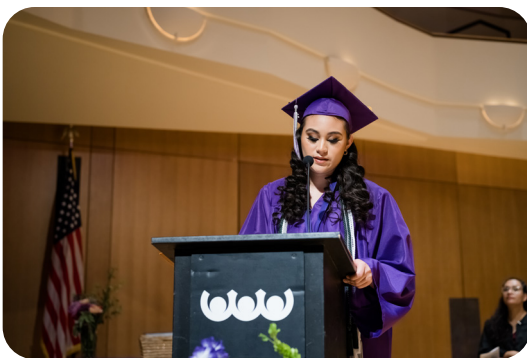


Stories of Triumph and New Beginnings

To the Class of 2023

On May 23rd, 2023, valedictorian Gladys delivered a heartwarming speech to her peers and supporters. Below, you will find her speech presented in its original language, Spanish, as well as its English translation.

Estimados graduadas, maestros, madres, padres y familias. En este día muy especial quiero dar un agradecimiento especial primeramente a Dios que siempre estuvo en mi camino para conseguir esta meta. También quiero agradecerle a Yolanda Zuniga y Walter Diaz. Me siento muy orgullosa de tener unos padres emprendedores y trabajadores que me han ayudado a conseguir este logro. Yo se que están orgullosos porque conseguí esta meta. Siempre estuvieron dispuestos a apoyarme, llevarme a la escuela y cuidar a mi hija porque nunca nos han dejado solas. Siempre han estado presentes en mi vida y en la de mi hija Merlin. Maestros Sarah, Nelson, Mix Flint, Ginia, Linda estoy muy feliz de tener a mis maestros que me estuvieron apoyando a cumplir cada trabajo de la clase. Y gracias a sus consejos y apoyo he podido terminar la Escuela Secundaria.



Valedictorian, Gladys, giving her graduation speech
Photo Credit: Noelle Williams Photography

Dear graduates, teachers, mothers, fathers, and families. On this very special day I want to give a special thank you first to God for always being beside me while striving for this goal. I also want to thank Yolanda Zuniga and Walter Diaz. I feel very proud to have entrepreneurs and hard-working parents who have helped me reach this achievement. I know they are proud because I achieved this goal. They were always willing to support me, take me to school, and take care of my daughter because they never left us alone. They always have been present in my life and in that of my daughter, Merlin. Teachers Sarah, Nelson, Mx Flint, Ginia, Linda: I am very happy to have teachers that were supporting me to complete each assignment. And thanks to your advice and support, I have been able to finish High School.

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, DESTA TAYE-CHANNELL

On September 1st, I will celebrate one year as President & CEO of Florence Crittenton Services. It is a tremendous honor and humbling experience to contribute towards dismantling barriers and offering support that enables FloCrit families to unleash their full potential. While the 2022-23 school year was a step forward with fewer COVID-related quarantines and disruptions, we continue to feel the long-term effects of the pandemic on two generations of FloCrit families. Referrals to our new full-time Bilingual Clinical Services Manager more than doubled from our expected reach, and early intervention referrals in our Early Childhood Education Center for speech and social emotional development have increased. Rather than causing alarm, this confirms that the programs and services offered at FloCrit, designed with input from our families, are effectively serving the community's needs.

And our families are stepping up and thriving! In May, twenty-four young mothers graduated from Florence Crittenton High School and are on their way to executing their post-secondary plans. They know they can continue to receive support from our Transitions Advocate, but they are well-equipped to succeed. In this issue of the Pathfinder, you'll meet the Class of 2023, see how we're engaging our alumni, and read about how the whole FloCrit community came together for one family who faced sudden housing insecurity. In my new position, I have come to realize the crucial importance of community support. I now see more clearly than ever that our community genuinely believes in the immense potential of all FloCrit families. I am so grateful for your unwavering support and sincerely hope that we will have the opportunity to meet you on campus or at one of our events this year!




DESTA TAYE-CHANNELL, MA, LPC,
PRESIDENT AND CEO

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Meet the Class of 2023



Jessica Banuelos
Mother of Marilyn (4yr). Jessica plans to buy a house and become an EMT after graduation. She will miss all of her wonderful teachers at FloCrit.



Nadine Cannata
Mother to Alexander (4mos). Nadine is attending Emily Griffith College in the fall and is grateful for all of the love and support from the entire FloCrit community.



