



bloom

Annual Report 2022



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



As spring approaches, I am heartened by how much we have accomplished together through such complex and uncertain times. I am grateful to you and so many others like you, from across Georgia, who stepped up to ensure that foster children would have the support they need to endure and thrive through the pandemic and every other obstacle life laid before them.

Together, in 2021, we have accomplished so much: We successfully launched the one-of-a-kind Bloom Closet Express in April 2021. As a result, vulnerable children in underserved communities too far to visit The Bloom Closet can now access the resources your donations make possible.

After a grueling 18-month process, Bloom became accredited by the Council on Accreditation in November. Accreditation officially recognizes what you and I have known all along: Bloom adheres to the highest standards in everything we do.

Amid so much growth and effort, I am proud to note that our focus never shifted from our mission. In our annual survey, 97% of foster children reported increased self-worth after receiving items from The Bloom Closet, and 100% of foster parents reported an improved ability to provide basic needs for the foster children in their care.

Another wonderful moment this year was the day we learned that your votes made us one of Chick-fil-A's 2022 True Inspiration Award Recipients for the Southeast Region. We are humbled and honored by your faith in our ability to serve Georgia's foster children. Thank you!

Today, we at Bloom find ourselves at an inflection point, with a duty to leverage the momentum of these achievements to reach more of Georgia's foster children. With you beside us, we can potentially reach every foster child in Georgia over the next ten years. You make this work possible. Thank you for your continued support.



Becky Davenport  
President & CEO,  
Bloom Our Youth

“ WITH YOU BESIDE US,  
WE CAN POTENTIALLY  
REACH EVERY FOSTER  
CHILD IN GEORGIA OVER  
THE NEXT TEN YEARS. ”



## OUR TEAM

**President & CEO**  
Becky Davenport

**Chief Development Officer**  
Valerin Lopez DeFrank

**Director of Finance & Administration**  
Nancy Connerat

**Communications and Grants Manager**  
Kristin Melton

**Volunteer Engagement Specialist**  
Mandy Morris

**Development & Special Events Coordinator**  
Stephanie King

**Community Outreach Coordinator**  
Alisha Lane

**Administrative Assistant**  
Abby Norton

## THE BLOOM CLOSET

**Bloom Closet Program Manager**  
Lauren Wyatt

**Bloom Closet Express Coordinator**  
Jackie Arsenault

**Administrative Assistant**  
Abby Norton

**Lead Store Associate**  
Emily Rowland

**Lead Donations Associate**  
Brittany Anderson

**Transportation Specialist**  
Katie Lozano

**Store Associates**  
Leah Holder  
Susan Snell

**Donations Associate**  
Katie Fuester

## FOSTER CARE

**Director of Foster Care Services**  
Pamella Talley, MPA

**Licensing Specialist**  
Tina Flowers

**Training and Parenting Coach**  
Dr. Mark Andrews

**Family Consultant Supervisor**  
Tamikia Clements

**Lead Family Consultant**  
Yolanda White

**Family Consultants**  
Carolyn Johnson  
Denise Johnson  
Haja Sherry  
Mercedes Walker  
Sophia Sutherland

**Program Assistant**  
Riley Smith



BloomOurYouth.org

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dan Bradfield  
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Jack Middleton  
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# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



4,100+

Foster Children's Lives Impacted By Bloom

Established in 1986, Bloom Our Youth is a family-centered, non-profit organization that protects, supports, and empowers foster children and the families who care for them.

## PROGRAM IMPACT

Making a difference

During the 12 months of 2021:

99,570

essential daily living items with a value of over \$752,671 provided to foster children

16,609

bags of in-kind donations received, sorted, and processed at our Volunteer & Donations Center

21,000+

days of care with loving Bloom foster families provided to foster children

3,396

volunteer service hours donated to help foster children thrive

## MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Positive Effects of The Bloom Closet

97%

of foster children reported increased self-worth after receiving items from The Bloom Closet.

90%

of foster children reported feeling ready for school after receiving supplies.

