Vision: Children and youth experiencing homelessness, birth through higher education, will have full access to quality learning, so they will never be homeless as adults, and the next generation will never be homeless.

Mission: To Overcome Homelessness Through Education
OUR WORK

We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with early childhood programs, schools, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

RESPONSIVE & EFFECTIVE POLICY ADVOCACY

- A strong voice for effective and responsive federal and state policies rooted in the realities of local communities
- Timely updates and analyses

PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

- Tools and resources for early care, pre K-12, and higher education
- Weekly newsletter with Q&A and practitioner voices
- In-person and online training on hot topics featuring national, state, and local presenters

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- Scholarships and support to youth who have experienced homelessness
- Full and authentic integration of young people into all areas of our work
Homelessness is a traumatic experience that harms young children and is associated with delays in language, literacy, and social-emotional development, putting children at risk for later academic problems. At the same time, homelessness creates barriers to accessing the high quality early learning programs that can mitigate the impact of homelessness on child development, and connect families to housing and services.

We expanded our early childhood practical assistance, partnering with Pritzker Children’s Initiative, Head Start Region VI, the California Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center (HETAC), and the states of New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Wisconsin to offer learning and strategies for increasing the enrollment of young children experiencing homelessness in high-quality early learning programs.

We refined and grew the pilot of our Head Start referral app, which aims to increase the Head Start enrollment of young children experiencing homelessness and helping to bridge early learning and K-12 systems.
We published/released the first-ever state data analysis and policy recommendations on infant and toddler homelessness. Despite research showing the injurious impact of homelessness on our youngest children, there were no estimates of how many infants and toddlers experienced homelessness, or how many participated in high-quality early learning programs—until now. SHC’s ground-breaking report establishes a set of benchmarks against which to assess progress, and provides a policy and practice roadmap at the local, state, and federal levels for increasing access to life-changing high-quality early learning programs.

“The infant/toddler report and dashboard are such valuable tools. You, Barbara and all of SHC are doing such great work!”

Tracy Duarte
Director, Pennsylvania Head Start Collaboration Office
Children and youth who experience homelessness are far less likely to complete high school than their peers, which in turn makes them 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness as young adults. Lack of a high school degree or GED is the single greatest risk factor associated with experiencing homelessness as a young adult. This vicious cycle is one of the root causes that perpetuates homelessness in the United States – a cycle that has been exacerbated by the pandemic and its associated continuing challenges for students and schools.

We led work on the smart, strategic, and effective use of the historic $800 million appropriation for children and youth experiencing homelessness provided through the American Rescue Plan Act. Building on last year’s top advocacy accomplishment, we rolled up our sleeves to convene educators, offer tools and trainings, and collect information to help communities leverage these one-time COVID-19 resources into sustainable support for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Our report, Progress & Promise, highlights six state and thirty-one local innovative efforts to make the most of American Rescue Plan Act Homeless Children & Youth Funds (ARP-HCY) and shows the early impact of this much needed investment in the education of some of our nation’s most vulnerable students.

“I appreciate the ways you and the SchoolHouse Connection team go above & beyond to identify emerging issues & provide technical assistance along the issue lifecycles of shifts & changes among ARP-HCY & unaccompanied homeless youth.”

Kim Pluhar
McKinney Vento Liaison, Forsyth County Schools
Despite increasing skepticism about the value of higher education, it remains true that pursuing education beyond high school is the most reliable and enduring way out of poverty: eighty percent of “good jobs” are held by workers with at least some postsecondary education, and in 2021, the unemployment rate of individuals with only a high school degree was nearly twice that of those with a bachelor’s degree. Higher education also appears to be a protective factor against young adult homelessness: a 2019 study shows four-year college enrollment to be nearly four times higher for young adults without experiences of homelessness in the prior 12 months than for young adults who lacked such educational attainment (52% compared to 15%).

