

The “Why” of Florence Crittenton Services

Driven by Purpose

Why We Empower Teen Moms Like Kasondra

Kasondra poses for a cheer photo.



Why do we do what we do? For over 130 years, Florence Crittenton Services has supported young women in Denver, empowering them to shape their own futures. Every day, our team of 80+ staff members comes to our campus, backed by 30 board members, hundreds of donors, and two annual fundraisers with 900+ attendees. But why dedicate so much to supporting this often-overlooked population?

Our “why” comes alive in stories like

Kasondra’s. Just a year ago, her life changed when she found out she was pregnant with her daughter, Ariella. “My mindset has completely changed from when I found out,” she says. “I have been starting to do better for myself and for her.” Determined to keep learning, she enrolled in Florence Crittenton High School and is now just a few credits away from pursuing her dream of studying criminology in college. With support from her Family Advocate, she earned a driver’s education scholarship, and regular therapy sessions with FloCrit’s Bilingual Clinical Services Manager help her navigate her journey.

Balancing school and parenting hasn’t kept Kasondra from cheerleading or connecting with friends. “I can still push through and be the person that I am for me...I decided to go down a pathway where I’m still getting my education, and my daughter is still getting taken care of, and I didn’t stop there and I’m not going to stop there. I’m just going to continue to go down the road to do what I want to do.”

This is why we’re here,—to empower teen moms like Kasondra to create the lives they envision, with the resources they need to thrive. This is why we do what we do. As you read this edition of the Pathfinder, we hope you see the heart of our mission and the impact of your support in helping teen families build the futures they want and deserve.

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, DESTA TAYE-CHANNELL

At FloCrit, we recognize that many of our parents need more than four years to graduate high school. That’s why, through our partnership with Denver Public Schools, we provide high school education for students up to age 21, allowing them time to catch up from interrupted schooling and finish strong. It also gives their children up to five years of care in our Early Childhood Education Center, where they learn and develop the skills needed to thrive and be kindergarten-ready.

While our DPS partnership helps students earn high school diplomas and GEDs, and our ECE prepares FloCrit babies for school, our comprehensive wraparound services are always evolving to meet the needs of teen families. These services address new barriers that can prevent teen moms from completing high school and extend support up to age 25, empowering them to achieve long-term success. You’ll have the opportunity to read more about these wraparound services in the Pathfinder.

In today’s world, keeping teen families supported looks very different. When we say FloCrit supports teen moms and their babies, we mean that we work one-on-one to identify not only immediate crises but also the barriers that impact their long-term goals. Together with our community and FloCrit teen families themselves, we help teen parents overcome those barriers so they can build stability, restore wealth, and create the family life they want. Thank you for being part of the community who prioritizes long-term, sustainable opportunities for families to thrive!




DESTA TAYE-CHANNELL
PRESIDENT AND CEO

In This Issue

The “Why” of FloCrit.....	1	FloCrit’s New Website.....	5
Turning Houses into Homes.....	2	Staff Spotlight.....	6
Twins on Track: Early Intervention.....	3	More Ways to Give.....	6
Car Seat Safety at FloCrit.....	3	Miles for Moms Recap.....	7
Workforce Development.....	4	Colorado Gives Day.....	8
Continuing the Journey: FloCrit Alumnae...5		Pathways to Empowerment 2025.....	8

Turning Houses into Homes

New Housing Basic Needs Store at FloCrit

With Denver’s rising housing costs and high eviction rates, many teen parents at Florence Crittenton Services feel forced to choose between working and attending school in order to afford basic living expenses like rent and utilities. As one teen parent put it, “Market rates are higher than they have ever been. Most are given a minimum wage job that only pays 15 dollars an hour but then give us a rent of \$1500+. Its nearly impossible to survive in Colorado.” [sic]

To address this growing need, FloCrit’s Housing Team provides financial assistance — including help with rent, deposits, utilities, and emergency hotels — along with placement support and housing voucher assistance. In fiscal year 2024, 85 FloCrit families avoided homelessness through eviction prevention, giving many teen parents and their children access to safe, affordable housing and allowing them to focus on education. However, high costs of living remained a significant challenge for teen families. “Our Housing Basic Needs Store is one of the things we do to try and drive down that cost of living for them,” says Madison Caparros, FloCrit’s Housing Manager, “The store opened in August, and we have had over 70 families utilize the store!”



