



# ANNUAL IMPACT



# REPORT



# PROGRAMS, EDUCATION & REACH



My Story Matters curriculum creates structured space for individuals to build clarity of identity, emotional regulation, accountability, and forward momentum—foundational capacities that support healthier families, stronger workplaces, and safer communities.

Classes Delivered	3,565
Total instructional hours provided	6,487



## INDIVIDUALS SERVED ACROSS ALL SETTINGS

Community	Justice Involved	Total
560	984	1,544

Community Cohorts	JJ Cohorts	Total Cohorts
77	114	191

“This class has helped me so much. They never offer any classes for someone in my situation. This class was an answer to my prayers. It has helped me with a lot of tools I am going to use in my daily life and future. It has given me hope for a future. For a while, I thought I couldn't have a future, but now I have HOPE! All these tools are amazing. I wish I had these years ago.”



“Thank you guys, it helped a lot, and you guys helped me find who I am and who I can be. I was so lost and struggling to make decisions, this class helped me gain confidence to plan for and take action on my future.”

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & CERTIFICATION

The certification pathway equips individuals with the skills to facilitate learning, mentor others, and model the principles of emotional intelligence, accountability, and intentional leadership. By developing more Certified Guides, we expand our capacity to reach additional families and communities while preserving the culture and integrity of the framework.

Guides Certified (Community, Institutions, Leadership Tracks):	48 Completed 21 in Process
Leadership Training Hours Delivered:	904
Peer-to-Peer Support & Mentorship Hours:	7405

“ Captain Your Story helped me find my voice. I now understand how to respond and react to situations appropriately. It helped me to have safe and healthy boundaries. ”



“She told me I’d be a really good guide. “A guide? I don’t think so”. And then, as we talked about it, my soul was like, “this is exactly it, this is what you need to do.”

## New Curriculum Development



Our work continues to evolve as it is shaped by real outcomes and lived results. The direction of our programs is guided not by theory alone, but by what we consistently see working in the lives of participants. As individuals engage with the framework and apply the tools in real situations—within families, workplaces, and communities—we are able to refine and expand our offerings to meet the needs that emerge. In response to this learning, we are expanding our Navigate Your Story curriculum series, adding new modules that address key areas of stability such as parenting, relationships, financial decision-making, career development, and emotional resilience. These expanded offerings allow participants to deepen the skills introduced in earlier courses and apply them to the practical realities of leading families, strengthening mental health, and building sustainable, self-reliant futures.

# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT & VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteer engagement reflects collective ownership of growth and wellbeing. Community members don't just support the work—they become part of the ecosystem that sustains change.

Total Volunteer Hours (Guides + Community):	10,674
Estimated In-Kind Value of Volunteer Support:	\$160,110
Active Volunteers & Mentors: Interns and Volunteers:	28 15

In 2025, we worked with 15 dedicated volunteers, interns, and service missionaries who played an important role in supporting our programs. They assisted with data entry, video editing for course content, translation, statistical analysis and program evaluation, writing articles for local publications, and even counting laps at the prison half marathon and marathon. Their help allowed our team to focus more directly on serving participants.



We also had 28 resident guides inside the prison who volunteered their time to mentor others, help facilitate the course, and lead reentry classes for those preparing to return to society. Their peer leadership and consistency were a key part of making the program sustainable and impactful.

## Strengthened Financial Stewardship

My Story Matters successfully completed and passed nine independent audits, each confirming strong financial stewardship, operational integrity, and compliance. These audits have strengthened trust and confidence among funders, partners, and stakeholders, while also reinforcing internal accountability and best practices.



# STABILITY, GROWTH, REENTRY & OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS

Transformation deepens when insight is paired with opportunity. Through reentry support, mentoring, and practical pathways, participants turn internal growth into stability, leadership, and forward movement in their communities.

Individuals Supported Through Transition or Stabilization:	83
Participants Connected to Employment, Education, or Training:	44
Internships, Practicums, or Leadership Placements:	28



The Supportive Services team has helped individuals in a variety of circumstances, whether it was those facing homelessness, reentry, domestic violence situations, or a list of many others. They helped connect them to key resources, community providers, and financial resources to help achieve their vision through healthy communities, partners, and other resources.

