



ANSWER
Scholarship

2017 Annual Report

The information in this report includes
full-year 2017, unless otherwise noted.



ANSWER Scholarship 2018-19 class



Dear Friends,

Elizabeth Bradley was nervous at her first ANSWER Scholarship luncheon, where we welcome our new scholars and honor alumnae. She had just received an ANSWER scholarship but worried whether she could raise two children, work full-time, and earn a four-year degree all at once.

Since then, Elizabeth has developed into a confident woman who has nearly completed her degree. She credits ANSWER with helping her realize that she is smart, passionate, and worthy.

My spirits have soared with many such stories during ANSWER's 12 years, including our last two as an independent nonprofit. ANSWER empowers local moms with college degrees so they can build a stronger future for themselves and their children. We are proud to influence economic and social mobility in our community by helping to educate one mother at a time.

This year has been one of strategic growth. We provided \$54,500 in scholarship funds for the 2017-18 academic year, fully transitioned to an independent governing board, and put structures in place for fundraising, budgeting, and future development.

Our Mentors for Mom program continues to provide mentors for scholars to advise on balancing the rigors of home, work and school. This year, we added a training program for new mentors and monthly meetings of all mentors to support them as they support our scholars. Our professional development workshops give scholars access to essential skills for job-hunting and careers post-graduation.

In 2018, we'll focus on where we go from here. How can ANSWER grow its base of donors? Should we give scholarships to more moms each year or increase the size of each scholarship? How do we expand but keep the feeling of camaraderie?

No matter how we answer, donors and supporters like you make it all happen. Your experience matters. Let me know if you'd like to meet with an ANSWER scholar to share tips about what it takes to land a first job in your industry. You could make an introduction that would change a mom's life.

From our founding in 2006 through 2017, ANSWER has awarded 99 scholarships to deserving mothers. Our scholars tell us they could earn their degrees because ANSWER believed in them even when they might not fully believe in themselves.

Susan Andersen, Founder and Executive Director
ANSWER Scholarship, Inc.
info@answerscholarship.org

MISSION

Our mission is to help women raising school-age children fulfill their dream of earning a college degree, while creating the desire, expectation, and priority of a college education for their children to follow in their footsteps.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY

There is a direct correlation between education and social and economic mobility. On average, a full-time worker with a bachelor's degree can earn 60 percent more than a full-time worker with a high school diploma.

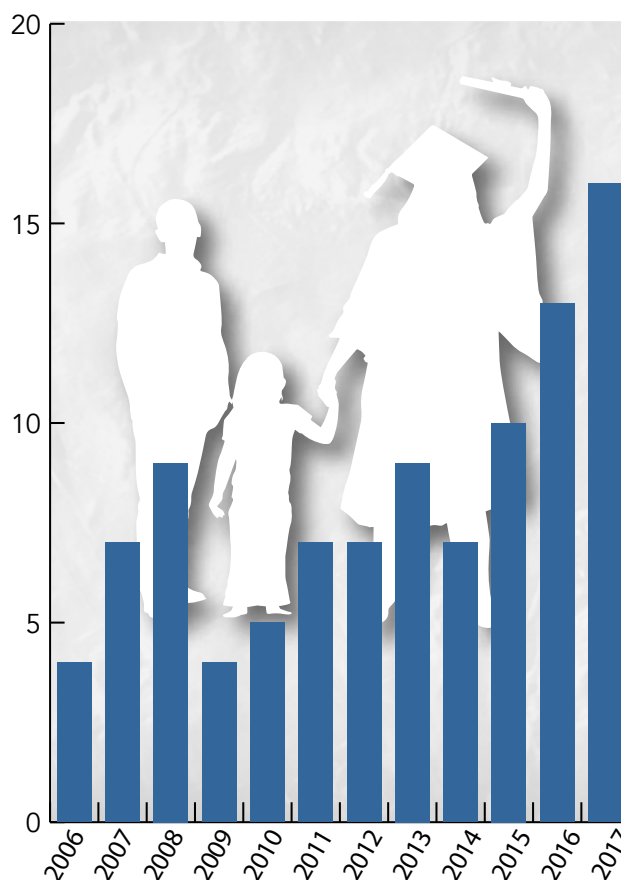
With more than 14 percent living below the poverty line in Mecklenburg County, the largest group being women, ANSWER Scholarship is committed to helping close the gap between women and social and economic opportunity by providing scholarship funding, mentoring and professional development.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

ANSWER Scholarship recipients share a common goal – to earn a college degree, while setting an example for their children to follow in their footsteps. Our scholars come from varying backgrounds but all are mothers raising school-age children, with many working full-time or part-time while balancing other life challenges.

