



the FORGE for Families
A Christ-centered Urban Ministry

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2025

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF SERVING
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN HOUSTON'S
GREATER THIRD WARD!

March 2026



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***In Memoriam**



"We loved you so much, that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well because you had become so dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NIV 84)

Holistically equipping families to fulfill their God-given potential

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

As I, the staff, and board of directors, reflect back on 2025, we are filled with gratitude and awe at all God has done through the FORGE. This past year marked a special milestone as we celebrate 20 years of serving our community, and I am reminded that none of this would be possible without the Lord Jesus Christ's guidance and our many faithful prayer warriors. As 1 Thessalonians 2:8 states "We loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." This verse captures the heart of our mission and the spirit that has carried us through two decades of ministry. In 2025, The FORGE had the opportunity of serving an estimated 3,000 people — families, children, and individuals — through our programs, outreach efforts, and community resources.

One of the greatest joys has been watching children who first came through our doors at a young age, now reaching milestones of their own: graduating, starting college, entering the workforce, and stepping confidently into their futures. Seeing these lives transformed is one of the most rewarding parts of the journey and a powerful reminder that the seeds planted years ago are bearing fruit. These successes are not ours alone. They are the result of the incredible generosity of our donors, the prayers of our prayer warriors, the dedication of our volunteers, and the unwavering support of everyone who believes in this mission. Because of you, we are able to continue equipping families, building hope, and creating opportunities that change lives. We are deeply thankful for every hour served, every prayer offered, and every gift given. As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude and anticipation, trusting that God will continue to open new doors for impact and growth. Thank you for walking alongside us and helping make this work possible.

With Gratitude and Anticipation,

Dana L Thomas
Executive Director
The FORGE For Families

2025 FORGE HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025 The FORGE served approximately 3,000 men, women, and children.

Thanks to our partners the impact was as follows:

- 77% Student retention in After-School Enrichment program
- 0% Teen pregnancies
- 0% High school dropout rate
- 85% participation in Parent Enrichment programming
- Mobilized approximately 310 Volunteers
- Packaged and distributed 800 Boxes of Love (Thanksgiving dinners) throughout the city
- Increased parent advocacy by providing a Right to Read specialist to support families during ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal) meetings, where a student's educational progress, services, and learning needs are reviewed and decisions about support are made.

Charting a Course Towards Purpose

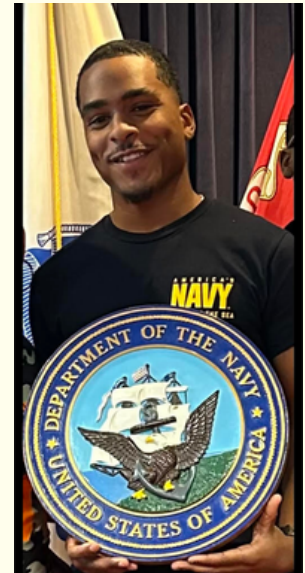
Daiton first came to The FORGE as a kindergarten student in our After School Enrichment Program. Over the years, he became part of a community that walked alongside him through summer camps, athletics, mentorship, and our three-year **JumpStart leadership program**. During that time, Daiton made the life-changing decision to follow Christ, and his faith continues to guide his life today.

One defining moment came during a JumpStart site visit to Methodist Hospital. While others observed, Daiton boldly asked about an internship—and his persistence paid off. The opportunity opened doors he had never imagined. During his senior year at Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School, through the school's partnership and the JumpStart program, he was able to secure an opportunity with Methodist Hospital and upon graduating, he enlisted in the United States Navy. His story reflects the impact of consistent mentorship, growing faith, and relationships that continue well beyond childhood.

Reflecting on his journey, Daiton shared:

“One of my biggest accomplishments through my involvement with The FORGE has been my spiritual growth. For the first time, I’m not just making time for God during the program, but I’ve also been committed to reading the Bible regularly and gaining a deeper understanding of it. I have understood what it means to be saved, and what it means to be a servant of the Lord out of love”. -Daiton

Daiton is currently serving in the United States Navy. We thank you for your service and dedication!