100%

of foster parents reported that The Bloom Closet had improved their ability to provide basic needs for the foster children in their care.

## BLOOM BECOMES ACCREDITED

In November 2021, Bloom achieved national accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA), joining only 2,000 other organizations to achieve accreditation.

The entire process took over 18 months to complete, with Bloom first providing written evidence of compliance with COA standards. Subsequently, a group of specially trained volunteer Peer Reviewers confirmed adherence to these standards, evaluating all aspects of Bloom's programs, services, management, and administration and conducting on-site interviews with trustees, staff, and clients.

Everyone at Bloom is incredibly proud of this accomplishment. It is an objective, independent, and reliable validation of the combined efforts of Bloom staff, partners, donors, and volunteers. COA's standards ensure that our services are well-coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, outcomes-oriented, and provided by a skilled and supported workforce.

In addition, this achievement reaffirms the strength of Bloom's commitment to be good stewards of your gifts to Georgia's foster children. To be accredited, organizations must demonstrate accountability in the management of resources. They must also have set standardized best practice thresholds for service and administration.

The issues facing children coming into foster care are increasingly complex. COA accreditation increases Bloom's organizational capacity and accountability by creating a framework for ongoing quality improvement.

Bloom is a better organization for having gone through this process. Our organization and the children we serve will benefit from it for years to come.



Pictured: Normer Adams, Chair-Person, Board of Directors, Becky Davenport, President & CEO, and Pamella Talley, Director of Foster Care Services



### ABOUT THE COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA)

Founded in 1977, COA is an independent, not-for-profit accreditor of the full continuum of community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations in the U.S. and Canada. The value of a COA endorsement and its accreditation process is reflected in its being named by the U.S. State Department as the sole national independent accrediting body under The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption to accredit intercountry adoption service providers. In addition, COA is the only national accreditor designated by the U.S. Department of Defense to develop accreditation standards and processes for human service programs provided to military personnel and their families.





## CRISSCROSSING GEORGIA

In April 2021, Bloom successfully launched The Bloom Closet Express. The custom-designed 20-foot Morgan Olson truck transforms into a pop-up boutique, bringing The Bloom Closet's colorful, whimsical, and upbeat atmosphere directly to foster children across Georgia. Through The Bloom Closet Express, foster children in underserved communities too far away to visit Bloom's brick-and-mortar location can access free clothing, necessities for basic hygiene and social well-being (undergarments, toiletries, school supplies), and items that provide emotional comfort and joy during difficult times (teddy bears, books, games).

In an interview with 11Alive News on April 29, 2021, Tom Rawlings, former Director of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, voiced his dream that The Bloom Closet Express would "crisscross the state and help people to think about foster kids in Georgia."

Today, The Bloom Closet Express is doing precisely that! Since its launch, The Bloom Closet Express has provided over 1,000 foster children with a unique and uplifting shopping experience—right in their communities throughout Georgia.

The weekend of January 21, 2022, The Bloom Closet Express took its first overnight trip, serving foster children in Baxley and Macon, Georgia. The first stop was Georgia Baptist Children's Home's Baxley campus on Friday evening to serve 30 children. Each child received a week's worth of clothing, shoes, socks and underwear, toiletries, backpacks, toys, and school supplies. Having never experienced anything like The Bloom Closet Express, the children were all very excited to shop and expressed their immense gratitude.

Saturday morning, the Bloom team drove to Macon, Georgia, serving 34 children in The Methodist Home for Children and Youth. Unfortunately, one group from The Methodist Home had to sit out the shopping experience due to COVID exposure in the home. The Bloom team stepped up, hand-selecting the items requested by the absent children, ensuring they got everything they needed.

The trip was an inspirational one for the Bloom staff involved. Bloom Closet Program Manager Lauren Wyatt shared, "The Bloom Closet Express trips are always eye-opening. Knowing that there are so many foster children in these rural areas that do not have the proper resources is mind-blowing. I am so happy to be a part of a program that can provide these resources around the state."

