

YEAR

3

TIDEWATER GARDENS

IMPACT REPORT



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Dear Residents and Friends:

As we move closer to constructing new homes in the St. Paul's area of Norfolk, we have not wavered from our commitment to putting “people first” in our decision-making. The residents of Tidewater Gardens continue to thrive because of their determination and tenacity, and the help of “People First,” empowered by Urban Strategies, Inc. For three years, People First^{USI} has rendered services to residents to address housing, health, education, and job needs, and we are pleased to reflect on the program's efforts in our FY 2022 report.

In year three (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022), USI successfully relocated 188 Tidewater Gardens families, with the majority residing in Norfolk. As a result, 91% of our families now have health insurance, 80% work full-time, and every 12th-grade student from Tidewater Gardens graduated in June! Please read more about our remarkable accomplishments inside.

The City of Norfolk remains committed to the success of People First, mainly through the yearly \$3 million appropriation, approved by City Council, to fund the initiative and by the work of dedicated citizens and organizations that make up the St. Paul's Advisory Committee (SPAC). Under the leadership of Councilwoman Danica Royster, the SPAC continues to provide impactful guidance to our communities, NRHA, and USI staff.

For all involved, thank you for keeping “people first” as we work to create safe, vibrant, and active neighborhoods throughout Norfolk.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Alexander".

Kenneth Cooper Alexander, Ph.D.
Mayor



Dear Residents, Stakeholders, Colleagues and Friends:

I am excited to bring you greetings on behalf of the St. Paul's Advisory Committee.

The St. Paul's area Advisory Committee was formed in April of 2018 with a mission to "promote leadership and work collaboratively with residents, City Council, the City of Norfolk, and Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority (NRHA) on the revitalization of the St. Paul's area." It was started under the leadership of then Councilwoman and now Delegate Angelia Williams Graves, who represents the 90th district in the General Assembly. We appreciate Delegate Graves' commitment to the revitalization of St. Paul's and for setting the tone and the promise that, throughout this process, people will always come first.

I proudly stepped into the role of chair of the committee in 2021, leading a group of 17 dedicated and diverse citizens to continue the work. The St. Paul's Advisory Committee, or SPAC, as we affectionally call it, has never wavered in its commitment to advise and guide city staff, our development partners, and staff of People First^{USI} to ensure that our residents receive the services they need to succeed, including relocation services, education, healthcare, job training and employment. We have been busy!

This transformation project is about people. Every monthly meeting begins with, "How are our residents doing?" In partnership with People First, we check in with the people most affected by this revitalization through surveys, personal phone calls, community meetings, and information sessions. We've participated in "walk and talk" activities in Tidewater Gardens, and held job fairs and health and wellness activities. We've done public art projects, weighed in on amenities for the new buildings, and provided educational opportunities for students such as touring historically Black colleges and universities and local businesses. People First Empowered by USI has been at the forefront of these activities.

We are especially proud that this transformation project has provided job opportunities for our residents. We have embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion as a cornerstone of the contractor-hiring process. I am proud to report that of the total abatement, demolition, and infrastructure-construction contracts to date, approximately 41% is projected to be spent with minority- and women-owned contractors, and that does not include the housing-construction contracts and the remaining demolition and infrastructure work. Nine Tidewater Gardens residents have been employed thus far and that number is expected to grow, again, thanks to the work of People First.

While our work continues, we take a moment to celebrate the successes of our residents and say "thank you" to the staff of People First. On behalf of the St. Paul's Advisory Committee, we appreciate your dedication and engagement with our residents as we all continue to work to make the City of Norfolk an ever-better place to live, work, worship, and play.

In service,

Danica Royster
Superward 7 Councilwoman
Chair, St. Paul's Advisory Council



Dear Residents and Stakeholders,

As you review the accomplishments of Year Three in this Impact Report on Tidewater Gardens, I think you will be impressed. With a shared mission of People First^{USI}, the results clearly demonstrate the value of collaborating among the partners. The City of Norfolk, Urban Strategies, Inc., and the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority have all had the same goal: Do what's best for our residents by putting "People First."

Each of the organizations strives to be respectful, resourceful and responsive. This happens every day for everybody.

One of the most heartwarming accomplishments to date is the level of engagement our residents are demonstrating. The numbers in this report highlight their engagement. Residents are not just looking for a better place to live, they're working to build better futures.

Thanks to the leadership of City Council, the energy of city staff and the wise counsel of Urban Strategies, Year Four promises to be even more amazing! Rest assured, our Board of Commissioners and the entire organization is committed to putting "People First."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Jackson'.

