

# LUNCH BUDDY PROGRAM

# 2025

# REPORT



Catawba County  
United Way

DATA FROM SPRING AND FALL SEMESTER, 2025

Here's a quick snapshot of the impact of the Council on Adolescents of Catawba County **Lunch Buddy Program** throughout 2025, highlighting mentor demographics, student grade levels served, mentor placement by school, and key insights about the program's reach!

## IN 2025, WE HAD...

82 Mentors

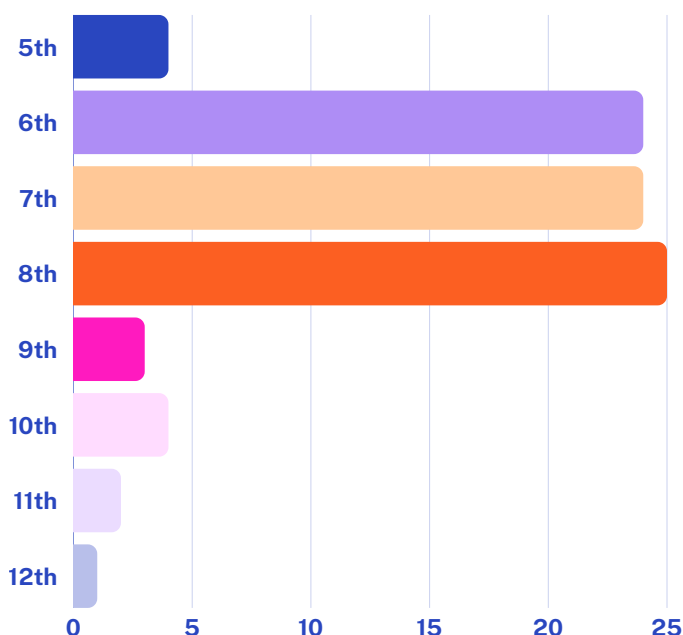
serving

87 Students

across all three school systems  
in Catawba County

## Student Participation by Grade Level

Total number of students served in the Lunch Buddy Program, organized by grade level.