Marisella Carillo Mother to Xavier (3yr). Marisella wants to go to school and make the “big bucks” one day so that she can give her son the life she never had. Marisella is thankful for her teachers and the services that FloCrit provided.



Liliana Contreras
Mother to Omar (1yr). Liliana wants to become a cosmetologist and is excited for everything that the future holds, including watching her son grow.



Isabel Facio
Mother of Roberto (4yr) and Mia (1yr). Isabel will miss EVERYTHING about FloCrit but is excited to be done with school. She is interning at the FloCrit ECE this summer to gain work experience.



Danessa Garcia
Mother to Nasiah (5yr) and Nazarius (6mos). She plans to pursue her RN and wants to own a home before 25.



**“Here at FloCrit you [...] teach us to believe in ourselves. You [...] tell us we can do it and we will. You don’t get that from the outside world.”
-Danessa Garcia**



Principal Josh Howard and Ashaunna
Photo Credit: Noelle Williams Photography



Valeria Hernandez
 Mother of Carlos (1.5yr). Valeria is currently enrolled in Emily Griffith's Cosmetology program and will be taking the state board exams to receive her license this month.



Naliyah Jones
 Mother to Jacarri (2yr). She will enroll in the Cosmetology program at Emily Griffith and wants to open up her own salon and tattoo parlor in the future.



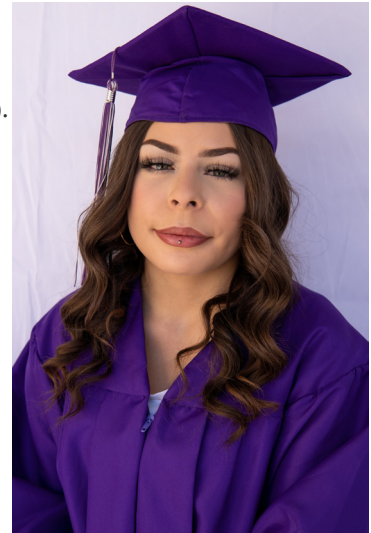
Haley Kelly
 Mother to Adalina (3yr). Haley wants to work on her own clothing brand while using her phlebotomy certificate at a donation center to help build her business.



Sunshine Maez
 Mother to Violet (2yr). Sunshine wants to go to college and become a nurse so that she can have a stable future with her daughter. She will miss everyone's love and open arms at FloCrit. Sunshine also has an internship with the FloCrit SFSP team this summer.



Alyssa Mahaney
 Mother to Eliana (18mos). Alyssa is excited to say "I did it!" and will be attending the Community College of Aurora in the fall. She will miss the teachers that are like family to her.



Jordan Martinez
 Mother to Amora (2yr). Jordan will be attending school for phlebotomy and is excited to watch her daughter grow. She will miss all of the great resources and teachers at FloCrit.

(FloCrit) genuinely wants to help and care for my little family without us being a burden. I am who I am today because of this school.
-Haley Kelly



Scan this code to hear Alyssa's advice to new moms at FloCrit!





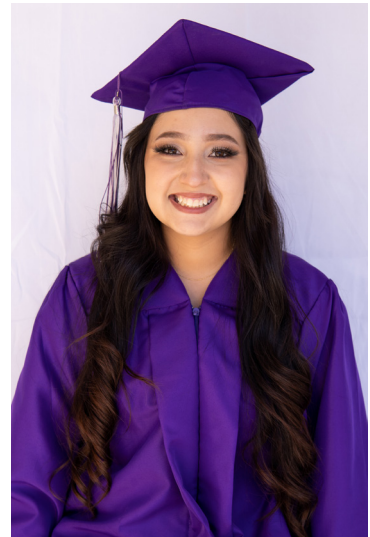
**Kaya No Runner
Many White Horses**

Mother to Amelia (1.5yr). Kaya will be attending Emily Griffith in the fall and is excited to give her daughter the best life possible.



Alison Melara

Mother to Josue (2yr). Alison will go to the Community College of Denver to get her certificate in business and wants to open up her own boutique. She is interning with the Development team at FloCrit this summer.



Katie Nuanes

Mother to Isabel (2 yr). Katie will get her Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education & Development and wants to provide the life for her daughter that she never had.



Ashaunna Nutter

Mother to Jaelyn (3yr). Ashuanna will be travelling to Australia with FloCrit this summer and is excited to get a life start after graduation. She will earn her phlebotomy certification at CCD this fall.



