The Case for Fostering HOPE LOUISIANA



Fostering Hope Louisiana addresses the orthodontic and mental health needs of children in foster care across the state of Louisiana.

THE CHALLENGE

Did you know that Medicaid does not cover orthodontic care, including braces? That leaves children in foster care, virtually all of whom are covered by Medicaid, without the resources or advocacy to acquire costly care needed to have a healthy smile.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Fostering Hope Louisiana steps in, partnering with the **judicial system** which recommends children in care for our work, our **orthodontic partners** who have a heart for our mission and offer their services at reduced rates, and our **donors, sponsors, and friends** in the community who make it all possible by funding the remaining costs.

But our service to children in foster care goes beyond braces – Fostering Hope Louisiana offers wraparound programs to these children in the way of financial literacy, life skills, and mental health supports.

A Message from Our Founder



I have spent much of my career advocating for children in foster care—first as an attorney representing youth in the child welfare system, and now through this organization.

I was inspired to establish Fostering Hope Louisiana when I saw firsthand how difficult it was for children in foster care to access something as basic and life-changing as orthodontic care. Time and again, braces were delayed or denied due to cost, systemic barriers, or a lack of consistent advocacy, leaving children to carry not just dental challenges into adulthood, but the emotional weight that comes with them.

Orthodontic care is about so much more than straight teeth. For children in foster care —who have already experienced instability, trauma, and loss—it can be transformative. A healthy smile builds confidence, encourages self-expression, and helps children feel seen, valued, and proud of themselves. I watched young people hesitate to smile, speak up, or fully engage simply because they felt embarrassed or overlooked. No child should feel that way, especially when they are already navigating so many challenges beyond their control.

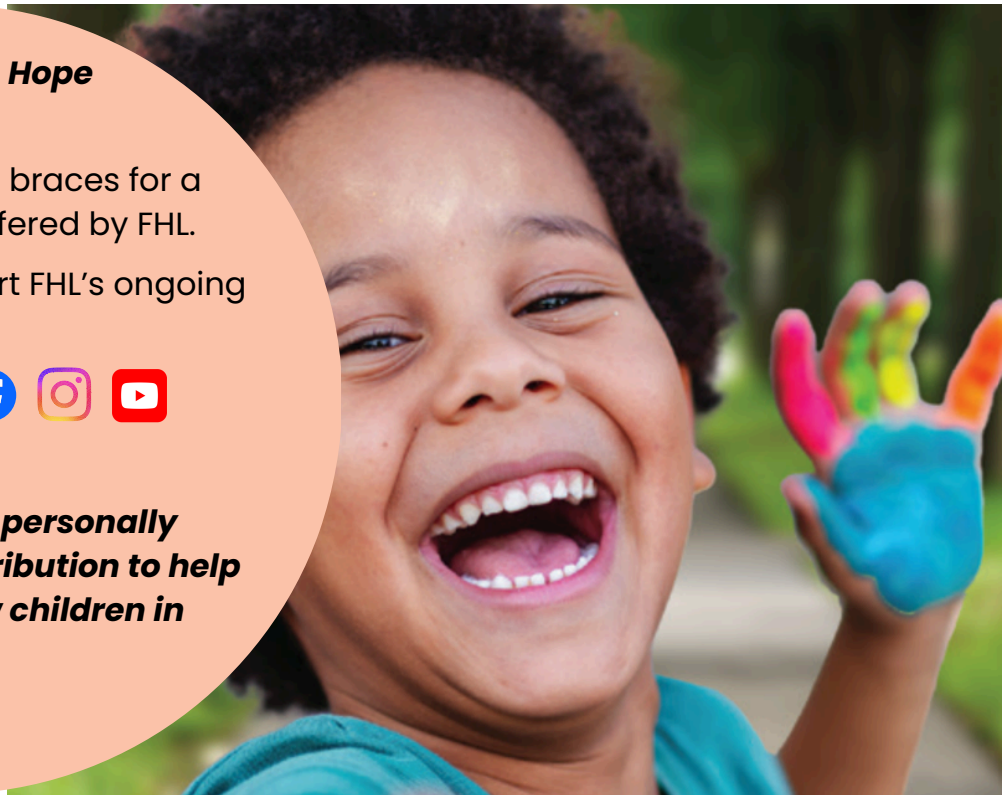
At Fostering Hope Louisiana, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to grow with confidence and dignity. By removing barriers to orthodontic care, we are not only improving oral health—we are helping children reclaim their voices, their confidence, and their sense of possibility. This work is deeply personal to me, and it is why I remain committed to ensuring that foster youth receive the care they deserve, when they need it most.