Ronald Jackson

Executive Director

Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

"The City of Norfolk, Urban Strategies, Inc., and the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority have all had the same goal: Do what's best for our residents by putting 'People First.'"



USI | URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.

Families at the Center of Results

Dear Friends of People First Empowered by USI,

After a year of stabilizing lives in the midst of a community rebounding from a global financial and health pandemic, the tenacity of Tidewater Gardens residents is demonstrated through their preparation of scholars for another school year, establishment of roots during relocation, and determination through the next steps in their stability journey.

The People First Empowered by USI team is committed to our mission of ensuring that all families are stable and thriving. We commit our efforts in partnership with former and current Tidewater Gardens residents, the City of Norfolk, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), and our partner network. I am proud of the equitable opportunities and the many partnerships that have grown and developed this year.

Our team is focused on the areas of health & wellness, education, economic mobility, and housing stability. The successful outcomes in each of these pillars are in this report. A few highlights include success in engaging ninety-seven percent of eligible Tidewater Gardens families working with the People First Team. Eighty-two percent of families secured a place where they go regularly for health care other than an emergency room, and one-hundred percent of eligible seniors graduated high school (up from eighty-three percent the previous year).

Together, with our partners, we stand boldly to promote equitable investment in and a joint partnership with the people of the Tidewater Gardens community to ensure that individuals and families are safe, supported, and able to thrive.

We are proud to present this report to the Norfolk community to celebrate the successes this year and the collaboration with Tidewater Gardens residents, the City of Norfolk, NRHA, and our partners.

Esther Shin

President & CEO

Urban Strategies, Inc.

Our team in Norfolk, from left to right: Kaberlyn Johnson, Thomasine Norfleet, Kimi Reid-Smith, Alton Howard, Kierra Mason, Brittany Sutton, Pam Blount, Kashira Wilson, Cricket Johnson, Jill White, Dominique Hoskins, Amber Swain, Aimee Barrett-Battle, Imani Smith, Nicole Brown and Marcus Clarke. Not pictured are Pam Young, Lashanda Riddick and Siray Stevens.



ABOUT PEOPLE FIRST^{USI}

To support and prioritize family needs and housing choices during the transformation of Tidewater Gardens, the City of Norfolk partnered with Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI), an organization that designs and implements neighborhood and human-services programs in communities undergoing transitions. With Norfolk's vision and USI's high-quality, comprehensive support for families, People First Empowered by USI (People First^{USI}) was born.

The name "People First" reflects the city's authentic commitment to serve the residents of Tidewater Gardens and our collective willingness to listen, support, and partner to ensure families are stable and thriving, and that people remain at the center of our work.

In partnership with the City of Norfolk, NRHA, the Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee, Tidewater Gardens residents, and a robust network of service providers, People First^{USI} team members connect families to supportive services, community resources, and opportunities in each of our four key service pillars: Economic Mobility, Education, Health & Wellness, and Housing Stability.

We just completed the third year of this partnership and are proud to say that People First^{USI} is now actively working with more than 97% of the original Tidewater Gardens households.

Engagement with the Tidewater Gardens families follows a professional process, but our commitment to the success of that process is deeply personal for every member of the People First^{USI} team. Right from the start, our goal is to get to know the residents as individuals. Only then can we target their specific challenges and open doors to meaningful opportunities. We develop individual- and family-focused plans, and then establish organic, collaborative relationships with residents to see that they are safe, supported, and thriving.

As we enter our fourth year of providing services to Tidewater Gardens families, we work side by side with them, ever more determined to make this transition period a positive one.

YEAR THREE – MOVING ONWARD, BUILDING UPWARD



While this reporting year ended with one of our biggest accomplishments yet – the breaking of ground on the redevelopment of Tidewater Gardens – we are even more proud of the relationships we have developed with the residents of Tidewater Gardens. For the past three years, we have supported residents in making positive changes in the areas of healthcare, education, housing, and job training as part of the transformation of the St. Paul's area of Norfolk.

As we and our partners work with families to help navigate through challenges and fulfill dreams, we have recorded success stories and new beginnings. No doubt this transformation also means an upheaval for families. As such, we are dedicated to easing the challenges they face, and working with them on meeting new goals and returning to the redeveloped Tidewater Gardens community.

