



## *We Were Made for More*

**C**harleston couple Allison and Bo Cordle are the kind of people willing to take bold chances to create the most fulfilling and meaningful lives possible. Their courage, sense of adventure and open hearts led them to sail the ocean, spend time in dozens of foreign countries, and foster – and ultimately adopt – five beautiful children.

The Cordles were the very first Lowcountry family licensed as foster parents by Epworth after we opened our Charleston office in 2019. At the time Allison Cordle was working as a project manager for Microsoft, and Bo was creating Emmy-winning video animations for televised sporting events like the Super Bowl and the Olympics. The couple had settled in Charleston in their late 30s after three years living aboard a sailboat in the Caribbean. Prior to their marriage, Allison had spent six years organizing Christian mission projects aimed at ending human trafficking

and halting the spread of disease. Her job took her to forty different countries, to communities marked by dire poverty. She said the work deepened and expanded her understanding of God because time and time again she saw the power of prayer and love in overcoming seemingly hopeless challenges.

But the couple say their most rewarding, soul-enriching and surprising journey to date started with their decision to become foster parents with Epworth.

“Once we settled in Charleston, we had everything we wanted materially,” Allison recalled. “But I started feeling like my life did not have a lot of purpose. It was a grand old, ‘you were made for more’ situation.”

The Cordles talked about having children. But both were near 40 at the time.



# Stepping Forward in Love and Grace

## Spring 2025

A Message from Beth Williams  
*President and CEO*

**E**pworth's mission is to serve children, youth and families in safe, Christian communities where hurts are healed, hope is nurtured and faith in God, self and others is developed. We carried out this mission through our multiple programs in 2024.

Among the key moments:

- Epworth continued to expand our footprint into all regions of the state. Overall, Epworth served 1,677 children and families in 2024.
- Epworth foster care staff served 361 children and youth in the program. In addition, 31 children were adopted into forever families. Since the inception of foster care in 2017, staff have licensed 357 foster families.
- We launched our Kinship Navigation program in August of 2024. During its first few months, the program served 222 kin caregivers and their children in the Midlands and Pee Dee regions of the state. We expect to serve over 500 relatives and their children during 2025. Kinship Navigation is a program that assists relatives who are caring for children and youth that cannot live with their birth parents. Kinship caregivers may need financial and/or emotional support for the children in their care. Thanks to United Methodist churches, Epworth is able to provide tangible items through our resource closets and financial support when needed.
- Although South Carolina continues to minimize the use of residential care, Epworth continues to serve youth with quality residential services. Our traditional residential program served 58 youth in 2024. Our Independent Living Center served 20 youth ages 18–23 years of age during the year. This center prepares youth who are aging out of foster care with the necessary tools to be successful in life. Epworth's Family Care Center served 33 mothers and children. This program provides a safe space for mothers and their children while going through substance use treatment. Mothers are taught life skills so that the family unit is preserved upon discharge from the program.

- Epworth's Early Intervention Center serves children with special needs through our campus preschool and home-based services. These programs served 196 children and families last year.
- Epworth's prevention programs continued to help many children and families during 2024. Through our counseling centers and community-based prevention programs, Epworth was able to serve 616 children, youth and families.
- Epworth benefited from an increased number of church partnerships during 2024. The United Methodist Congregation doubled the amount of church partnerships during 2024 to 130, up from 57 in 2023. Churches provide support through office space, resource closets, food security, financial support with rent and utilities, and dedicated space for training and support groups.
- For the 12th year in a row, Epworth maintained the coveted four-star rating from Charity Navigator for its sound financial management and its commitment to accountability and transparency.

### Objectives for the coming year

- Epworth will continue expanding the Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing by introducing a third Center for Counseling in the Lowcountry region of the state. The Lowcountry Center for Counseling, located in North Charleston, is expected to launch later this year. Our outpatient counseling centers provide much needed psychotherapy services to local communities. Clinicians are professionally licensed and rostered in cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), the principal evidence-based model utilized in the centers. All insurance carriers are accepted, including Medicaid. Projected Cost: \$600,000
- Epworth will launch a Family Resource Center at the Trenholm Road Campus. This Resource Center will provide families with services such as SNAP, TANF, WIC (financial assistance), tangible resources and other therapeutic services. Plans are underway and staff are working with community partners



on bringing this important resource to Columbia.  
Projected Cost: \$200,000

- We will expand our Center for Independent Living. The Independent Living program serves youth ages 18 – 23 who are aging out of the foster care system. We recently opened a second cottage for youth transitioning into adulthood who need less supervision than the traditional Independent Living program. This program houses a residential advisor who lives in the cottage with the youth for support.

Epworth has a long tradition of assessing the needs of underserved children and their families and of offering new services and programs that meet the changing needs of South Carolina's families. Whether

Epworth is serving children and families through the traditional group home, foster family programs, kinship care initiatives, counseling programs, family care programs or services for older, displaced youth, the mission of healing hurts and nurturing hope through Christian communities continues. Epworth is a community where we model unconditional love and grace to all people in need.