The average scholarship amount for an ANSWER scholar in 2017 was \$3,406.

A total of 99 scholarships were awarded to 54 mothers since 2006 – increasing year-over-year (includes returning scholars). By 2020, we hope to award more than 20 scholarships annually.



SCHOLARS

Some of our scholarship recipients are highlighted below, with a complete scholar list available on our website, answerscholarship.org.



Seeking a B.A. in Art Education at Winthrop University, **Pam Brown** aspires to reach as many students as possible at a public school, fostering an environment of creativity where the children will have an opportunity to help with lesson planning. Pam lives with her husband and six children.



A single mother of four children, **Tisha Campbell** is enrolled at Johnson C. Smith University, where she is studying to earn a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in management. By providing a strong example, Tisha hopes to teach her children how education will help them persevere.



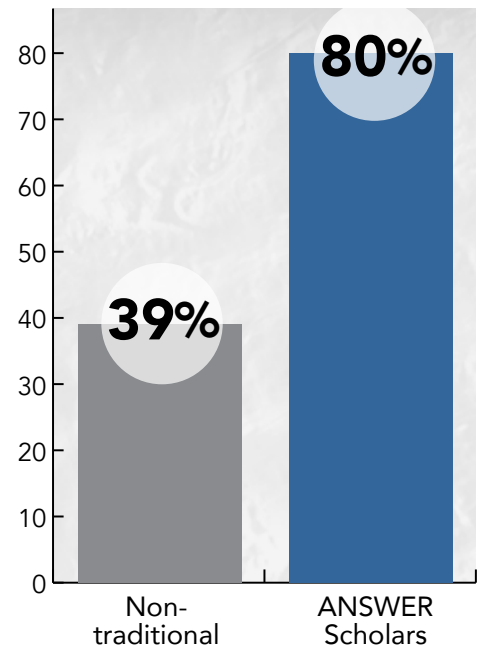
Consuella Harge is seeking a B.A. in Mathematics, with an actuarial science concentration, at UNC Charlotte. A mother of two, Consuella has faced many obstacles in her life, including lupus and long-term effects from post inflammatory fibrosis, which left her in a coma for nearly 20 days in 2014. She wants her children to understand how knowledge and education will help them to do anything in the world.

GRADUATES

Since 2006, 35 mothers graduated from local colleges and pursued full-time jobs in the fields of their choice, business ownership, or graduate school. Our scholars' high graduation rate demonstrates that ANSWER Scholarship helps advance social and economic mobility for mothers and their children.

In 2018, we anticipate ten graduates.

ANSWER Scholarship recipients graduate at a rate 2 times the national average.



ALUMNAE

Some of our alumnae are noted below, with a complete list of graduates available on our website, answerscholarship.org.



Photo courtesy of Mike Hensdill/The Gaston Gazette

While working full-time and attending classes, **Nicole McRavion** earned a bachelor's degree in educational studies, and earned spots on the President's List and Dean's List for her high GPA. Nicole plans to pursue a master's degree and spend time volunteering with ANSWER Scholarship as a mentor.

Sheri Perez-Segura graduated from Winthrop University with a bachelor's degree in family and consumer sciences, with a concentration in early childhood and adolescent studies. "The impact that my journey has had on my children is amazing. If you educate a mother, you educate the entire family."



A graduate of Winthrop University, **Jackie Bithorn** realized that she had a greater purpose in life than just having a job for the sake of income. Jackie earned a bachelor's in sociology and also holds an associate degree in criminal justice. "I want to give back and be able to do something positive, and counseling is one of my passions."