We're happy to share our **2021-22 People First^{USI} Impact Report** with you. In this report, you will see our ongoing effort to assess opportunities we uncover and to apply available resources where they're most needed. You will also read encouraging stories of family resilience, strategic partnerships, and encouraging progress, all accomplished while maintaining our holistic approach to family support in our key service pillars:

- Economic Mobility
- Education
- Health & Wellness
- Housing Stability

We are excited about work done to date and laser-focused on what is to come. As construction gets under way on new homes for Tidewater Gardens residents, we continue to build on the foundation of trust and community engagement that we originally envisioned. It's a foundation that gets stronger every day, thanks to the help of the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), and other stakeholders. But, most important, thanks to the cooperation of the Tidewater Gardens families.

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Resilient. Renewed. Respected.



People First^{USI} has had Deborah Ross's back on more than one occasion, so the program is all right by her.

She was skeptical at first when she learned she would have to leave Tidewater Gardens, the community she called home for more than 30 years. She says she's felt unsafe there sometimes – her front windows were shattered by stray bullets, twice. That scared her as much as the time she had to call 911 when a squirrel got stuck in her window, jammed between the portable air-conditioning unit and the windowsill. He didn't die, just scratched incessantly until Ms. Ross, 64, figured out how to set him free. "I had to call the police to get him," she says.

However, Ms. Ross also has fond memories of the "good days." The days she would sit on her front porch and listen to music while chatting with neighbors. The random cookouts and street parties. The laughter of children playing with her two daughters, both of whom graduated from college; one going on to become a teacher, the other a social worker.

"They did real well," says the proud mom.

It was hard for her to dig up roots, but People First^{USI} helped her plant new ones, Ms. Ross told a crowd of Norfolk, NRHA, and U.S. Housing and Urban Development officials at the groundbreaking for the Tidewater Gardens redevelopment in April.

Before she could move, Ms. Ross needed to put some things in place, like applying for Social Security benefits. Then she worked with her People First^{USI} counselor, Lashanda Riddick, to find a new apartment. Ms. Riddick made lists of potential units and toured them with Ms. Ross, until she settled on a two-bedroom flat in a senior citizens' community.

"It's kinda quiet. It reminds me of a nursing home sometimes."

With Ms. Riddick's help, Ms. Ross has what she needs to thrive in her new home and is taking care of her health.



Ms. Ross, right, is shown here at the groundbreaking ceremony with David Brint of Brinshore Development, left. Behind them is Steve Morales, NRHA project director.

"Ms. Riddick is my best friend; she checks in on me all the time," says Ms. Ross, who even joined the advisory board in her community to stay active and engaged.

Deborah Ross plans to return to the St. Paul's area when the redevelopment is completed in 2025. *"I plan to come back," she says, "if the Lord doesn't bless me with a husband by then."*

PARTNER PROFILE

Landlords Leading the Way

Finding a new place to live can be challenging in today's market, where the cost of renting, leasing and purchasing a home has skyrocketed for people of all income levels. The City of Norfolk and People First^{USI} teamed up to provide a Landlord Incentive Program to give Tidewater Gardens residents more housing choices when using a housing choice voucher to find new housing.

Using housing choice vouchers, a sizeable number of Tidewater Gardens families relocated to racially diverse neighborhoods of opportunity, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These neighborhoods often have highly ranked public schools, lower crime rates, and amenities that support households transitioning out of high concentrations of poverty.

Recognizing that some landlords and property owners are hesitant to rent to low-income residents, the City and People First^{USI} developed incentives such as sign-on bonuses, property inspection assistance, vacancy loss coverage, and landlord support. The housing vouchers cover up to 80 percent of the rent, giving landlords assurances that they will receive their monthly income. Meanwhile, residents have more choices of where they live and can help decentralize poverty by moving to mixed-income communities. The innovative program is a win-win for everyone involved.

Just ask Ryan Milstead.

Mr. Milstead is a compassionate investor who married his passion to help people in need with his skill at investing in real estate. As a licensed real estate agent and owner of Renters Choice LLC property-management company, Mr. Milstead partners with the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) to provide subsidized housing for low-income residents.

He got his properties on the approval list to qualify for Housing Choice Voucher Program subsidies after attending a program sponsored by the NRHA for interested property owners. After weighing the risks and benefits, Mr. Milstead's assets qualified to be on NRHA's property list in 2018. Since 2019, when the City of Norfolk and NRHA began relocating families from Tidewater Gardens to prepare the community to be redeveloped, Mr. Milstead has rented or leased homes and apartments to seven Tidewater Gardens families.

Providing housing that is clean, safe, and well-maintained is the bare minimum that Renters Choice offers. Mr. Milstead goes above and beyond just renting units to showing compassion for prospective and current tenants.



Former Tidewater Gardens resident Christopher Gray signs a lease at Ashton Apartments.

