

Thank you, Suzanne

As we shared with you earlier this summer, Suzanne Banning has announced her retirement as Florence Crittenton's President/CEO. For 19 years, Suzanne has served in pivotal professional roles for the organization, culminating as CEO since 2014. We applaud her passionate, collaborative and intelligent leadership of the organization. She has been nothing short of a champion for FloCrit and its teen families.

Suzanne's exit to retirement in Minnesota finds the organization on solid footing in terms of financial resources and Board/staff leadership. She is committed to a smooth transition and has provided more than ample time – through August – to prepare for a new President/CEO to take the reins.

A diverse transition committee continues the work of selecting a President/CEO, and you'll be among the first to hear the news. Florence Crittenton remains stronger than any one individual at the helm, and we could not advance the important mission of serving teen families without the vital support you've provided.

In Partnership,

Lee Morgan, MD
Chair, Board of Directors



Suzanne Banning with FloCrit moms Lesley and Myra, Class of 2022 at the Pathways to Empowerment event in April

To the Class of 2022

By Abbygail Valle, Graduate of the Class of 2022



I'd like to start by saying congratulations to all the graduates and thank you to the families who are celebrating with us tonight, and who will continue celebrating with us as we move forward and close this chapter. A special thanks goes out to all the wonderful teachers and staff I got the pleasure of meeting. Thank you for the commitment to the success of every student. First let me say how much of an honor it is to stand here today and be a part of this amazing memorable moment. It fills my heart with joy knowing I finally made it here. It fills my heart with joy knowing after all the challenges, all the speed bumps, and even baby bumps I can finally announce that I am a high school graduate.

As this chapter closes right before our eyes, it is important to remember to embrace your future, because the possibilities of life are endless. Embrace your teachers, because their patience is what got us here today. Embrace your family, because you are strong enough to stand all the pressure in life because of them. Embrace your children, because even though we had them young, it just means we get to love them that much longer. But most importantly, always embrace yourself.

For me standing here today is a big accomplishment. I got pregnant with my daughter Alani when I was 16. I dropped out of school and entered motherhood. By 19, I got pregnant with my second daughter Anaya. Having my girls is the only motivation I needed. Being a mother made it clear that it is important to become the best role model for them, which means becoming the best role model for myself. I knew I had to finish school. So I enrolled here at Florence Crittenton, and it has been the best decision I have ever made. They pushed me in the direction I wanted to go, making it possible for me to graduate, and I am blessed to have had this life-long experience. I am blessed to have had this opportunity to reach my goals, and I am blessed to be taking everything I have learned over the years with me as I take on a bigger fight with college.

Tonight I'd like to express my gratitude. I'm beyond appreciative to have been able to see through all the challenges and come out of them even stronger and better. I'm excited to see how the next chapter unfolds for us all. Thank you everyone, and once again, congratulations.

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Meet the Class of 2022



High school teacher Rossi Doshkova with Monica Perez and Chalaya Davis

Caren Alverado Montes Mother to Melissa and Mia. Caren is glad she had teachers who encouraged her to return to school after the pandemic. She will always remember watching her oldest daughter transition from the toddler room to the preschool room in the ECE Center, and watching her youngest learn her colors and how to count to 10. Caren plans to get a full-time job when she graduates while also continuing her education. She hopes to one day buy a home for herself and her daughters, and have a job that gives her stability and time to spend with her girls.

Alexis Ayala Mother to Miliانو. Alexis appreciates the motivation to graduate that FloCrit gave her. She is ready to explore her career options now that she is a high school graduate.

Jasmine Carillo Mother to Jayden. Jasmine was able to graduate because FloCrit supported her and worked around her schedule. She is proud to have taken the phlebotomy class. Her son grew and learned during this time in the ECE Center. Jasmine is excited to start taking EMT classes so she can become a paramedic.