With Gratitude and Hope,
Leslie Lacy, J.D.
Founder and Executive Director, Fostering Hope Louisiana

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Your support makes the Fostering Hope Louisiana (FHL) mission possible.

- Make a one-time gift to cover braces for a foster youth and programs offered by FHL.
- Begin a monthly gift to support FHL's ongoing financial sustainability.
- Follow our work and share!



Will you make a personally significant contribution to help FHL serve 10 new children in 2026?

I got to know Leslie Lacy as I was finishing high school, after spending a period of time in foster care in Baton Rouge. For many young people like me, something as basic as orthodontic care feels completely out of reach. Medicaid doesn't cover braces, and when you're navigating the foster care system, it's hard enough just to keep up. Worrying about your smile is the last thing you have energy for. Leslie saw how deeply that affected me. Her concern for my orthodontic health wasn't cosmetic; it was transformative. Having access to braces gave me confidence at a moment when I needed it most and helped me believe I deserved care, dignity, and a future with possibilities.

That confidence changed the trajectory of my life. I went on to attend Spelman College and later earned my master's degree from Columbia University. Today, I work in project management, and I know my smile opens doors for me professionally and personally. I carry myself differently because someone intervened when the system fell short. I am profoundly grateful to Fostering Hope Louisiana and to Leslie Lacy for seeing me, investing in me, and helping me step into the future with confidence. - **Brittany N. Butler, Former FHL Youth**





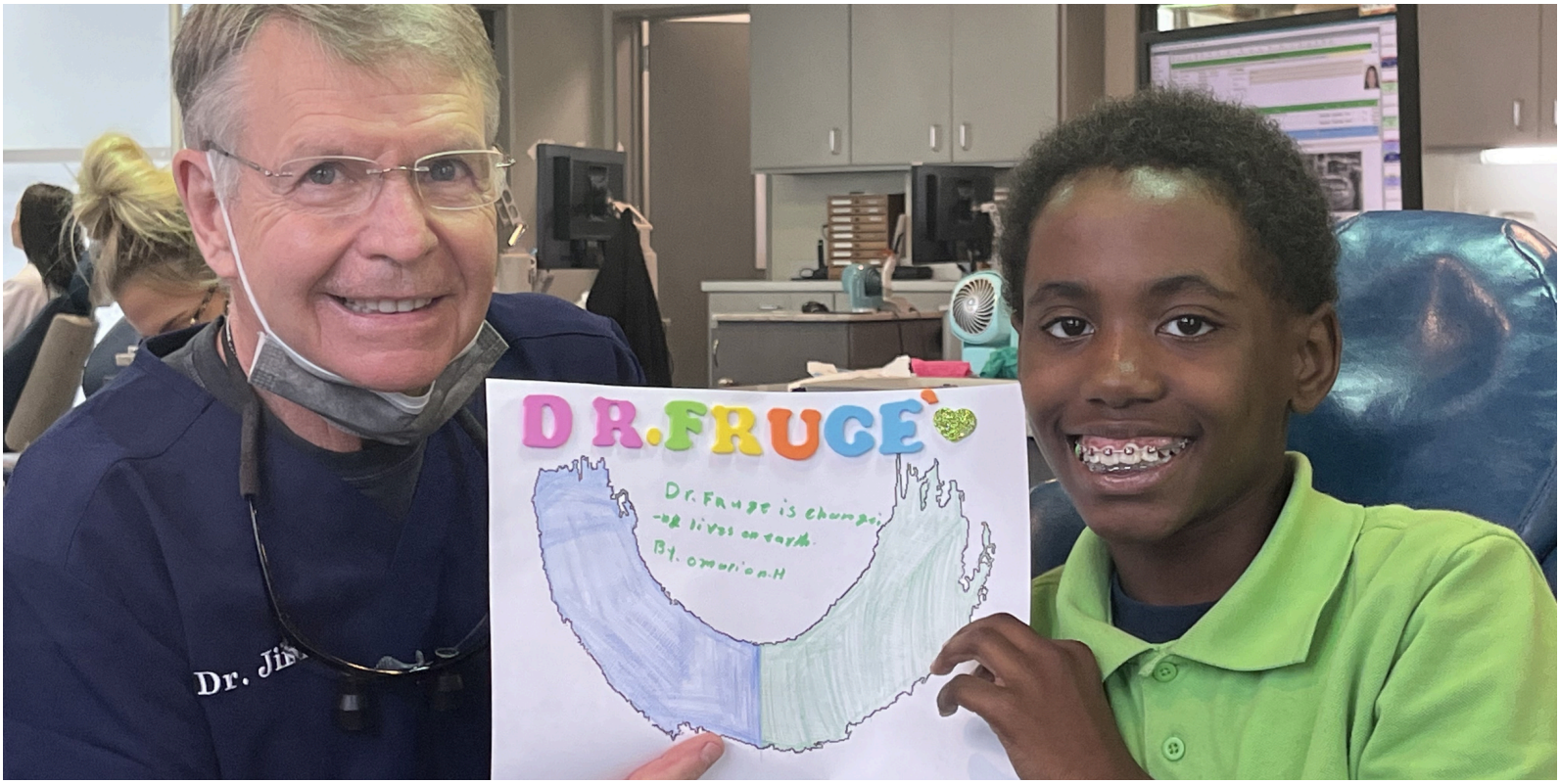
Fostering Hope Louisiana (FHL) by the Numbers