Destiny Olivas

Mother to Raymond (2yr). She is enrolled at Emily Griffith for the Esthetician program this fall and is excited about becoming financially successful in the future.



Jessica Ruano-Gonzalez

Mother to Abby (4yr) and Edward(2yr). After graduation she will work at a plasma center and is excited to buy her own house and car. She will miss all of the love and support she received here.



Abril speaking at the 2023 graduation ceremony
Photo Credit: Noelle Williams Photography



**“Something I will miss about FloCrit is everyone’s open arms of love and support and help and faith that all teachers/staff have for us teen moms”
-Sunshine Maez**



Amanda Saenz
 Mother to Yosef (1yr). Amanda will go to CCD in the fall to become a pharmacy technician and is excited to be financially stable. She will miss the staff and the atmosphere at FloCrit.



Michelle Sibayan
 Mother to Dilynn (6yr). She will be going to EMT school at Denver Health in the fall and is excited to see her own daughter graduate one day.



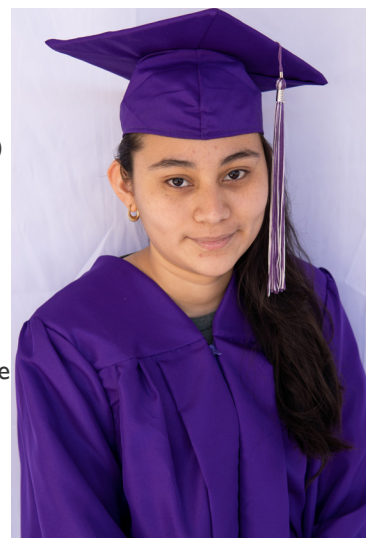
Aisha Vazquez
 Mother to Dariana (2yr). She plans to go to nursing school in the future and will miss her teachers and classes at FloCrit.



Aaliyah Walker Mother to Hezeki (4yr) and Mecca (2yr). She wants to work at a plasma center after graduation and looks forward to being financially stable for her children. She is grateful for her support team at FloCrit.



Abril Zavala-Torres Mother to Abraham (2yr) and Lenin (18mos). She will go to school for cosmetology to learn more about what she loves to do. She's excited for what the future has in store.



Gladys Zuniga-Gutierrez Mother to Merlin (2yr). Gladys will work at a cleaning company so that she can reach her goals and study. She will miss the teachers and activities that were always available at FloCrit.



The Class of 2023 turn their tassels from the right side to the left.
 Photo Credit: Noelle Williams Photography

From Tiny Steps to Bright Futures

Nasiah's Journey Through the Early Childhood Education Center

From the tender age of ten weeks old, Nasiah embarked on a remarkable educational adventure that recently culminated in his graduation from Florence Crittenton's Early Childhood Education Center (ECE). Just as his mom, Danessa, proudly graduated from Florence Crittenton High School in May of 2023, Nasiah's graduation from the ECE serves as an incredible accomplishment that showcases the transformative power of early childhood education. Join us as we follow Nasiah's journey to becoming kindergarten ready, with a video showcasing each stage of an ECE student's growth, development, and accomplishments. From those adorable first steps to the blossoming of social skills and cognitive abilities, these videos capture the essence of the transformative power of Florence Crittenton Services' ECE program.

Nasiah's Journey Through the FloCrit Early Childhood Education Center

Scan each QR code to view a video about the Florence Crittenton ECE!

FIRST YEAR

In just 12 months, Nasiah experienced an incredible transformation, as he went from crawling to standing to walking. He also developed motor skills, language, and social connections.

PRE-SCHOOL

In the FloCrit ECE, Nasiah's growth soared as his teachers helped prepare him for kindergarten by following a daily routine, problem solving, and building relationships with other children.

INFANCY

Starting at six weeks old, infant care is on-demand and at FloCrit, infants receive focused care from their teachers. Scan this code to learn more from ECE Director, Mona Lisa Martinez!

TODDLER

As Nasiah began to toddle and talk, he embarked on a journey of independence and self-discovery. Scan this code to hear from Nasiah's past teacher, Miss Sherry!



FloCrit Alumni Reconnect

At Florence Crittenton Services, our commitment to teen moms and their children extends far beyond high school graduation. Emily Assaf, Transitions Advocate at FloCrit, assists high school seniors and recent graduates up to age 25 with career and educational support, as well as access to community resources and educational opportunities beyond 25. “(The) Transitions program was created so we can continue to empower and connect with our recent graduates and alumni with the next chapter in their life.” says Emily, “This can include a wide variety of support such as completing their resume, learning interview skills, career exploration, touring a campus, scholarships, or connections to programs in the community that can support them finding an immediate job to starting their career.”