Lesly Carranza Abundiz Mother to Ezra. Lesly is proud of being the Student Council President during her senior year. FloCrit helped her focus, believed in her, and was patient and understanding when she had hard days. Her son took his first steps in the ECE Center, learned to talk there, and had access to therapy and other services he needed. Lesly plans to continue her education at the Community College of Denver and work towards a career in the medical field. She hopes that in five years she will have a stable home with her family and is working at a job that she loves.



Alum Julie Rosales, Class of 2020, speaks to the graduates

Chalaya Davis Mother to Jia. Chalaya says that FloCrit encouraged her to continue to pursue her education and got her and Jia excited about Jia's education, too. She will always remember that Jia took her first steps in the ECE Center. Chalaya will start trade school after graduation and pursue a career in plumbing. In five years, she plans to have her own plumbing and HVAC business.

Analysia Gonzalez Mother to Dominic. Analysia is grateful for the support she received from her teachers and counselors. She cherishes the memory of reading to her son in his ECE Center classroom during a Literacy Lunch. Now that she is a high school graduate, Analysia plans to start working and taking college classes. She hopes to be an esthetician one day and own her own business.



Valedictorian Lillyanna Servey

Fabiola Gutierrez Morrones Mother to Hector. Fabiola is glad she was able to be a part of the GED program at the high school. The ECE Center helped her son have a routine, make new friends, and develop. Fabiola is ready to begin college classes after graduation. She plans to become a registered nurse, and support her mother as she retires.

Myra Gutzmer, Salutatorian Mother to Lucious. Myra says she will always remember the new things she learned every day at FloCrit and the relationships she built here. She loves that the ECE Center taught her son sign language and lots of different songs. Myra is excited to start college classes to become an ultrasound technician at Red Rocks Community College. She hopes to eventually work at an OB/GYN office.



Principal Josh Howard and Fabiola Gutierrez | Photo by Vince Dean Photography

Kenresa LeBlanc Mother to Royal and Ja'Honis. Kenresa fondly remembers the after-school parties that FloCrit hosted, and is glad that the ECE Center taught her children many things. After graduation, Kenresa is going to cosmetology school. She hopes to make enough money in her career to eventually have a house with her family.



Donica Snyder, Program Manager of the Student and Family Support Program, shares words of wisdom with the graduates | Photo by Vince Dean Photography



Lesly Carranza, Myra Gutzmer, and Karen Madeus | Photo by Vince Dean Photography

Karen Madeus Mother to Tierra. Karen says that FloCrit provided all the resources she needed to be successful from academic and emotional support, essentials for her and her daughter, and all around love and care. Karen plans to become a paramedic. After graduation, she is going to begin school to become an EMT while also working.

Jenacy Mendez Mother to Michael. Jenacy found a lot of support and encouragement at FloCrit. She loved being able to see photos of her son learning and playing, and seeing him learn new skills in the ECE Center. Jenacy is ready to start college and work toward someday buying a house for her and her son.

Karen Murillo Mother to Enzo. Karen is grateful to the high school teachers for helping her get her GED, and the ECE Center for helping her child interact well with other kids his age. She is excited to begin college and explore her career options. In five years, she hopes to have a career and a stable life for herself and her son.

Kaysea Owens Mother to Emmett and Ricky, Jr. Kaysea fondly remembers being welcomed back to FloCrit when she returned during her difficult second pregnancy. She is grateful to the ECE Center for helping Emmett get started in therapy. Kaysea plans to continue her education and pursue a career as a registered nurse in labor and delivery.

Monica Perez Mother to Mauricio. Monica says that FloCrit helped her graduate by being an amazing school. She loves all the little projects that the ECE Center did with Mauricio over the years that she has kept. Monica dreams of opening her own car repair garage. She will be heading to Emily Griffith Technical College after graduation to become a mechanical engineer.

Andrea Ramirez-Sanchez Mother to Gael. Andrea is thankful for her academic counselor Ms. Hagan for pushing her and never letting her give up on herself. She hopes to begin college after graduation, and in five years to be helping women by working as a labor and deliver nurse.