One program that helped us support this effort was the American Rescue Plan, which provided resources and funding to help people avoid homelessness and access real, lasting support, such as the Captain Your Story classes, therapy, other supportive services, mentoring sessions, and more.

New Individuals Supported by ARP in 2025	51
Referrals Made	24
Supportive Services Provided	438



# ENGAGEMENT, COMPLETION & CONTINUITY

Strong completion and continuation rates demonstrate relevance, trust, and momentum—indicators that individuals are not just attending, but integrating the work into daily life. We have found that individuals who complete at least three rounds of our courses show significantly greater stability in mindset, behavior, and long-term goal orientation. This completion takes time and many will finish their classes in 2026.

“This class was emotionally hard. I cried way too many times, but the tears helped me to understand that I matter and my charges do not define me.”



“This class was a self journey of understanding myself and defining what is important to me and the team I lead. It’s been a game changer in every area of life!”

## People Proven Evidence

Our work is increasingly guided by real outcomes and lived results. Decisions are informed by what is demonstrably working for people, not just theory or intention.

“With the fast pace crazy life I lead it can be so tempting to just skip class or stop going - but with each week of homework and then getting such great support and learning so much in class- it has me so rejuvenated and excited to see what comes next.

I have allowed myself - the ultimate caregiver LOL - to take time for me, consider my needs and emotions and claim my vision. I am most definitely a work in progress, but even looking back at who I was and what I thought I wanted before the class to now just 9 weeks in- it is night and day. I have filled pages and pages of notes each week and in looking back and referencing them, I see the change in myself and my vision is getting clearer.

I love that the tools and techniques are relatable, broken down in “Harbors “ that build upon each other and that they are shareable. Thank you so much for this opportunity and especially for my coaches and class members who have made this such a positive and inspiring experience. “

“Been in prison for 18 years and have taken many classes. There is no class like this one. And so much thanks to my guides for allowing me to express openly. And for being the great example, someone in my situation needs. The guides relating to us was a huge help and true inspiration. Thank y'all for helping me find more within myself.”

# SYSTEMS, PARTNERSHIP & REACH

Working across systems allows shared language, aligned expectations, and continuity of care—reducing fragmentation and increasing long-term impact at both the individual and community level. Through partnerships with correctional institutions, community organizations, educators, and service providers, we train and equip professionals with the tools of the Creator’s Framework®. This approach strengthens the capacity of existing systems by giving staff practical strategies to guide reflection, accountability, and forward movement. When agencies share common language and tools, the impact extends beyond a single program—supporting consistent reinforcement of growth as individuals move between systems and into their communities.

Community Sites, Organizations, or Systems Served:	33
Active Cross-Sector Partnerships:	22
Geographic Communities Reached:	25



“I see a lot of struggle in the Spanish community. I think that in the Spanish community a lot of the time, emotional intelligence isn't one of those words they speak, it's survival. I love all the tools I can teach them. I can teach women and children, families; in their language.”

## Language Expansion

Our team successfully completed a full Spanish translation of the core Captain Your Story curriculum, expanding access for Spanish-speaking individuals and families. This milestone supports equity, cultural responsiveness, and deeper community reach, ensuring that foundational tools for regulation, responsibility, and purpose are accessible across language barriers.



# GRANT PARTNERSHIPS

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

## Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint Partnership

In a time when many individuals and families are navigating complex personal and societal challenges, the generous support of partners makes meaningful change possible. We are deeply grateful for the support provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose contributions expanded access to the Captain Your Story program for individuals who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to participate. This partnership reflects the power of community investment in human potential. By removing barriers to participation and expanding access to trained guides, these contributions help create pathways for healing, stability, and lasting transformation for individuals and families.