- **5 years** of existence as a nonprofit organization
- **8 regions** in which FHL currently serves children, with the goal to serve children in all **9 regions**
- **36 children** supported over the past 5 years with braces, orthodontic care, and supportive programming

Dozens of Louisiana children in foster care are on the FHL waiting list at any given time. Will you help us meet this need?

Cost to serve one foster youth: $5,000

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Fostering Hope Louisiana (FHL) offers far more than orthodontic care. It provides stability, dignity, and renewed confidence to youth who have experienced trauma and disruption. By removing financial barriers and pairing orthodontic services with education in life skills, communication, financial literacy, and mental health, FHL supports the whole child.

What makes this work especially meaningful to me is its intentional focus on preparation and empowerment. Our youth are not simply receiving braces; they are developing self-advocacy, responsibility, and self-worth; skills that influence how they see themselves and how they engage with the world around them.

Leslie's passion and trauma-informed, innovative vision for orthodontic care inspired me to become involved. As a retired educator/psychologist, I have seen firsthand how access to care, combined with thoughtful education and emotional support, can transform outcomes for vulnerable youth. It is an honor to support an organization so deeply committed to nurturing lifelong smiles, confidence, and brighter futures.

- **Dr. Bettye Mashack, Fostering Hope Louisiana Board Member**





Fostering Hope Louisiana
2024 Statement of Financial Position

Revenue

Contributions: $67,190

Total Revenue: $67,190

Expenses

Program Services: $30,055
Management & General: $5,382
Fundraising: $265

Total Expenses: $35,702

The financial support of our community is Fostering Hope Louisiana's sole source of revenue.
We rely on the generosity of our donors - of all types and amounts - to provide services to deserving foster youth across the state.

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The Case for Fostering HOPE LOUISIANA

Leslie Lacy's passion drew me to Fostering Hope Louisiana. As she described the orthodontic and mental health needs of children in Louisiana's foster care system, I realized I had witnessed similar struggles in my home state. My son attended therapeutic schools, where many students were in foster families or state residential facilities. Some were irreparably harmed by abuse and neglect, and even the fortunate ones—those in stable placements—were hungry for attention, care, and affirmation. While our healthcare system covers treatment for anxiety and depression, poor dental health is dismissed as cosmetic. Yet the shame of being afraid to smile or have a photo taken quietly fuels anxiety, depression, and isolation—and leads to challenges in school, relationships, and beyond. At FHL, we believe restoring a smile is the first step toward restoring confidence, curiosity, and hope.

Orthodontic care is not easy—years of appointments, painful adjustments, and long-term commitment—so when FHL accepts a child, we walk with them for years, becoming deeply invested in their physical and emotional well-being. I've experienced this while mentoring two young boys in the program. What began as conversations about braces quickly grew into meaningful relationships built on trust, discussing topics like school, sports, friendships, and dreams for the future. Thanks to our dental partners, we're able to reduce the cost of orthodontic care, while also providing life skills, financial literacy, and mental health support. With increased funding, FHL can say yes to more children, expand support across Louisiana, and surround foster youth with the care, guidance, and opportunity they deserve—pointing them toward college or a career, stronger relationships, and a fulfilling life. - **Rob Delena, Fostering Hope Louisiana Board Chair**



Fostering Hope Louisiana's Must Urgent Priorities Are...

- **To serve 10 foster youth in 2026, which necessitates $50,000 in funding**
- **To build long-term sustainability, ensuring Fostering Hope Louisiana has the capacity to expand its reach and deepen its impact.**

Will you help Fostering Hope Louisiana rise to the challenge?

One-time and monthly gifts are deeply appreciated.

Scan the code at right to view sponsorship opportunities or to make a gift online.

Fostering Hope Louisiana Tax ID: 85-2886657

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