



**2021-2022
PROGRESS REPORT**



**SITTERS
FOR SCHOLARS**

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Our Mantra: Meeting Student Parents Where They're At

It's been quite a school year for all of us at Sitters for Scholars: student parents and their children, our volunteer sitters, staff and board.

How do we capture the rollercoaster up and down emotional experience of it all?

Going from a total pandemic shut down of our in-home babysitting services to the fits and starts of transitioning from virtual to in-person learning, the Delta and Omicron surges, struggling to understand the latest CDC guidelines, the frustrating wait for vaccines for those under 5, the uncertainty of it all -- still!

Like many small non-profits, we kept our eye trained on our mission – to help student parents further their education and with that, gain greater economic stability for their families.



In May 2021, we welcomed May Vaughn, our new dynamo part time executive director. In June, we rolled out our new name – Sitters for Scholars – after a 6-month re-branding process in which the non-profit marketing company Pixability assisted us pro bono.

July & August, we were in full outreach mode for the fall semester– networking with all our partner schools and organizations like UMass Boston, Roxbury and Bunker Hill Community Colleges, Urban College and the Jeremiah Program. In addition, we attended community gatherings like the Donna Summers Disco Party and the Revere Beach Sand Castle event.

We were hopeful that the COVID vaccine for kids 11-16 would be available by fall and that partner organizations



would be returning to pre-pandemic enrollment, both virtual and in-person. But the DELTA variant had other ideas.

Our best laid plans hit a Fall COVID variant surge and many student parents – and their children -- remained in virtual class. Nevertheless, we persisted!

September & October outreach included 3 in-person events, as well as multiple informational zoom sessions and canvassing. Eight sitter volunteers signed up for training and three student parents were ready to receive them.

Our new mantra – meeting parents where they're at – resulted in a Board policy change. We recognized that a single parent enrolled in class needed a sitter (masked and vaccinated) to keep their kids occupied whether Mom was attending in-person class or at the computer in her bedroom.



In December, we welcomed Judy Coleman as part time program manager and continued our outreach to student parents and partner schools for the spring semester. Board members and staff also delivered holiday turkeys to families, gift bags for the kids at Christmas and end of year thank you cards to our sitters.



In line with our new daytime sitting policy, March & April brought to light a new and exciting partnership with Found in Translation, an innovative non-profit that trains immigrant single moms to become medical interpreters.

By late May, Sitters for Scholars had provided 101 hours of babysitting for eight student families in the 2021-2022 school year, including our first family of twins! The future looks brighter with vaccines soon to be available for the under 5 set. This summer for the first time we will be providing sitting sessions for families this summer for parents who want to continue their education. Transitioning out of the pandemic phase of COVID, means setting our sights on growing parent and sitter participation for the fall semester.

COVID laid low both our staff in January & February. We revised our COVID policy once again to meet the changing needs of our families and sitters -- just in time for the latest OMICRON variant's arrival.

Now almost two years into the pandemic, it is clear that COVID has changed the needs of our target population, perhaps permanently.

In response to specific requests from our partners at Jewish Vocational Services, ABCD, RCC and the Jeremiah Program, we began offering daytime sitting services (in addition to evening sitting). This opportunity, we believe, will also expand our volunteer sitter pool to retired people for whom being out at night is not desirable.



Lorene Corbin: Student Mom on a Mission



“The service is going quite well and I am very appreciative of Sitters for Scholars! It has made a tremendous difference in my life. having the ability to go to college and know that my children are with a life. having the ability to go to college and know that my children are with a reliable babysitter means very much to me and my well-being. I love knowing that my children are being cared for properly by someone that has been thoroughly evaluated beforehand.

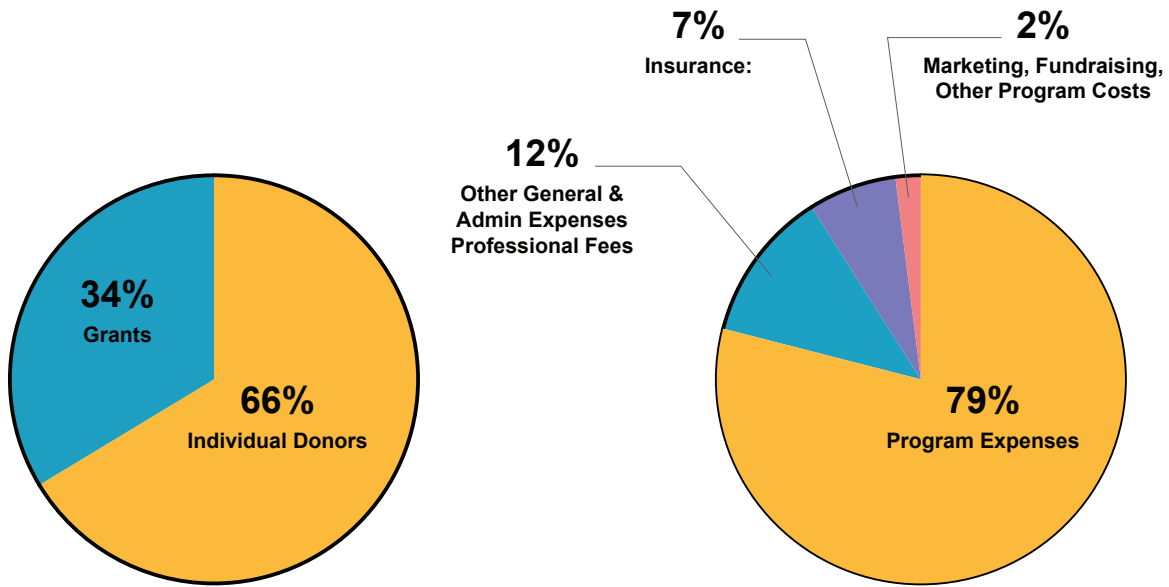
Lamia Farrah: Volunteer Sitter Certain to Make a Difference