For example, his company will:

- Waive application fees, late fees, and deposits for pets, as needed
- Disregard negative credit information and criminal background checks for nonviolent offenses
- Provide tenants with alternatives to eviction for minor infractions

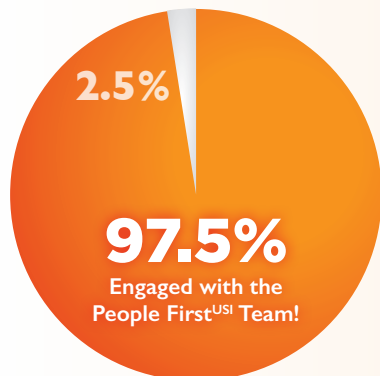
"I try to have the lowest possible barrier for tenants," he says. "The best way I know how to get people out of a culture of poverty is to relocate them to a different area. I'm doing that by providing good units for these families." Mr. Milstead's properties are among those in neighborhoods of opportunity.

Mr. Milstead is one of nearly 100 landlords and property owners who work closely with People First^{USI} to help Tidewater Gardens residents find temporary or permanent housing until the redevelopment is completed in 2025. The City and NRHA have signed a resolution guaranteeing Tidewater Gardens residents in good standing the right to return to the new community if they desire.

In the meantime, landlords like Mr. Milstead are helping People First^{USI} secure affordable, quality housing for Tidewater Gardens families.

Year Three by the Numbers

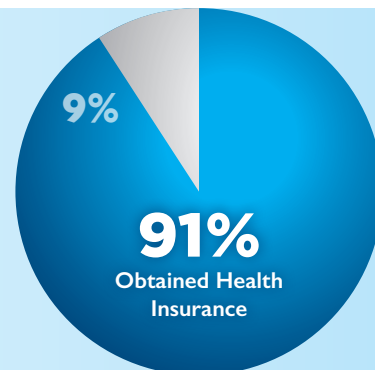
PEOPLE FIRST^{USI} ENGAGEMENT



By the end of Year Three, 596, or **97.5%**, of the 611 original Tidewater Gardens families had **engaged with the People First^{USI} Team!**

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Out of 571 adult residents, 469, or **82.1%**, secured a health care provider they regularly see for care.
- 520 out of 571 residents, or **91%**, obtained health insurance.
- Of the 239 individuals with chronic health conditions, 218, or **91.2%**, connected with services to manage them.
- 535, or **99.3%**, of 539 resident children have health insurance.



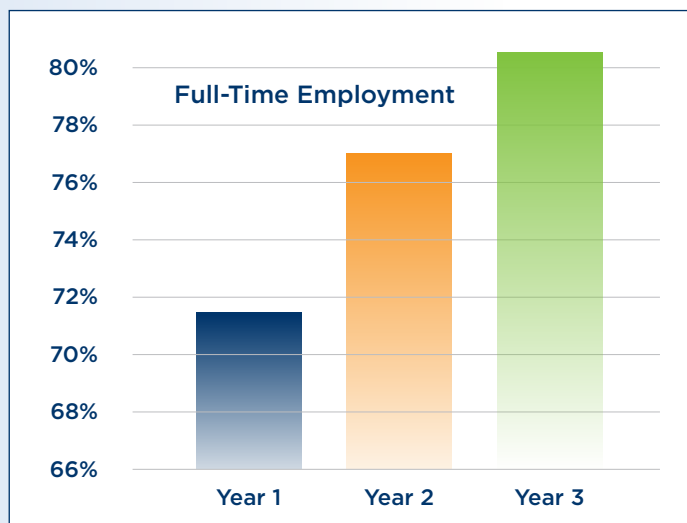
EDUCATION



- Of the 262 children ages 0-3, 121, or **41.2%**, participated in center-based or formal home-learning programs.
- Of eligible seniors, 18 out of 18, or **100%**, graduated from high school in Year Three. The Year Two rate was 83%.
- Of target children ages 0-5, **4.69%** more were enrolled and assessed in early-learning programs in Year Three than in Year Two.
- Of the 196 eligible resident children, 82, or **42%**, participated in center-or formal home-based early-learning settings and programs.
- 133, or **55.9%**, of resident children are receiving early-childhood-development screening.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	% over Y2
Percent of residents ages 18-64 with wage income (employed)	47%/152	74%/199	73%/255	73%/297	- 0 -
Average annual wage income	\$14,177	\$18,005	\$18,826	\$21,037	11.74%
Full-time employment (>30 hours)	N/A	71.20%	77%	80.50%	4.55%
Of-age/able-bodied unemployed	89%	67	94	110	17%
Of-age/able-bodied working fewer than <30 hours	N/A	29.80%	27%	27.30%	1.12%



