



Generations Ahead

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**Empowering teen parents TODAY
for a healthier TOMORROW**



Generations Ahead is serving some of the most vulnerable in our community, and is making a truly meaningful and lasting difference in those lives. I am inspired by the stories of these remarkable parents and their beautiful children, and by their perseverance and determination in the face of significant and at times overwhelming challenges. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and committed staff to engage in this critically important work.



GREG LUYT
BOARD MEMBER

MISSION

We empower young parents to become resilient by building positive relationships, strengthening family stability, and raising healthy children.

VISION

All children and their families are resilient, thriving, and engaged in their communities.

OUR VALUES

DIGNITY

We sincerely respect our clients' individual capabilities, potential and needs. We support and honor their self-determination.

EMPATHY

We are non-judgmental, treating others always with compassion and acceptance.

EQUITY

We are open, ethical, and inclusive in our relationships, believing in the unique strengths of all individuals and their ability to succeed.

2025 STAFF

- Lauren Brandstatter
BA, Director of Strategic Operations and Communications
- Robin Lagerquist
LLBSW, IMH-E, Case Manager
- Mike Opper
MBA, Fatherhood Advocate
- Sarah Payette
MEd, Program Director
- Chad Phillips
MA, Fatherhood Advocate (departed GA Feb. 2025)
- Marjorie Rich
MPH, Executive Director
- Emmy Schumacher
BA, Development Director

INTEGRITY

We behave with honesty, transparency, and trust, committing ourselves to excellence in service.

JOY

We are positive, supportive, and encouraging every step of the way. We celebrate progress and growth.

RELATIONSHIPS

We proactively model and support healthy, enriching and trusting relationships with individuals, families, and communities.

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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INTERN

- Angela Iott

Dear Friends and Supporters

As we reflect on 2025, one word rises clearly to the top: **Growth.**

This past year marked an important moment for our organization—a year of moving forward with confidence, grounded in strong leadership, a committed team, and deep community trust. In a time when so much feels uncertain, we are proud to say there is stability within our organization and momentum in our mission. Because of that foundation, we are looking ahead with optimism and purpose as we prepare to support more teen parents and their babies across Northern Michigan.

Throughout 2025, we continued to serve teen parents and their children across our seven-county region with more reach, more support, and more heart than ever before. While the numbers in this report tell an important story of families served and needs met, they cannot fully capture the resilience of the parents we walk alongside—or the care and compassion that surrounds them.

This year, we strengthened our programming by welcoming a new Fatherhood Advocate, allowing us to more fully support whole families and empower all parents. We also experienced a remarkable increase in referrals from our community partners, a testament to the trust, collaboration, and shared commitment that makes this work possible.

Together with you, we provided critical financial assistance to families facing urgent and unexpected challenges. Through direct support and our baby pantry, parents received essential items, safe sleep supplies, and relief during some of their most stressful moments. Every diaper distributed, every bill covered, and every family supported represented dignity, stability, and hope.

At the heart of everything we do is empowerment. We believe teen parents are capable, resilient, and deserving of support as they build healthy, stable futures for themselves and their children. It is an honor to be part of that journey.

None of this would be possible without you—our donors, volunteers, partners, and advocates. Your belief in our mission fuels our work and ensures that teen parents in Northern Michigan do not have to navigate parenthood alone.

We truly love what we do.

We deeply care about our clients.

And we hope you can feel that care reflected in every story and every impact shared in this report.

Thank you for standing with us in 2025. We look forward to continuing to grow—together.

With gratitude,



Alison Metiva
Chair, Board of Directors



Yarrow Brown
Executive Director



Alison Metiva



Yarrow Brown

JOSH'S STORY OF GROWTH
AND CONNECTION

Building Forward, Together



Josh with GA's Fatherhood Advocate, Mike

Josh was 19 when he enrolled in Generations Ahead. He first connected with us while on a date with another client at a TC Pit Spitters event. At the time, his newborn daughter was with her mother, though he soon began sharing custody while living in a camper in Lake Ann. Josh was navigating this chapter largely on his own, without family support and with only a small, distant circle of connections.

Early on, Josh began meeting with our Fatherhood Advocate and quickly built rapport. “Mike matched my energy,” Josh shared. “We vibed. He was fun to talk to.” That sense of mutual respect helped Josh feel comfortable engaging and staying involved, and once he knew Mike would be present at social events, he began attending those as well.