Lilyanna Servey, Valedictorian Mother to Gyanni. Lilyanna is happy to have discovered that she is good at phlebotomy during her time at FloCrit. Lilyanna is ready to begin her post-secondary journey. She plans to enroll in nursing school so she can work as a nurse.



Haseena Shabazz dedicates her rose during the rose ceremony | Photo by Vince Dean Photography

Haseena Shabazz Mother to Dawud and Fatima. Haseena says that FloCrit motivated and supported her through every trial and decision she needed help with. The ECE Center educated her children and taught them to write. Haseena is ready to pursue a career in the healthcare field. She plans to start by getting a certificate for an entry level job, and then continue her education by getting a degree in the field.

Arin Stamm Mother to Aiden and Arlene. Arin is glad that FloCrit supported her with transportation funds so she could get to school, tutoring in math, and watching her kids in a safe and supportive environment. Now that she is a high school graduate, Arin plans to take licensed practical nurse courses in college. She hopes to be a registered nurse so she can provide stable housing and nutrition for her children.

Abbygail Valle Mother to Alani and Anaya. Abbygail is proud to have finished all of her GED tests, and is glad that FloCrit built a great environment where she and her children could learn. She plans to pursue a career in the medical field. After graduation she will begin her Associate degree with the hope of working in a hospital.

Kenya Velazquez Mother to twins Elian and Julian and baby Miklo. Kenya found support during her time at FloCrit, and the ECE Center taught her twins to draw and speak more. Kenya will begin taking classes in a massage therapy program after graduation with the goal of becoming a massage therapist.



Andrea Ramirez and her community



Grads share sentiments on their caps



Kenya Velazquez and her community



The Florence Crittenton High School Class of 2022 | Photo by Vince Dean Photography

ECE Center Graduates Off to Kindergarten

This coming fall, three graduates from the Early Childhood Education Center preschool classroom will start kindergarten. Ashly, Angelo, and Aiden have all spent time in the FloCrit ECE Center learning, making friends, playing on the playground, creating beautiful art projects, and growing up. Their teachers Miss Sherry, Miss Mariam, and Miss Rachel have prepared them for Kindergarten, and even though they will miss them, they know that these three grads are on their way to great things.

Ashly is excited to go to kindergarten, because she will get to go to another school. Here in her preschool classroom, one of her friends is fellow grad Aiden. "I won't miss Aiden, because he'll go to kindergarten, too," says Ashly. She will miss her teacher Miss Sherry though. "I like school so much, because I love Miss Sherry," Ashly nods. It's no surprise that Ashly will miss Sherry and her other teachers. They have taught her so much. "I learned my numbers here," Ashly says proudly. "I can write my name, too. A-S-H-L-Y. I spelled that!"

Angelo is ready to go to kindergarten in the fall, too, but he is also a little sad to leave his preschool classroom here at FloCrit. "My favorite thing about the classroom here is the toys," says Angelo. "We make a picture, and we run." He especially likes to make pictures of characters from his favorite video game. "I am excited to go to kindergarten," Angelo tells us. He has big ideas about what his new school will be like. "I'm going to play with some new friends. I'm going to play on the playground. I'm going to drink some milk and eat." He even wonders, "Will there be new toys there?"

Aiden says he is going to go to a new school for kindergarten. "I am excited about kindergarten. I think I am going to learn new things. I think I'm going to have new friends" he tells us. "I think I am going to learn the ABCs." Aiden will miss the playground here at FloCrit, but "I think there will be a playground at my new school," he says. Most of all he will miss his teachers Miss Sherry, Miss Mariam, Miss Rachel, and Miss Scottie.



Ashly



Aiden



Angelo

Join the Florence Crittenton Phoenix Society of Monthly Donors



Become a member of the Phoenix Society today! The Phoenix Society is our monthly donor community; it represents some of our most committed and active Florence Crittenton Services champions. To celebrate 130 years of FloCrit, support us by giving \$130 this year. For \$10.83 (\$130 annually) or more a month, you can help us educate, prepare, and empower two generations — teen mother and child. One of our Phoenix Society members, Alexis Anderten says, "As a Latina myself, I appreciate the work FloCrit is doing for these young women. Education is so important and I'm glad they have the support and resources to get their diplomas."