Bloom is committed to expanding The Bloom Closet and The Bloom Closet Express over the next 12 months. Among other elements, the growth strategy includes increasing partnerships with organizations and institutions that can provide shopping locations, volunteers, and collection points. The fulfillment of our mission is a shared effort—we cannot accomplish it without our community partners and supporters like you!



# THE BLOOM CLOSET EXPRESS

Bloom accepts donations for The Bloom Closet and The Bloom Closet Express at our Volunteer and Donation Center, located at:

115 Marquis Dr.  
Fayetteville, GA 30214

Monday – Saturday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Please visit our website at [bloomouryouth.org](http://bloomouryouth.org) for more information on how to donate.

## ON THE ROAD

The team documented the Bloom Closet Express' overnight trip to Baxley and Macon, Georgia with candid behind-the-scenes videos. We've posted the videos on our Instagram and Facebook pages, both @bloomouryouth! Please help us spread the word about Bloom by watching, liking, and sharing the videos with your friends and family.



## WISH LIST

- New or gently used shoes and clothing (size infant through teen)
- Pajamas
- Socks and underwear (new)
- Winter jackets, mittens, and hats
- Diaper wipes and diapers
- Baby powder, lotion, diaper rash ointment, infant shampoo
- Baby Gear (diaper bags, infant carriers, baby swings, cribs, etc.)
- Baby blankets, baby linens
- Baby bottles, sippy cups, bibs, pacifiers (new)
- Full-size toiletries such as toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, soap
- Books and toys for babies, children and teens
- School Supplies
- Gift Cards to Wal-Mart, Target, and Amazon



## THE 2021 FOSTER FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Each year, to acknowledge the commitment, courage, and compassion it takes to be a successful foster parent, Bloom spotlights one foster family as The Bloom Foster Family of the Year. The chosen family has gone beyond simply meeting the administrative and legal requirements of being a foster parent. Instead, they have gone the extra mile to serve as role models, mentors, and family for their foster children, helping them grow into independent, confident, and capable individuals.

The 2021 Bloom Foster Family of the Year honor went to Mr. and Mrs. Shabazz, who are currently fostering a young, therapeutic brother and sister, Adam and Ramona\*.

Mr. and Mrs. Shabazz have been with Bloom for two years and have shown themselves to be model foster parents, exemplifying beneficial parent partnerships, commitment to their growth as foster parents, and, above all, dedication to their foster children.

Displaying an intuitive understanding of the importance of sibling connection and family ties, Mr. and Mrs. Shabazz advocated fostering Adam and Ramona together in their household. The siblings had been separated and had not seen each other in far too long. When they finally saw each other in the Shabazz family home, they immediately hugged, overcome with excitement! Moreover, to provide Adam and Ramona the best care possible, Mr. and Mrs. Shabazz developed a positive relationship with the children's biological mother.

Mr. and Mrs. Shabazz have shown great patience with Adam, who came into their home struggling with behavioral difficulties, helping him implement different coping strategies and skills that have helped him become calmer and more self-assured. In addition to keeping both children's medical and dental care up to date, they ensure the children receive regular therapy to help them overcome their past trauma.

Adam and Ramona are not the only foster children the Shabazz family has welcomed into their home. Mr. and Mrs. Shabazz and their three biological children

have helped several foster children feel loved and accepted by providing them with a stable home filled with laughter.

The Shabazz family has also shown that one can be a source of love and support for foster children in other meaningful ways. They have, for example, stayed with a foster child at the hospital so he would not feel alone or isolated, and they have reached out to a former foster child's current foster family, extending an invitation for a get-together.

The Shabazz family is indeed a blessing to Georgia's foster children, and we are so happy they are a Bloom family!

*\*The names of the children have been changed to protect their privacy.*





# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Donor list is reflective of cash donations of \$250 or higher made between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021. It does not include in-kind gifts.