	PROJECTS/DETAILS	KEY WINS
<b>125</b> Young Adults taught & mentored in the community	Classes held via Zoom and in person at BYU and the Food and Care Coalition. Some of these classes were tailored specifically to YA and others were a mix of all adult ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class gained popularity through word of mouth</li> <li>• Made small strides in introducing the class to church leaders</li> <li>• YA found purpose and vision for their lives</li> </ul>
<b>66</b> Justice Involved (JI) family members taught	Family members taking the class simultaneously has great benefit. This shared experience strengthens understanding, healing, and alignment as families prepare for reunification and long-term stability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases communication skills</li> <li>• JI families found greater support through a community experiencing similar challenges</li> <li>• Strengthens families and relationships within the family unit, including the incarcerated individual</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> Spanish-Speaking individuals in Guide Certification	We have 4 Spanish-Speaking individuals currently in the process of Guide Certification to fill the need for Spanish classes. The process takes over a year to complete.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These guides will be able to do Zoom and in-person classes</li> <li>• They can, if they choose, teach the class in the prison and/or the community</li> </ul>
<b>1000</b> Spanish Language Workbooks	There has been a high demand for our course to be taught in Spanish in the prison. We completed the Captain Your Story workbook translation, and it has been greatly received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish classes have started in the Salt Lake prison.</li> <li>• This addition has had a significant impact for learning</li> </ul>

### Hear Directly From Families



[The Martindale Family](#)



[The Mabey Family](#)



# UTAH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



July 2023-  
July 2024

	PROJECTS/DETAILS	2024 OUTCOMES	EXPANSION
<b>904</b> Individuals taught & Mentored in the community	Classes held at USCF and CUCF, Food & Care Coalition, Foster Care partners, Community organizations and businesses.  479 incarcerated and 425 in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained 16 Guides</li> <li>Mentor training</li> <li>Held 116 classes                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12-18 week cycle for participants</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Increased classes Mentor training Guide certification
<b>114</b> Justice Involved family members taught	When a new class starts in the prison we invite the residents to invite their families to sign up for the class. Taking the class simultaneously has great benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases communication skill</li> <li>Learn and grow together</li> <li>Strengthens families and relationships</li> </ul>	As the number of classes taught in the prison increases so does the reach on the outside
<b>250+</b> Digital resources	We have added to the digital resources available to the justice involved participants and in our community classes to increase their learning and ability to concentrate on the work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sustainability with continued support</li> <li>Greater understanding of material</li> </ul>	Development of additional resources for sustainability and additional learning and support
<b>37</b> Supported in RE-ENTRY	We are committed to supporting individuals transitioning out of corrections and homelessness by providing education, resources, and tools for lasting success. Our programs emphasize continued learning and personal growth, empowering participants to rebuild stable, fulfilling lives. We offer a comprehensive network of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment counseling</li> <li>Housing partnerships</li> <li>Mentorship</li> <li>Therapeutic support</li> </ul>	We are continually looking for community partners to expand our network of opportunity

In July of 2025 the state funding was cut. Our Incredible team has stepped up to fill the gap and continue the momentum of growth ensuring the work continued.

## July 2025-December 2025

<b>Classes Taught</b>	86	43 Classes @ USCF: Antelope, B1, B2, B4, Green, Dell 43 Classes @ CUCF: Gale, Fir, Elm, Birch, Cedar, Hickory,
<b>Completion Rate</b>	74%	CYS maintains a 74% program completion rate, reflecting strong participant engagement and institutional stability.
<b>Nonrecoverable</b>	9%	Of the remaining non-completions, 9% were due to transfers to county jails prior to program completion, indicating that the effective completion rate among participants able to remain enrolled is significantly higher.
<b>Participants</b>	749	749 x \$300 cost per participant = \$224,700
<b>Hours Spent</b>	2744	350+ administrative hours 500+ office hours 1894 guiding hours to date
<b>Volunteer Hours by Resident Guides</b>	1428.50	Residents certified as Guides contributed 1,428.5 hours of volunteer service mentoring peers within the program. This peer leadership model amplifies outcomes.

# TANF GRANTS: COMMUNITY



Individuals Taught	Community Cohorts
560	77

Support from TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) grants has made it possible for My Story Matters to reach parents across Utah with tools that strengthen stability, leadership, and long-term self-reliance. Through these funds, we have been able to engage parents in structured learning that builds emotional intelligence, personal accountability, and practical life skills that support healthier families. Participants developed the capacity to regulate emotions, make intentional decisions, and lead their households with greater clarity and confidence. By strengthening identity, communication, and problem-solving skills, the program helps parents create more sustainable outcomes for themselves and their children—improving mental health, strengthening family relationships, and supporting the long-term goals of self-sufficiency and generational stability.