“I enjoy the socializing and the food,” Josh explained. “The food is always good”. These gatherings provided space for connection, nourishment, and community; elements that mattered deeply during a time of uncertainty. Josh is a natural leader who engages easily with peers. Confident, friendly, and encouraging, his presence strengthens every event and contributes positively to the sense of community GA strives to create.

Through his time with GA, Josh has gained meaningful support that helped stabilize his life. He credits the Fatherhood Program with helping him avoid serious financial hardship and maintaining access to essentials, such as his phone and vehicle. Just as importantly, GA helped him build connections to other clients, community partners, and additional resources. “You guys help me connect with people and the community,” Josh said.

“The best part has been connecting with someone and having conversations,” Josh shared. “They listen to you, hear you out, and help you figure out what’s best for you, which is ultimately trying to achieve my goals.”

JOSH, CLIENT

Currently, Josh’s living situation is the most stable since he was kicked out of his father’s home at age 17. He rents in town, owns a reliable vehicle, has a steady income, and consistent access to food and shelter. “I’ve actually gained needed weight these last few months!” he proudly exclaims, something that was hard to do with the stressors of life and scarcity of resources.

As Josh enters his final year of enrollment, he’s focused on forward momentum. His goals include earning his CDL (Commercial Drivers License) and becoming a future GA ambassador. This is a position that he imagined when speaking to us, and we couldn’t agree more! He’s also clear about the role he plays in his own success. “Some of the work is on me - to show up, go to events, reach out, and ask for help,” he reflected. “When it’s voiced, GA works as a team to support.”

Josh continues to build toward a future rooted in stability, growth, and connection. He values maintaining strong relationships and a sense of belonging, which he is happy to find at Generations Ahead.

“

Generations Ahead is deeply needed in our community because parenting at a young age can be isolating without the right support. As a young mom myself, I understand how powerful it is to have encouragement, stability, and someone walking alongside you. What draws me to this work is Generations Ahead’s commitment to meeting young parents where they are, without judgment, and helping them build strong futures for their families. This organization is successful because it leads with compassion, consistency, and genuine relationships that help young families truly thrive.

LAUREN FLYNN,
BOARD MEMBER



* Names changed for confidentiality



Programs & Services

We create a safe, fun, and engaging environment for teen parents and their children. All programs and services are provided at no cost to the families we serve and participation is always optional.

BABY PANTRY

The Baby Pantry provides essential supplies for a baby’s first year of life, with 90% of items generously donated by the community.

MENTOR PROGRAM

Young parents are paired with caring, trained volunteer mentors who offer individualized guidance, encouragement, and ongoing support.

FAMILY & PARENT ENRICHMENT

These programs give young parents opportunities to connect through child-friendly activities that promote social-emotional well-being. We also offer educational playgroups for children and organize family-focused community activities that encourage personal growth and strengthen family bonds.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Our case management services address diverse needs, from access to community resources to parenting support, health concerns, relationships, and educational or career goals.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Participants in the internship program are matched with organizations or companies aligned with their professional interests. These paid internships help young parents build skills, gain experience, and explore career pathways.

PARENT EDUCATION

Parent education groups provide a supportive space to share experiences and learn effective parenting strategies. Through guided discussions and expert support, participants strengthen their parenting skills and navigate the unique challenges of parenting as a teen.

COMMUNITY NIGHT

A monthly, welcoming gathering that builds connection and community. Families can access one-on-one support from case managers for help with jobs, housing, and paperwork, connect directly with community partners such as DHHS and SOS Learning Lab, and enjoy low-pressure social activities including open gym, art projects, music, snacks, and peer connection.

Internship Program

The Generations Ahead Internship Program offers select clients the opportunity to explore career paths that may lead to further education, training, or long-term employment. This program is designed for clients who are in stable situations and have the capacity to focus on career development. Participants complete an interest assessment, which helps narrow potential career options, and local businesses and agencies are then recruited to serve as host sites.

Because Generations Ahead provides a stipend, clients are able to participate without financial risk. GA also works to reduce common barriers to employment by assisting with childcare, transportation, and necessary clothing or equipment. Internships are available in either 25- or 50-hour placements, allowing flexibility based on each client's availability and level of interest.

