

Homeward House Collaborative

Impact Report

Why Homeward House Exists

It started because families were falling through the cracks.

In 2018, at the height of the opioid crisis, too many families with young children were left behind and becoming bleak statistics of parent-child separation. These separations were not because of bad parenting. The underlying issue was a combination of parental substance use, poverty, and a system simply not designed to help them stay together.

It was then that a group of parents, providers, community members, and funders came together and decided what was happening was indefensible. These separations were harmful, costly, and preventable.

We knew a better way was possible — one grounded in the perspective of parents with lived experience. So we set out to prove it. Our first family walked through the door in December 2019.

What the Homeward House Model Proves

When equitable, judgment-free support from peers who have walked a similar path is available, most families not only feel empowered — they access the resources they need and successfully achieve their goals.

Over seven years, more than 340 families chose to receive judgment-free support from parent ally mentors with wraparound support services from community partners. More than 1,000 lives have been touched. And the outcomes are good for children, parents, and the community.

8 out of 10 families who chose our support stayed together or got back together.



8 out of 10

Families who choose support from Homeward House stay together.

For comparison, an approximate national average range for reunification of infants separated because of parental substance use disorder is around 30-40%.

For the families that were separated, the homelike environment Homeward House provides for parent-child visits has proven essential — because healing does not happen in fast food restaurants or institutional spaces. It happens at a kitchen table, on a familiar couch, in a place that feels like home.

The Homeward House model also makes financial sense. Supporting an entire family through the Homeward House program costs significantly less than placing a single child in foster care — and most of our families have more than one child.

Better outcomes, lower costs.

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Behind Every Number, a Family

What does courage look like? It looks like showing up, even when everything feels impossible.

Families came to Homeward House pregnant and without housing, newly out of jail, in the middle of court cases, navigating mental health crises, and struggling to hold on to sobriety while parenting alone. What they had in common was courage — and a belief that a different future was possible.

These are just a few of their stories.



"I had no job, no money, and no plan. I just knew that I was ready to turn my life around."

Photo and name are stock representations used to protect the privacy of the family.



"One minute I'm on a piece of cardboard, wondering how it's all going to turn out. Now, it's like a dream come true ... the hard work is starting to pay off. I'm starting to feel the fruits of my labor and I'm very blessed and grateful for it."

Ricky and his daughter were the first Homeward House clients.



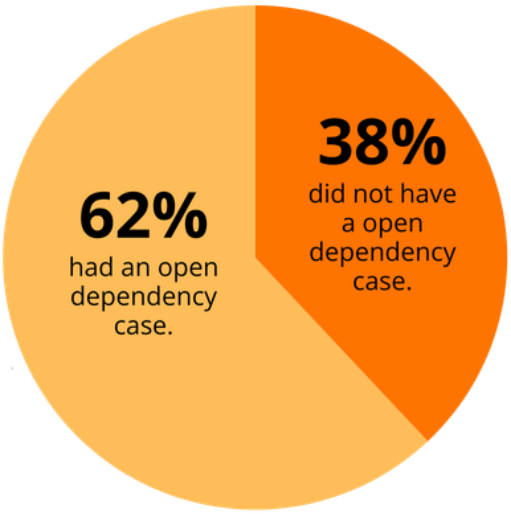
"Today, I am grateful for the entire experience. The hard times serve as a reminder to not take anything for granted, to take care of oneself to the best ability, and to be careful who you let into your life."

Photo and name are stock representations used to protect the privacy of the real family featured.

The Data: 2024–2025

Our data collection got a significant boost in 2024, enabling us to gather detailed information in a way that wasn't possible in our earlier years. The following metrics reflect what we learned from 172 families — 500 individuals — served between 2024 and 2025.

- All were experiencing substance use disorders and poverty.
- Nearly half were experiencing homelessness.
- Nearly three-quarters were pregnant or caring for a baby under one year old.
- And 41 percent identified as BIPOC, reflecting our commitment to reaching families who face the greatest barriers to support.