Monthly giving lets you spread your contributions throughout the year, easily budget your contributions, and make an ongoing commitment to Florence Crittenton Services teen mothers and their children.

Join the Phoenix Society today:



Pathways to Empowerment: We Rise Together

After two years, the Florence Crittenton community was finally able to come together to celebrate our accomplishments and to honor our mission: to educate, prepare, and empower two generations. Pathways to Empowerment: We Rise Together was held on April 14 at the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus, showcasing a blend of fun, free-flowing activities and educational centers that highlighted several different FloCrit departments: the Student Family Support Program, the Early Childhood Education Center, the FloCrit High School and the Alethia E. Morgan, MD Health Center. Guests then heard from FloCrit's two award winners, who gave empowering and inspiring acceptance speeches. The Charles Crittenton Community Partner Award was presented to Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck in honor of their decades of support, services, and sponsorship to the mission of Florence Crittenton. Patti Klinge was awarded the Dr. Kate Waller Barrett Advocate Award due to her leadership and wisdom that has helped transform Florence Crittenton into the organization it is today. Finally, guests were able hear from keynote speakers, Florence Crittenton Class of 2013 graduate Lesley Del Rio and her son Leo. Their speech encompassed everything it means to be a FloCrit Phoenix, truly demonstrating the lifelong influence that Florence Crittenton has.

Pathways to Empowerment: We Rise Together raised over \$294,000 toward the investment in the education, preparation, and empowerment of teen mothers and their children. Thank you to all who attended, made a generous donation, or simply shared these stories with someone new. You all are the collective embodiment of "We Rise Together" and for that, our appreciation is endless.



Greg Berger, Caitlin Quander, and David Spaulding accept the Charles Crittenton Community Partner Award on behalf of Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck | Photo by Vince Dean Photography



Patti Klinge receives the Dr. Kate Waller Barrett Advocate Award | Photo by Vince Dean Photography



Keynote speakers Lesley and Leo, Class of 2013 | Photo by Vince Dean Photography



Teen mom Naliyah tells guests about the art-o-biography book she created in Art Therapy



Housing Coordinator Madison Caparros and Elfriede Leicht | Photo by Vince Dean Photography



Mike and Yun Hui Kehoe and Board member Chelsea Carver and William Browning | Photo by Vince Dean Photography

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Teen Moms Engage with State Government

On April 28, seven FloCrit moms witnessed democracy in action with a visit to the Colorado State Capitol. Several staff members accompanied the girls on the trip, including Florence Crittenton High School Civics teacher Jen Portillo. “The best thing about the day at the Capitol is that the students are able to see how government works firsthand,” says Jen. Walking around the Capitol and feeling the energy is something that is difficult to convey through reading books and in the classroom.



Teen moms on the floor of the House of Representatives with Rep. Alex Valdez

The moms experienced the political process firsthand as they sat on the floor of the House of Representatives, where Rep. Alex Valdez, who represents FloCrit’s district, introduced the group. They exchanged handshakes with various Representatives, including Reps. Monica Duran and Naquetta Ricks. The moms then toured the Capitol, gathering a bit of Colorado history on the way.

The FloCrit group attended the hearing for HB22-1042, Teen Parent Driving Instruction Course. Two FloCrit moms, Karen and Lesly, testified in support of the bill, sharing their experience being teen moms and trying to get where they and their kids need to go. They explained how difficult it is to navigate the system in order to get their drivers licenses, that often they’re not able to pay for the testing or classes to get their license, or the license itself. The group spoke with bill sponsors Senators Janet Buckner and Dennis Hisey.



