



www.hopefromthebottomup.com

Hope Newsletter February 2025

Hope-Filled Organization:

DONORS CHOOSE

DonorsChoose is a United States–based nonprofit organization that allows individuals to donate directly to public school classroom projects. The organization has been given Charity Navigator's highest rating.

[About us | DonorsChoose](#) 1.5 minute video

Our mission

We make it easy for anyone to help a teacher in need, moving us closer to a nation where students in every community have the tools and experiences they need for a great education.

But we can't do it alone. Join us!

Our commitment to equity in education: We are committed to combating racial and socioeconomic inequity in school funding. Our team works to inspire as much support as possible for teachers of color and for schools that serve low-income communities and Black, Latino, and Native American students.

Created by teachers, for teachers: In 2000, Charles Best, a teacher at a Bronx public high school, thought about all the money he and his colleagues were spending on books, art supplies, and other materials for their students. They weren't alone — today, teachers still spend an average of \$500 out of pocket on their classrooms each year. Charles figured there were people who'd want to help if they could see where their money was going. He founded DonorsChoose, a website where teachers could post requests for classroom resources, and his colleagues posted the first 11 projects. Since then, teachers at most US public schools have requested resources through our platform.

Our team Our team has vetted and fulfilled over 2 million classroom project requests that range from butterfly cocoons, to robotics kits, to books with diverse characters. Many of us are former teachers, so

our operation feels like a cross between a tech company and a classroom. Whether we're in our NYC office or working remotely across the country, you'll find us digging into our data, sharing our favorite projects, and Instagramming teacher and student joy.

Here is an example of one classroom project in a Philadelphia public school. Click on this link to get more specific information about this project. [Egg Hatching Exploration: Connecting Students to Birds and Life Cycles | DonorsChoose project by Ms. Holmstrom](#)

Egg Hatching Exploration: Connecting Students to Birds and Life Cycles: Help me give my students in a Title I Philadelphia school a hands-on, experience through the Quiver Farm's egg hatching program, aligning with our current curriculum module on birds and informational texts while fostering curiosity and responsibility.

Hope-Filled Organization:

SHARE OUR SPARE



Our Story

Share Our Spare (SOS) was founded in 2011 by area mom, Amy Kadens, and nine other Chicago women with a desire to help local families in need.

After meeting a mother at a North Side food pantry in need of an emergency supply of diapers and formula for her infant daughter, Kadens mobilized her personal network to share any of their spare baby supplies. The response was hundreds of donations from parents eager to help. The following month,

Share Our Spare was founded to ensure that no family would have to stress over providing their children the most basic essentials.

SOS received [nonprofit](#) status in 2012. First functioning out of Kadens' garage, operations were moved to a 1,500 sq. ft. office space – which was later expanded to 3,000 sq. ft – and two offsite storage spaces. In 2021, SOS moved into our current 10,000+ sq. ft. [Sharehouse](#) to accommodate the significant growth and demand we were experiencing in the new decade. In 2020 alone, as families struggled during the pandemic, we distributed more diapers (1.2 million) than all of our previous eight years combined.

Since our start, SOS has helped an estimated 50,000+ unique children and their families across metro Chicago find support, strength and hope through an agency partner model, which emphasizes wraparound services and empowering upward economic mobility.

To see and listen to a 2 minute and 3 video about Share Our Spare click on this link:

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/video/1478557>

Hope-Filled Organization:



History

Our story began in 1849, during one of Chicago's most challenging periods. In response to the devastating cholera epidemic that left countless children without families, the Chicago Orphan Asylum (COA) was founded under the Illinois Special Nonprofit Charter Act. Established to provide care and stability for vulnerable children, the asylum was a critical response to a community in crisis. Over the years, what began as an urgent response evolved into an enduring commitment to the well-being of children and families – a legacy we proudly carry forward as Family Focus.

Our organization evolved to meet the needs of our community, addressing the pressing demands of each era. As the needs of our city shifted, so did we, and in 1949 COA was renamed to Chicago Child Care Society (CCCS). We expanded beyond orphan care to include foster care, adoption services, and eventually, early childhood education and family support programs, all while staying true to our mission to uplift children and support their families.

In 1976, Family Focus was founded through the partnership of Bernice Weissbourd, Delores Holmes, and Irving Harris. During a period when the role of women in society was rapidly evolving and families needed more support than ever, Family Focus began as a parent drop-in center in Evanston. Recognizing the need for comprehensive family support services, Family Focus quickly expanded and became a pioneering leader in community-based family support.

In 2019, Family Focus and CCCS began merger discussions – recognizing that both organizations shared a similar mission while being uniquely complimentary of one another. On January 1st, 2021 we began operations as a merged organization. With combined resources, expertise, and vision, the name Family Focus was chosen because it reflects the heart of our work: ensuring that every family has the tools and resources they need to thrive.

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE FAMILY

Today, Family Focus is proud to operate 11 centers across Chicago and Northeast Illinois, impacting the lives of 20,000 participants via a wide range of services from early childhood education to family health

programs, and more. Our award-winning Home Visiting Program exemplifies our dedication to excellence. This program provides families with one-on-one support in parenting, school readiness, and holistic child development, equipping every family to thrive in their unique journey.



1849 Orphan Asylum



Bernice Weissbourd

Pictured on the left is the original Asylum building at 22nd and Michigan. It initially provided 400 beds for children orphaned by cholera.

Pictured on the right is Bernice Weissbourd, who was one of the original cofounders of Family Focus, along with Irving Harris and Delores Holmes.

The Arts:

With the divisions within our country and around the world, the following song offers a hopeful way to proceed.

“I’d like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony”



Click on this link to hear and enjoy this song: [Bing Videos](#)

Share this Newsletter!

If you find this Newsletter to be a positive contribution to promote Hope and positive changes for now and in the future, please consider forwarding this Newsletter to people you think would enjoy it and who may want to share their hopeful stories and programs for future Newsletters.

Hope From the Bottom Up website link: <https://hopefromthebottomup.com/>
Or send me an email (robert@robertbeezat.com) with the name and email address of the person you think would be interested. I will then contact them.

Thank You