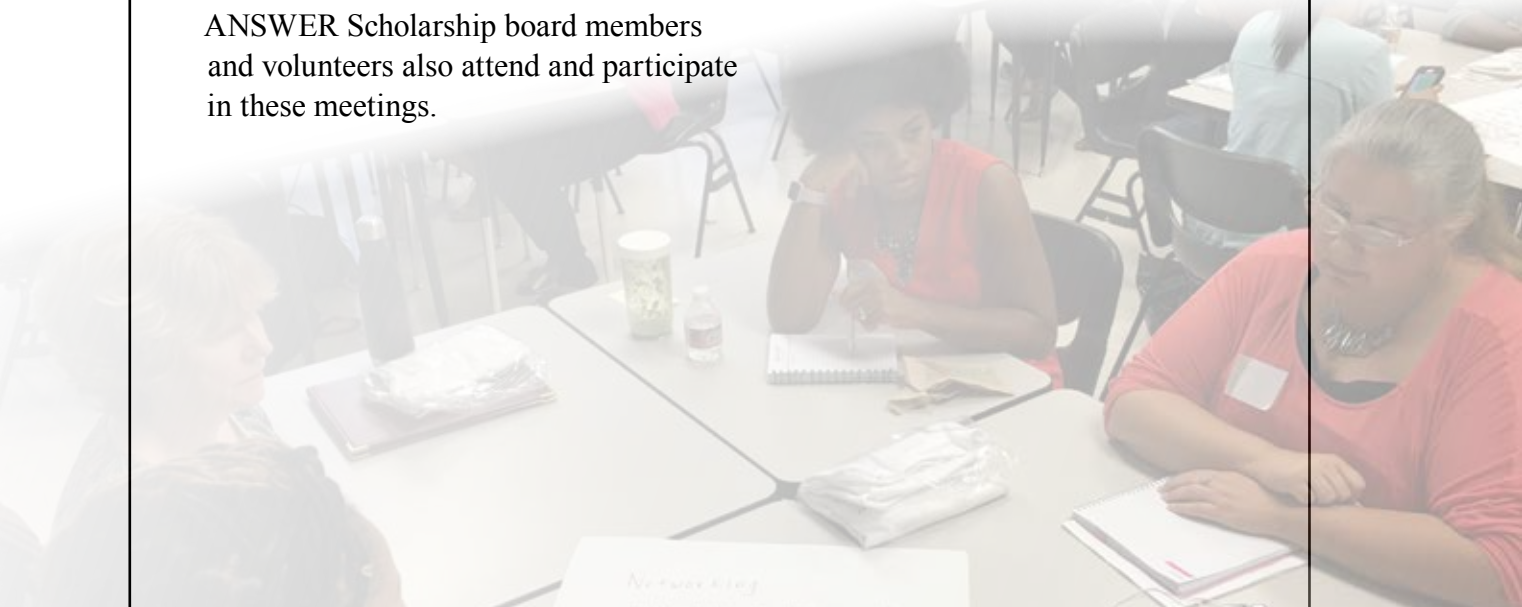


MENTORS FOR MOM PROGRAM

Mentors for Mom is our signature program. Scholarship recipients are paired with a mentor for support and guidance on balancing family, work and school. In 2017, we welcomed 12 volunteer mentors; in 2016 we had six volunteer mentors.

Scholars and mentors meet one-on-one for support, and also attend six Mentors for Mom meetings during the academic year, sharing experiences and uplifting each other in a safe, supportive environment. The meetings include professional development topics from local experts – networking, personal branding/ interview skills, resume writing, and financial planning – and are intended to provide scholars with new skill sets and valuable information for growth.

ANSWER Scholarship board members and volunteers also attend and participate in these meetings.



"My relationship with Vanja has meant so much. She has been incredibly supportive, especially in times when I did not feel like I had enough support in my life. Going to school as a single mother is challenging and overwhelming. Having a mentor felt like an emotional weight had been lifted. I can always talk to Vanja, and that is important to have in a mentor/mentee relationship."