"Both Jesse and I have truly benefited from this program. During the course, I personally came to the realization that I needed to return to school in order to pursue the vision I care about most. After a few course corrections, I am now enrolled at WGU working toward my degree in Software Engineering. There have been many moments when I've wanted to quit and return to what felt easier. But I remind myself daily of the commitment I made not to give up on myself this time.

I deeply appreciate this course and the effort that has gone into making it available to so many people. It has genuinely made a difference in our lives."



"My Story Matters was truly life-changing for me. It went far beyond writing—it invited emotional intelligence, self-reflection, and the courage to step out of old patterns and consciously choose a new, positive direction of growth and service. My guides were remarkable facilitators—professional, deeply insightful, and generously willing to share their own stories—which created genuine connection and trust. I felt truly seen, supported, and guided in a way that made lasting change possible.

My Traumatic Brain injury took my ability to speak /communicate ...After 12 years of not writing...I experienced quite a profound...(divinely orchestrated) gift... Because of My Story Matters—and what I like to call a few big burly angels—inspiration showed up and the words began to flow.... I am more committed than ever to continue forward! Immense gratitude and affection to you all"❤️

“ It has been transformative. There are so many layers - I feel like I'm just scratching the service and want to dive deeper.

I think this group has been a major success. It has taught me how to regulate emotion, set clear goals, improve communication, and aid in my rehabilitative process. I am grateful for the opportunity to discover and experiment with this new philosophy. Thank you for letting me attend.

”

# TANF GRANT: RURAL SCHOOLS



In 2025 we introduced Power Days. Designed for schools that did not have room in the schedule for the full program, our team took the opportunity to present an assembly on Response and Community, conduct workshops with students in leadership classes, and work with the teachers on reinforcing what was taught in the assembly. We saw an across-the-board increase in students using the methods and ideas that we taught in the assembly and classes to help them regulate difficult situations and find appropriate people to talk through challenges with. We were invited to teach at a school on the Navajo Nation, as well as several other rural schools.

We also continued to take our full program to rural high schools, presenting assemblies on Response, Focus, Community, Maslow's, Identity and Focused Action. We also worked with student leaderships in 6 workshops, taking them through the Chart Your Story course, and led the teachers through the Captain Your Story course. We are getting feedback that the students are communicating more when they need support, and are striving to regulate tough emotions in a more productive manner.

Lastly, we expanded our work into a setting supporting students who are working to complete their high school journey despite significant life challenges. At Horizonte High School—a vibrant community serving many refugee youth, students in care, and students connected to justice-involved support programs—we delivered a 12-week Chart Your Story course focused on identity, choice, and future direction.

Their teachers took the course right alongside them and they shared that the course had helped the students see that rather than concentrating on a big picture of things out of their control, the students now spend time figuring out what they CAN control, and working on those. They are choosing people to confide in that function as coaches and challengers, rather than persist in the cycle of drama. They have a positive vision of the future and some ideas on how to work toward that.



# MISSION-ALIGNED IMPACT

## The Edge Effect and the Work of My Story Matters

In the natural world, the edge effect refers to the unique phenomena that occur at the boundary where two different ecosystems meet—such as where a forest merges with a grassland or a river meets the sea. These transitional zones are not barren borders; they are some of the most vibrant, diverse, and productive places on earth. At the edge, species from both ecosystems converge, new forms of life emerge, and unexpected interactions spark innovation and resilience.



This ecological principle beautifully mirrors the heart of our work.

At My Story Matters, we work at human edges—the places where systems, identities, and experiences collide. These are often the overlooked or underestimated spaces in society:

- Where incarceration meets reentry
- Where trauma meets healing
- Where shame meets self-worth
- Where youth meet adulthood
- Where generational cycles meet intentional change
- Where someone's past meets the possibility of a new future

These human “edges” are not voids—they're rich with potential, if we are willing to see them for what they are: powerful zones of transformation.

Most systems tend to focus on what lies safely within boundaries. But we intentionally operate at the edge. We step into the tension. We build bridges between what was and what can be. We believe that in these liminal spaces, people have the opportunity to rewrite their story, reclaim their identity, and reimagine what's possible for their future.

