

MARY'S PLACE

Seattle, WA – 2020 and 2025 Day 1 Families Fund grantee

For more than two decades, Mary's Place has been a lifeline for families experiencing homelessness in Seattle, Washington. The nonprofit's mission—which inspired the establishment of the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund—is to ensure that no child sleeps outside. The Mary's Place team advances that mission by providing emergency shelter, mobile outreach, and homelessness prevention services, partnering with others in the community to empower families to navigate the journey out of homelessness. "We can't do it alone; we need our community to come alongside us," says Dominique Alex, the nonprofit's CEO. "That's the magic of Mary's Place."

The organization's first \$5 million Bezos Day 1 Families Fund grant in 2020 was transformative. It allowed Mary's Place to grow its diversion approach, helping families avoid entering shelter whenever possible by finding alternative housing solutions. Mary's Place used the funds to expand its work with landlords and property owners to secure stable housing for families.

One of the most significant impacts of the grant came at the Mary's Place Family Center in The Regrade, which opened in an Amazon office building in 2020 and remains the organization's largest shelter. The grant enabled Mary's Place



KEY STATISTICS



With its Day 1 Families Fund Grant, Mary's Place has:

- Served over **6,000** families through emergency shelter and mobile outreach
- Assisted **2,668** families in securing safe and stable housing

to increase staff capacity at the shelter, which became vital as a growing number of families sought immediate assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. With unprecedented demand, Mary's Place rose to the challenge, helping 2,700 families move into stable housing during the five-year period of its grant—an achievement that underscores the organization's ability to adapt and scale in times of crisis.

Today, Mary's Place continues to evolve. Shelters across the Seattle region are full. With its 2025 Day 1 Families Fund grant, the organization plans to pilot an Intensive Acute Outreach Program to meet families with the most complex needs where they are—whether in cars, tents, or other precarious situations. They will also invest in providing 200 shelter beds with wraparound services for families experiencing homelessness, as well as expanding tools like housing navigation and flexible funding to connect more families to permanent housing.

Through it all, Mary's Place plans to lean on the lessons learned from its pandemic response to scale its impact even further. "We've learned so much," Alex reflects. "We're in a position to meet families where they are and help them find stability. Ending family homelessness is possible—but it takes all of us."

“Our first Day 1 Families Fund grant in 2020 allowed us to meet the unanticipated needs of families during the pandemic and be a leader in our community during this difficult crisis.

DOMINIQUE ALEX
CEO

FAMILY STORY

After leaving an unhealthy marriage, Paula—a military veteran—and her five-year-old daughter, Alayla, moved to a new home in Louisiana to start fresh. But when two hurricanes destroyed their home, Paula lost what little she had left. Determined to rebuild, she headed to Seattle for a new beginning.

At first, Paula managed to keep them in a motel while searching for work and housing. When the money ran out, desperation set in, as Paula found herself in a situation that she never anticipated. "I just started calling places and saying, 'Hey, I'm sitting outside of a motel on the street with my daughter, she's five, we have nowhere to go,'" Paula recalls. One of those calls connected her to Mary's Place. Within hours, staff arranged transportation and welcomed Paula and Alayla into a Mary's Place's 24/7 family shelter.

There, Paula found more than a roof—she found hope. Alayla thrived in a trauma-informed environment with caring youth services staff and other children to connect with, while Paula worked with housing specialists to secure permanent housing. Today, they are in a stable home, and Paula sees the transformation in her daughter: "She's resilient, she's strong, and she's beautiful, and we got through it together. The staff at Mary's Place were so caring. I always tell them they gave me my life back." With the help of Mary's Place, Paula and Alayla have both a home and a bright future.

