



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

## DEAR COMMUNITY,

In 2025, Love First celebrated a significant milestone: our fifth anniversary. While we continued to focus on the work – growing our impact and proving the power of our unique approach to youth development and community liberation – we recognize the importance of both celebration and evaluation.

So this year, we hosted our first-ever fundraising gala. And we did it the Love First way, co-creating a youth-led and culturally rooted event that celebrated Black brilliance. The highlight of the gala was a youth fashion show, showcasing their creativity and demonstrating what workforce development can look like when we give young people the opportunity to reveal their talents and help

them cultivate pathways to turn their purpose into a career. We couldn't be more proud of their work and grateful to community for coming out to support their ingenuity.

In 2025, we also took an intentional pause to reflect on our work thus far and ensure our efforts are aligned with community needs moving forward. Our core values and trusted approach remain the same, but we're excited to share our updated mission and vision – and new programming in 2026 and beyond.

Thank you for being part of our village,

Satara Strong-Allen, Executive Director | Chauntyll Allen, Founder



**VISION** We envision a world where all young people are holistically supported, deeply valued, and fully empowered to thrive through equitable access to education, wellness, and economic opportunity. We believe in the transformative power of culturally affirming communities that foster healing, belonging, and purpose.

**MISSION** Love First is building a school-to-success pipeline with culturally competent mentorship to connect young people to their purpose and a village of support.



## COMMUNITY DINNERS

In 2025, we hosted four community dinners, providing free healthy food, connection across generations, and important skill sharing, in Saint Paul and North Minneapolis. With 50 or more participants at each event, we nourished and sustained the village with knowledge, resources (like our Community Closet), and healing activities for many young people who don't have reliable spaces to be safe and supported.



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

At Love First, we don't provide traditional job training or placement. We work with young people to tap into their talents, embrace their dreams and turn their purpose into a career pathway. In 2025, for instance, a group of young people shared their interest in fashion – and we worked with them as a cohort to develop their passions by connecting them to tangible opportunities to grow and showcase their craft. Now, three of the four are making commercial strides with their own fashion lines and in modeling and film. In 2026, we're excited to apply this cohort model to art for several Love First young leaders with significant talents.



## GLOW & GROW PROGRAM

Our Glow & Grow program is cultivating an ecosystem of young Black women who know their worth, recognize their leadership and act in ways that care, not only for themselves, but their peers and community. In 2025, we hosted 20 sessions and a full-day conference that engaged dozens of Black girls in ongoing learning and healing activities and opportunities to build their villages of support. Now in its 5th year, we're seeing the undeniable appeal and effectiveness of the program, as older girls are inviting their siblings, participants are bringing flyers to their schools and new junior leaders are stepping up to take on facilitation roles from senior leaders.

## EVENTS & OUTREACH

At Love First, we recognize joy as a tool of strength, resistance, and healing. Through events we hosted and those hosted by partners – like the African American Leadership Forum and the Minnesota Lynx – and we give young people space to feel safe and have fun. In 2025, we connected young people to cultural experiences in the community, from art exhibits to professional sports and also collaborated with other organizations to attend and enhance their events, including providing access to our community closet at a food distribution site.

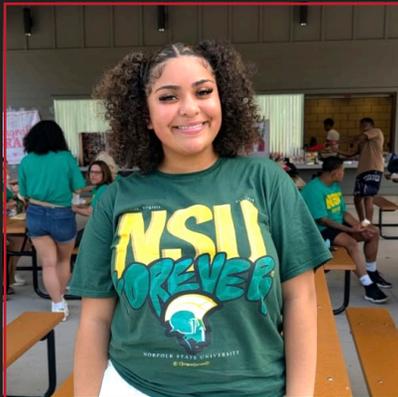


## COMMUNITY SAFETY AND MUTUAL AID

When we ask youth about the problems in their neighborhoods, they identify chemical dependency and housing instability as key challenges – and they want to do something about it. Led by the youth, in 2025, we hosted three pop-up engagements in outdoor spaces, offering free food, hygiene supplies, clothing and on-the-spot training in overdose prevention. We also continued to help young people meet their basic needs through our mutual aid program that provides direct cash assistance for daily essentials, like food, transportation and rent. In the first 10 months of 2025 alone, we distributed more than \$33,000 – and we see how these funds are helping to stabilize young people when they experience unexpected trauma, like the death of a parent.

## YOUTH LEADER SPOTLIGHT: SYDNEY OUNDO

Sydney Oundo's passion for organizing and commitment to community was evident from the first moment she engaged with Love First. Now a freshman at Howard University, Oundo participated in Love First HCBU tour, provided leadership in Glow & Grow and so much more. "What I just love so much about Love First is it truly is a youth-centered space," Sydney said. "Whatever young people want to do, that's what they make happen. If I want to be a mechanic, they're gonna figure out some mechanics for me to go to a workshop. If I want to be a fashion designer, they're gonna figure out a fashion show for me to be a part of. My experience has always been whatever I want to do is what they want for me. With fashion, I've always had those passions and that creativity in me, but I never got to really accept that creativity in myself – and Love First gave me the opportunity to do that. It has been one of the most important nonprofits that I've been a part of during my youth organizing years, and I'm very, very proud to say that I'm a part of something much bigger than myself. They've taught me how to be selfless, while also prioritizing myself and my dreams. And that's a priceless experience. So I feel very grateful to be a part of this community. I feel so grateful for my bonus aunties, Chauntyll and Satara, and all the people that I've met through Love First. It's really expanded my world, and that's what Love First does. It shows youth other sides of the world that they've never seen before. And I'm very proud to say that it's my home."



## IMPACT: HBCU TOUR

In 2024, Love First took 24 young people on a tour of Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), including students who are often excluded from such opportunities because of their GPAs. As of 2025...

- **100% of the seniors on the 2024 trip are in college**
- **50% of those seniors are attending an HBCU**

## STAFF & BOARD

### 2025 STAFF

Chauntyll Allen, Founder  
Satara Strong-Allen, Executive Director  
Tahnea Brown, Programming Lead  
Angelica Chanslor, Operations

### 2025 BOARD

Danielle Matthias, Co-chair  
MaryAnne Sergio-Quiroz, Co-chair  
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## THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Youthprise  
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Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation  
Greater Twin Cities United Way  
Minnesota Womens Foundation  
Restorative Actions  
Dozens of individual donors

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

*We can't do this work without the support and collaboration of community partners Hallie Q Brown Community Center, Indigenous Roots Cultural Center, Frogtown Neighborhood Association, Sterling Club, African American Leadership Forum, 825Arts, the Minnesota Lynx, Irreducible Grace Foundation & Black Youth Healing Arts Center, The B Suite*

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