In addition to learning trade-specific skills, interns gained valuable experience in



Client, Intern, Grand Traverse Industries

communication, professionalism, and other essential workplace skills. We are deeply grateful to these community partners for investing in our clients and providing meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. It's a great chance to promote their field and provide on-site training!

To learn more about our Internship Program or how to be a host site, email info@generationsahead.org

2025 Highlights

Partners of Joy

49 businesses, groups and individuals donated gifts for young families during the holidays

2025 Partners of Joy gifts and support brightened the holiday season for

75 & **55**
adults children

287 VISITS TO THE BABY PANTRY

3 mentors paired with teen parents

18 FATHERS
IN THE FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

NEW BABIES BORN IN 2025

18

3 INTERNS PLACED

Hosted by:
Social Butterfly Event Planning
The Flower Station
Grand Traverse Industries

6
CLIENTS GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL

CLIENTS SUPPORTED

81 | **70**

YOUNG PARENTS

CHILDREN

“

What has surprised me most is how rewarding it has been to see my mentee achieve so many of the goals she had for her life and her child’s life.

MENTOR

She’s helped me see so much in myself and my worth, and so much more.

CLIENT/MENTEE



Scan here to check out our mentor page and learn more



IN 2025, MENTORS CONTRIBUTED
271
HOURS OF MENTORSHIP

MENTORS 2025

Our Mentor Program warmly supports young parents as they navigate the joys and challenges of parenthood while continuing to pursue their personal and academic goals. Through guidance, encouragement, and connection, mentors help parents feel empowered and supported every step of the way.

After completing a four-week training, mentors are prepared to be matched one-on-one with a parent when the opportunity is right, or to offer flexible, informal support—such as providing transportation, lending a helping hand during group activities, or simply being a trusted, caring presence.

This program is built on trust and compassion, helping young parents build confidence, strengthen parenting skills, and feel less alone. Mentors share encouragement, listen, and provide helpful resources, supporting teen parents as they grow in resilience, decision-making, and overall well-being. Together, we work to create lasting, positive change—promoting independence and opening the door to brighter futures for both parents and their children.

We thank our mentors for their incredible support.

NEW 2025 MENTORS

Colleen Masterson-Bzdok
MacKenzie Desmonde
Anthony DeMerle
Jane Kendra
Alexandria Diller

ACTIVE 2025 MENTORS

Teresa (Terri) McCardell
Renne Ball
Sandi Pittman
Larisa Galnares
Shari Van der Grijn
Susan Wooton
Ingrid Pylvainan



With Gratitude **FOR OUR 2025 VOLUNTEERS**

We are profoundly grateful for our dedicated volunteers, whose commitment and generosity make our work possible every day. From organizing our baby pantry and supporting administrative efforts, to providing transportation and childcare during events so young parents can build meaningful connections, our volunteers are at the heart of our community. We thank them for their time, energy, and compassion, and we honor the lasting difference they make in the lives of families we serve.

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Andy Wolf | Jon Randles | Roger Gerstle |
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| Bzdok | Mary McGonegle | Suzanne Vanderklipp |
| Dana Boomer | Megan Klabunde | Teaghan Gorsline |
| Elise Ballinger | Nancy Chatterley | Teri Gorsline |
| Ingrid Pylvainen | Rebekah Weeks | Terri McCardell |
| Jane Becker | Renne Ball | Tony DeMerle |
| Jane Wilde | Robin Nance | Zinnia Burks |



I love helping with the baby pantry’s seasonal clothing changeover, playing with busy toddlers while their parents meet, and serving up snacks while parents and children enjoy family time together at many of the organization’s events. These volunteer opportunities have allowed me to observe firsthand the perseverance and dedication to parenting these young people exhibit while working toward their high school graduation and employment.

SHELLEY DUKE
VOLUNTEER

IN 2025,
VOLUNTEERS
CONTRIBUTED
1,029
HOURS OF
SERVICE



THANK YOU TO AAA RANGLES INSURANCE AGENCY for your generous 3-year commitment to volunteer service as an organization. We truly appreciate your willingness to dedicate time and energy alongside your staff to support our community.



