



**Media Contact:**

Olivia Biggs

(740) 304-4413

[Olivia.Biggs@nursefamilypartnership.org](mailto:Olivia.Biggs@nursefamilypartnership.org)

## **NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE FOR NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AND CHILD FIRST ANNOUNCES NEW PARENT AMBASSADORS**

*NFP and Child First graduates selected to advocate nationally to expand each program*

**DENVER, COLO.** (Updated March 14, 2024) — The National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership® and Child First recently announced the new class of Parent Ambassadors who will share their stories as new parents and the impact of the Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First programs with Congress and other policymakers. For the next two years, this group of Parent Ambassadors will work together to expand the Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First programs to serve more families.

These Parent Ambassadors are graduates of either the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program or Child First program, both offered through the National Service Office. NFP partners first-time moms affected by social and economic inequality with a registered nurse throughout the first 1,000 days, from pregnancy until her child's second birthday. Each nurse works with each family to build the lives they want for themselves and their children. Child First is an evidence-based, intensive, early childhood model that works with the most challenged young children and their families, helping them heal from the damaging effects of stress and trauma.

When their child turns two-years-old, each mom enrolled in Nurse-Family Partnership graduates and is encouraged to join Raising Strong, a community of fellow NFP alumni. Program graduates are invited to apply to be selected as a Nurse-Family Partnership Parent Ambassador. Likewise, caregivers who complete the Child First program are invited to apply to be a Parent Ambassador.

Parent Ambassadors serve as advocates for NFP and Child First families and work to increase access to the programs nationwide for a term of two years. The group helps spread the word about Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First by sharing their personal story and participate as an advocate through outreach opportunities such as speaking at events, attending legislative meetings and serving on community advisory boards. They also are a sounding board for leaders at the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First to ensure the program is continuously responsive to the changing needs of families.

One of the main policy goals for the Parent Ambassadors in 2024 is to continue advocacy for public funding for home visiting services. Now that the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood and Home Visiting (MIECHV) program has been passed, it's an opportunity for Parent Ambassadors to share their story and advocate for funding towards Nurse-Family Partnership programs across the country.

“Parent Ambassadors get an opportunity to engage in advanced advocacy and leadership training that is coupled with their lived experiences,” said **Sarah McGee**, chief policy and government affairs officer for the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First. “That makes this group of parent ambassadors a valuable, trusted and powerful voice at all tables that support health equity and break down barriers in social injustices.”

Parent Ambassadors serving on behalf of NFP are leaders among NFP's alumni group, Raising Strong, which is a network of 3,400 graduates of the program. In this role, they are charged by the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First with reaching current NFP families and graduates to provide support in expanding parent advocacy. This new class is the fourth group of Parent Ambassadors to advocate on behalf of the organization since 2019.

The National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First is proud to announce the members of the new class of Parent Ambassadors.

**Savannah Bertrand** of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was introduced to Western Wisconsin Nurse-Family Partnership Consortium in 2019 by her local WIC office after becoming pregnant with her second child and disclosing pre-existing mental health issues. Savannah says her NFP nurse gave her confidence to take care of her own mental health plus the reassurance that she would be an excellent parent. Savannah is a proud mother of two children with special health care needs. Through her lived experience, she is

working her dream job as a children's resource specialist where she advocates for children and families and helps them navigate the complex terrain of disability programs – all while pursuing a degree in Human Services. Her dedication to ensuring equitable access to care and support for all children, regardless of their unique needs, has been a consistent theme throughout her career. Savannah enjoys crafting and immersing herself in the captivating mysteries of true crime podcasts.

**Ruth-Ann Bucknor** discovered Nurse-Family Partnership at RVNAhealth in Connecticut when she was newly pregnant and looking for local resources and support. Ruth-Ann's NFP nurse not only aided her in accessing essential resources like prenatal care and WIC, but also provided invaluable support and insights. Since graduating NFP in 2022, Ruth-Ann is a compassionate and dedicated leader committed to creating lasting, equitable and accessible systems for future generations. She is pursuing a degree in social work and aspires to attain her doctoral degree. Ruth-Ann serves on the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet and the Governor-appointed Early Childhood Cabinet and is an active member of her state's NFP cabinet. Her journey with NFP is a testament to her ability to inspire individuals to overcome obstacles and realize their potential. Ruth-Ann enjoys spending time with her family and cooking.

