This fiscal year we increased our new placements, grew our Build apprenticeship program, deepened our partnership with Durham Tech through Elevate, and launched resiliency trainings to support our participants with some of their mental health needs. Our work has positioned us to lead Durham’s Guaranteed Income pilot, giving us the opportunity explore ways to eradicate poverty on a national level. Local, which will provide an unconditional payment of $500 per month to help evaluate the impact of guaranteed income on recidivism and re-incarceration, launches this fall.

This year and a half has reaffirmed my belief that we should embrace every season on our journey, because when an opportunity presents itself, we want to seize it. As I look back, my sincere thanks to each one of you for the investments of time, talent and treasure that you have made in StepUp Durham. I invite you to continue to walk with us as we say “YES” to new opportunities before us.

I rarely say no, but I’m also a person who does not like to hear the word no. Fundamentally, I believe that many “noes” are really “not right now,” AND that in many cases a no can become a yes if given time. When you read the stories of David, John, and Vivian, the theme of timing emerges – the doors that opened when John felt like he had limited options, the opportunities that arose when Vivian was positioned for a new career, and how David’s readiness to use the skills he learned at StepUp helped him secure his dream job.

When I think back on StepUp’s six years in Durham, our journey has been similar. At one point, we thought we might have to close our doors due to limited resources. Now, even in the midst of what feels like a never-ending pandemic, we have seen growth and feel ready and well-placed to take on new and exciting challenges.
StepUp Durham offers FREE employment readiness training, personalized job coaching, employer referrals, and supportive services to job seekers, including those with challenges like a criminal background or gaps in work history.

Step1 Work.
StepUp Durham offers FREE employment readiness training, personalized job coaching, employer referrals, and supportive services to job seekers, including those with challenges like a criminal background or gaps in work history.

Step2 offers four phases of programming that occur in eight-week blocks. The four phases are: Personal Development, and Leadership Development.

Step3 Thrive!
Step3 is a 12-month program that provides a microeconomic opportunity for participants.

Elevate
Elevate gives participants in Step3 the opportunity to take short-term courses that will help them fill in skill gaps that have been hindering them from gaining stable wage employment.

StepUp Kidz
StepUp Kidz supports children of StepUp parents as they develop their own financial stability and habits, while also encouraging personal and academic well-being and success.

When Vivian began working with StepUp Durham in 2018, she had just lost her job and needed help. She found StepUp, enrolled in the Job Readiness Workshop, and after securing work, she enrolled in Step2 to develop other skills. "I've been a part of the StepUp community ever since." After receiving her certification, Vivian was able to secure a new position with an independent lumber company in Carrboro, NC and uses her certification every day. "I have a lot of goals, and with guidance they are achievable. I want to build a savings account and turn $100 into $10,000. I want to create a retirement account so I am not uncomfortable in my old age. I want to prepare for my child's retirement so they don't have to worry about it. I want to be better equipped to advance and serve the organization. All of that said, John has been instilled a belief that I can keep going. They have shown me where he is seen, heard, and valued, not based on his background. It's been phenomenal. I've referred everyone that I'm talking to. Especially if you have a criminal background, gaps in employment history or if you don't know the answer, they work with someone who can help me." Through collaboration with StepUp Durham's Build program, John was given the opportunity to work with Scrap Exchange and meet amazing, loving people there. He was able to secure permanent job with the Scrap Exchange because of this. After his initial certification is opening the door to endless possibilities and will allow me to make more money so that I can support my family stress free.

Waron participated in classes and built lasting relationships with StepUp Durham, but then the global pandemic hit and she was faced with job loss again. "I reached out to StepUp and am engaged to find work." Through StepUp, Waron was able to learn about Hope Renewations and secure a spot in their program. "StepUp wants me to succeed. If they don't know the answer, they work with someone who can help me." After her experience with Hope Renewations, she pursued pursuing her education through StepUp's Elevate program. Waron chose to seek out a for-forklift Certification from Durham Tech, not realizing how soon her certification would come in handy. "I got the training before I knew about the job, and it ended up being exactly what I needed!"

John enrolled in Durham Tech's Forklift Certification program at no cost, and has now been promoted within the Scrap Exchange to play a major role in operations, customer service, inventory scheduling and more. He is one of two employees within the Scrap Exchange with a for-forklift Certification.

Vivian participated in classes and built lasting relationships with StepUp Durham, but then the global pandemic hit and she was faced with job loss again. "I reached out to StepUp and am engaged to find work." Through StepUp, Waron was able to learn about Hope Renewations and secure a spot in their program. "StepUp wants me to succeed. If they don't know the answer, they work with someone who can help me." After her experience with Hope Renewations, she pursued pursuing her education through StepUp's Elevate program. Waron chose to seek out a for-forklift Certification from Durham Tech, not realizing how soon her certification would come in handy. "I got the training before I knew about the job, and it ended up being exactly what I needed!"