



Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

Bezos Day 1 Families Fund

FRIENDSHIP PLACE

Washington, DC – 2020 and 2025 Day 1 Families Fund grantee

Founded in 1991 as a neighborhood-based alternative to large-scale shelters, Friendship Place has grown into a DC-region-wide leader in innovative, person-centered solutions to homelessness. As the organization has expanded its reach, it has stayed true to its core values: listening to people with lived experience of homelessness; advancing the field through creative, responsive programming; and serving as a national model to other organizations serving families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

Friendship Place received its first \$2.5 million Day 1 Families Fund grant in 2020 and has used the flexible funding to support families experiencing homelessness across three key areas:

- Direct financial assistance to families through Friendship Place's Family Fund,
- Short-term family housing at a facility called The Brooks, and
- Employment support through the AimHire program.

The Family Fund focuses on helping families overcome last-mile barriers to stable housing—such as rental application fees, security deposits, and unpaid utility bills that sometimes keep housing from being attainable. “The support of the Day 1 Families Fund helps us find ways to say yes to families,” says Jean-Michel Giraud, CEO of Friendship Place. “Speed is critical in DC’s competitive housing market, and these funds allow us to act quickly so families can make the vital transition into stable housing.”



KEY STATISTICS



With its Day 1 Families Fund Grant, Friendship Place has:

- Connected **412** unsheltered families with safe places to stay
- Helped **1,172** families quickly regain stable housing
- Connected **1,446** with the services they need to thrive

At The Brooks, Friendship Place has created a caring environment where families can heal from the trauma of homelessness and start the process of rebuilding. The Brooks has 50 living units, play areas, and a lounge and computer lab for studying and work. While the units at The Brooks come furnished, Friendship Place has used its Day 1 Families Fund grant to enable families at The Brooks to purchase additional supplies to meet their specific needs, such as baby bathtubs for families with infants.

Through the AimHire program, a dedicated employment specialist provides personalized support to parents, helping them secure stable jobs and build long-term self-sufficiency.

Over the past five years, Friendship Place has served more than 1,400 families with the Day 1 Families Fund grant—900 through the Family Fund and another 400 through The Brooks and AimHire. The team reports that the vast majority of those families have transitioned into permanent housing.

Friendship Place's approach is rooted in compassion, speed, and efficiency. Staff work within guidelines but remain flexible, always aiming to remove barriers to safe and stable housing. As housing costs and eviction rates continue to rise, the need for responsive, family-focused support is growing. With its new Day 1 Families Fund grant, Friendship Place plans to continue its current model, staying focused on providing quick-turnaround support to families experiencing homelessness, ultimately resulting in long-term stability. "We believe that ending homelessness is possible," says Giraud. "And we're committed to being the organization that others turn to when families are in crisis."

“The support of the Day 1 Families Fund helps us find ways to say yes to families.

JEAN-MICHEL GIRAUD
PRESIDENT & CEO

FAMILY STORY

When a family with young children finally found a home after months in a Northern Virginia shelter, it felt like the first step toward stability. But moving in required more than hope—it required resources. Friendship Place sprang into action, helping with the security deposit and first month's rent. Staff dropped everything to get the checks delivered, determined not to let bureaucracy stand in the way.

Then came an unexpected roadblock: the family owed an outstanding electricity bill. Without clearing that debt, the landlord wouldn't allow them to move in. Time was critical—the family was on the brink of losing the home they had worked so hard to secure. Friendship Place didn't hesitate. With paperwork and eligibility documents in hand, the team processed the payment immediately, covering the utility debt and removing the final barrier. Thanks to the flexibility of the Day 1 Families Fund grant, they could act quickly and decisively. The family was able to move in and begin moving forward in a safe place they call home.