## \$30,000+

Chick-fil-A, Inc.  
Randi Clowers  
Deena Seckinger  
SMC3

## \$20,000-\$29,999

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Jerrell  
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## \$10,000-\$19,999

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Zaxby's Franchising LLC



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS (CONTINUED)

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### \$500-\$999

Ms. Carol Adams  
Alpha Internal Medicine  
Arlo Group  
Mr. & Mrs. Ben Autrey  
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Batten  
Bethany Circle  
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Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Bradfield  
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Ms. Teresa Otwell  
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Ms. Lisa Shiflett  
Mr. & Mrs. Tony Shoaf  
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Mr. & Mrs. Brad Williams

### \$250-\$499

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Mr. & Mrs. Luis Velasquez  
Mr. & Mrs. Ed Vise  
Ms. Rebecca Willis  
Ms. Ellen Wood  
Mr. Casen Young





## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Do you have a heart for children? If so, we invite you to get involved with Bloom! Your support will help further our mission to strengthen foster children and empower the families who care for them. Together, we will continue making a difference in the lives of thousands of foster children each year!



### Volunteer with Us

Volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization! We are seeking more people willing to donate their time and talents to help foster youth thrive. Sign up at [bloomouryouth.org](http://bloomouryouth.org).

### Donate Monthly

Monthly donations help us plan, ensuring foster children can access **what** they need, **when** and **where** they need it. Join our community of monthly givers, helping keep The Bloom Closet and The Bloom Closet Express stocked and accessible for foster children across Georgia. Donations are tax-deductible. To contribute, visit [bloomouryouth.org](http://bloomouryouth.org).

### Become a Foster Parent

You can offer a child hope for a brighter future by becoming a foster parent. Consider attending a **no commitment orientation** to learn about the process and the children in need of care. If you have patience, love, and kindness, you're already better suited for fostering than you might believe. To attend an orientation, call us at 770-460-6652.

### Grant a Foster Child's Wish

Each year, Bloom collects over 500 presents to grant holiday wishes for the foster youth in our care. It's the perfect opportunity for you, your family, or your group to give back during the holidays. To participate in 2022, call 770-460-6652.

### Sponsor an Event

Bloom hosts several annual fundraising events like Bloom Ball, Rhythm & Bloom, and Frocks & Rocks! The proceeds from these events go directly to Bloom's programs serving foster children because sponsors help cover the event costs. Email [info@bloomouryouth.org](mailto:info@bloomouryouth.org) with "Sponsorship Inquiry" in the subject line to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

### Host a Donation Drive

Hosting a donation drive is a great way to get involved with Bloom from anywhere. We will provide donation bins and will organize drop-off and pick-up. To learn more about how your group can have a tangible impact on our mission, email [info@bloomouryouth.org](mailto:info@bloomouryouth.org) with "Donation Drive Inquiry" in the subject line.

### Spread the word!

Tell your friends and family about the different ways they can help strengthen foster children throughout Georgia.



## STAY CONNECTED

It's easy to stay up to date with Bloom's news, events, and ways to help!

GET UPDATES

Don't miss a thing! Join Bloom's email list and get the latest news and upcoming events delivered directly to your inbox!

Visit [bloomouryouth.org](http://bloomouryouth.org) to sign up.

STAY CONNECTED

Connect with us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram and Twitter! Watch live updates and candid behind-the-scenes footage from The Bloom Closet and The Bloom Closet Express. You'll be the first to know about special announcements!

WATCH VIDEOS

Subscribe to our YouTube channel to watch heartwarming foster parent interviews, tours of The Bloom Closet, and other exclusive features.



“  
BLOOM MAKES A  
BIG DIFFERENCE  
IN THE LIVES OF  
FOSTER KIDS  
GOING THROUGH  
A SCARY AND  
DIFFICULT TIME.  
”

- Hatten, Bloom Supporter





150 Marquis Drive  
Fayetteville, GA 30214



**THE MISSION OF BLOOM  
IS TO STRENGTHEN  
CHILDREN  
IN FOSTER CARE  
AND EMPOWER  
THE FAMILIES  
WHO CARE FOR THEM.**

bloomouryouth.org  
770.460.6652