Moms stand with Sens. Janet Buckner and Dennis Hisey

Near the end of the visit, Reps. Alex Valdez and Donald Valdez spent time with the group, discussing the electoral process and what it means to serve in the House of Representatives. Several FloCrit moms asked thoughtful questions like women in politics and how representatives discuss topics they are passionate about even when they disagree. FloCrit mom and 2022 graduate Karen found the visit eye opening. “The day at the Capitol meant a lot. Government and law wasn’t originally something I was interested in, because I thought it was just lawyers,” she reflected. “But the visit was eye opening and exposed me to new options since I don’t know what I want to do after I graduate.”

9Health Fair Opportunity to Sharpen Real-Life Skills



MedConnect teen moms and teacher Linda Almanza at the 9Health Fair

A big piece of Florence Crittenton’s mission to educate, prepare, and empower teen moms is to support their transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency. Through our partnership with Denver Public Schools’ MedConnect program, students who are interested in working in the medical field can obtain phlebotomy and EKG certificates while attending high school.

In phlebotomy, moms learn patient care, how to draw blood, and how to speak to patients in a respectful and professional manner. In the EKG class, they learn how to perform cardiovascular tests on patients of all ages. After learning the basics, students practice on each other, and once they’re confident enough, many FloCrit staff volunteer as patients so moms can gain more experience.

Linda Almanza, FloCrit’s MedConnect teacher, is passionate about getting her students career-ready, teaching not only the technical skills required for the certification, but also the soft skills needed to be successful professionals in the medical field. She was looking for a way to give

moms more exposure to real-life situations—how to talk to and work on strangers, while providing them with a good patient experience. Linda contacted 9Health Fair as a potential volunteer opportunity for moms, and after a tour of the campus, the representatives at 9Health suggested Florence Crittenton host a fair instead. On Saturday, April 9, over 100 people from the community came to the fair for affordable, preventative, and often life saving healthcare and screenings.

Florence Crittenton High School Principal Josh Howard was on board with the idea, and thought of the experience as beyond the hands-on practice for MedConnect moms. To him, the fair was an opportunity to “bridge the gap between dream and reality, between a career goal, not necessarily in the medical field, and how that plan translates into the real world”. Teen moms Jessica, Cindy, and Vanessa, who volunteered at the fair, all stated they were nervous at first, but after the first few blood draws, they felt more at ease. They valued the opportunity to draw blood and interact with different people. Jessica noted one participant, an elderly man, was so kind and understanding that it gave her more confidence on her following draws. The moms’ participation at the fair was a big success. As Linda put it, “They acted professional the whole time, and even if they missed a vein in the first try, that was also a valuable learning experience on how to talk to the patient about trying again”.

Housing Becomes a Focus for FloCrit

Over the past several years, data collected by the Student and Family Support Program (SFSP) team has exposed the lack of safe and stable housing, the rising need for such housing, and the impact housing has on dropout rates. Many moms face an acute housing crises due to overcrowding, abuse, substance use, or inaccessibility to school and the workplace. Our two-generation approach has taught us that when a mom finds safe and stable housing, the benefits she receives from it also impact her child. With this realization, FloCrit launched a Housing Task Force Committee in the Fall of 2021 to assess housing model opportunities to pursue to best support moms and their children. The Task Force, led by Strategies with Rox and composed of FloCrit Board members, community members, service providers, real estate agents, funding experts and the most important voices, FloCrit moms, worked for nearly a year to see how Florence Crittenton can begin meeting the need for safe and stable housing.



Delmy meets with Housing Coordinator Madison Caparros

During the 2021-2022 school year, we increased our understanding to better leverage resources we have within the community and laid the foundation for increased support for housing stabilization for FloCrit teen moms and their children. Over the last year, 70 moms received housing services and support from staff on the SFSP team. Of those 70 moms, 32 received financial assistance for housing related needs such as rent, deposits, applications fees, and eviction prevention and 16 moms have been placed in stable and safe housing. The SFSP team also provided referrals and placement services, housing education opportunities, and is building a working relationship with key community providers such as Denver Housing

Authority and the First Step house run by Warren Village. Teen moms who have been placed in Warren Village's First Step are already showing improved attendance and engagement with their children's educational needs. The partnership allows for 11 dedicated spots for FloCrit moms and their children, in which these families have their own rooms, share a communal living space, and can stay for up to a year after their graduation. Three of the teen moms living in the First Step house graduated this year with the Class of 2022, Karen, Chalaya, and Salutatorian, Myra. One mother's school attendance has nearly tripled.