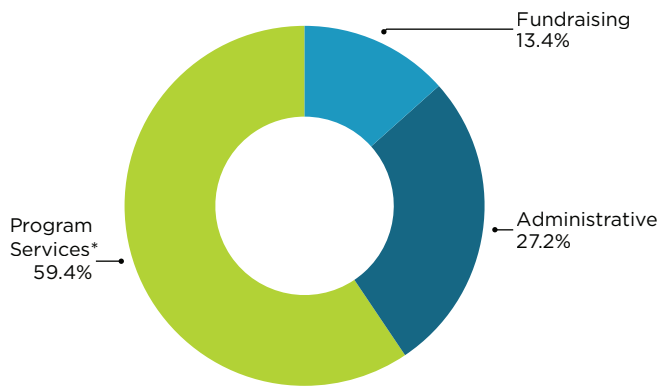
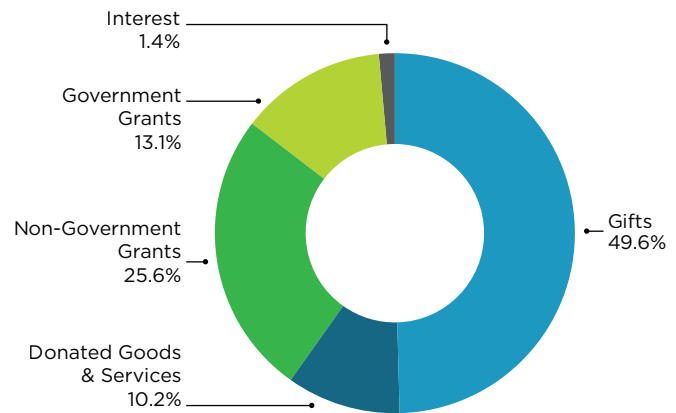
Scan here to learn about
volunteer opportunities



Financial Overview

By investing time and money to support teen parents, we help break cycles of poverty and create brighter, more hopeful futures for their children. Your generosity empowers teen parents to fulfill their potential—transforming their lives and creating a ripple effect of positive change in their communities. **All services are provided for free to our families.**

REVENUE	AMOUNT
Gifts (Individuals, Clubs & Businesses)	\$418,031
Donated Goods & Services	\$86,403
Non-Government Grants	\$215,852
Government Grants	\$110,867
Interest	\$12,043
TOTAL	\$843,196



EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
Fundraising	\$81,559
Administrative	\$141,995
Program Services*	\$298,810
TOTAL	\$522,364

***Program Services include:**

Case Management, Mentor Support, Family Enrichment Activities, Play Groups, Counseling, Career Internship, Financial Assistance, Transportation, Household Needs and the Holiday Program

The Impact of Counseling Support

Mental health support is a critical part of the journey for many teen parents, and in 2025, counseling services made a profound difference for the young families we serve. **Thanks to the generosity of our donors who invested specifically in Mental Health funds, 14 clients enrolled in counseling and completed a total of 131 sessions throughout the year.** These services were provided by six dedicated therapists who believe deeply in our mission and offered their care at a deeply discounted rate—saving our organization nearly \$11,000 in 2025 alone. These services are completely free for our clients. This impact would not be possible without the courage and commitment of our clients, who chose to invest in themselves and their

well-being; the generosity of our donors, who recognized how essential mental health is to healthy parenting and long-term stability; and the incredible therapists who partner with us to ensure high-quality, accessible care. Together, this community of support is helping teen parents build resilience, confidence, and a stronger foundation for their futures.

Providers in 2025

Diana Ro,
Resilient Mental Health
Hayden Scott,
Fellow Traveler Therapy
Lauren Holst,
Head and Heart Therapeutic Solutions

Shannon Pineau,
Mind Body Nature, LLC
Michelle Loeffler-Rohruff,
Mental Wellness Counseling
Devin Moore,
Head and Heart Therapeutic Solutions



Our work at Generations Ahead is made possible because of a community that chooses to invest in young families. Our Empowerment Partners serve as the foundation of our mission, providing transformational support that strengthens everything we do. And every other gift, no matter the level, is a brick in what we are building together. Each donation is meaningful, each one represents compassion, and each helps ensure that no young parent has to face their journey alone.