In February, FloCrit hosted our first Alumni Open House. During the event, alumni and their families connected with past classmates and staff while visiting different stations such as housing, mental health, and ECE. “Based on the information they shared with us, we have been able to revisit our Transitions programming and have learned how we can better serve our students once they graduate.” says Frank, Family Engagement Manager at FloCrit. This event was catered by Lily’s Cocina, which is owned by FloCrit alumna, Priscilla Garcia!

We will have our next alumni event, a Fall Homecoming, on Saturday, September 23rd, from 10am- 12pm. If you’re a FloCrit alum, please put it on your calendar now!



FloCrit staff Frank Knappe and Ginia Coors with alumna Ciera and her daughter. Ginia Coors is celebrating 30 years at FloCrit High School!



FloCrit alumnae pose in the photo booth.

Public Policy

Child Care Tax Credit Passes Successfully!!

During the last legislative session, FloCrit, along with its partners, worked successfully to pass **HB23-1091, Continuation of the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit**. The tax credit, which is a critical support for funding FloCrit’s Early Childhood Education Center, allows taxpayers who make monetary contributions to childcare centers in the state to receive an income tax credit equal to 50% of the total value of the contribution.

The benefits of this tax credit stretch well beyond the Florence Crittenton Campus. Early Childhood Centers across the state of Colorado. Because of the **CCTC** childcare providers can maintain affordable rates, expand access to more Colorado families, and keep their doors open.

FloCrit Students Spend a Day at the Capitol

In addition to the passage of HB23-1019, Florence Crittenton Services held their annual Day at the Capitol on March 16th. Several of FloCrit’s students and faculty attended the Day at the Capitol, where they were introduced on the floor of the Senate by Senator Julie Gonzales (D-34), had a guided tour of the Colorado State Capitol and were joined by legislators for a conversation on policy issues impacting teen parents and their children.

Scan here to view photos from Florence Crittentons “Day at the Capitol” 2023!



2023

Family Engagement Photo Roundup

Scan here
to see
more
photos:



These events wouldn't be possible without the support of our dedicated volunteers!

Interested in volunteering?

Contact Michelle Baldwin, Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator, at mbaldwin@flocritco.org for more details.



For the first time since before COVID-19, Florence Crittenton Services was able to host in-person Family Engagement events all year! Each month, we celebrated seasonal holidays while helping teen families forge social networks and connections.



From Tragedy to Triumph

How FloCrit's Housing Department Helped Vanesa Rise Above Adversity

Vanesa's journey at Florence Crittenton Services began when she found herself facing an unexpected reality that each of our students have encountered: she was pregnant as a teenager. Overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty, Vanesa felt a deep sense of isolation. She had no idea what to do or where to turn for support.

"I was scared. I didn't know what to do." Vanesa recalled. "I didn't want the baby at all, I was really young and didn't have any support."

Vanesa ultimately chose to have her child and was introduced to FloCrit at the hospital. Although she was apprehensive at first, Vanesa decided that she would make her son proud by receiving her high school degree and building a successful future for the two of them through the comprehensive support at Florence Crittenton Services. The community at FloCrit quickly became a

safe space for Vanesa to learn, grow, and connect with others who understood her journey.

Life took an unexpected turn again when Vanesa's apartment caught fire in April. One moment she was giving her son, Gabriel, a bath, and the next moment she was outside of

her apartment building waiting for the fire department. Questions about what to do, where they would stay and how she would replace her family's belongings began to overwhelm her. However, during this time of uncertainty and tension, she knew exactly who to call: her support team at Florence Crittenton Services.

The Housing Department at FloCrit swiftly sprang into action, ensuring Vanesa and her family had a roof over their heads. They arranged for them to stay in a hotel until a new place could be secured.

"If I didn't have the resources from FloCrit, like if we didn't have the hotel, we would probably be staying in the car because we had just paid rent for that month." Vanesa shared. "It was really overwhelming and stressful, but we got through it."

This support didn't end with temporary housing. The entire FloCrit community rallied around Vanesa, recognizing the magnitude of her traumatic experience. In an inspiring show of solidarity, the FloCrit family banded together and visited Baby Bucks, our basic needs store. "They came together, not just teachers, but students, and they went down to Baby Bucks and got me...diapers, wipes, clothes for my son. All of them." Further, the housing department supplied Vanesa and her family with items like kitchen supplies, toiletries, pillows, bedding, air mattresses, and towels in order to begin rebuilding their life in their new apartment.

