



**FAMILIES
FIRST**
newsletter

Spring Edition



2026

Families First

Spring



Spreading Holiday Joy: Families First Gift Pickup Events



This past holiday season, Families First brought warmth and cheer to families across Western Massachusetts and Greater Boston with our **Holiday Gift Pickup events**. These events provide parents with the opportunity to **select and bring home gifts for their children**, allowing them to celebrate in ways that are meaningful to their own families and traditions. Through the generosity of our supporters, volunteers, and staff, we were able to make the season brighter for children and parents alike.



In Western Massachusetts, thanks to the generosity of donors who responded to our holiday call for support, Families First was able to purchase toys for participating families. In Greater Boston, we were also joined by **Toys for Tots**, who generously donated 200 additional toys. Several Families First board members also contributed toy donations, helping ensure that every child received something special.

Families received more than gifts. In Western Mass, **United Way of Pioneer Valley** provided backpacks filled with **kid-friendly food**, while in Greater Boston a grant from **United Way of Mass Bay** allowed us to provide over 200 **grocery store gift cards**. Many parents shared that this support was especially helpful during the holiday season.

The success of these events would not have been possible without our amazing volunteers. In Western Massachusetts, volunteers came from **Chestnut Community Alliance, Community Foundation Western Mass**, and **Greenfield and Northampton Cooperative Bank**, helping make the event smooth and welcoming. In Greater Boston, volunteer support came from **Boston Children's Hospital, Takeda, Lego Foundation, PwC, Webster Bank**, and **Details by Driscoll**, ensuring every family felt supported and celebrated.

Events like these are about more than gifts. They provide parents with an opportunity to share meaningful moments with their children and experience the joy of seeing their child's face light up with excitement. They also reflect the strength of community when families, donors, partners, staff, and volunteers come together.

Overall, our Holiday Gift Pickup events were a warm and joyful way for families to come together, celebrate, and feel supported. We are grateful to everyone who made these celebrations possible and look forward to continuing this tradition in the years to come.



New Paths, Stronger Communities



This spring marks an exciting period of growth and connection at Families First as we continue expanding our programs to better reflect and serve the communities around us.

We are proud to welcome **our first Portuguese-speaking Program Facilitator, Erica Silva**, to the Families First team. Originally from Brazil, Erica brings more than a decade of experience as a Home Visitor and Parent Support professional, along with over 24 years of living in the United States. Her work is grounded in meeting families where they are, building trust, and creating meaningful opportunities for parents to engage, learn, and grow together.

In **February 2026**, we launched our very **first program offered in Portuguese with Somerville Public Schools**, a major milestone for our organization. This initiative has already made a powerful impact, expanding access to Portuguese-speaking families and creating space to celebrate culture, language, and community. Participation has been strong, and families have expressed excitement about being part of a program that feels both welcoming and reflective of their experiences.

We are also thrilled to have recently welcomed **two bilingual Spanish-English Program Facilitators**, Nicolasa Lopez and Glenda Almonte-Morales. Both bring a wealth of experience supporting families and share a deep commitment to strengthening communities through parent empowerment and connection. Their presence further enhances our ability to reach and support a broader range of families.

In addition to expanding our language offerings, we introduced **a new Self-Care Session** for alumni parents, designed in direct response to feedback from families and alumni. This workshop creates a supportive space for participants to explore stress, connect with one another, and learn practical strategies for well-being. Through group discussions, participant-led conversations, mindful exercises, and breakout activities, the session encourages reflection and community-building. **The pilot launched on March 18** with an incredible turnout of **60 alumni in attendance**.

Together, these efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to growing alongside the families we serve, ensuring that every parent feels seen, supported, and empowered.



Erica Silva



Nicolasa Lopez



Glenda Almonte-Morales

Western Massachusetts Spotlight



This spring, we are excited to highlight some of the amazing people and partnerships making a difference in Western Massachusetts.

We are proud to recognize **Kisra Campbell, Program Facilitator**, who has been a valued member of the Families First team for the past two years. Kisra demonstrates a deep passion for her work and cares deeply about the families she supports, always showing love and respect in her approach. She plays an important role in **connecting parents to community resources** and is consistently willing to support both families and fellow team members. As a member of the **Families First Advisory Council**, Kisra also serves as a bridge between Families First and community partners, strengthening relationships and expanding our impact. In addition to her work with Families First, Kisra is also the **founder of Mujeres Al Poder**, further reflecting her commitment to uplifting and empowering her community.

We recently welcomed **Maritza Martinez** to the Families First team as a Program Assistant. In her short time with us, Maritza has already made a strong impact, supporting families and contributing to the smooth running of our programs. We are thrilled to have her on board and look forward to seeing her continued contributions.

Our work in Western Massachusetts is strengthened by the incredible organizations we partner with. Some of our key partners



Kisra Campbell



Maritza Martinez

this year include **The Care Center, Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start, the Madrina Project** through the Women of Color Health Equity Collective, and **Mujeres al Poder**. We are also proud to continue our long-standing collaboration with **Valley Opportunity Council**, who have been supporting Families First since we expanded into the region. These partnerships help us reach more families and provide meaningful resources to the communities we serve.

The work happening in Western Massachusetts is a testament to the power of partnership, community, and dedicated individuals who make Families First's mission possible.

Parent Leader Highlights



Precious Jones

Precious Jones is a shining example of the impact our Parent Ambassadors have on the Families First community. Dedicated to supporting families in our parenting programs, she actively represents Families First at local events and community gatherings. Always ready to promote our programs, Precious encourages parents to participate, stay engaged, and connect with valuable resources. Known for her responsibility, respect, and positive energy, she brings motivation and warmth to every interaction. Her passion for representing Families First helps strengthen our connections and presence in the community, making a real difference for the families we serve.

Roxanna Ramirez

Roxanna Ramirez, a mother from Dorchester, shares that her biggest accomplishment this past year was “finding myself” and “finding my truth” while being part of the program. “This program was so impactful. It helped me shape and develop a strong mentality following my trauma,” she says. “It gave me a safe space and also a community of support behind it.” Roxanna highlights how meaningful it was to connect with other parents, sharing that “through this program I met other moms who with their testimonies built me up mentally and emotionally.”

She also credits the facilitators for creating a welcoming and supportive environment from the start and appreciated the twice a week sessions that helped her stay engaged. “I will forever carry the lessons learned and the new friendships obtained,” she says. Roxanna hopes other parents can experience the same kind of support, calling programs like this “essential for families,” and expressing gratitude for the “knowledge, love, and support.”