Just as the edge effect in nature creates conditions where growth is accelerated and diversity is expanded, our work fosters:

- Innovation in healing — allowing individuals to explore new ways of seeing themselves and their experiences.
- Resilience in identity — as people integrate both their past and their potential into a coherent, empowering narrative.
- Connection and community — by creating environments where individuals feel seen, heard, and valued as they navigate change.

Our story-centered programs are designed to nurture these environments. Whether we're partnering with organizations who work in prisons, classrooms, or community centers, we're cultivating the edges—spaces where people are ready for change but need support to step into it with confidence and clarity.

We don't fear the edge. We lean into it. Because we know that the most life-giving breakthroughs don't come in the middle—they happen where stories, systems, and souls collide.

In embracing the edge effect, we embrace the messiness, the beauty, and the transformative power of the in-between. And in doing so, we help people step into lives that are no longer defined by limitation, but by possibility.

# CAPTAIN YOUR STORY: A FORCE MULTIPLIER

For a fraction of the annual cost of incarceration, the Captain Your Story program delivers measurable reductions in the criminogenic risk factors that drive recidivism. Preventing the reincarceration of even a small number of participants results in substantial cost avoidance to the State—ranging from hundreds of thousands to several million dollars annually—while simultaneously improving public safety, institutional stability, and successful community reentry.

**What distinguishes Captain Your Story is not that it replaces other rehabilitative programs—but that it makes them work better.**

Correctional systems offer a range of evidence-based services: treatment, education, vocational training, and reentry planning. Yet many individuals cycle through these programs without lasting change—not because the programs lack value, but because participants lack the internal framework needed to engage them meaningfully.

Captain Your Story provides that missing foundation.

Through identity development, emotional regulation, and belief-based healing, participants begin to understand who they are, how they respond to stress, and what they want for their future. This internal clarity shifts motivation from compliance to ownership. Programs are no longer boxes to check or requirements to endure—they become tools participants choose because they align with a vision they have claimed for themselves.

When individuals know their story and believe they have agency within it, they are more capable of:

- Engaging fully in treatment rather than resisting it
- Persisting in education and workforce programs despite discomfort or setbacks
- Applying skills learned across programs to real-world decision-making
- Navigating reentry with intention rather than survival-based reactivity

In this way, Captain Your Story acts as a force multiplier for existing investments. It strengthens institutional programming, stabilizes behavior inside facilities, and increases the likelihood that services translate into durable change after release.

## COST OF INCARCERATION VS. COST AVOIDANCE THROUGH PROGRAMMING

Cost per Day	\$153
Cost per Month	\$4,658
Cost per Year	\$55,900

(per incarcerated individual)

## ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE THROUGH REDUCED RECIDIVISM

Sustained Community Stability

**59\* CYS participants**  
released in 2025

## ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS TO THE STATE

**\$1,011,636**

(6612 days x \$153)

\*These numbers are from May 2025-December 2025. We did not start receiving this data from UDC until May, however classes were taught throughout the year.

## ADVANCING TO ROUND 3

15 Participants released to CCC & have continued programming with CYS

103 TOTAL leadership participants to date

16 participants currently enrolled in leadership

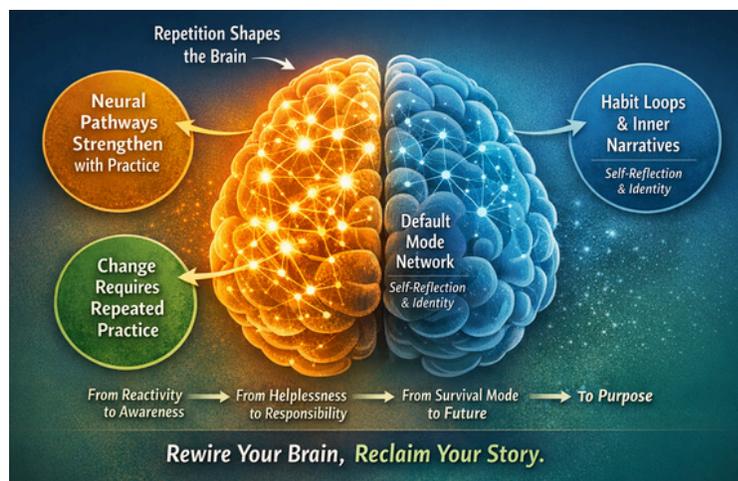
# A GLIMPSE INTO WHAT WE DO



## Why Repetition Matters: The Science Behind Sustainable Change

The brain changes through repeated experience. Neuroscience calls this neuroplasticity—the process by which neural pathways strengthen based on what we practice over time.

