## N Her Footsteps

# FY2024 Annual Impact Report



## Note from the Executive Director

Dear friends and supporters,

When we launched N Her Footsteps, I couldn't have imagined the incredible support we'd receive from all of you. It's been an honor to work alongside so many passionate individuals who believe in our mission and want to see our community thrive. We've made meaningful progress together, but there's so much more to do. Thank you for joining us on this journey—let's continue to create positive change, one step at a time.



#### Keisha Gillis

Founder and Executive Director

## Introduction

Our first year has been a heartfelt journey, rooted in honoring the legacy of Barbara Jean Sheets—a woman whose life was dedicated to uplifting her community. From teaching Sunday School at Martha Davis Baptist Church to serving as a County Commissioner in Jefferson County for 20 years, her commitment inspired us to create N Her Footsteps. We launched online on Juneteenth and hosted our first community event in July, kicking off our mission to support students and teachers with the resources they need to thrive. Our story is just beginning, and we're excited to make a lasting impact, one step at a time.

















## **Our Story**

Founded by Karen and Keisha Gillis, N Her Footsteps was created to continue the legacy of Barbara Jean Sheets. Initially, our goal was to offer scholarships and host a back-to-school drive. However, as we connected with community partners and educators, we quickly saw a broader need for support in Jefferson County. From contributing to care closets in local schools to establishing teacher supply cabinets, our mission has expanded to address the unique challenges faced by students and educators throughout the school year.











## **VISION**

Create an environment where children can achieve their maximum potential.

## **MISSION**

N Her Footsteps is committed to empowering students and supporting educators in Jefferson County through direct community engagement and resource distribution. By building strong relationships with schools and community leaders, we aim to create a positive, lasting impact in the lives of students and educators.



## Accomplishments

#### Successful Launch and Initial Partnership:

Our partnership with Isaiah 117 House at our launch event was a meaningful start. Raising over \$3,000—60% of our \$5,000 goal—we used \$1,000 to purchase items from their Amazon Wish List, including a Polaroid camera that helps foster siblings keep memories as they transition to new homes.

#### First Fundraiser Success:

At our "Mossback Kickback" fundraiser, we exceeded our expectations, raising over \$600 and collecting 100+ items for school care closets—more than double our initial goals. This event showed the strong community support behind our mission.



# Accomplishments

#### **Supporting Schools with Care Closets**

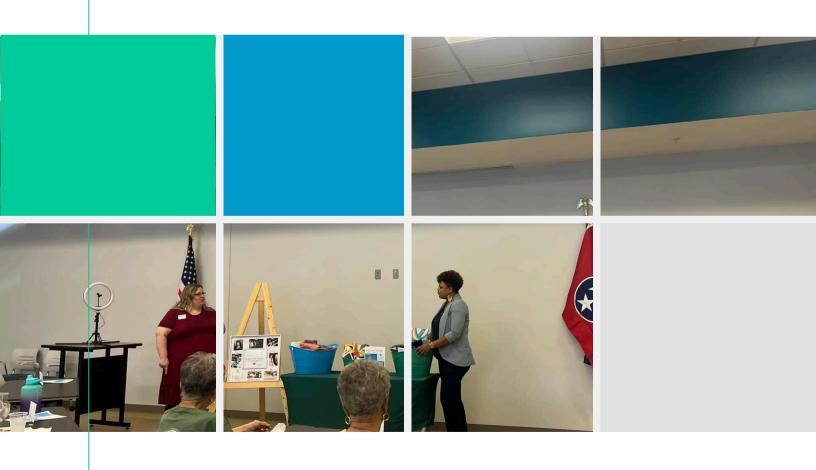
We began stocking care closets at four Jefferson County schools: Jefferson Elementary, Jefferson Middle, Patriot Academy, and Jefferson County High School. These closets provide students with essential items like hygiene products, snacks, and clothing, ensuring they can focus on their education without the burden of unmet basic needs. Our work in this area has been supported by both financial contributions and in-kind donations from local businesses and individuals.

#### **Teacher Supply Cabinet Initiative**

We established the first teacher supply cabinet at Jefferson Middle School, a pilot effort to help reduce out-of-pocket expenses for educators. Our goal is to eventually expand this initiative to all four schools we serve, ensuring that teachers have the resources they need to create a positive classroom environment.

## Financial Highlights

In just three months of active fundraising, N Her Footsteps has made significant strides. We applied for our first major grant, requesting \$10,000 to support our initiatives. We were thrilled to receive our first grant of \$500 through Walmart's Spark Good program and have also applied for Walmart's Round Up for Good program, offering supporters an easy way to contribute. In addition to monetary donations, we've received in-kind contributions, particularly for our care closets. With the approval of our FY25 budget and a newly established financial policy, we've laid a strong foundation for responsible growth.



# Goals for FY 2025



#### **Empowering Students & Supporting Educators**

In FY25, we aim to continue building on our initial success by focusing on our Student Empowerment and Classroom Heroes initiatives. We will host our first annual Bundle Up & Pack Up event in January, providing students with school supplies and winter clothing to ensure they return from winter break prepared for success.

#### Scholarship Program Launch

We plan to award scholarships in April 2025 to students aged 18-21 with a diploma or GED, allowing them to pursue higher education or vocational training. This initiative focuses on reaching those students who may otherwise be ineligible for other opportunities.

#### **Expanding Teacher Support**

By the end of FY25, our goal is to establish Teacher Supply Cabinets at Jefferson Elementary, Jefferson Middle, Patriot Academy, and Jefferson County High School. These cabinets will help alleviate the financial burden on teachers and ensure they have the materials needed to inspire their students.









# **Thank You**

To our supporters, partners, and the Jefferson County community for helping us make a meaningful impact during our first year we forever grateful. We look forward to continuing to grow and serve in FY25!



www.nherfootsteps.org