We at Epworth thank you for your previous and ongoing support. Your generosity helps to change lives, bring families together, provide resources for safer and more secure lifestyles, and give children who have suffered early in their lives a huge chance for new beginnings and happiness.



In 2024, 1,962 volunteers provided 6,483 hours of service to Epworth. Thank you, Epworth volunteers!

**Thank You,  
Volunteers!**





# Program Highlights



## Foster Care

We oversaw 31 adoptions – including the little boys pictured; 27 adoptions were with Epworth families and 4 were with external families.

92% of youth placed in Epworth foster homes did not experience any moves to other foster homes



## Residential

80% of youth receiving residential or foster care services were discharged successfully to home or to a lower level of care. (Shown, Dantzler Cottage)

100% of seniors graduated or earned a General Equivalency Degree (GED). This is the 12th consecutive year Epworth has had a 100% graduation rate.



## HOMEBUILDERS®

88% of families in the HOMEBUILDERS program completed the entire program.

97% of children served by HOMEBUILDERS showed an increase in well-being.



## Independent Living

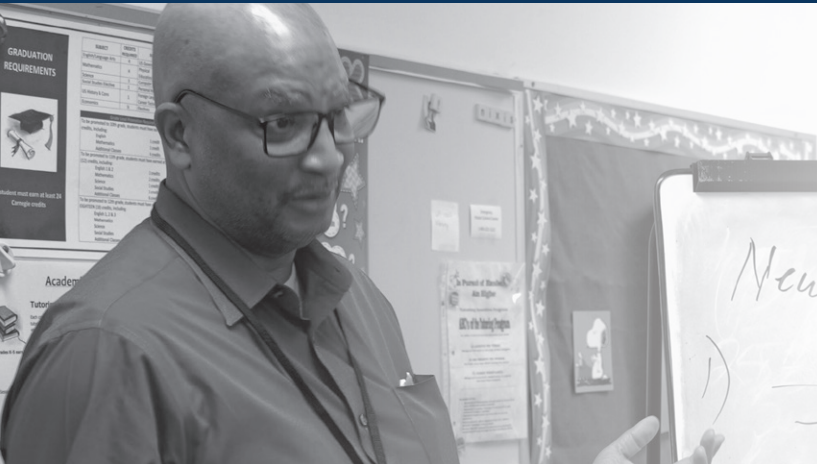
92% of Independent Living residents were enrolled in higher education or job skills training.

100% of youth served in the independent living program had no involvement with the criminal justice system. (Shown, a bedroom at our Independent Living Center for college-age students.)



# Total Clients Served 1,677

Community Based 838 | Early Intervention 196 | Residential 111 | Foster Care 532



## Academics

During the school year, 3,581 tutoring sessions were offered. (Shown Epworth tutor Bill Simmons.)

Our tutoring center provided 5 tutors, a career counselor and a academic and behavioral coach for 66 residents.

## Centers for Counseling

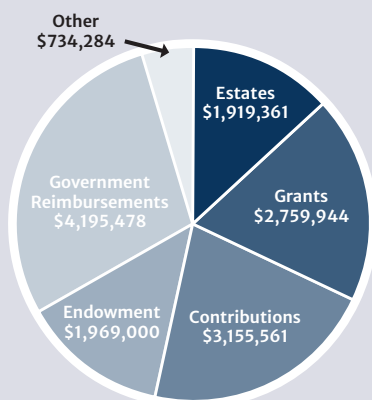
83% of clients served at Epworth's Centers for Counseling showed an increase in overall well-being.



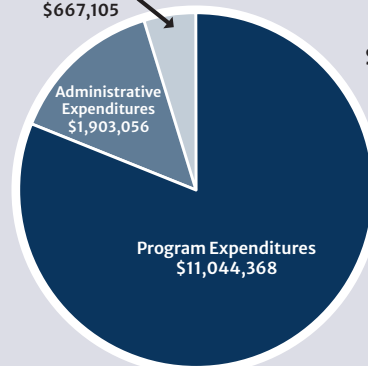
## Family Care Center

92% of Moms served in the Family Care Center graduated and achieved self-sufficiency goals for themselves and their families.

**2024 Revenue Sources**  
Total Revenue  
\$14,733,628 (Unaudited)



Fundraising  
Expenditures  
\$667,105



**2024 Total Expenditures**  
Excluding Depreciation  
Total Expenses  
\$13,614,529 (Unaudited)

## *Church Giving \$10,000 or More*

Belin Memorial UMC, Murrells Inlet  
 Bethany UMC, Summerville  
 Chapin Christian Community Church, Chapin  
 Edisto Island UMC, Edisto Island  
 First UMC, Conway  
 First UMC, Marion  
 Grace UMC, North Augusta  
 Hibben UMC, Mount Pleasant  
 Lake City UMC, Lake City  
 Lyman Methodist Church, Lyman  
 Macedonia Methodist Church, Mullins  
 Manning UMC, Manning  
 Mount Horeb Church, Lexington  
 Pleasant Hill UMC, Fort Mill  
 Shady Grove UMC, Cameron  
 Shandon UMC, Columbia  
 St Johns Methodist Church, Aiken  
 St Johns UMC, Fort Mill  
 St Johns UMC, Rock Hill  
 St Johns UMC, Anderson  
 St Mark UMC, Seneca  
 Trenholm Road UMC, Columbia  
 Union UMC, Irmo