Reunification: Back Together and Moving Forward

For the 62 percent of families who came to us with an open dependency case, the road was hard and the stakes were high. These were families already in the system, already facing the possibility — or reality — of separation.

Of those families, 82 percent successfully reunified with their children.

Prevention: Staying Together and Out of the System

For the 38 percent of families who reached us before a dependency case was ever filed, the goal was prevention — keeping families together and out of the child welfare system entirely.

Of those families, 84 percent successfully avoided court involvement altogether.





What We Know

- We know that peer mentors — parents who've walked this road themselves — are often the only people families will trust.
- We know that wraparound support has to be genuinely judgment-free to work.
- We know that providing a homelike environment for parent-child visits is not a luxury — it is essential to the healing families need.
- We know that when families with young children are given judgment-free support, most of them rise to meet it.

And we know that none of this works alone. Community partners — visit supervisors, legal advocates, housing navigators, mental health specialists, and early childhood providers — are the connective tissue that makes wraparound support real. We also know that even promising data and proven outcomes are not enough to guarantee funding in today's environment.

Sustaining this kind of work requires champions — in government, in philanthropy, and in community — who are willing to invest in prevention even when the results are harder to see than the crises they prevent.

Six years in, we know things about this work that can't be found in a policy manual.

"A program like this doesn't just help families during visits — it strengthens the community as a whole by creating stability, reducing stress, and offering parents the guidance and support they often can't find anywhere else."

— COMMUNITY PARTNER

"This has been the ONLY program/resource that has got me clean and kept me clean and given me the milestones I've accomplished thus far... This program does work and has changed my family's life completely."

— PARENT

This knowledge belongs in more than one county.

What's at Stake

For parents facing substance use disorders and poverty with an infant or young child, the difference between receiving timely support and not is everything. It is measured in children's safety, in parents' recovery, and in public dollars.

Without Homeward House

- Childhood trauma increases
- Parent-child bond is disrupted
- Recovery becomes harder
- Family visits feel stigmatizing
- The state incurs higher costs
- Families struggle to stabilize
- Outcomes worsen over time

With Homeward House

- Trauma is prevented or minimized
- Parent-child bond is nurtured
- Recovery becomes more attainable
- Family visits are healing and fun
- Public expenditures decrease
- Families become self-sustaining
- Generational trajectories improve

What Comes Next



Homeward House is pausing direct services in Snohomish County as we navigate the funding landscape — but the work is far from over.

We are in the final stages of developing a replication toolkit so that communities across the country can implement the Homeward House model. Everything we have learned — about peer mentorship, partnership building, data collection, and family-centered care — will be available to the providers and advocates who need it most. The toolkit will be released later this year.

The families we served shaped what this program became. Their stories will help shape what it becomes everywhere else.

Thank You

None of this is possible without the people who make it real.

To the **clients** who trusted us with the hardest moments of your lives and showed us what courage looks like — this work exists because of you.

To the **parent ally mentors** and **other staff** who show up with skill, heart, and steady presence, day after day — you are the program.

To the **volunteers** who give their time and energy because they believe families are worth it — your generosity is felt.

To the **funders** who invested in prevention even when its results are harder to see than the crises it prevents — your vision makes the difference.

To our **community partners** — the visit supervisors, housing navigators, legal advocates, and early childhood providers — who walk alongside families with us — this is a collaborative, and you are essential to it.

And to every **supporter** who has spread the word, opened a door, or simply believed in what we're building — thank you.

Homeward House is proof of what becomes possible when people come together around families.



Homeward House COLLABORATIVE

Preventing the harm, damage, and costs of parent-child separation.

homewardhouse.org

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This report reflects the commitment and work of
Homeward House Collaborative
partners, parents with lived experience, staff, clients, funders, and volunteers — past and present — in Snohomish County, Washington.