Students shopping at the Housing Basic Needs Store.

Cassie*, an 18-year-old mom, found her excitement about moving into her first apartment quickly replaced by stress. She couldn’t afford cleaning supplies or baby-proofing kits, leaving her anxious about maintaining a safe environment for her baby. With support from the Housing Basic Needs Store, Cassie accessed everything she needed, transforming her apartment into the nurturing home she envisioned and giving her peace of mind.

While our original basic needs store, Baby Bucks, provides diapers, clothes, and formula, the Housing Basic Needs Store offers free household items like cleaning supplies, kitchenware, bedding, and baby-proofing kits. These resources reduce financial strain and help FloCrit teen families create safe, welcoming homes to spend their time in after the bell rings.

*Name changed for privacy

How You Can Help

The Housing Basic Needs Store empowers families like Cassie’s to remain in school while living in safe, comfortable homes. Help FloCrit make every house a home by donating today! Check out our wishlist and drop-off times below, or scan the QR code to donate directly through our Amazon wishlist.

Housing Basic Needs Wishlist

- Soap
- Dish/Dishwasher Soap
- Laundry Detergent
- Trash Bags
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Queen Air Mattresses
- New Bath Towels
- Kids Bowls/Plates/Cups
- Baby Proof Kits
- New Pillows
- Tupperware
- Ziploc Bags
- Cleaning Supplies
- Foldable Hampers
- Sets of Pots and Pans

*All items must be new.

*Donation hours: Mondays 1pm-3pm and Thursdays 9am-11am

Scan Here to Donate
Through our Amazon
Wishlist:



Twins on Track

FloCrit's ECE Supports Early Development

Kenya enrolled in Florence Crittenton Services while she was pregnant with her twin boys, Elian and Julian. At 6-weeks-old, the twins began attending the Early Childhood Education Center, giving Kenya the opportunity to earn her diploma next door. At first, the boys' speech seemed typical—just baby babbling. But over time, Kenya noticed something unique. “I noticed that they both had a special language. I would call them minions, because they made up their own language and when I would ask them something they would make up their own words...I know it's normal for twins to have their own language, but also, they weren't saying any words.” After consulting with her doctor at FloCrit's school-based health center, Kenya worked with the ECE to connect with a speech therapist, who confirmed the need for therapy. Kenya remembers how thoughtfully the therapy was integrated into their routine. “At the beginning, it was like, three times out of the week, 30 minutes each with each of them. Then once they started progressing more and learning more, it came down to two times out of the week. They would work around their scheduling—after nap time, after they were outside, or after breakfast—so they could have a routine.”



Elian (left) and Julian (right) with their little brother, Miklo.

Thanks to early intervention and consistent support, Elian and Julian made tremendous progress, “...you can understand them now,” says Kenya. They graduated from the FloCrit ECE last May and started kindergarten this fall. Kenya is proud of how well her boys have adjusted. “I feel like the preschool and the extra help they had prepared them a lot for kindergarten because they weren't scared, they were like ‘This is not new to me.’ It might be a new setting and a new environment, but the whole ABCs, coloring, just the basics of kindergarten...They knew what to expect.”

Car Seat Safety at FloCrit

At Florence Crittenton Services, car seat safety is a priority to protect children and equip teen parents with the skills to transport their little ones safely. Parent Educator Brooke Kimball became a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician in 2021 after realizing how easily car seats can be misused—even with the best intentions. “I had been working with kiddos since I was 15 and through that class realized I hadn't been using best practice when it came to car seats...and was mortified” says Brooke. “I had always assumed I was keeping the kiddos in my care as safe as possible. I thought, I love and care for them immensely—of course I know how to install a car seat perfect...wrong.”

Since joining FloCrit in 2023, Brooke has made it her mission to teach students about car seat safety. “I largely accomplish that through my course, Teen Parenting, seminars with our partners at DOTI (Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure), or one on one meetings. As of October 2024, almost 40% of FloCrit parents have had formal car seat education. In the U.S., 46% of car seats and booster seats are being misused (NHTSA). I really stress the idea that car seats can be tricky and our parents are capable of learning best practice.”