– **Andrea Kellner**, ANSWER Scholarship recipient

"Having a mentor, formal or otherwise, means you have someone on your side who can help you navigate the unknown and talk about aspects of life. My relationship with Andrea has been effortless from the start, we share and learn from each other, and she knows I am always here to support and help in any way that I can."

– **Vanja Lane**, ANSWER Scholarship mentor

"Having a mentor has meant having an advocate to support me during this journey and guide me along the way. Through my relationship with Mary Jane, I have a great role model and advocate for education, and now I call her a friend."

– **Anita Ross**, ANSWER Scholarship recipient

"Life is about relationships. A few mentors in my life truly made a difference, and to have had a part in Anita's growth is a great joy. To see her love of children and teaching translate into her becoming a teacher, at a time when this profession faces so many challenges, reminds me that teaching is truly a calling and not a job."

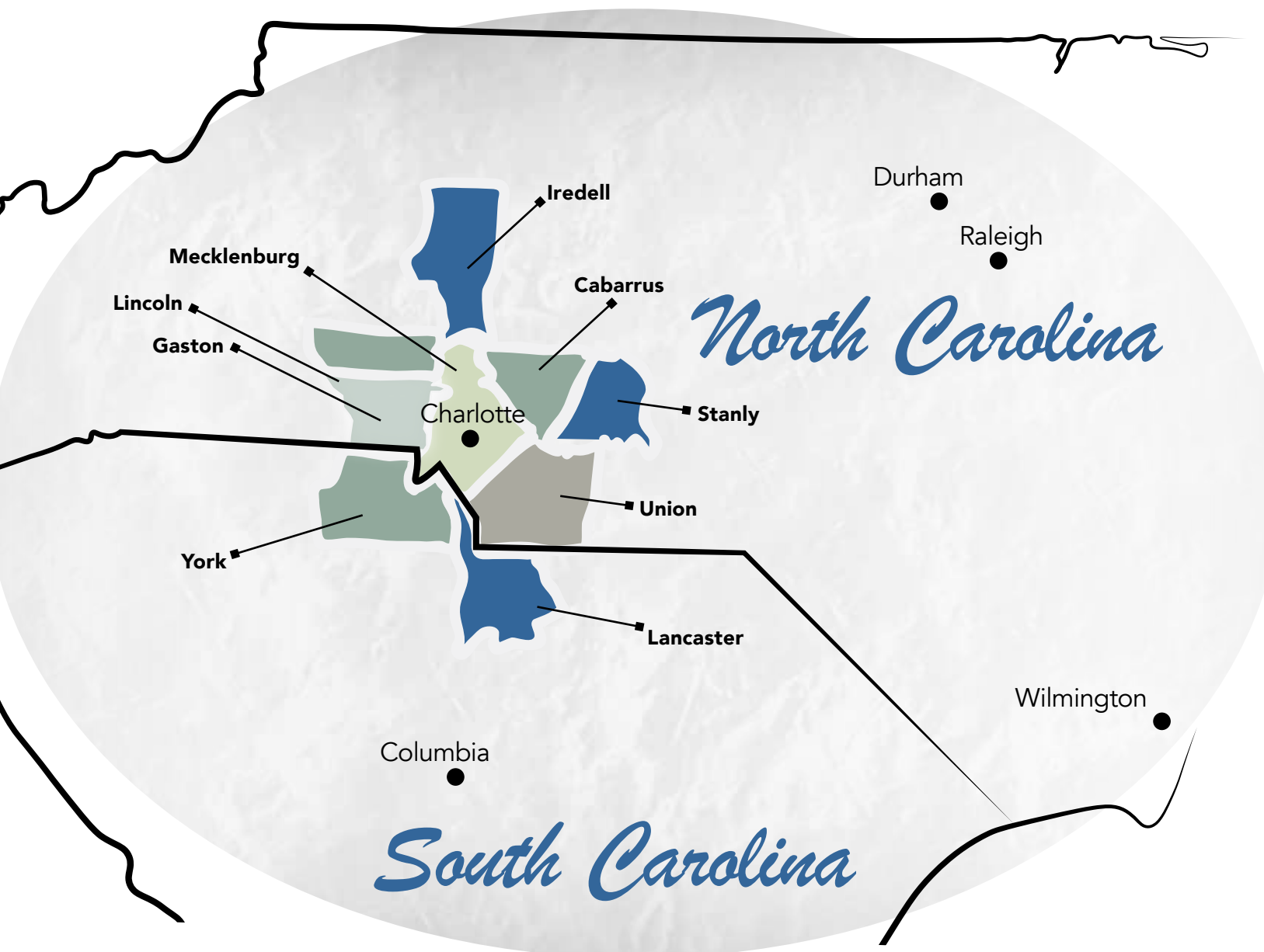
– **Mary Jane Freeman**, ANSWER Scholarship mentor

