Introduction

As it has been for most, 2020 has been a year of challenges and uncertainty at Fathers’ Uplift. However, it has also been a year of growth in the midst of obstacles. Whether referring to the number of constituents we’re serving, our revenues, the quantity of donors and supporters, or even just awareness of our mission, we’re seeing growth across the board. It has been an exciting time in which Fathers’ Uplift is transforming from a small
nonprofit specific to Boston into a nationally-highlighted cause with relevance, support, and services beginning to extend beyond our original geography.

2020 has also been a year in which social distancing measures forced us to make adjustments and adopt technologies that have ultimately been of value to our organization in and of themselves. Remote therapy, stronger patterns of internal team communication, an updated web and social presence, and more; all have been positive innovations we've found ourselves pursuing as a consequence of COVID-19.

New Advocates Spreading Our Story

Oprah hosted one of the fathers we've served, Javan Tooley, alongside Tyler Perry and 98 other fathers she brought on to an OWN Spotlight episode to discuss black fatherhood in the face of racial discrimination and current tensions across the country.

View the episode here!

Early this year, none other than Steve Harvey himself hosted our CEO and co-founder Charles Daniels on his Facebook Watch show, Harvey on Watch. Both Steve and Charles got a bit emotional, as they discussed their own experiences with fatherhood, both as fathers and sons.

View this interview here!
Charles was also interviewed on one of Boston's most listened to radio channels, WBUR, about what it's like being a black father raising black sons and daughters in the midst of all that's going on today as well.

Listen here!

New Services and New Content

The emergence of COVID-19 caused us to have to both expand our scope of services and increase the pace at which we adopted and implemented new technologies to enable us to
continue serving our clients and maintaining relationships with our supporters without the usual elements of in-office therapy and coaching sessions, on-location staffing, and fundraiser/community events like our annual Uplift Gala and “This Dad Cares Grilloff”.

First, here is how we innovated for our clients:

It’s pretty hard to sit through a therapy session to discuss trauma and emotions when all your mind can think about is the empty fridge at home and how you’re going to feed your kids tonight. We’ve always understood that mental health is holistic, that it’s about more than therapy sessions and psychology alone, which is why we’ve always paired our clinical therapy services with coaching and guidance services to help fathers and families overcome obstacles that they frequently face.

In the face of COVID-19, we had to step that up and further provide for our families in need in new ways, as both the physical and financial health of our served families was put at risk all at once. Here are some of those ways we changed things:

We began implementing remote therapy and coaching

In the midst of all that’s going on, therapy, guidance, and support is more important than ever. We understood this, so we began conducting therapy and coaching sessions through Zoom as soon as it was authorized for clinical use. Thanks to some of our new grantors, we now have the resources to adopt a more cohesive telehealth tool as well; we are currently in the process of beginning the use of Theraplatform and expect to make remotely accessible therapy and coaching a permanent option for our clients.

We began providing greater physical support for families in need

As you’ll see in our impact figures outlined further below, we began to provide not only for the mental and emotional health of our fathers and families, but for their physical health as well. Health is holistic. One cannot thrive when any area of their health is inhibited. So we’ve been delivering groceries, providing gift cards, providing clothing, and continuing to provide bags for dads and other supports through our coaching programming.

We gave cash to families who needed it
Besides resources, in partnership with the Stand Together Foundation and the #GiveTogetherNow initiative, we even provided cash assistance to some of our fathers and families struggling in the face of COVID-19; over $30,000 for 60+ families.

You may not know it, but fathers who owed money on child support were not eligible to receive stimulus payments, regardless of however active and engaged of a father they are now. Additionally, many families needed temporary assistance as public support began to come into play. We were there to help.

We also innovated for you, our supporters, sharing our story in new ways

This year we have increasingly focused on keeping you, our supporters, looped into the story of impact that you empower. We've always had occasional email updates and social media posts, but this year we stepped up the pace. Not only did we increase the frequency of our communication, posts, and updates on social media and email, but we also got you more exposed to the stories and experiences of the fathers we serve and amire through our Fathers' Day Everyday interviews and our AFAR podcast.

Each of those can be found in our blog, on iTunes (FDE & AFAR), and on Spotify (FDE and AFAR).

A Story of Impact

Benjamin Diaz has been one of our longtime constituents since 2017. For years, and with our help, Ben has been fighting to remain engaged in his daughter’s life. Over the years, Ben has received support from Fathers’ Uplift through coaching, therapy, and our Parenting and Housing Group. One of Ben's barriers was housing instability, but with the support of Father's Uplift and collaboration with the Boston Housing Authority, we are happy to announce that Ben has recently been approved for housing and now has a place!

It is imperative to note that housing instability can have a tremendous impact on fathers’ wellness and the credibility of co-parenting, which potentially can result in fathers being separated from their children indefinitely. One of the leading barriers we see in preventing fathers from remaining engaged with their children is lack of access to affordable housing. Our goal is to assist fathers in overcoming barriers that can prevent them from remaining
positively engaged in their children’s lives. When families do not have stable housing, it has a negative impact on their well-being.

![Coach Leonard and Benjamin Diaz pictured here, with Ben's daughter and niece.](image)

Ben has consistently demonstrated a desire and commitment to engage in support from Father’s Uplift; it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Diaz and we look forward to continuing to support him.

**Impact by the Figures**

In the first 6 months of 2020, even with the disruption of COVID-19, we served over 900 fathers and families with our core services. We provided direct therapeutic interventions to 581 individuals, guidance and informative media to 281 individuals, training through our Male Engagement Institute to 14 individuals, and guidance through events and outreach to 70 individuals.

Additionally, in the face of COVID-19 we ramped up our efforts to provide for fathers and families’ basic needs, including clothing (70), temporary housing support (9), legal/advocacy assistance (21), grocery gift cards (31), meals and grocery deliveries (270), 71 bags for dads,
and $30,600 in direct cash assistance to families who were in need of emergency support in the face of the economic toll of COVID-19.

We're Thankful for Our Supporters:

Continued Grantors: American Heart Association, Tufts Medical Center Dorchester Health Initiative, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, Social Venture Partners Boston, Boston LISC, Nordblom Family Foundation, and several anonymous grantors.

New Grantors: The Boston Foundation, the Boston Resiliency Fund (City of Boston), Imago Dei Fund, Stand Together Foundation's Catalyst Network, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Foundation, Focus for Health Foundation, Shaw Foundation, Nordblom Family Foundation, AEW Capital Management, and The Philanthropy Connection

Additionally, we are very grateful to have received a $100,000 contribution collectively made by the following individuals:

Ronan McGovern
Anton Hunt
Finally, we’re thankful for the 130+ donors who have contributed to our cause individually and/or with fundraisers of their own so far in 2020. Our grassroots base provides sustainable support that we will increasingly rely on over the coming years, so we are grateful to have a solid foundation in these early years of our organization's story!

**Summary**

The year of 2020 has been a challenge, but certainly not an insurmountable one. With our community of supporters at our backs and willing and eager fathers ready to improve their lives and coming to us for help, we are ready to make 2020 overall a groundbreaking year. We are thankful to have your support and hope to have you along for the ride for many more years to come!

Thank you,

Charles Daniels and Samantha Fils-Daniels