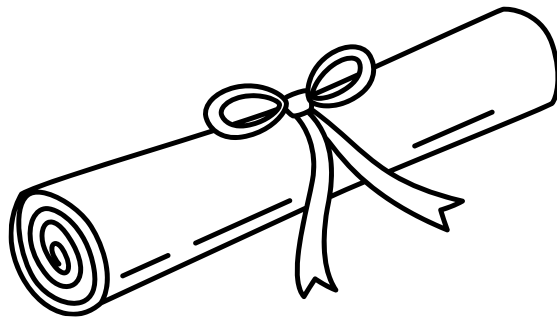




ANSWER
Scholarship

2024-2025

IMPACT REPORT



Our Vision and Mission



Vision

To create a brighter future for moms and their children.

Mission

To mentor and prepare mothers of school-age children to achieve a college education and inspire them to be role models of academic, personal, and professional success for their children.



A Message From Our Executive Director

Olga Elmore had a tough start in life. She was born in Khabarovsk, Russia, and spent her earliest years in an orphanage. At age 4, she was adopted by an American family and had to learn English and a new way of life.

Olga graduated in May from Appalachian State University's Hickory campus with a B.S. in Business Management. It took the single mother of two sons more than ten years to earn her degree, but she did it. "I think once you set your mind to something, regardless of what happens in life, just persevere towards your goal," she told the Hickory Daily Record.

Olga is one of 13 mothers who graduated from college in the 2024-2025 academic year with support from ANSWER Scholarship. They studied at UNC Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith University, Catawba College, and other institutions.

I marvel at how ANSWER has grown. A secret to our success is our Mentors For Mom program. Led by Martha Honeycutt, it provides a volunteer mentor for each scholar. Our mentors were in the news this year, including an interview on Queen City News.

We continue to develop our fundraising outreach in a challenging financial climate for non-profits. Our May luncheon, held for the first time at Carmel Country Club, was a great success. Nearly 160 people attended. Sixty-five were first-time guests, and more than half became donors. We raised \$40,460 from the event, a new record.

This year we also received our largest grant ever, a two-year, \$100,000 gift from the Principal Foundation. Their generosity allows us to help more moms pursue an education.

The challenges we face are familiar. We continue to seek effective ways to promote our program to attract the highest quality applicants. We also want to increase donations to ensure ANSWER's stability for years to come.

The theme of our mentoring workshop series this year was No Limit. It's true for our scholar moms. Thanks to your support, it's true for ANSWER Scholarship, too.

Susan Andersen
Founder and Executive Director

Scholars and Alumnae Reaching and Rising



ANSWER Scholarship provided \$105,300 to 24 scholars in our 2024-2025 program year, with a total of \$951,502 awarded since 2006.

We had an 86% graduation rate with 13 moms graduating in 2024-2025. These scholars attended nine different colleges across the greater Charlotte area. Many different degrees were also represented, including nursing, psychology, business management, education and communications.

Every year we survey our alumnae and this year's survey gave us some amazing details.

- 94% are currently employed
- 77% of the jobs require a college degree
- 84% say their position is in their field of study
- 78% are satisfied/very satisfied with their position
- 79% are making above \$50,000 a year with 10% earning over \$100,000 annually
- 79% say that their schooling has positively influenced their children

As part of this yearly survey, we also ask about their children. These statements always make us smile just a bit more.

"My older son graduated from UNC Charlotte a year after myself! And my younger daughter is currently in her second year at NC State University!"

"ANSWER Scholarship changed my life for the better! I run a thriving grassroots nonprofit organization, and I know that I owe much of this to ANSWER- for seeing a single mom and providing hope, instead of seeing my situation as hopeless."

"My son learned how to enjoy school. Before he did not enjoy going to school. He now loves school and is more disciplined. This year, thus far, he has perfect attendance. And it is all thanks to ANSWER Scholarship and the example that I was able to provide for my son."

Mentors For Mom Program

Powered by Purpose



ANSWER's Mentors For Mom(MFM) program is in its 14th year. The growth of this program and the feedback we have received from both scholars and alumnae reminds us that it truly makes ANSWER the success that that it is.

Our theme for this scholar year was No Limit. Through our workshops, scholars discovered there is "no limit" to lifelong learning, problem solving, building community, and empowering their voices and their presence. Scholars say these workshops give them a chance to be part of a community that is hard to find at school and help them understand that they are not alone in this educational journey.