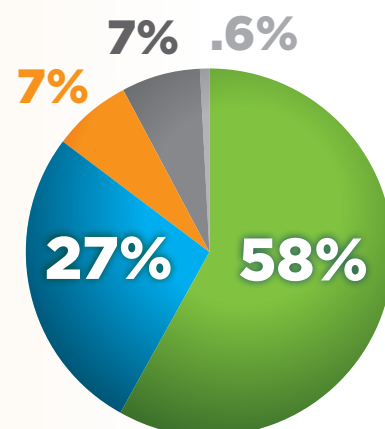
HOUSING STABILITY

In Year Three, People First^{USI} assisted 167, or **89%**, of the 188 total households that relocated from Tidewater Gardens. Of those 167:

- 97, or **58%**, relocated using a housing-choice voucher (HCV).
- 45, or **27%**, transferred to another public-housing community.
- 12, or **7%**, relocated to project-based housing.
- 12, or **7%**, rented elsewhere.
- 1, or **.6%**, purchased a home.

Since Year One, People First^{USI} has helped to relocate 447 residents of the 611 original residents in Tidewater Gardens. Of those:

- 142, or **31%**, relocated to a Neighborhood of Opportunity as defined by HUD (<40% poverty and <62% minority concentration).
- 389, or **85%**, relocated to a neighborhood with <40% poverty but >62% minority concentration.
- 182, or **40%**, relocated to a neighborhood with <20% poverty.
- 47, or **10%**, relocated to a neighborhood with >40% poverty.



Housing Stability



A HOME OF HER OWN



Anyla Williams-Johnson selects countertop material.

People First^{USI} and the transformation of Tidewater Gardens are two of the best things that happened to Anyla Williams-Johnson.

When she learned in 2018 that she would have to relocate from her one-bedroom unit in Tidewater Gardens while the community was being redeveloped, she immediately set her sights on purchasing her own home.

It seemed like a big dream for Ms. Williams-Johnson, who is the third generation in her family to call Tidewater Gardens home. Her grandmother, who worked for the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), lived there. Her mother lived there. And Ms. Williams-Johnson had lived there since she was a baby. When she turned 18 and learned she was eligible to rent her own unit, she did. But living in Tidewater Gardens wasn't easy.

"I believe that anyone that lives in that community suffers from PTSD because you see things," she says, referring to post-traumatic stress disorder. "You get so used to hearing gun shots you become numb to it."

Four years ago, Ms. Williams-Johnson, then 32, was working part-time at Walmart when she attended a meeting held by People First^{USI} and NRHA to discuss the Tidewater Gardens relocation and transformation project. There, she received an application for the Housing Choice Voucher Program as well as information on a first-time homebuyers program offered through NRHA.

After applying for subsidized housing, she learned she didn't meet eligibility requirements for a permanent subsidy because her income was too high. People First^{USI} put her in touch with someone with NRHA's home-ownership program, a connection that resulted in her enrolling in an NRHA course where she learned the income and credit score she would need to purchase a home in the NRHA's inventory of affordable properties. Meanwhile, Ms. Williams-Johnson read everything she could about the home-buying process while she continued to work at Walmart and save money.

Then COVID-19 hit. While many customer-service workers quit their jobs during the pandemic out of concerns for their personal safety, Ms. Williams-Johnson was not one of them. She used the opportunity to dutifully report to work, and she got promoted twice and became a full-time employee, eventually becoming Team Lead in the Bakery and Deli department.

"I knew if I was going to buy a house I had to increase my hours to work 40 hours. So I got me a surf board and started riding the waves."

By the end of 2021, Ms. Williams-Johnson was ready. With a full-time job and steady work history of 13 years at Walmart, money in the bank, and acceptable credit, she qualified for a three-bedroom, two-bath home owned by the NRHA that the authority was going to rehabilitate before selling. The asking price was \$163,000, which Ms. Williams-Johnson called a blessing.



On June 10, 2022, she closed on her newly refurbished home and received the keys to the Princess Anne Road property that has everything she dreamed of: Luxury vinyl floors. Gray and white granite countertops with silver speckles. An ensuite in the master bedroom that no one will get to use except her. A driveway outside for her car, and a big shed for storage.

The day she became a homeowner, Ms. Williams-Johnson said she was so happy, she "spun around in a circle."

"My grandmother came the first day I got the keys and prayed at the house," she says proudly, crediting hard work, People First^{USI} and the NRHA with helping her make her dream come true.



SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

Since 2019, People First^{USI} has worked nonstop to enhance the quality of life for Tidewater Gardens residents using a holistic approach that focuses on the family through the prism of four pillars – education, housing stability, health and wellness, and economic mobility.

In 2021-22, Year 3, the initiative's track record of success continued as more families moved to temporary or permanent homes, obtained medical and dental care, earned higher wages with better-paying jobs, and returned to classrooms as pandemic restrictions eased.

People First^{USI} is a program created by the City of Norfolk, which hired Urban Strategies, Inc., to implement it. The goal: Help transform the lives of Tidewater Gardens' families as the community is being redeveloped, working with a broad network of nonprofit, government, and private providers to secure the resources and services families need to become stable and thrive.

The goal is to enable families to strengthen their resilience and provide them with a renewed sense of hope while respecting their decisions about where they want to live both during and after Tidewater Gardens is transformed.

For Leo Cox, it means smiling broadly for the first time in years without being ashamed of his teeth. Or lack thereof.

Mr. Cox, 72, was fortunate to receive a full set of dentures last September at Hampton Roads Community Health Center. For the first time in his life, Mr. Cox had dental insurance at Hampton Roads that he was able to secure with the assistance of his family-support staff member at People First^{USI}, Lashanda Riddick.

Although the community center typically charges clients on a sliding-fee scale based on ability to pay, Tidewater Gardens residents don't have to pay a dime; People First^{USI} picks up the tab. After about nine months of dental visits, Mr. Cox walked out of the dentist's office with a pearly white smile he describes as "beautiful."



Leo Cox, right, is shown here with his daughter, Shamoneik Sutton.

"It was a good experience," he says.

In May 2021, Mr. Cox moved from Tidewater Gardens to a two-bedroom unit in a community that has amenities such as a swimming pool and community room. "It's so nice," Mr. Cox says. Meanwhile, he continues to enjoy his smile and home while debating whether he'll move back once construction is complete in 2025.

Education



PARTNERING BY THE BOOKS



Norfolk Public Schools

the resources and opportunities that NPS offers students, such as access to the internet, laptops, tutoring, and 24-hour homework assistance.

Mr. Brady says Norfolk's partnership with People First^{USI} is one of the best in the school system. *"They're able to provide students not just academic support, but also social and emotional support, getting them involved in after-school activities, keeping track of their academic progress and attendance, and providing mentoring."* He also attributes the 2021-2022 school year's 100-percent graduation rate for Tidewater Gardens students to that support.

One outcome of People First^{USI} is to help Tidewater Gardens children perform at or above grade level academically, graduate from high school on time, enroll in and complete a two- or four-year college or vocational school, and obtain a job with upward mobility. To accomplish that, People First^{USI} helps families secure stable housing in choice neighborhoods and partners with Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) to strengthen academic support and services it offers families.

In February 2022, People First^{USI} formalized a strategic partnership with NPS to boost student achievement working closely with Bruce Brady, executive director for Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Brady, who has attended St. Paul Advisory Committee meetings since 2021, became more involved with the Tidewater Gardens transformation in 2022 by leading the NPS-People First^{USI} collaboration.

A key area of focus was improving attendance for Tidewater Gardens students by returning to pre-pandemic numbers. People First^{USI} participated in meetings the district held with teachers and staff, and encouraged parents to either send their children back to school or sign up for online learning.

Through NPS, People First^{USI} tells Tidewater Gardens parents about and encourages their participation in the many services it provides through its network of partners. The collaboration works both ways; through People First^{USI}, NPS communicates to Tidewater Gardens parents. This increases parental participation and awareness around

Measuring Progress

Norfolk Public Schools provides People First^{USI} data it needs to track students' achievements, a requirement for communities that receive Choice Neighborhoods Initiative funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The data helps People First^{USI} identify students' needs, determine the root causes for students' challenges, and develop educational strategies.

The 2022-23 academic year will be particularly crucial for the partnership, as NPS prepares to close Tidewater Park Elementary, which teaches children in grades three through five. In the fall of 2023, those young scholars will be assigned to Ruffner Academy for grades three through eight. Mr. Brady said the district will need community input on a theme, curriculum, and special programs for Ruffner, and he hopes Tidewater Gardens families will participate. People First^{USI} will be there every step of the way.

Economic Mobility



MINDING HER BUSINESS



Photo courtesy of Old Dominion University

Her name is Shantae Brown, but she also answers to “Boss Lady.”

Ms. Brown, 35, is a living example of what People First^{USI} had in mind when it formed partnerships with the Norfolk community to help Tidewater Gardens residents grow from surviving to thriving with economic stability.