PARTNERSHIPS

ANSWER Scholarship works with many organizations, including universities and colleges, houses of worship, local businesses, and nonprofits to help advance our mission and elevate issues affecting women, children and communities.

Our university partners include UNC Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith, Pfeiffer, Montreat, Gardner Webb, Winthrop, Belmont Abbey, Carolinas College of Health Sciences, CPCC, and South Piedmont Community College. Moms residing and attending school in these nine counties may apply for an ANSWER Scholarship: Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Stanly, and Union in North Carolina, and Lancaster and York in South Carolina.

In 2017, we partnered with local nonprofits – including the North Mecklenburg Woman’s Club, Carolina Women’s Club, and SHARE Charlotte, to name a few – to help raise scholarship funds and bring more awareness to women’s issues.



FUNDRAISING

Cultivating relationships with current donors and establishing new partnerships is important to the success of ANSWER's fundraising initiatives. In late 2017, a strategic development plan was crafted to expand the organization's reach. The 2018 plan includes launching the Community Innovations Series, a speaker's program about topics impacting women and families in our region. The bi-annual program will be hosted by area universities and open to the community. ANSWER will also institute a new large-scale fundraising event (more details to come). As the organization grows, the strategic development plan will remain the cornerstone for new activities.

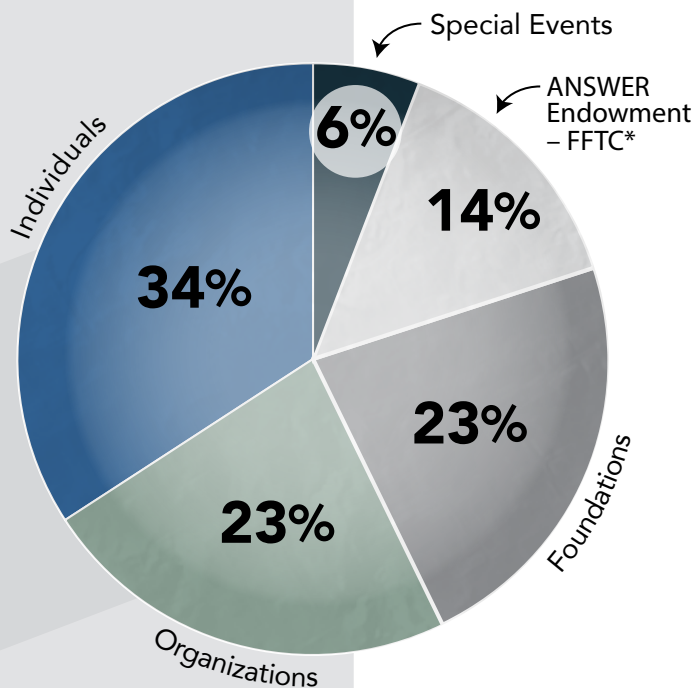
While we partner with local organizations and campaigns to broaden fundraising opportunities, we also commit to doing the work necessary to engage and coordinate campaigns to help advance social and economic mobility for families and communities. One such annual fundraiser includes a pancake breakfast hosted by a local restaurant – The King's Kitchen. In 2017, we hosted more than 80 individuals and made a profit of \$4,818.