Scholars and alumnae often describe the MFM program as life changing. They point to financial support as the foundation, with more than 80% saying it was invaluable in helping them stay on track toward their degrees. Workshops also stood out. In our recent scholar survey, 83% rated professional development workshops a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, and 92% did the same for personal development workshops.

The definition of mentor is someone with valuable experience and knowledge who offers guidance and support. Our scholars, current and past, consistently highlight the encouragement, guidance, and sense of community that MFM provides, crediting the program with preparing them not just for graduation, but for lasting success. While our scholars feel empowered by this program, we also see the impact on our mentors, too. Many stay connected to their scholars years after the scholars have completed their degrees, creating lifelong connections.

Some scholars return and give of their time and talent. Take Elizabeth Bradley who has returned to be a mentor. Read what she had to say about the importance of mentorship and finding a community in this article from Philanthropy Focus from Foundation For The Carolinas: [Educating Mothers, Empowering Generations](#).

Volunteers and Community Village Behind the Victories



Scholar Cindy Barner with Sheila Wright



Hisayo with scholars at our Give Back workshop

ANSWER has more than 60 volunteers who give of themselves and their time each year. Our volunteers strengthen our core and show our scholars there is no limit to the village that surrounds them.

This year we would like to recognize two volunteer superstars, Sheila Wright and Hisayo Gallo. These women personify vivid volunteerism.

Sheila Wright first heard about ANSWER in 2019 at a church event where she learned about the organization's mission. Soon after, she began volunteering on the Professional Development Committee and later became a mentor.

"I never had a mentor while I was in school, and I believe it is such an incredible asset for women pursuing their degrees," she said. "ANSWER provides that village of women who support, encourage, and cheer for one another. If I can help somebody along the way, then my living will not be in vain." Sheila now also serves on the Scholar Selection Committee as Co-chair.

Hisayo Gallo has been a dedicated volunteer with ANSWER for more than 12 years starting back when the organization supported only a handful of scholars. She has served as a mentor, later rising to the position of Chair of Mentor Enrichment. Since 2020, she has led the Scholar Selection Committee, currently serving as Co-chair with Sheila Wright.

What inspires her most are the scholars themselves—their resilience, determination, and powerful stories: "Being part of their journeys is deeply meaningful to me."

Hisayo says that ANSWER is more than an organization, it's a community built on hope, perseverance, and the belief that education transforms not only lives, but generations. Hisayo is an essential part of that community.

ANSWER works to ensure our scholars have information and access to other community services. We have 59 organizations in our network including family, legal and wellness offerings. We added two more this year, Ausome Abilities (Neurodivergent Advocacy) and financial consulting w/TIAA. These partners are available to our scholars so they can stay focused on completing their degrees.

Events and Supporters

Purpose Meets Celebration



This year's Fall Festival Fundraiser was once again a joyful day of fun, family, and connection. Scholars and their families joined friends and supporters of ANSWER for an afternoon filled with laughter and generosity. Together, we raised \$57,000 in support of our programs.

In May, we introduced a new tradition. While we retired our longtime Pancake Breakfast for logistical reasons, we elevated the May Luncheon into a signature fundraising event. Always a special occasion to honor our graduates and welcome new and returning scholars, this year's luncheon also became a powerful celebration of generosity. With the support of faithful friends and many first-time donors, the inaugural event raised an inspiring \$40,460.

That is \$97,460 from both events that directly supported our scholar moms through Mentors for Mom workshops, emergency education grants, and other vital resources that make success possible.

ANSWER is deeply grateful for the tremendous and continued support we receive from generous individuals, foundations, and organizations across our community. We are honored by the ongoing commitment of the Keith and LuAnn Driscoll Foundation and the MER Foundation. Their annual support strengthens our mission year after year. We also extend heartfelt thanks to community partners such as the North Mecklenburg Woman's Club and several houses of worship, including St. Stephen United Methodist Church, St. Matthew Catholic Church, Myers Park United Methodist Church – Goodness Gracious! Gift Shop, and St. Ann Catholic Church. Synchrony Financial once again continued their steadfast support of our scholars and programs. Together, these donors power our mission and make scholar dreams come true.