Summer Club 2025 Impact Story

We first met Axel through his dad, who is The FORGE's fleet mechanic. Axel joined The FORGE through the After School program. From the beginning, Axel brought a quiet presence and thoughtful spirit to the program, and as he continued showing up, he grew more confident and connected within the community. That summer, he returned for Summer Club—and something began to change. In an environment and community filled with support, guidance, and connection, Axel slowly started to come out of his shell. He built friendships, laughed more freely, and began to feel like he truly belonged. Day by day, his confidence grew.

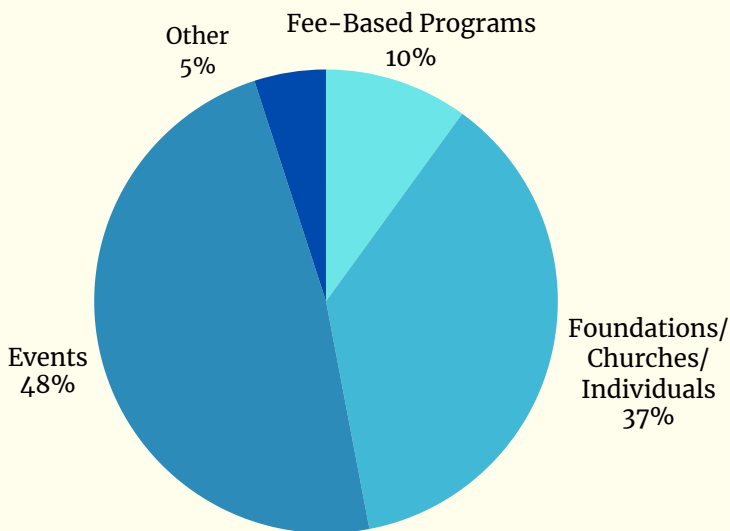
On the final day of camp, in front of 75 adults gathered to celebrate the last day of summer club, Axel did something no one expected. He walked to the front, took the microphone—no notes, no prompting—and spoke with simple courage. “I love The FORGE because since I came here my faith became stronger and better”.

In that moment, the quiet boy we first met had found his voice. That's the power of supportive people, a strong community, and faithful prayer. When staff and community members invest their time, care, and encouragement, confidence takes root and belonging can change everything—made possible through the generosity of you, who help support and sustain this work.

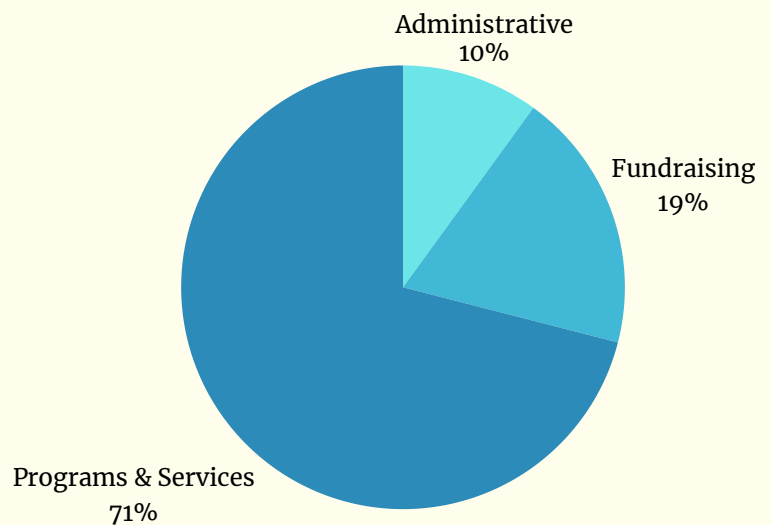


2025 FINANCIALS

Revenue - \$2.2 million



Expense - \$2.0 million



Planting Seeds & Growing Futures: Celebrating 20 Years of The FORGE

The FORGE for Families celebrated its **20th Anniversary Gala**, “**Planting Seeds & Growing Futures**,” honoring the people and partnerships that have shaped this Christ-centered ministry in Houston’s Greater Third Ward. **Carolyn Vance** served as **Honorary Co-Chair**, continuing her family’s long history of support and prayer for the ministry. **Event Co-Chairs Julie & Griff Aldrich, Reed & Billy Wareing, and Laura & William M. Wheless IV** led the evening, celebrating generations of involvement with The FORGE.