EMMY SCHUMACHER
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Thank You for Giving

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JAN 1 - DEC 31, 2025

With sincere gratitude to our supporters in 2025

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Thank you for all you do - for the support and for keeping me going when I wanted to give up. You guys deserve the world and are superheroes to me. I really do appreciate your guys hard work. I know I wouldn't be the person I am today without you all.

CLIENT

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Generations Ahead embodies our community's care for parents and children. Through its work, families are shown that they are valued, important, and not alone. Whether it's helping a young father earn his driver's license so he can be present in his child's life, or supporting parents as they complete their education or secure jobs to support their families, this work delivers meaningful, life-changing support. As a mom myself, I'm proud to live in a place where families are prioritized by an organization that shows up when it matters most.

SARA WYCOFF MCCAULEY
BOARD MEMBER



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Lillian Swan

Lauren Thomas
Tonic and Lime
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Trinity Lutheran Church
Trinity Lutheran Preschool:
1st Grade Classroom
Twice Trendy Tots
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A Quiet Force for Young Families

HONORING MARJIE'S LEGACY AT GENERATIONS AHEAD

When Marjie stepped into retirement in February of 2026, she left behind far more than an executive director's title. She left a thriving organization, a deeply rooted community, and generations of young parents and their children whose lives are stronger because she believed in them, often before they believed in themselves.





Marjie was just the right leader at just the right time to hold the vision for, and begin building, Generations Ahead. She has been a model for us all for what it looks like to walk alongside young parents, surround them with community, and provide steady, reliable support through all the joys and challenges they face. Our Generations Ahead families and our community are stronger and more resilient because of her leadership.

ALISON METIVA

Marjie's work in support of young parents began with the Doula Teen Parent Program, founded in 1977, where she served from 2012–2015 and built deep relationships with young parents and staff. When she returned to this work in 2018, she carried a bold vision: to create Generations Ahead as an independent organization to ensure our community's long history of supporting teen parents would continue. Under her leadership, Generations Ahead became independent in 2019 and achieved nonprofit status in 2020 and has grown into a respected, community-centered organization built alongside a dedicated board, staff, volunteers, and donors.

While these organizational milestones are important, Marjie will be the first to say the true value of the work is about relationships.

She will miss the client stories most: stories of perseverance, setbacks, and growth. She understood that progress is rarely linear, and that young people need space to learn, stumble, and become stronger. In her earlier years, she knew clients deeply, their struggles, their triumphs, their humor. Once she knew their stories, she admits it was impossible not to love them. She often jokes that her family was lucky it would have been inappropriate to bring clients home with her, because many tempted her to do just that.

Equally meaningful to her was the community she built with colleagues, volunteers, board members, and donors. She often speaks of the camaraderie and care that grew from mission-driven



Marjie is one of the most genuine, ethical, purpose driven leaders I have ever known. She is both a visionary leader and a capable manager. Marjie has been an unwavering advocate for our clients and this organization. It has been my honor to work with her over the last eight years.

MARSHA SMITH

work. In a field where the work can be heavy, Marjie helped foster a culture of connection, support, and genuine joy, making even the hardest moments feel meaningful and rewarding through a shared sense of team.

Those who know Marjie often call her a force, not because she leads loudly, but because she leads with quiet confidence, deep values, and trust in her team. She doesn't command a room; she creates space. She opens doors, holds them steady, and ensures others can walk through, no matter how many tries it takes.

Marjie's career reflects a lifelong commitment to women's and children's health, with leadership roles in public health, education, and community service throughout the Grand Traverse area and beyond. She and her husband, Roger Gerstle, have called Traverse City home since 1994, raising three daughters who now live across the country. In retirement, Marjie looks forward to something simple and profound: time with family, friends, and creative pursuits like clay, French, and maybe even piano.

As Generations Ahead moves forward, Marjie's influence remains woven into its culture and mission, in the systems she built, the leaders she empowered, and the countless young parents who were met with patience, compassion, and belief when they needed it most.

A quiet force, a trusted friend, and a humble leader, Marjie leaves Generations Ahead stronger, wiser, and ready for what comes next.



Marjie exemplifies the very best of mentorship: she listens with intention, leads with compassion, and gives credit freely while carrying her wisdom with humility. As she retires, she leaves behind not just a legacy of excellence, but a community shaped by her care and friendship.

LAUREN BRANDSTATTER



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