Keith & LuAnn Driscoll
Foundation

MER
FOUNDATION

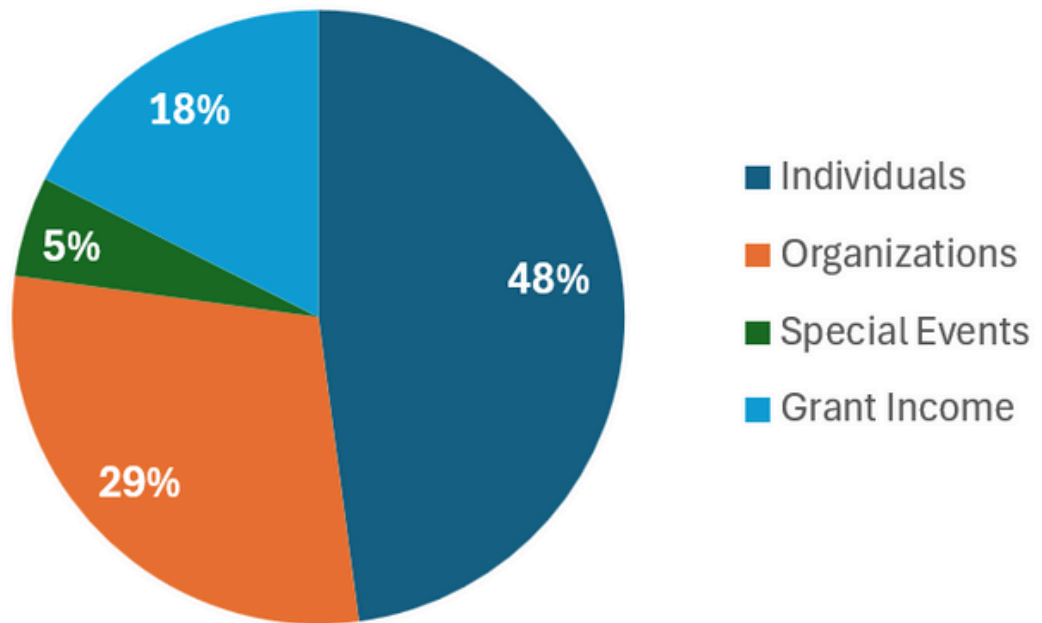

St. Stephen
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH


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WOMAN'S CLUB

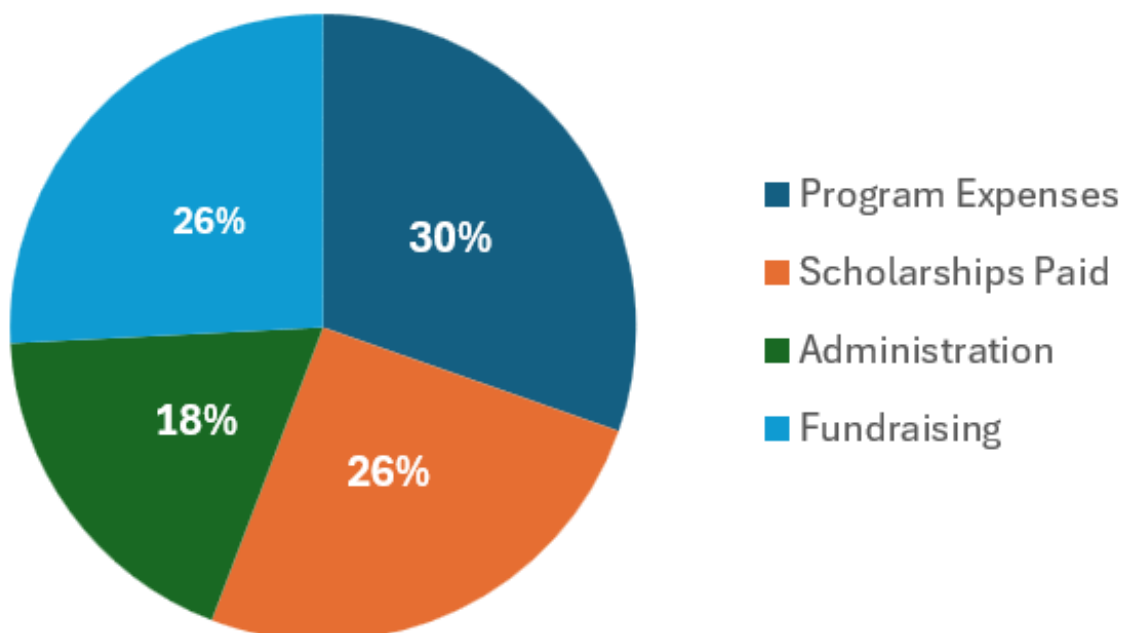
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Financials

Operating Revenue



Operating Expense



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