"When you look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, shelter is right there at the base," explains Brooke Kimball, Housing Coordinator at Florence Crittenton Services, "In fact, a person who is experiencing homelessness can't think beyond a twelve-hour clock. Until our students are all living in a home where they feel safe and secure, their education is going to be at risk."



Vanesa and Gabriel
Photo supplied by Vanesa

Recent data shows that 99% of FloCrit families are currently facing various housing challenges such as overcrowding, violence at home, feeling unwelcome, and rent payment issues. Though Vanesa's story is a unique situation, the FloCrit Housing Department continues to be an indispensable pillar of our comprehensive support programs as we work toward housing security and stability for all FloCrit families.

Gabriel, 17 months old. Photo supplied by Vanesa.



Pathways to Empowerment: Rooted & Flourishing

On April 13th, amidst the enchanting beauty of flowers and trees at the Denver Botanic Gardens, we hosted our signature event, Pathways to Empowerment: Rooted & Flourishing.

A focal point of the reception was an artistic installation shaped like a tree, adorned with inspiring FloCrit family stories and the future dreams of FloCrit preschoolers. There was also a silent auction, a live auction, live music by the Lampin' Jazz Quartet, and exceptional food from Catering by Design.

During the event, we awarded Dr. Diane Kane, former FloCrit Board Chair, with the Dr. Kate Waller Barrett Advocate Award, recognizing her unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in empowering teen families. Clayton Early Learning was honored with the esteemed Charles Crittenton Community Partner award for their steadfast commitment to the growing families at FloCrit. President & CEO William Browning accepted the award on Clayton's behalf. Clayton Early Learning provides high quality

early childhood education programs and fosters thriving, equitable communities by partnering with families to nurture the whole child.

One of the most memorable moments of the evening was the premiere of a video featuring the stories of three FloCrit alumnae: Araceli (Class of 1986), Ataya (Class of 2011) and Myra (Class of 2022.) Their journeys were depicted with authenticity, strength, and triumph. After the video, Araceli shared her personal account of how FloCrit has enabled her to overcome barriers and flourish in her daily life.

Pathways to Empowerment: Rooted & Flourishing raised over \$232,000 with sponsorships, auctions, ticket sales, the wine pull, and additional donations. The event was a testament to the transformative power of our programs and served as a catalyst for fostering deeper connections, raising awareness, and renewing our commitment to educating, preparing, and empowering teen moms and their children.

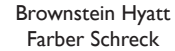


Juan Botello, Desta Teye-Channell, and Kelly Berger



Emily Assaf and Frank Knappe with FloCrit student Juliana

Thank You to Our Sponsors



Meet the Individual Giving Team!



Name: Claudia Mayo
Job Title: Development Assistant
Alma Matter: McNeese State University
Favorite Hobby: Reading
Email: cmayo@flocritco.org

Claudia keeps meticulous records for FloCrit and has your back when it comes to tax receipts. She will be sure to send you an acknowledgement letter after your generous donation. Contact her for your 2023 tax receipts early this year!



Name: Amanda Schweikert
Job Title: Development Associate
Alma Matter: University of Puget Sound
Favorite Hobby: Pickeball
Email: aschweikert@flocritco.org

Amanda is here to support you with all things related to monthly donations, first-time gifts, and becoming a Pathbuilder. Contact Amanda if you have questions about making a gift, structuring a donation, utilizing a DAF, exploring tax-efficient giving options, or scheduling a tour!



Name: Theresa Garcia
Job Title: Director of Development
Alma Matter: Pomona College
Favorite Hobby: Singing in her community choir, Voices Rock
Email: tgarcia@flocritco.org

Theresa oversees the entire Development Department while specializing in legacy gifts, endowment contributions, DAFs, and appreciated securities. With her expertise, she's your trusted resource for making a lasting impact. Connect with Theresa to unlock new opportunities for meaningful giving!

From the entire team at Florence Crittenton Services, *thank you* to our incredible donors! We are truly grateful for your impactful support as our community continues to educate, prepare, and empower teen moms and their children.



Early Bird pricing available through September 1st!

October 7th, 2023



Miles for Moms

Run • Walk • Roll
to educate, prepare, & empower



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