Determined to become an entrepreneur so she could be her own boss, Ms. Brown opened a business, Aqua Green Cleaning Company & Lawn Care LLC, which specializes in residential, commercial, and post-construction clean-up, and landscaping. Her goal is to have a long roster of clients in the naval shipyard industry. Her road to success began in 2017, the year she started Aqua Green while juggling a full-time job in the naval shipyard. It was more hobby than business because she never made any money back then.

The pandemic forced Ms. Brown, a Tidewater Gardens mother of five, to put her company on the back burner. That is, until People First^{USI} told her about the DreamBuilder program at Old Dominion University (ODU). Designed to help women fulfill their dreams of being successful entrepreneurs, the



12-week program offered at ODU's Women's Business Center at the Institute for Innovation and

Entrepreneurship offers guidance, business connections, mentors, and childcare assistance free to women enrolled. Childcare assistance was huge for Ms. Brown, saving her \$300 every two weeks.

Ms. Brown graduated from DreamBuilder in April 2021. She credits the program with helping her to finally start making money at Aqua Green, which has five employees, and with providing the support she needed to earn several key certificates that will position her company to compete for large projects.

Ms. Brown holds a Virginia Value Veterans (V3) certification that qualifies her to hire veterans or their spouses, and the Small, Women and Minority-owned (SWaM) certification from Virginia's Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity. Her company is listed in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 3 program that pairs certified contractors with business opportunities. And she is working to be certified as a woman-owned small business by the Small Business Administration.

“I've always wanted to be my own boss. Being able to take advantage of that program opened a whole lot of doors,” says Ms. Brown, who works closely with mentors to help her get to the next level. “After being in the class, I was able to build a much stronger foundation than what I had before. With DreamBuilder, the resources and help are beyond unbelievable. Everything is at your fingertips, but you have to want it and work for it.”

Ms. Brown's mentors have no doubt she will accomplish her goals. She is called the poster child for what ODU envisioned when DreamBuilder was created.

Old Dominion University contributed to this report.

PARTNER PROFILE



 Kaleidoscope Counseling
& Case Management, LLC

For The Health Of It

Francesca Dillard-Moore is on a mission to dispel the negative stigma about mental health that exists in the Black community. As founder and CEO of Kaleidoscope Counseling and Case Management (KCCM) LLC, a Portsmouth-based, comprehensive mental health agency that serves families and children in the Norfolk area, her nonprofit works closely with People First^{USI} to help Tidewater Gardens families cope.

Since 2019, Kaleidoscope has been awarded one-year support grants from People First^{USI}, funded by the City of Norfolk, to help families who experience trauma, anxiety, depression, drug or alcohol addiction, grief and other issues that impact their quality of life and ability to perform daily functions. Kaleidoscope does this through in-home counseling, mentoring, parenting classes, outpatient therapy, safety courses, and mental health skill-building exercises. It also makes referrals to Medicaid services and community mental health providers to ensure that families receive the comprehensive care they need.

Working with People First^{USI} has enabled Kaleidoscope to treat a vulnerable population that likely would not receive treatment otherwise because, as studies have shown, African Americans tend to

shun the mental health system due to the cost of treatment, perceived shame of needing help, and negative past experiences from white mental health professionals who were not sympathetic to the unique needs of people of color.

Kaleidoscope removes those barriers by employing a diverse staff that Tidewater Gardens families can relate to. "When they see people who look like them they are more encouraged and become more trusting," says Dillard-Moore.

In the last three years, Kaleidoscope has helped more than 40 Tidewater Gardens families, many of whom are experiencing some type of trauma. Typically, says Dillard-Moore, the trauma stems from violence – whether it is domestic violence in the home, from seeing or experiencing it in the neighborhood, or from the violent death of a loved one. Sexual assault and depression also loom large.

Kaleidoscope hopes to make inroads as a People First^{USI} partner by providing a continuum of care for Tidewater Gardens families for up to five years after they enroll in the program to ensure they have the resiliency to withstand life's challenges.

PEOPLE FIRST^{US} PARTNERS

Boys & Girls Clubs of
Southeast Virginia

Garden of Hope, CDC/Second
Chances, Norfolk

Old Dominion University:
Institute for Innovation &
Entrepreneurship

Children's Hospital of
The King's Daughters

Girls on the Run Hampton Roads

Peoples Pharmacy, LLC

City of Norfolk Community
Services Board

Hampton Roads Committee
of 200+ Men, Inc.