Elizabeth Wareing and the late **Jack Blanton Sr.** received the **Seeds of Change Award** for helping establish The FORGE’s permanent home in 2010, planting seeds that continue to grow through the lives of children and families. **Spencer Tillman** shared a powerful message on investing in young lives, followed by a special performance from **Jordin Sparks**, joined by several FORGE students. The evening concluded with a heartfelt prayer by **Dr. Reynolds** over the ministry’s leadership, students, and future.

We were grateful to welcome longtime friends and supporters, including **Cedric & Mary Anne Burgher, Flo & Jim Carroll, Fred & Kem Frost, Susan & Joe Ince, and Gay & Ken Wynne**. For twenty years, The FORGE has walked alongside children and families, believing **family change can happen in one generation**. Thank you to everyone who helped us reach this milestone, and the **A.D. Players Theater** who hosted our celebration!



Third Ward / South Union

69%

Living in neighborhoods where many families fall below the federal income threshold

80%

Qualify for free or reduced lunches

\$32k

Median household income

26%

Hold a high school diploma

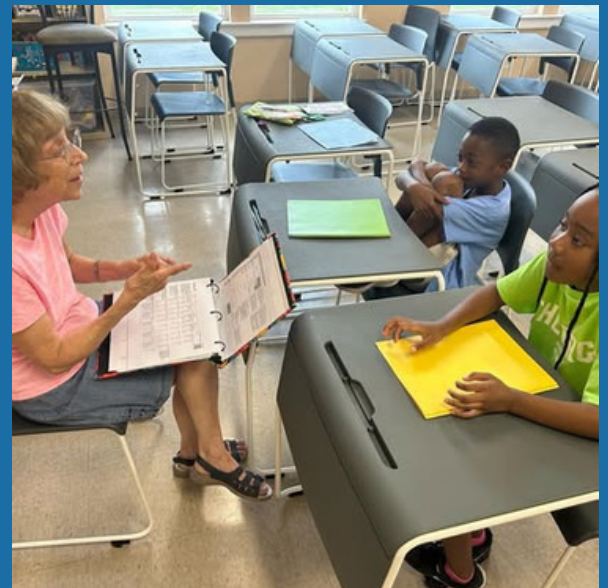
35%

Households are headed by single parent



71%

Of staff are former students



PROGRAMS

After School Enrichment –

- Literacy, social-emotional learning, homework help, tutoring activities, meals, and daily devotions.

Athletic Programs –

- Boys and girls teams for middle and high schoolers, emphasizing skills, competition, character, academics, and faith.

The SET Program –

- Christian teen mentoring with competition, drama, music, talks, and group discussions.

Summer Club –

- A weekday camp running daily throughout the summer (ages 6–13) with activities, field trips, academics, and spiritual growth. High schoolers are trained as junior counselors.

Jump Start –

- High school leadership program focused on faith, academics, college, careers, and professional development.

Fusion –

- Middle school mentorship program with small groups and real discussions.

FORGE Breakfast Bible Club –

- Biweekly Bible study for Beatrice Mayes middle schoolers with breakfast and school drop-off.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND DISCIPLESHIP

Rice & University of Houston Partnership

College students presented their final projects the week of December 1. They shared how serving at The FORGE highlighted the value of after-school programs and college student volunteers.

Yates High School

Early Morning Bible Study, with students actively inviting friends. Average weekly attendance: 34.

Yellowstone High School

Staff meets students during lunch to build relationships, share God's Word, and encourage them.

Cristo Rey

Continues investing in FORGE students.