**75%**

of our lunch buddy pairings  
are in their first year

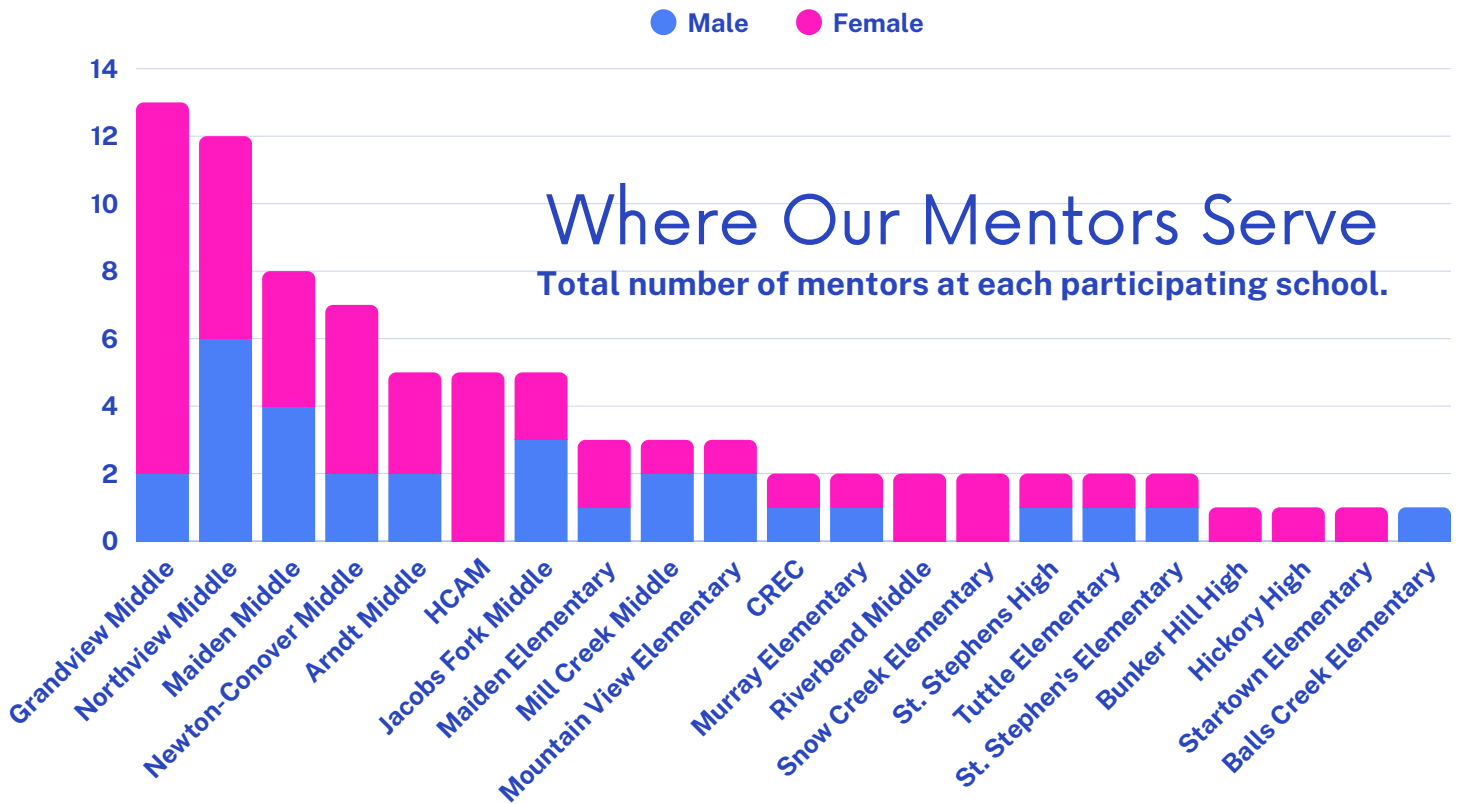
**25%**

of our lunch buddy pairings are  
returning/long-term matches

**84%**

of our program participants  
are in middle school

The Lunch Buddy Program primarily serves middle school students, which is reflected in the strong representation of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Most high school participants are long-term matches who began meeting with their mentors in middle school.