Parent Educator, Brooke Kimball, demonstrates proper car seat installation for her Teen Parenting class.

FloCrit continues to support families from diverse cultural backgrounds. “We know that countries often have different laws and cultural beliefs about car seat safety. I, with the assistance of my incredible bilingual coworkers, have met one on one with new students from various countries to support them in their car seat journey.”

By empowering teen parents with critical car seat knowledge, FloCrit strengthens their confidence and builds a foundation of safety that supports both parent and child at every stage of life.

Workforce Development

How FloCrit Prepares Teen Moms for Life and Work

FloCrit's comprehensive campus is a safe and supportive environment for teen moms to earn their high school diploma while being empowered with resources that help them balance school and parenting.

To support more students who need to work while in school, FloCrit is expanding services to equip teen moms with practical job skills and work experience for both before and after graduation. Alexis Krupa, an AmeriCorps Engagement Support Member in her second year at FloCrit, highlights the transformative impact of these programs and explains how workforce development is helping teen moms gain confidence, income, and independence.

Alexis started at FloCrit as a Family Advocate, primarily supporting parents in accessing resources like social security cards and birth certificates, arranging food boxes, and organizing transportation. This year, her role has shifted to emphasize workforce development. "Florence Crittenton Services is responding to the needs of the students...So many of our students need work experience and want work experience," Alexis explains. "A lot of our students have to choose between going to school and going to work, [between] having an income or having an education."



Resource Support Interns, Monae (left) and Alex (right), working in Baby Bucks.

Baby Bucks, the free on-campus basic needs store, has become a valuable workforce development opportunity for FloCrit alumni and students. Previously run by staff, the store now empowers two Resource Support Interns—who are also FloCrit alumni—to manage inventory and operations. This role allows them to earn an income and provides them with work experience while they contribute to their community. In addition to managing the store, Alexis collaborates with the interns to develop workforce skills such as professionalism, conflict management, and communication. Monae, FloCrit Class of 2024 graduate and Resource Support Intern, shares how her experience in this role has enhanced her communication skills. "If there's no communication between you and your co-workers, stuff is gonna get either mixed up or miscommunicated," she says. "It's just better to have communication with the person you're working with."

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by teen parents, Donica Snyder, Director of Student & Family Support Program (SFSP), underscores the importance of integrating workforce development into FloCrit's programming. "It's important for us to have workforce development as an SFSP Pillar because curriculum, transportation, and childcare need to be carefully considered for teen parents," says Donica. "While there are great workforce development programs in the city, it can be difficult for our parents to access them when sites cannot accommodate supportive internship hours and locations. FloCrit's focus on relationship and strong case management has proven very successful in our wrap-around programming and we'd like to bring that same philosophy to workforce development."

This relationship-based support is central to FloCrit's philosophy. "Sometimes what I think our students just need is somebody that cares and knows them and will walk alongside them," says Alexis. Building trust and being that "cheerleader" empowers teen mothers to succeed in both school and their future careers. "I think so much about workforce is confidence," she adds. "I hope that our interns, anyone who comes out of the program, feels they can confidently go into a new space and learn a job. They are capable of making money, providing for themselves and their baby, and creating their own path."

By expanding workforce development efforts, FloCrit parents are building the skills and self-assurance that equip them for success—not only as mothers but as empowered individuals capable of charting their own futures. Through thoughtful support and targeted programming, FloCrit is helping teen parents see their potential and pursue their goals, at home, at work, and beyond.

Continuing the Journey

Scholarships and Community for FloCrit Alumnae



FloCrit alumnae and their families enjoy a free night of bowling with a few FloCrit staff at Crown Lanes Bowling.

For FloCrit parents, graduation isn't goodbye. When teen moms graduate from Florence Crittenton High School, they become alumnae who are united by their commitment to their children and the challenges they've faced together. Regular alumni events, like October's bowling night, offer a space for FloCrit alum to connect, have fun, and feel supported by a community that always has their back. In addition, both current students and alumni can join FloCrit's monthly family engagement events, which bring together multiple generations of teen families. Monae, FloCrit Class of 2024 graduate and Resource Support Intern (see page 4) often brings her entire family to these events. "I feel like life is short and there's not enough time in the day, so I just try to make as much memories I can with the loved ones I have,"

Monae says "I like to make memories with them and show them how much I care."