## *Estate Gifts*

Joe Ann Holliman Estate  
 Katrina L Patton Estate  
 Margie L Amick Estate  
 Doris M Chavis Estate  
 Hemrick N Salley Jr Estate  
 Ella Mae Proctor Estate

## *Donors of \$10,000 or More*

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 Robert L. Blanton  
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 Building Systems Solutions  
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 Children's Charities of the Midlands  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Heyward L. King  
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 Lawrence S. Lumpkin  
 Jeff and Holly McCall  
 Gwen McElveen  
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 Katrina L. Patton\* and Luke Biggs  
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 Dan and Karen Reider  
 John and Tracy Schaberg  
 Harriet Sessoms  
 Dennis and Sheila Shanklin  
 Wayne and Beverly Shealy  
 Clay and Janice Shirley  
 David R. Smith  
 Dorothy D. Smith Charitable Foundation  
 Jim and Laura Sonefeld  
 S.C. United Methodist Foundation  
 J.C. Wilkie Construction  
 Charles Williamson  
 Edgar and Betty Woodward

"I had encountered so many children around the world who needed families," she said. "I held babies whose mamas begged me to take them home. It was inconceivable to me that I would go great lengths and expense to bring a child into the world when there were so many children in need already here."

Allison prayed for guidance. In 2019, TV news coverage of the border crisis riveted her attention and changed the course of the couple's lives. Images of children being held without their parents broke her heart, and she felt a powerful call to help them.

Allison has learned to listen to the still quiet voice inside of her. When Bo came home that day, she announced that they were going to Texas to rescue some of the children. Bo listened thoughtfully.

"We could try that," he said. "Or we could help kids here in South Carolina."

Given the complexities of the border conflict, Allison realized his suggestion made sense.

Coincidentally, she had recently made friends with a woman at her gym who was setting up Epworth's new foster care office in Charleston. Allison approached her friend to learn about the foster care process, and in the months that followed, her friend helped the Cordles apply and win approval to be foster parents.

Soon, the Cordles took in two siblings. Both the little girl, Abby, and her younger brother, Alex, were under the age of 5.

"Within days of the children coming to live with us, we realized they had lice, we all came down with a stomach virus, and we were evacuated from our home because of a hurricane," Allison said.

The Cordles dealt with all of it. The couple took in a third child, an infant named Eliana, a few months later. Within three years, they had taken in two additional children, Leighla and Eli. Eli was the biological younger brother of Eliana.

Going from no children to five young children in three years would challenge anyone. But in addition to love and stability, some of the children in the Cordle's care needed extra help recovering from trauma.

"It took us awhile to wrap our heads around the fact that traditional parenting doesn't always work with children who have lived with trauma," she said. "One of our children is volatile, so we've had some tough moments. The typical consequences don't always work with these children."

Allison learned about a trauma parenting model called Trust-Based Relational Intervention, which Epworth endorses. Allison was so impressed by the results she obtained in applying this approach, she became a trainer herself and now works with Flourishing Families of South Carolina to train parents and organizations in this method.

The Cordles had assumed that all the children would eventually be reunited with their birth parents. Instead, over time, all five became available for adoption. The Cordles did not hesitate.

"We are really enjoying our kids, and we have fun with them" Allison said of their life today. "Bo and I

sometimes look at each other and laugh at how far we've come."

Today Abby is 9, Alex is 8, Eliana is 5, Leighla is 3 and Eli is 1. Allison said that building this beautiful family together with her husband has been deeply gratifying.

"Our little family will last longer than we will, and if this is our legacy, then gosh, man, we are so lucky because they are incredible, the things they have overcome," she said. "It is an honor just being a witness to their changes, growth, maturity and healing."

She said they were especially proud of being able to give the children siblings.

"For most people, siblings are the longest relationship you'll ever have in your life," Allison said. "The other day Leila, who is our 3-year-old, came in from swimming lessons and she had a little ribbon for graduating from one level to the next. She was so excited, she was yelling, and I watched the other kids celebrate her like she had won the Olympics. So much whooping and hollering! Bo and I get a lot wrong, but we got the sibling thing right."

As a Christian and a mom, Allison is grateful she and Bo have been able to influence the trajectory of the children's lives away from generational addiction and other struggles. She remains in awe at the challenges, joy, adventures, and spiritual and emotional enrichment that make up the typical foster family journey.

"Bo and I could never have imagined some of the hard things we would face in fostering," Allison said. "Nor could we have imagined in our wildest dreams, the great things, the joy we have in our lives because of it."

*If you are curious about the rewards and realities of fostering, learn more by contacting Epworth's Foster Care staff at (803) 256-7394 or visiting [maybeme.org](http://maybeme.org).*





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[www.epworthsc.org](http://www.epworthsc.org)

Beth Williams  
President and CEO

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\*Children's names and pictures have been changed for confidentiality.

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