“Everything is going pretty well, so far. I am babysitting Josielyn Alvarado's 4 year old, Theodore. I go to her house every Tuesday at around 4:45pm, and pick Theo up from the bus. So far, everything has worked out well. Theo is a sweet kid.”

Funders: We Couldn't Have Done It Without You!

Sitters for Scholars is grateful for the financial support we have received in 2021. Our organizational funders -- The Cummings Foundation, The Stearns Charitable Trust, IR+M Community Outreach, Eastern Bank, Trillum, MINTZ, Northeastern University and the Leonard Zakim Foundation -- provided invaluable affirmation of the work that we do, despite the difficulties we faced in year two of the pandemic. And our individual contributors were there in the spring and fall to provide crucial support. Thank you!



2021 TOTAL REVENUE = \$121,300

2021 TOTAL EXPENSES = \$82,100

Please note: Due to the reduction of services in 2021, our staff reduced their hours to preserve funds which gave us our first ever financial cushion as we enter 2022.





May Vaughn, Executive Director



“Thank you to our friends for supporting Sitters for Scholars. I hope you enjoy reading this recap of highlights from the last year and learning about the many ways that Sitters for Scholars is growing and developing. Our sights are set higher for the future.

Despite the challenging times, your generosity and care inspire hope for our families. Together we have raised over \$120,000 in support of our student parents and children. Thank you for standing with us during a critical time of need! With your help, we can continue to serve our student parents while building a better tomorrow.”

We knew early last spring when we first interviewed May Vaughn for the position of part-time Executive Director that we were in the (Zoom) presence of a born organizer with extensive experience in early childhood education and deep ties to the communities SFS serves.

Taking on a new job in the midst of the pandemic, would be daunting for most people, but we soon appreciated just how enthusiastic and resourceful, May Vaughn was. We also became convinced that her middle name was “Network.” She has spent the last year connecting with all of our educational and organizational partners; spoken at partner venues like the Women’s Leadership event at Benjamin Franklin Institute and a Women to Women conference at Roxbury Community College; attended multiple school orientations; and lined up Northeastern University graduate students for a capstone project in social media and marketing. Where ever she goes, May makes sure she gets the word out about Sitters For Scholars’ mission to help student parents succeed.

Meet SFS’s New Program Advisory Committee Members

SFS is pleased to announce the first members of our Program Advisory Committee:

- Curtis Williams, City of Boston, Boston Center for Youth & Family
- Kelley Cabral, Lead Preschool Teacher Wellesley College Child Care
- Sindy Vaughn Suazo, Ph.D, Associate Director of Graduate Enrollment & Corporate Partnerships

We will depend on these folks to help advise and support SFS programming as we strive to better serve student parents in the Boston area. They will join the members of our larger Advisory Board, which already provides SFS with valuable policy advice and fundraising assistance:

- Samuel Batchelder
Esq. Former Partner, Goodwin-Proctor
- Margot Botsford
Esq. Retired Associate Justice Massachusetts Supreme Court
- Lisa Carter
Director of Project Access, Roxbury Community College
- Kara Cormier
Esq. Associate, Mintz Law
- Caitlin Cornwall
Sr. Clinical Trial Manager, Goldfinch Bio
Former SFS Sitter and Board Member
- Rosie Cunningham
VP of Strategy & Alliances, Boston REACH
- Oksana Hradyska
Project Manager, Convergent Dental
Founder, Sitters Without Borders
- Emily Musgrave
Esq. Partner, Mintz Law
- Liza Nascembeni
Assoc. Director, Huan Resources & Community Values
Harvard Business School
- Kathleen O’Neill
Director of Single Stop, Bunker Hill Community College
- Tory Stephens
Climate Fiction Creative Manager, Grist’s Solution Lab
- Thanie Williams-Phillip
City of New Rochelle Police Department
2015 graduate of Sitters Without Border

We Would be Nowhere Without the Sitters for Scholars Board!

To say that the Sitters for Scholars was an activist board, would be an understatement! Members are actively involved in all aspects of our programming, operations and fundraising.

- Ellen A. Bruce
- Roman Hradysky
- Sandy Shea
- Laurie Burlingame
- Jenny Marcelin
- Leakhena Schechter
- Danielle Clark Cole
- Albert Pasakarnis
- Marisa Osborne
- Victoria Garcia
- Rachel Puopolo



To Sign up for Babysitting Services, Volunteer to Babysit for a Student Family or to make a donation to support our work, please visit: www.sittersforscholars.org

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