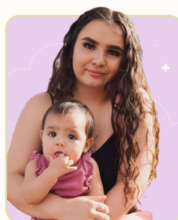
The Transitions Program at FloCrit also supports parents by offering a variety of scholarships. Some are traditional, while others are designed specifically for FloCrit parents, covering not just tuition but also incidental expenses like childcare, transportation, and school supplies. These scholarships reflect our commitment to removing financial barriers, empowering young parents to focus on their education and long-term goals. As Emily Assaf, FloCrit's Transitions Advocate, explains, "Scholarships empower FloCrit moms by providing them with opportunities to pursue their educational growth and explore their career paths without the burden of financial costs."

If you're interested in creating a scholarship for FloCrit students, please contact Theresa Garcia at tgarcia@flocritco.org!

FloCrit's New Website is Live!

www.flocritco.org

Florence Crittenton Services is on a mission to educate, prepare, and empower teen mothers and their children.



Are you a teen mom?

You can do it! Earn your diploma and build the future you want for your family with support from FloCrit.

[Start here](#) →

Scan the QR code to check it out!

SCAN ME



Staff Spotlight: Britney Perez



Britney's journey with Florence Crittenton Services began as a FloCrit teen parent and has now come full circle in her role as the ECE Administrative Assistant. A graduate of the Class of 2020, Britney first came to campus when her daughter, Devonnie, was three months old. Now, as a staff member, she draws on her experiences as an alumna to support teen moms and their children.

Britney recalls the nerves she felt on her first day dropping Devonnie off at the ECE: "I was scared...as time went by, it was more like, 'Here, take her, she's all yours...!' and I started to trust them." Her trust grew as she witnessed the staff's care. "They don't look at you like just another teen mom. They actually look at you as a parent," she says. Today, Britney works to create that same sense of welcome for others, saying, "Every morning, I always greet the child first...I feel like the child likes being acknowledged."

Graduating during the pandemic, Britney worked for a few years before welcoming her second daughter, Zoe, with her husband. After spending two years as a stay-at-home mom, she decided it was time to return to work. With help from FloCrit's Transitions Advocate, Emily, Britney received resume support: "She helped me put all the information that I needed, what people wanted to see on a resume." With her new resume, Britney successfully applied for her current position, where she manages the front office, tracks attendance, and oversees records so teen families can access affordable childcare through the ECE.

As a FloCrit alum and staff member, Britney has gained a new perspective: "As an alum, I did not see how much work it was to keep FloCrit going...Now I see that it does take a lot to be here, and I like being in this role because now I can share my experience with the moms." Her favorite part? "I love seeing the babies...the way they dress them...and I just like seeing the babies and the children go and be happy that they're in class."

Development Corner

Non-Cash Assets for Year-End Giving

At FloCrit, we often discuss why supporting teen families matters, but as year-end giving approaches, we want to equip you with the how; here are ways to make a difference through non-cash assets.

If you have any questions, contact Theresa at tgarcia@flocritco.org or 720-423-8910.

Donor Advised Funds (DAFs)

DAFs are popular giving vehicles that allow donors to contribute to community foundations or financial services firms and recommend grants to charities like Florence Crittenton Services. Contributions to your DAF offer the maximum charitable deduction, and you can also name FloCrit as a beneficiary to create a lasting legacy.

Stock Gifts

Gifting appreciated securities is a powerful way to support FloCrit while potentially avoiding capital gains taxes. By donating stocks directly to FloCrit, you may qualify for a tax deduction based on the current market value, regardless of the purchase price.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from Your IRA

For donors 70 ½ or older, QCDs allow you to donate up to \$105,000 annually from your IRA to a qualified charity like FloCrit, without paying income tax on the distribution. This distribution as a gift does not count as taxable income, which can reduce your annual income and may lower your Medicare premiums and Social Security taxes. Additionally, after age 73, QCDs can be used to satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Beneficiary Designations

You can designate FloCrit as a beneficiary of all or part of your IRA, 401(k), or pension. If you don't use all of your retirement assets during your lifetime, this provides an opportunity to support our mission. Similarly, you can name FloCrit as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

*This is not tax advice. Please consult your trusted advisors for financial planning.

