

**Contact**

Caroline Cascio, President and CEO  
(318) 651-9314  
[ccascio@wellspringalliance.org](mailto:ccascio@wellspringalliance.org)

**The Wellspring Receives \$1.25 Million Bezos Day 1 Families Fund Grant to Help End Homelessness for Families in Monroe, Louisiana**  
*Fund grants \$123.45 million to 40 nonprofits across the U.S. to move the needle on re-housing and supporting families experiencing homelessness*

**MONROE, La. – (November 22, 2022):** The Wellspring, a primary provider of homeless services in Northeast Louisiana, today announced that it has received a \$1.25 million grant from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund—the largest private gift in the organization’s history. Launched in 2018 by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, the Day 1 Families Fund issues annual leadership awards to leading organizations on the frontlines that are employing compassionate, needle-moving work to help families move from unsheltered homelessness and shelters to permanent housing with the services they require to achieve stability.

“I am both humbled and honored that the work of The Wellspring has been recognized at the national level in such a significant way and that we have been selected for a Day 1 Families Fund award,” said Caroline Cascio, president and CEO of The Wellspring. “Homelessness in Northeast Louisiana looks very different than it does in other parts of the country, with families making up the majority of those facing homelessness, and children under the age of 18 comprising half of our homeless population. The need for comprehensive services that will not only bring families indoors, but also address the root causes of their homelessness and foster long-term self-sufficiency, is critical. The Wellspring is proud to have the Day 1 Families Fund support us in this effort.”

This one-time grant will help The Wellspring in its tireless work to support families as they reel from skyrocketing rent costs, limited services and insufficient incomes. The Wellspring plans to use the grant funds to address the tremendous community need for sheltering families experiencing homelessness as well as the mental health needs of client populations served by the agency. The Wellspring will also use this as an opportunity to invest in the workforce capacity, infrastructure and resource development essential to sustaining these direct services in Northeast Louisiana.

The Wellspring was selected as a Day 1 Families Fund grant recipient by a group of national advisors who are leading advocates and experts on homelessness and service provision. National advisors brought expertise on housing justice, advancing racial equity and helping programs employ resources effectively to assist families out of homelessness.

Over the past five years, the Day 1 Families Fund has provided 170 grants totaling more than \$520 million to organizations around the country working to combat homelessness and help families gain housing support and stability. This year, the Fund issued a total of \$123.45 million in grants to the

following organizations: Carpenter's Shelter; CATCH, Inc.; Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona; The Center for Women and Families; Changing Homelessness; Chapman Partnership; Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County; Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County, Inc.; Community Services & Employment Training (CSET); Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO); Family Promise of Hawai'i; Family Promise of Northern New Castle County; Family Services of Tulare County; Flagstaff Shelter Services; Gateway180; Heartland Alliance; H.O.M.E. Inc.; Homeless Alliance; Hope House of Milwaukee; Housing First, Inc.; Housing Forward; HRDC; Ka Hale A Ke Ola Homeless Resource Centers, Inc.; LA Family Housing; Mother Nation; Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, Inc.; New Reach; Oglala Sioux Tribe; Partners for HOME; PATH; The Salvation Army, Denver Metro Area; Samish Indian Nation; San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness; Sojourner Truth House; Solo Por Hoy, Inc.; Start Corporation; Strategies to End Homelessness; The Wellspring; YWCA Cass Clay; and YWCA Missoula's Housing Programs.

Sarah Johnson, executive director of the HOME Coalition, the Continuum of Care serving Northeast Louisiana, said, "This announcement and gift signal a safer today and brighter tomorrow for tens of thousands of Northeast Louisiana children and families. Until today, our community has been unable to achieve our most fundamental duty—keeping all our children safe and housed. Starting now, that no longer needs to be the case."

"My case worker is more than just a person that sits behind a desk. He shows sincere care and concern for me and my family. That is what people need to know—that there are sincere people to help in their time of need," said a former participant housed by The Wellspring.

The Bezos Day One Fund made a \$2 billion commitment to focus on making meaningful and lasting impacts in two areas: funding existing non-profits that help families experiencing homelessness, and creating a network of new, non-profit tier-one preschools in low-income communities. The Day 1 Families Fund issues annual leadership awards to organizations and civic groups doing compassionate, needle-moving work to provide shelter and hunger support to address the immediate needs of young families. The vision statement comes from the inspiring Mary's Place in Seattle: no child sleeps outside. For more information, visit [www.BezosDayOneFund.org/Day1FamiliesFund](http://www.BezosDayOneFund.org/Day1FamiliesFund).

### **About The Wellspring**

The Wellspring is an umbrella organization that focuses on strengthening the lives of individuals and families throughout Northeast Louisiana with programs that include youth development and violence prevention services; counseling, play therapy, and supervised visitation; comprehensive residential and non-residential services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; and an array of homeless and Veterans' programs and services. To learn more, go to [www.wellspringofnela.org](http://www.wellspringofnela.org).

###