Every repeated thought, behavior, or emotional response reinforces the brain networks associated with it. This is true for both helpful and harmful patterns. Habits of self-talk, stress reactions, avoidance, or rumination can become deeply ingrained simply through repetition.



Research also shows that the brain's default mode network—the system involved in self-reflection and identity—can reinforce familiar internal narratives about who we are and what we believe is possible. Because of this, meaningful change does not happen in a single moment.

Change happens through practice.

At My Story Matters, our work intentionally creates repeated opportunities for individuals to practice new ways of thinking and responding—moving from reactivity to awareness, from helplessness to responsibility, and from survival mode to purpose.

Through guided reflection, language shifts, and supportive community, participants strengthen healthier patterns over time. As these patterns are practiced and reinforced, clarity, emotional regulation, and intentional action become more accessible in everyday life.



Sustainable change happens when new patterns are practiced consistently and connected to identity and purpose.

That is how stories change—at the level of the brain, behavior, and lived experience.

*Creatures of Habit: The Neuroscience of Habit and Purposeful Behavior (PubMed ID: 31122343)*

# ORGANIZATIONAL WINS & PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

## Strengthened Standard Operating Procedures

Clearer systems and processes have been established, reducing ambiguity, increasing consistency, and allowing the work to scale without losing quality or values alignment.

## Improved Team Unity & Work Alignment

Roles, communication, and shared purpose have become clearer—resulting in stronger collaboration, reduced friction, and more effective teamwork.

## Increased Learning & Expanded Work

We've seen measurable growth in learning capacity across the organization—both individually and collectively—allowing us to take on more complex work with greater confidence and effectiveness.

## Expanded Partners

New partnerships launching reflects the organization's readiness to expand responsibly while maintaining quality and mission integrity.

## Self-Work & Personal Growth

Staff and leadership have engaged in meaningful internal development, strengthening emotional regulation, clarity, and professional maturity.

## Outcomes Met

Key benchmarks and outcomes are being achieved, validating both program design and implementation strategy.

## Organizational Drive & Momentum

There is stronger internal alignment and forward momentum across teams, creating a culture that is proactive, solution-oriented, and resilient.

## Strategic Investment in Capacity

Intentional investments in people, systems, and infrastructure are strengthening long-term sustainability and impact rather than short-term fixes.

## Systems Expansion & Modernization

Operational and program systems have been updated and expanded to support growth, efficiency, and consistency across sites and partners.

## Pieces Coming Together

Previously disconnected efforts are now aligning into a more cohesive ecosystem—programming, leadership, partnerships, and operations working together.

## Increased Confidence in New Tasks

Teams are taking on new responsibilities with greater confidence, demonstrating adaptability and a growing skill set.

## Strong Partnerships & Internships

We've built valuable partnerships and internship pathways that extend impact, provide mutual benefit, and strengthen community integration.

## Improved Customer / Participant Experience

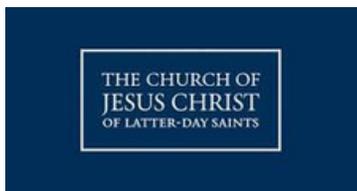
Refined systems and clearer communication have led to better service, stronger relationships, and a more supportive experience for those we serve.

# KEY PARTNERSHIPS...

The impact of this work is made possible through the strength of our partnerships. Community organizations, government agencies, grant contributors, and private donors **form the lifeblood of opportunity** that allows My Story Matters to reach individuals and families at critical moments of change.

These partnerships provide not only financial support, but also collaboration, referrals, and **shared commitment to strengthening communities** across the state.

Together, we are able to **expand access to tools** that build self-reliance, emotional intelligence, and family leadership. Each partner—whether through funding, advocacy, or direct collaboration—**plays a vital role in creating pathways** for individuals to stabilize their lives, strengthen their families, and contribute positively within their communities.



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