IN 2022

We successfully advocated for timely implementation of policies to remove barriers to financial aid for homeless and foster youth. SHC’s persistent advocacy helped ensure that 2020 legislative reforms to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that benefitted homeless and foster youth went into effect this year, and were not delayed, as initially contemplated by the U.S. Department of Education. We made the case with Congress and the U.S. Department of Education, including releasing a report demonstrating the significant impact of the pandemic on FAFSA completion for youth experiencing homelessness and youth with experience in foster care.
“A couple years ago, you helped me get financial aid as an unaccompanied homeless youth. You advocated for me and used your voice so that I could go back to school and get my degree. I’m not sure if you remember, but you played an integral role in standing up for me and representing me so that Hunter College would give me the financial aid I needed to enroll for classes. I just want to say thank you. You were at the beginning of this whole journey. I remember when you called me back, a few hours after I left you a voicemail. I didn’t think anyone was going to call me back. I remember how miserable and desperate I was and how you rescued me from that situation. I remember how you paid attention to me and my goals. And all I want to say is thank you.”

Student who Received Support from SchoolHouse Connection
In 2022 state policy, SHC advanced bills in four states.

**California’s SB 532** reinforces the rights of students experiencing homelessness and those in foster care to remain in the school of origin to complete high school.

**Virginia’s HB 717** provides unaccompanied minors the ability to consent to their own housing, emergency shelter and related services.

**Alabama’s HB 385** waives fees for drivers’ licenses for youth experiencing homelessness.

**Florida’s SB 1708/HB 1577** helps youth experiencing homelessness get driver’s licenses and car insurance; connect to resources in college; and learn about their rights and how to access them.

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**Ashanti Jones, Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager**

We were thrilled to add Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager Ashanti Jones to our team this year. She will increase our capacity to advance both state and federal policy work, and to help integrate our state and federal policy advocacy.
Other 2022 state policy highlights include:

**Established Communities of Practice in Arkansas and South Carolina**

We established Communities of Practice in both Arkansas and South Carolina to bring together stakeholders to collectively increase their capacity to serve youth experiencing homelessness, to drive needed policy reform, and increase our base of allies. As a result, a bipartisan effort is underway to introduce legislation to reform vital records laws in Arkansas in 2023.

**Expanded SHC’s Policy Fellows Initiative**

We recruited volunteers from key Congressional districts in Connecticut, Indiana, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Michigan, and Missouri to advocate for federal policy reform. As a result of our legislative meetings, key members of Congress signed on to SHC priority bills.

**Presented at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Seattle and Denver**

NCSL included cohorts of legislators who are interested in addressing issues related to youth experiencing homelessness or in foster care. SHC used the opportunities to network and to inform elected officials about our work and our resources. As a result, we will be collaborating with legislators in Hawaii and Arkansas on bills to address youth homelessness in 2023.
SHC’s Youth Policy Corps

We launched our first-ever Youth Policy Corps, a year-long program during which young people who are part of our Youth Leadership & Scholarship program receive monthly training on policy advocacy, and participate in educational activities. Scholars attend a monthly training, monthly virtual advocacy meetings, write an Op-Ed, and attend an in-person advocacy trip in Washington, DC. Youth Policy Corps participants receive a stipend for their participation.

(Image Above) Our YLS Scholars visit with policymakers at the U.S. Department of Education.
We are proud of our 2022 federal bipartisan policy work, which includes:

**Increased Homeless Education Funding**

We led advocacy on FY2023 funding for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, resulting in a 13% increase over FY2022.

**Championed Five Bills**

We recruited volunteers from key Congressional districts in Connecticut, Indiana, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Michigan, and Missouri to advocate for federal policy reform. As a result of our legislative meetings, key members of Congress signed on to SHC priority bills.

**Helped Homeless & Foster Youth Get Tax Refunds**

We worked with federal partners to ensure that youth benefit from changes in the Earned Income Tax Credit that resulted from last year’s advocacy.
Our young people are one step closer to reaching their goals:

Fourteen of our scholars graduated with either a high school or post-secondary degree.