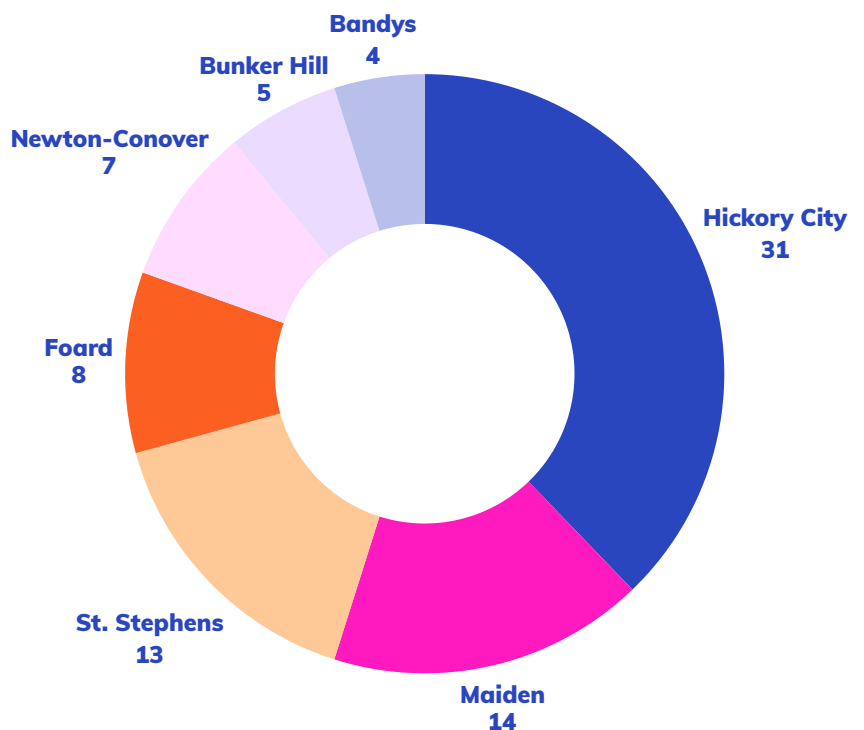


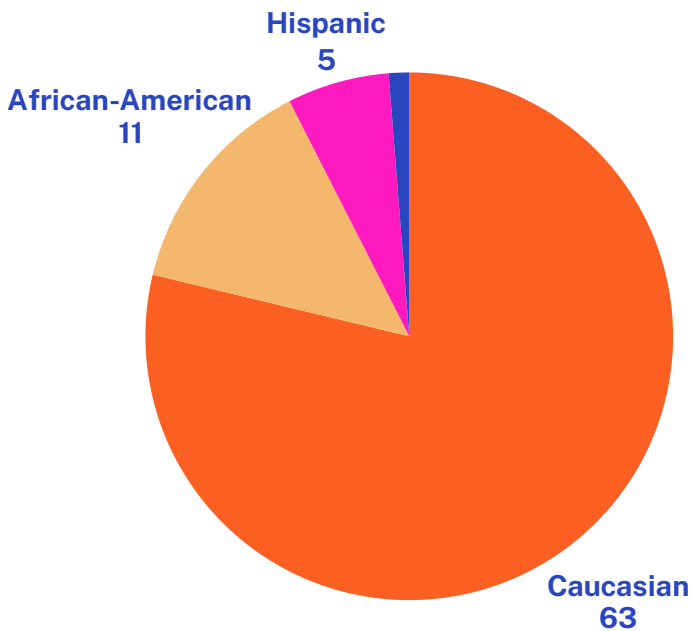
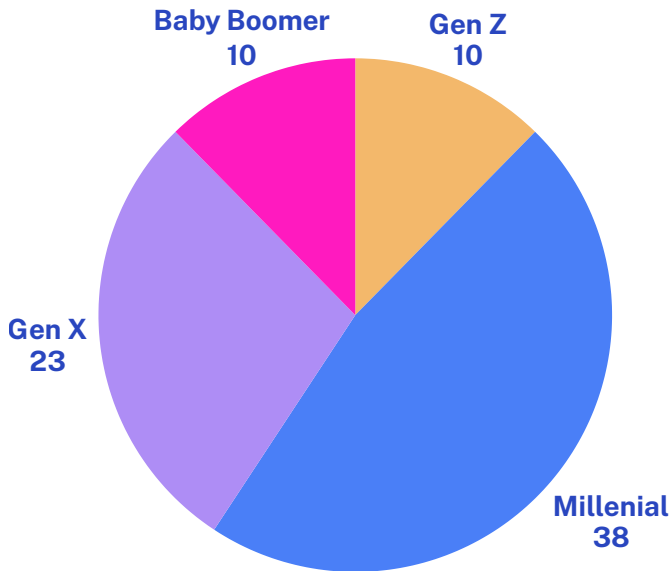
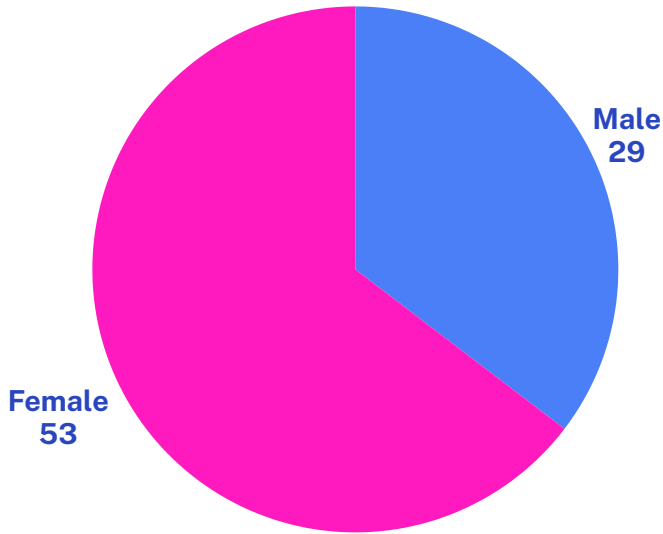
Grandview and Northview serve the highest number of students in the program, with Grandview having the largest number of female mentors and Northview having the largest number of male mentors. We have 31 mentors serving in Hickory City Schools, 44 in Catawba County Schools, and 7 in Newton-Conover City Schools.

## Mentor Participation by School + Feeder District

### Total number of mentors serving students across each participating school district and feeder system.

Mentor participation is highest within Hickory City Schools, which reflects the higher population density and strong program presence. Newton-Conover City Schools is a smaller district and, in 2025, the program operated only at the middle school level. The Lunch Buddy Program partners with 15 schools across Catawba County Schools (spread widely throughout the county). Mentor numbers are scattered across those locations, though CCS collectively serves the largest number of students.





# Mentor Demographics

**Gender, ethnicity, and age distribution of mentors participating in the Lunch Buddy Program.**

Current mentor demographics show the program is most strongly represented by Caucasian Millennial women.

Men, racial and ethnic minorities, and younger mentors remain underrepresented. One of my biggest goals for the Lunch Buddy Program is to recruit more diverse mentors, to better serve the diverse student body in our county.