Three teen moms who live in the First Step house—Myra, Karen, and Chalaya—graduated with the Class of 2022

Chalaya, a graduate of the Class of 2022, and her four-year-old daughter Jia were part of the first group of FloCrit teen moms to move into First Step. Chalaya faced housing instability ever since she got pregnant, whether living with her family or her baby's father and his family. The uncertainty of her living situation produced intense anxiety which led to inconsistent attendance at school and instability for her and Jia. Chalaya turned to her Family Advocate Kimble and the SFSP Housing Coordinator Madison, who helped her navigate housing resources and connected her with multiple options, including First Step. "I don't have to walk on eggshells around anybody. I can go on about life with ease and not always feel anxious," reflects Chalaya. "This is the first time in over three years that I've truly felt content and happy. It shows in my daughter, too."

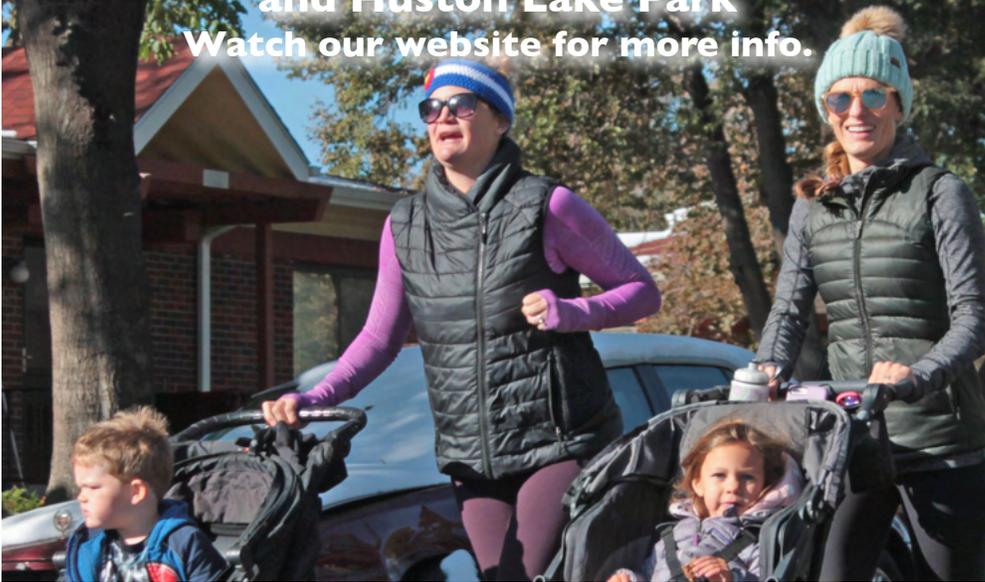
Securing a safe place to live has given her the ability to focus on her future, learn to handle a lease, work on her finances, and work toward her goal of someday owning a home. The opportunity to develop better friendships with other FloCrit moms in the transitional housing is an added bonus that she has grown to appreciate. "I wasn't in a good mental space to live by myself," she says. "I find my depression gets really out of hand when I'm by myself." SFSP provides wraparound services embedded in a framework that focuses on emotional intelligence, positive relationship building, and learning to navigate resources. The partnerships Family Advocates form with moms at FloCrit are key in impacting these challenges and supporting the outcomes moms want for their families.

Jia has flourished in the preschool class thanks to her regular attendance. "Life has its different challenges, but when you just give up, you don't know what the future could hold," says Chalaya. The eight months she and Jia spent living in the First Step house prepared them to live on their own after graduation. Chalaya received a housing choice voucher for the city of Englewood. She and Jia will be transitioning into permanent housing in the upcoming months, where Chalaya will still have the opportunity to continue to pursue her higher education.



Jia snuggles up in her own bed

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