100% of our scholars:
- Have stable housing

92% of our scholars:
- Have reliable health care, mental health care, and food security
- Showed an increase in financial literacy in 2021
- Are engaged in their communities in a meaningful way
Other 2022 YLS Highlights:

- In June, we hosted the 2021 and 2022 scholars for two separate five-day gatherings in Orlando. The cornerstone of the gatherings – the awards ceremony – was held in partnership with the McKinney-Vento program of Orange County Public Schools.
- In July, we brought together the 2019 and 2020 cohorts for two separate five-day summits in Washington, DC. Scholars participated in two advocacy meetings during each trip.
- We hosted monthly zoom learning opportunities for scholars on a variety of relevant topics including self-care, healthy relationships, and how to fill out the FAFSA.
- We hosted monthly virtual chat opportunities for all scholar cohorts where they could build rapport with each other and staff.

Roshanda Pinson, Program Manager, Youth Leadership & Scholarships

The YLS program on-boarded Roshanda Pinson, MSW, as a program manager to assist with case management services, which allows for more in-depth services across the board.
“You never feel alone when you’re among those who’ve experienced what you have in a way. For me personally I have found a home through SHC despite not having an actual home. The memories you’ll hold onto forever, the friendships you never expected to make, the lessons you’ll learn, and the path you choose to walk and grow, are all a part of being a SHC scholar.”

– Carlos, 2020 Scholar

“Getting to meet with staff at USICH and the Department of Education was an experience I’ll never forget. Resources are nothing without a support system AND accurate representation across the board, which is a table that I can always count on SHC being the first at. SHC has helped instill a new sense of respect in myself. They give us so many opportunities, even being “fun”, giving us opportunities to speak on things that we’ve been silenced on for years. I do believe that they are a voice of the youth, if not one that projects our voices. I am so forever thankful for the friends who have slowly become my family and for all of the opportunities SHC has given us.”

– Tara, 2019 Scholar
GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MAKING THE CASE

Child and youth homelessness is largely hidden from sight – from the public, and from the practitioners and policymakers who are best positioned to help. The early care and education challenges created by homelessness are also obscured, contributing to a failure to prioritize the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness and to support solutions. SchoolHouse Connection actively works to increase the visibility of child and youth homelessness and the role of early care and education in helping permanently break cycles of homelessness.

IN 2022

- Our work was cited and/or we were quoted in more than 50 stories, including the New York Times, the New York Times Magazine, USA Today, the Seattle Times, the Chicago Tribune, Education Week, Chalkbeat, K12 Dive, Hechinger Report, Inside Higher Education, and Center for Public Integrity.
- We launched “Hidden Homelessness: Youth Voices,” a youth storytelling series that highlights the often overlooked and unseen experiences that define child and youth homelessness. Five SHC youth scholars wrote powerful essays about their personal and particular experiences of homelessness and the importance of education and caring professionals in their lives.
## 2022 Preliminary & Unaudited Financials

### Revenue & Support

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Earned Revenue</td>
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<td>Early Childhood</td>
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### Change in Net Assets

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### Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year

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### Net Assets at the End of the Year

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<td><strong>$1,630,260</strong></td>
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jennifer Pringle - President
- Viviana Otoya - Treasurer
- Phillip Lovell - Secretary
- Jill Sallows - Board Member
- Lynda Thistle Elliott - Board Member
- Melinda Dyer - Board Member

STAFF MEMBERS

- Barbara Duffield - Executive Director
- Patricia Julianelle - Senior Strategist for Program Advancement & Legal Affairs
- Nikki Hannon - Education Initiatives Specialist
- Ashanti Jones - Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager
- Leconte Lee - Director of Communications and Marketing
- Rodd Monts - Director of State Policy
- Erin Patterson - Director of Education Initiatives
- Roshanda Pinson - Program Manager, Youth Leadership & Scholarships
- Karen Rice - Senior Program Manager of Education Initiatives
- Jordyn Roark - Director of Youth Leadership & Scholarships
- Jillian Sitjar - Senior Program Manager, Higher Education
- Kevin Spears - Director of Revenue & Operations