Support Your Local Teen Moms

Miles for Moms 2024

Photographed by Vince Dean



CEO Desta Taye-Channell welcomes student speaker, Julie, to the stage.

The 19th Annual Miles for Moms was a powerful reminder of what makes the FloCrit community so special: we are neighbors showing up for neighbors. On October 5th, over 300 participants and volunteers from all corners of Denver came together to support local teen families, raising \$52,000 to further our mission of educating, preparing, and empowering teen moms and their children.

Our student speaker, Julie, embodies the grit and determination of the 116 teen parents currently enrolled at Florence Crittenton High School. She and her daughter, Serenity, make the hour-long bus trip each day to access the education and resources at FloCrit. As Julie shared in her speech, "Coming to FloCrit makes it worth it because I know

I want (my daughter) to grow up and always have everything she needs— to know she can do anything she hopes and dreams. It is my dream to give her the world, and I know that with the support of the FloCrit community, I can!
-Julie, Class of 2026

I have the best opportunity to graduate here with the support Serenity and I need."

CEO Desta Taye-Channell, Denver Clerk & Recorder Paul Lopez, and Councilwoman Jamie Torres of District 3 also spoke before kicking off the untimed race. The day included an adorable kids' race and prizes for best costume, fastest runner, and fastest stroller.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, fundraised, or supported from afar! Your efforts empower teen families to build the lives they want and deserve with the support of Florence Crittenton Services.

Scan here to see more photos from Miles for Moms!



Photographed by Justin Vriens

Participants of all ages enjoyed running, walking, and rolling on a sunny October morning.

Thank You to Our Sponsors

Advocate



Supporter

The Botello Family



Friend

BBG Construction Law

Denver Health

Empower

Lynda McNeive



MOODY INSURANCE AGENCY



Metropolitan State University of Denver

Zonta Club of Denver II

PATHWAYS TO EMPOWERMENT



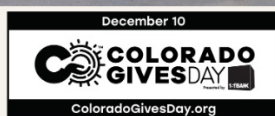
Join us at the Denver Art Museum for our signature event.
Tickets available in January!

Please contact Michelle Baldwin at mbaldwin@flocritco.org or 720.423.8908 for sponsorship information.

April 24th, 2025

Every Woman Inspires a Future

Be a part of the story this Colorado Gives Day.



Florence Crittenton Services of Colorado
96 S. Zuni Street
Denver, CO 80223



Scan here to learn more and dedicate your gift to an inspiring woman in your life.

EDUCATING, PREPARING, AND EMPOWERING TEEN MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Board of Directors

- Juan Botello, Chair**
Graland Country Day School
- Lynda McNeive, Secretary**
Retired Attorney
- Molly Grasso, Treasurer**
Bernstein Global Wealth Management
- Danisha Allen-Dawkins**
VIZIO
- Kelly Berger**
Kelly Berger Art
- Jessica Calderon**
City of Denver Office of Equity and Social Innovation
- Chelsea Carver**
Mile High United Way
- Erin Close**
Flatiron Health, Inc.
- Devin Farrell**
Delta Dental
- David Fine**
Metropolitan State University
- Yolanda Fitzpatrick**
CoBank
- Bernadette Gonzales**
5280 Family Law
- Alyssa Hultman**
Empower
- Ted Kijanka**
PCL Construction
- Nicole Lovato**
Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver
- Ruth Mackey**
SRS Acquiom
- John Markovich**
FirstBank
- Mari Medrano**
CoCal Landscape Services, Inc
- Dr. Alethia (Lee) Morgan**
COPIC
- Heidi Morgan**
Wagner Morgan Strategies
- David Peterson**
Amyntas Security Group
- Cathy Pomeroy**
Retired Teacher
- Danielle Rash**
Denver City Attorney's Office
- Christina Raya**
PNC Asset Management
- Michael Sapp**
Xcel Energy
- Genevieve Smith**
Anthem
- David Spaulding**
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP
- Carly West**
Black Hills Energy