

ROOTS &
WINGS

Rise Above



2025

IMPACT REPORT

WWW.ROOTSANDWINGSNJ.ORG

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Roots & Wings,

Thanks to you, our loyal and generous community of supporters, 2025 was a fantastic year for our group of motivated and hard-working program members at Roots & Wings!

Roots & Wings invests heavily in each individual in our residential RISE program – helping make education, whether academic or vocational, accessible; teaching job readiness and financial literacy skills, and helping to ensure our program members are mentally and physically healthy. Most importantly, Roots & Wings provides safe and stable housing for our youth so that they can have the peace of mind to pursue the skills they need to live financially independent lives without the fear of becoming homeless like many of their peers.

Our evidence-based, trauma-informed national model, “Mobility Mentoring”, works and our program members are thriving. The model’s assessment tool, the Bridge to Economic Mobility, helps our youth set achievable goals and allows us to quantify and track outcomes – that of the individual members and the RISE program overall.

In January 2025, we redesigned and relaunched our FLY program to support the needs of our graduates as they transition to independent living and to keep their social connection to Roots & Wings and their peers strong. We were able to expand our services through our RISE and FLY programs and help 26 individuals in 2025.

Our goal is to serve 28-30 this year in our residential and post-residential programs. With our community’s support, together we can continue to make life-changing opportunities available to an often unseen and underserved population.

Thank you very much for your continued support which makes these accomplishments possible.

With Much Gratitude,

Edith Villacampa Fiato



Founded in 1999, Roots & Wings is a 501c3 and one of few organizations of its kind in the state of New Jersey that solely focuses on the betterment of the often forgotten 18-24 year old individuals who have left the foster care system without a family or home of their own to turn to for support.

Our mission is to provide safe housing, emotional support, life skills, and educational opportunities for youth aging out of foster care; empowering them to rise toward their greatest potential.



1 in 5 aged out foster youth experience homelessness before the age of 21*
1 in 5 aged out foster youth become incarcerated before the age of 21*
Only 57% report being employed at the age of 21* .

**Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation*



2025 MEMBER OUTCOMES

At the end of 2025, **100%** of the 20 members participating in the RISE program were enrolled or had finished educational/vocational programs:

- 7 Members graduated/exited from Roots & Wings:
 - 4 Members completed their education or vocational certification and were hired in their field.
 - 1 Member has an internship in her field and is on track to earn 4-year degree next semester.
 - 2 members exited the program 6 months early, having both found their own apartments and continuing on their educational path.
- 2 members are enrolled in a 2-year college degree program. One of the members is dual-enrolled in a nursing program and has a paid externship working under the guidance of an RN.
- 2 members are currently enrolled in a GED program. Both will pursue trades upon completion.
- 1 member is enrolled at Morris County VoTech.
- Other members, one of whom earned her GED while at Roots & Wings, earned or are pursuing certifications in medical assistance vocations (Patient Care Technicians, Certified Nursing Assistants, Sterile Technician)



2025 ROOTS & WINGS BY THE NUMBERS

20

Total residential members served by Roots & Wings (RISE)

20

RISE Members on an educational track

18

RISE members employed

5

Members graduated from the RISE Program

5

RISE graduates working in field of study

18

RISE members who contributed to a savings account

481

Total number of meetings with RISE coaches

13

Life skills workshops held for RISE members

40

Total RISE member milestone goals completed

16

Total number of bedrooms available

6

Total number of apartments

6

Total number of founding FLY members

HOUSING, EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT, & COMMUNITY

By addressing housing, education, employment, financial literacy, and personal development, Roots & Wings' residential program, RISE, provides the comprehensive support needed to break cycles of instability and empower clients for long-term success.

Of the 20 youth served in 2025, 85% were homeless or in imminent danger of becoming homeless when they entered Roots & Wings. Roots & Wings covers all the costs associated with housing its members in scattered site apartments in Morris and Union Counties.