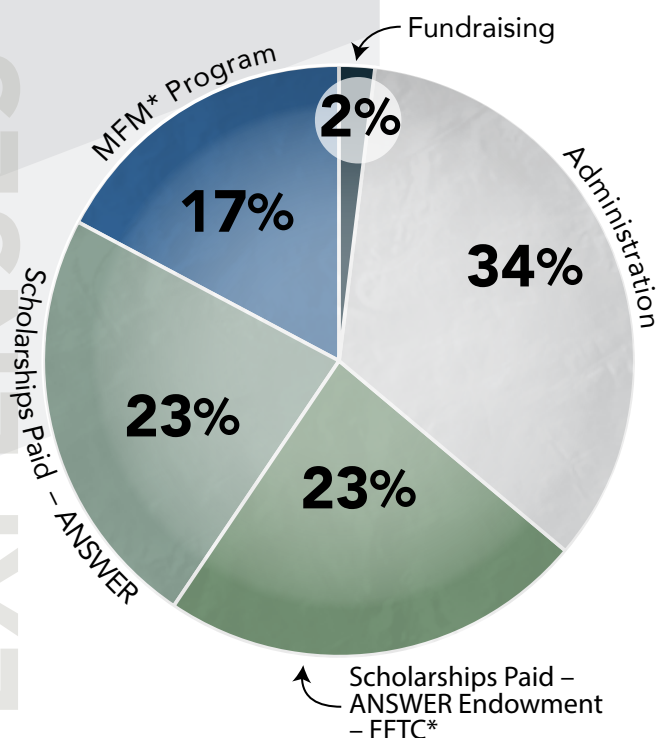
FINANCIALS

In 2017, ANSWER Scholarship totaled \$201,452 in revenue and \$116,752 in expenses, as outlined in the charts below. Through the generosity of individuals, organizations and other fundraising channels, we awarded \$54,500 in scholarships – an increase of more than \$11,000 from the previous year. Funding for the Mentors for Mom professional development programs was \$19,711.

To see the Report 990, please visit our website, answerscholarship.org.



| | 2017 | 2016 |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Individuals | \$68,783 | \$43,738 |
| Organizations | 46,058 | 18,843 |
| Foundations | 47,000 | 33,500 |
| ANSWER Endowment – FFTC* | 27,358 | 43,189 |
| Special Events | 12,253 | 8,925 |
| Total Revenue | \$201,452 | \$148,195 |



| | 2017 | 2016 |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| MFM* Program | \$19,711 | \$13,448 |
| Scholarships Paid – ANSWER | 27,142 | 43,189 |
| Scholarships Paid – ANSWER Endowment – FFTC* | 27,358 | |
| Administration | 40,220 | 20,703 |
| Fundraising | 2,321 | 1,598 |
| Total Expenses | \$116,752 | \$78,938 |

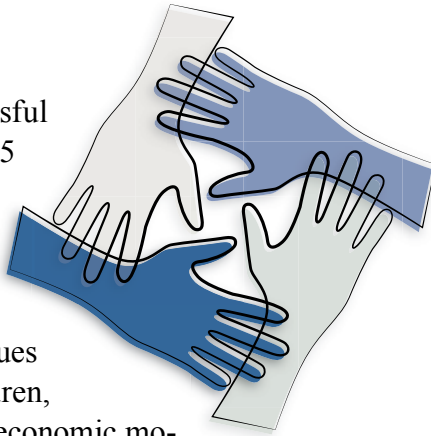
* MFM: Mentors for Mom
FFTC: Foundation for the Carolinas

VOLUNTEER

ANSWER Scholarship is successful because of its volunteers, with 95 percent of our work accomplished through volunteerism. Our volunteers represent diverse backgrounds, sharing a commitment to addressing issues affecting local women and children, including advancing social and economic mobility. In 2017, we had 34 registered volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the organization, including mentoring, professional development programming and facilitation, marketing and communications, and fundraising, to name a few. Please contact Susan Harper at 773-725-2750 or susan.harper18030@gmail.com to learn more.

**Thank you to
ANSWER Scholarship donors,
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and volunteers!**



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DONATE

To make a donation, please visit answerscholarship.org, and select Donate from the homepage,

OR make check payable to ANSWER Scholarship, Inc., and mail to 6420 Rea Rd, Suite 112, Charlotte, NC 28277

Please connect with us at info@answerscholarship.org.





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