**Jacqueline Green** of Dallas, Texas, and her husband were introduced to WiNGS Dallas Nurse-Family Partnership by her local WIC office when she was 22 weeks pregnant. During this time, the passing of her mother-in-law spurred her to seek additional support. After being paired with her NFP nurse, Jacqueline gained the knowledge necessary to be a successful mother to her son, Sekou, and found housing after being displaced from a winter storm in 2021. She utilized resources provided by her NFP nurse to return to college and earn her bachelor's degree in the health and wellness field. Jacqueline has gained confidence in her career as a medical professional since graduating from NFP in 2021. She is now a certified community health worker for the state of Texas and is pursuing her master's degree. Jacqueline and her family enjoy traveling, gardening, watching football and going to museums.

**Al-Nisa Nixon** was starting her senior year of college when she learned she was pregnant with her daughter. Having very little support and being in an abusive marriage, her NFP nurse at Essex County Nurse-Family Partnership guided her through pregnancy and provided resources for Al-Nisa to continue her education, get a restraining order and divorce and find safe housing. Al-Nisa graduated from NFP in 2018 and attributes her personal and professional success to her NFP nurse who pushed her to graduate college, complete her master's degree in public health and become a doula and lactation

consultant. Currently, Al-Nisa serves as a healthcare administrator at a local health system where she oversees organizational processes and compliance and recommends data-driven improvements. Al-Nisa is also pursuing her doctorate degree in public health. She volunteers with several organizations advocating for better maternal, infant and child health outcomes. Al-Nisa enjoys traveling with her daughters and supporting their love of swimming and dance.

**Vonda Stephens** of Greensboro, North Carolina, was heading into the final year of her master's program when she learned she was pregnant with her first child. Vonda's nurse from Nurse-Family Partnership of Guilford County encouraged her to use resources available through her school and community to accomplish her dreams. She was able to find a better job, get married, become a mom and finish her master's degree with the support of her NFP nurse. Now, Vonda is a wife and mother of two boys. Even with years working in the home health field serving children with special needs, Vonda was caught by surprise when she had a child with special needs herself. The journey of advocating for her own child has made Vonda even more passionate about working for others. She currently serves as an employment specialist for a local autism program and provides employment support for adults with autism spectrum disorder.

**Courtney Williams** of South Florida was six months pregnant when intimate partner violence (IPV) abruptly ripped her family apart. She also battled hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe type of nausea during pregnancy, which left her bedridden most days. Courtney was introduced to Child First Families First of Palm Beach County, which paired her with a clinician and care coordinator. They provided comprehensive mental health interventions and home-visiting services tailored to her and her baby's unique needs. Courtney credits Child First for helping her establish a strong, loving and holistic continuum of care for her children to heal and thrive. Since graduating from Child First, Courtney has advocated for early and continued care for marginalized mothers, especially those who have suffered abuse. Courtney is also the proud owner of Zinaya Birthing Co., a doula and maternal concierge agency that supports mothers throughout their pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum periods. Courtney enjoys all things self-care and movie nights with her two children.

The Parent Ambassadors began their tenure in September, 2023 with monthly meetings that will lead them to the first in-person training in Denver, Colorado in spring 2024. There, they will learn more about NFP and Child First, study “advocacy 101” and participate in team building exercises. The group is prepared to embark on sharing their

stories as advocates on behalf of Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First. To track their progress and learn more about the Parent Ambassadors, visit our [website](#).

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### **About the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First**

The National Service Office (NSO) is the central, unified operational structure for two evidence-based programs: [Nurse-Family Partnership](#) and [Child First](#). In 2020, what was formerly the NSO solely for Nurse-Family Partnership joined forces with Child First, a merger empowering two proven, evidence-based models to share complementary expertise, infrastructure and integrated support services. The resulting unified entity works to ensure that health care, early childhood development and the mental health of the entire family are delivered in proven ways to achieve long-term positive outcomes.