



When crisis calls, Charlotte Family Housing (CFH) answers. In late 2019, CFH joined Children and Family Services partners, United Way of Central Carolinas and Community Link, Mecklenburg County, the city of Charlotte, and other local nonprofit organizations, to form a coalition organized to respond to the needs of tenants being displaced due to the closure of the Lake Arbor apartments in West Charlotte. Local government forced the owners of this apartment complex to clean and renovate buildings that were riddled by pest infestations, mold, and other substandard conditions. CFH's assistance included individualized assessments of the residents to determine their critical needs, eligibility for financial support and wrap-around services, and relocation to livable dwellings.

Despite the horrendous conditions, many tenants continued to live at Lake Arbor because they did not have to pay rent due to various lawsuits involving the dilapidated dwellings. In December of 2019, just before the year-end deadline for all tenants to evacuate, one such tenant, Shante, connected with CFH. Within a year, Shante graduated from our program with her first savings account, the establishment of a home business to complement her wages from a full-time job in warehouse distribution, and the keys to a stable, unsubsidized three-bedroom apartment for herself and her two daughters, ages six and ten.

When asked to reflect on her participation in the CFH program, Shante said her licensed clinical social worker, Brook, was "on her from day one, so helpful and so encouraging." In a thank you email to Brook the week of her graduation, Shante wrote:

*Brook, thank you for always seeing so much potential in me. So many times, I've doubted myself, but you always let me know I had what it takes to be successful in this program. Today, I graduate this program with confidence that I'll be able to make it on my own, using the tools I've gained in this program. I know how to budget. I know how to save money. I'm also disciplined to take care of my priorities. When I started Charlotte Family Housing, I was broke and broken. I was on the verge of being homeless. CFH saved me and today I say thank you. Thank you to the staff. Thank you to the Board of Directors, the volunteers, and, especially, Brook. Today, I graduate a conqueror... a fighter who doesn't give up. Today, I graduate with stability, a savings plan, and money saved. These words won't measure up to how thankful I truly am for everything big and small that this program has done for me and my family. I'll be forever grateful.*

*P.S. I couldn't go away without mentioning one of the volunteers who took time out of his busy schedule to meet with me and give me some great business advice. Because of the program, I have my own website and a side income to help me on my journey. Thank you for all the referrals to the amazing programs, I couldn't and wouldn't be as successful had it NOT been for CFH. You are all are amazing. Namaste.*

The light in CFH honors the light in you, Shante. Namaste.