homelessness to rebuild their lives by providing transitional housing, support, and hope.

Vision

That every woman and child in our community has a safe place to call home and the resources to maintain it.

PHONE:

423-624-6144

ADDRESS:

230 N Highland Park Ave
Chattanooga, TN 37404

WAYS TO GIVE:

chattanoogaroomintheinn.com/give

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