Austin High School

Ministry expanded weekly on campus at the principal's invitation. Students receive encouragement and prayer. Staff also building relationships by attending games and taking students to University of Houston events.

Boxes of Love

Our annual Thanksgiving meal giveaway on November 22 provided 800 boxes—feeding roughly 3,200 people—with 18 organizations and 150+ volunteers. The FORGE distributed 65 boxes to program families and community members.



Volunteer opportunities

- **After-School/Tutors** meet on Mondays or Wednesdays from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm from Sept. – May.
- **The SET Youth Night/Mentors** meet the last Monday each month from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm from Sept. – May.
- **FORGE Volleyball Coaches** (Girls aged 9 – 13 years old) volunteer from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm one day a week from Sept. – Oct.
- **The Toy Drive** for Holly Jolly Toy Store runs from Nov. 2 – Dec. 9.
- **Boxes of Love / Set-up** the night before takes place Nov. 20.
- **Boxes of Love / Prepare** and distribute Thanksgiving meals for families is held Nov. 21 from 9:30 am – 1:00 pm.
- **Decorate** The FORGE for Christmas takes place Nov. 21.
- **FORGE Basketball League** (coed ages 5 – 10 years old) with referees, timekeepers, and coaches runs from Nov. – Feb.
- **Label Toys** for Holly Jolly Toy Store takes place Dec. 8 – 9.
- **Holly Jolly Toy Store** is held Dec. 11 from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm.

Thank You!

2025 SUPPORTERS

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE PRAYERS AND
INCREDIBLE SUPPORT YOU'VE EXTENDED!

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Stephanie Abron
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Gera Esquivel
Jen & Matt Etter
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Dominick Fazioli
John Fields
Sherryln & Robert Fields
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First Presbyterian Church of Houston
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Mary Floye-Federer
Keith Foley
Tawanda Franklin
Claire & Joe Frazier

Claire & John Frazier
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 Wynne Law PLLC
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 Greta & Charles Zimmerman
 Amy & Dan Zoch
 Christopher Zook

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 Mrs. Ruthie Stormer

In Honor Of:
Bridget Thomas
 Bart Henson

In Honor Of:
Ellen Mowry
 Karma Burford

In Honor Of:
Elizabeth Wareing
 Mr. & Mrs. Ted Collier
 Mr. & Mrs. Joe Dilg
 Laura & Bill Wheless
 Ruth & Ted Bauer Family Foundation

In Honor Of:
Liz & Wade Franklin
 Jason McLane

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Jack Blanton
Virginia Blanton
Elizabeth & Peter Wareing
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Carol Liffman
Cyndy & Bob Purgason
Judy & David Ruble
Bob Taylor
 John Piper

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Coach Chris Williams
 Heather & Michael Homan

In Honor Of:
Elizabeth Wareing
Virginia Blanton
 Emily & Holcombe Crosswell

In Honor Of:
Mary Kelly Duncan
Jane Elizabeth Heard
Christiana Reckling McConn
Randa McConn
Jolyn Towns
 Kim & Scott Martin

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 YOUR NAME IS NOT LISTED**



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THE FORGE

the FORGE for Families
A Christ-centered Urban Ministry



SAVE THE DATE

GOLF is the platform.
IMPACT
IS THE PURPOSE.

FOR
FAMILIES
GOLF CLASSIC

2026 GOLF CHAIRS:
Drew Beaver • Jack Burgher • Jeff Jackson

Join us on the course
where every swing supports
children and families in
Houston's Third Ward

FRIDAY
MAY 1 2026

Memorial Park Golf Course
1001 E Memorial Loop Dr. • Houston, TX 77007

11:00 am Box Lunch
11:30 am Shotgun start

The 19th Hole Awards ceremony following with spirits and appetizers.

THIS ROUND MATTERS!



THE FORGE
the FORGE for families
www.forgeforfamilies.org

For more information contact bethwlee@forgeforfamilies.org • 713-660-1871

The FORGE for Families is a Christian 501(c)(3) nonprofit urban ministry empowering families and Children in Houston's Third Ward