With housing stability, RISE members can focus on their futures. Each member works closely with program staff to explore education and employment goals, develop essential life skills, and create both short- and long-term goals. Through this ongoing support, members gain confidence, strengthen their executive functioning skills, and develop the skills needed to navigate adulthood and earn livable wages.

Roots & Wings is committed to building a sense of community and belonging. Optional monthly "extracurricular" activities give members opportunities to relax and connect, allowing relationships to form that will last beyond their time in the program.

RISE



CONTINUED CONNECTION

FLY

Roots & Wings has always remained a resource to our RISE graduates. In January 2025, the FLY program, a non-residential post program, was redesigned and launched to formally acknowledge the meaningful connections developed during the RISE program and the continued support available to graduates.

As of January 2026, FLY serves 11 members who have chosen to participate in this voluntary program. FLY provides alumni with continued access to our office food pantry, referrals, case management, and support services. FLY offers program-specific curriculum with life skill groups and social events designated specifically for alumni.

FLY members serve as positive role models for current RISE members, offering encouragement, guidance and perspective drawn from their own experiences. FLY is also unique in its access to an Emergency Fund made possible by the generosity of our donors. This fund provides critical financial assistance during unexpected and challenging times, whether due to car repairs, lost wages, medical needs, or other urgent situations.

Roots & Wings' goal is to serve as a steady support system, much like a parent to adult children, present when help is needed and offering encouragement as RISE & FLY members build independent, fulfilling lives.



MEMBER UPDATES



Jamani

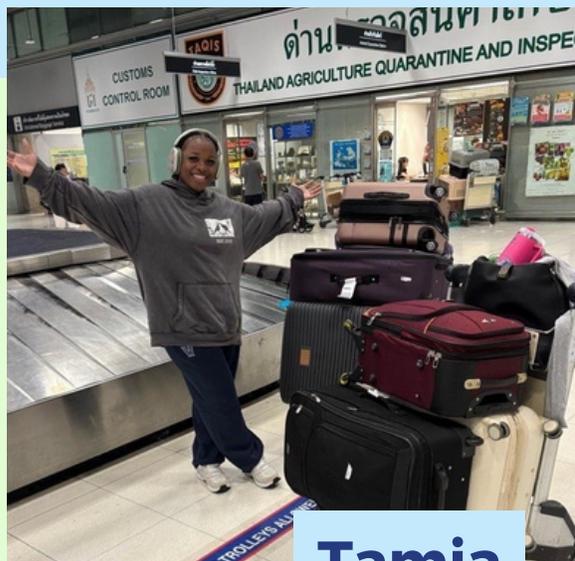
You may remember Jamani as the speaker for our 2023 RISE & FLY Gala. Jamani is a resilient young woman who has faced a life of adversity with determination and strength.

In May 2025, she graduated with a double major in Chemistry and Education, and received her dream job offer: a high school chemistry teaching role in the West Orange School District.

Jamani lives in her own apartment with her two cats. As a FLY member, she enjoys serving as a role model and mentor to current active program members.

Tamia, our 2024 gala speaker, is another recent double graduate of both college and Roots & Wings!

After she graduated with a 4-year year degree in Communication, Tamia's confidence and curiosity led her to Thailand, where she spent a summer teaching English as a Second Language to elementary students. Now back in the U.S., Tamia has continued to pursue her passion for education and is currently teaching English and Language Arts at a charter school in Newark.



Tamia

Benson joined Roots & Wings with a clear goal in mind: to become an HVAC technician. At our 2025 Gala, Benson was introduced to one of our sponsors, an HVAC company, and was granted an interview.

Last summer, Benson started working in the warehouse and was promoted in September. He now works full-time shadowing a professional in the field. This opportunity has a clear career path and provides valuable hands-on experience, which Benson complements with his HVAC studies at Morris County's VoTech .



Benson



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