

# Alumni **Success Stories** to Inspire You

## **Maya's Story**

### **A miraculous meeting that changed my life**

I met Nancy & Bob during one of the darkest and most uncertain times of my life at a domestic violence support group meeting. I found myself broke, abused and terrified. I was living in a small apartment with my stepdad and my young son. I discovered the OHFF program – and was interviewed and accepted. And my life was forever changed. Nancy & Bob's financial and emotional support brought hope and healing into my life. My sons deserved a new beginning, too. And thanks to this program, I was finally able to give it to them.



### **A dramatic turnaround**

After five years of dedicated support – including in-depth discussions, mentoring, problem-solving and financial assistance – I underwent a remarkable transformation. With OHFF's help, I was able to move out of my father's apartment and into a beautiful home of my own. I reunited with my son and successfully removed the abuser from our lives. I was able to secure full custody of my two boys. I managed to rebuild my credit. And for the first time in a long while, I was able to sleep peacefully. I created a safe environment for my children, regained control over my finances and focused on advancing my career.

One of the most priceless parts of my journey was knowing I could open up to Nancy & Rob about anything – no matter how difficult, painful or overwhelming. That kind of trust and safety is rare and I will never take it for granted.

### **Life since graduation**

I have happily raised two wonderful boys – one with a degree in Engineering/Computer Science and the other, a West Point Cadet pursuing a professional soccer career. I purchased a beautiful home in Westchester, where I built a loving family with my partner, who is a caring father. Additionally, I was part of a startup financial services company. Today, I'm proud to be part of a team that includes over 50 members, and we are continuing to grow.

### **My future looks bright**

I want to make more time for travel and find a hobby that truly interests me. I also hope to become more involved with OHFF, moving beyond just annual participation to offer consistent support and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need, witnessing the hope and joy that come from helping.

### **The impact is immeasurable**

I found light in two extraordinary people, Nancy & Rob, who, through their hearts, tireless effort and genuine belief in others, brought hope to those of us who once felt lost. They didn't just help me rebuild my life – they helped me reclaim it. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire team for their incredible dedication and for showing up each day with such heart and purpose. Your work is immensely meaningful and makes a bigger difference than you may ever realize.

## Renee's Story

### **A dedicated Psychology graduate.**

I attended CUNY Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, NY. I graduated in 2023 with a major in Psychology. Any educational support that I needed, the EMP program provided it.

### **Guidance and good advice was essential**

Before I got into college, I was worried about my lack of guidance and financial support. I didn't know how I would pay for college. I researched finding the right college but I was stuck. I didn't know how to apply for aid. I didn't know what I was eligible for in foster care. It was all very stressful. The EMP program immediately connected me with a mentor for all of my questions. I got financial aid as a full-time student and learned how to work within a budget. During my college years, I needed tutoring and my mentor was able to instantly connect me with a one-on-one tutor, which was amazing.

### **My mentor was vital in my life – and still is**

During my undergraduate journey, I had a lot of doubts. There were times I wanted to drop out and give up. Who can I talk to? My mentor was there for me. And I absolutely love her. She was insightful and provided critical thinking skills. "What do you want to do?" "What would your life look like?" It made me think about real-life decisions and kept me focused. She made me look at how far I'd come and how far I have left to go.

### **My first big-girl job**

After graduation, I landed my first job very fast! It was not just because of my degree. It was also because Tanisha at OHFF connected me to internships – that really helped my resume look great. It seems like everything I apply for, I get!

I've been working as a Student & Temporary Housing Community Coordinator for the Department of Education. I work in shelters and temporary housing facilities. I support families and their children with any educational needs, including attendance checks, enrollments, clothing, immunizations...anything. I also launched my own personal skincare business since graduation. I think I have the drive and the dedication to back it.

### **Higher education is next on the agenda**

In September 2025, I will be going back to school for my Master of Social Work at Fordham University. I needed some guidance and my mentor (who also went to Fordham) responded quickly – and even helped me with my personal statement for the graduate degree application. EMP mentors never leave you. I got in within two days of my submission!

### **A well-planned future**

Ideally, I will be a licensed Social Worker with a Master's degree. And a dog mom, not sure about kids yet. And I want to be living in NYC or New Jersey. Hopefully, married, I'm manifesting it all!

### **Thank you from the bottom of my heart**

I am so grateful for the EMP program and my mentor. I would not know her if it weren't for the EMP program. Six years later and I'm still connected with her! I look forward to coming back to OHFF to show everyone my Social Worker license when I get it.