READY Academy

City of Norfolk Department
of Human Services

Hampton Roads
Community Foundation

Teens with a Purpose

City of Norfolk Department
of Public Health

Hampton Roads
Community Health Center

The Basilica of Saint Mary

The Planning Council

Communities in Schools
of Hampton Roads

Hampton Roads Workforce Council
(formerly Opportunity, Inc.)

The Up Center

Concerned Citizens of Booker T.
Washington High School

Kairos Freedom Schools
of Virginia, Inc.

Tidewater Community College

United Way of South Hampton
Roads

Crestar Health, LLC

Kaleidoscope Counseling &
Case Management, LLC

Virginia Department of Health

Dollar Bank

Mosaic Steel Orchestra

William A. Hunton Family YMCA

Dominion Energy, Inc.

Norfolk Public Schools

Young Investors Group, Inc.

EVMS (Minus 9 to 5)

Norfolk Works/Norfolk Department
of Economic Development

YMCA

Foodbank of Southeastern
Virginia and the Eastern Shore

YWCA

A Year Filled with Fun!



In June '22, *Honoring Our Legacy* brought over 100 past and current Tidewater Gardens residents together to share the community's history and heritage.



July '21's *Summer Blast* welcomed 217 current and former Tidewater Gardens residents, 40 People First^{USI} partners, and local entertainers who gathered to reach out with support services and celebrate resident achievements.



Following a collection drive, more than 50 coats were provided to 35 residents at a Worth it Wednesdays *Cocoa and Coats* event in December '21.



A school-supplies giveaway event in August '21 helped Tidewater Gardens families prepare for the new school year.



The *Historically Black Colleges and Universities College Expo* in April '22 gave students ages 13-18 and their parents information about scholarships, financial aid, virtual college tours, college options, athletics, and sororities/fraternities.

Breaking Ground

AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE



From left to right: NRHA Board of Commissioners Vice Chair Alphonso Albert, NRHA Board of Commissioners Chair Don Musacchio, NRHA Executive Director Ron Jackson, Brinshore Principal David Brint, Brinshore Principal Richard Sciortino, Norfolk Deputy City Manager Trista Pope, Councilwoman Danica Royster, NRHA resident Kaberlyn Johnson, Norfolk Mayor Kenny Alexander, NRHA resident Deborah Ross, Rep. Bobby Scott, Del. Angelia Williams Graves, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Administrator Matthew Heckles, Virginia Housing Chief Executive Director Susan Dewey, Franklin Johnston Chief Development Officer Tom Johnston, Franklin Johnston Chief Operations Officer Taylor Franklin, Bank of America Hampton Roads President Frank Castellanos, and Councilwoman Andria McClellan.



LOOKING AHEAD: YEAR FOUR RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

People First Empowered by USI will continue in Year Four to build and foster strong relationships with families in their new communities, assuring them access to education, employment, health and housing stability. USI will seek supports and resources to address family needs and meet those needs in the communities where our families live.



Housing: With the goal of ensuring that all residents who lived in Tidewater Gardens remain stably housed, People First^{USI} will: **1)** support family-readiness to relocate and make housing choices that are right for their family; **2)** continue to support families in moving to Neighborhoods of Opportunity or neighborhoods with lower poverty rates; and **3)** build family capacity to negotiate challenges after relocation.



Health & Wellness: We will: **1)** continue to focus on increasing the number of residents who participate in annual, preventive health screenings; **2)** continue to address chronic health conditions and connect individuals to services to appropriately manage those conditions; **3)** continue to support education about and access to COVID-19 vaccines; and **4)** continue to support, educate, and connect families to innovative programs and resources for self-care, those that build safety in their surroundings, mastery in their lives, and connection to others.



Education: We will continue working with our families and education partners on our aligned goals, ensuring that all children are kindergarten-ready, proficient in core academics, graduating on time, and ready for college or a career. We will seek to accomplish this through: **1)** increasing parents' capacity for supporting their children's educational needs; **2)** building support networks for children transferring or who have transferred schools as a result of relocation; **3)** creating programming to support learning loss as a result of the pandemic; **4)** prioritizing enrollment in two-generation literacy programs, where parents participate in learning with their children; and **5)** focusing on early-learning enrollment to increase the number of children safely enrolled in high-quality early-learning programs.



Economic Mobility: We will: **1)** continue to focus on enrollment of job seekers in workforce-development opportunities that lead to employment; **2)** continue to provide workforce training to newly employed families while identifying and encouraging families to obtain better-paying jobs; **3)** enroll residents in skill-building programs that lead to Section 3 employment; **4)** continue to activate partnerships to support the entrepreneurship goals of residents; and **5)** focus on asset-building through financial empowerment and homeownership.

