TWO-GENERATION APPROACH
Leola and Jazzlyn's Story
MEET LEOLA & JAZZLYN

“I’m a grandmother, a great-grandmother, so I’ve got great-grandchildren that I used to keep all the time, even before I got Jazzlyn. So I’ve been doing this all my life. I was the oldest daughter of 18, so I had to raise my sisters and brothers, and I raised the neighborhood children, so it’s just my whole life. I think it’s one of the purposes for why I’m here. I’ve raised a lot of children in my lifetime—and I love children, and older people—I love everyone, but older people and children, they are my heart. Our life is not our own—we are here for a purpose. There’s a purpose and a reason that we’re here. And that’s what we have to learn—what our purpose is.”

A cornerstone of Our House’s mission is the Two-Generation Approach: our pledge to serve entire families, addressing the needs of both children and adults simultaneously, and holistically lifting the entire family out of poverty. A two-generation approach takes into consideration the needs of everyone in the family, acknowledging that a child’s potential is inextricably linked to parental stability and well-being. While the average size of a family at Our House is a single mother and two children, we resources to serve households of any size or shape. The Two-Generation Approach also extends to those families who have larger-than-normal generational gaps between children and their guardians. Such would the case of Leola and her great-granddaughter Jazzlyn.
ONE HOUSEHOLD, FOUR GENERATIONS

Leola, 71, became the legal guardian of her three-year-old great-granddaughter, Jazzlyn, in June of 2016 after their family petitioned the Department of Human Services for custody to release her from foster care. Leola is a retired nurse, mother of nine, and caretaker of all. After her long history of raising her children, grandchildren, family friends, and community members, Leola, gracefully stepped into the role of providing for Jazzlyn.

One of Leola’s many granddaughters had a previous knowledge of Our House and the Central Arkansas Family Stability Institute (CAFSI), a program that provides any family or household with children with comprehensive support and services to help families avoid homelessness. Per the suggestion of her granddaughter, Leola applied for CAFSI and began working with Case Manager, Ruthie Hokans, to navigate the DHS system in order to get she and Jazzlyn the assistance they need. Because Leola is on a fixed income, she was unable to afford school and childcare expenses. But together, Leola and Ruthie successfully overcame the challenge of securing health insurance and a childcare voucher for Jazzlyn to enroll in the Our House’s Little Learners Child Development Center.
LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Since enrolling in Little Learners, Jazzlyn’s personality has simply blossomed. Toddler 3 Lead Teacher, Hayley Thompson, reports that even though Jazzlyn is the youngest student in the class, she is on level with the rest of her classmates. “Jazzlyn is so eloquent with her words, so socially confident, and is just a really enthusiastic learner!”

Parents are confident their children are being nurtured, educated, and loved by the team at Little Learners. That piece of mind helps the entire family thrive. Leola has certainly appreciated the opportunity of having Jazzlyn in such capable hands.

“She loves it! Jazzlyn is a very smart child, she’s very brilliant in her mind so, she’s learned, and she is doing so good. She loves her school, and that’s what’s so important. She loves her school, she loves the children, and every day she has a good report about how she’s doing, and that means a lot to me.”
A BRIGHT FUTURE

During Leola and Jazzlyn’s time in the CAFSI program, the primary goal has been to navigate the complex systems in place to receive the support and benefits they need for the whole family’s success. Leola has acted as an advocate for Jazzlyn’s education, and, in turn, Jazzlyn is making leaps and bounds. Future goals for Leola include increasing her computer skills, and working in the Career Center with a tutor to increase her own literacy as she intends to help Jazzlyn with reading and homework in the years to come. Both the parent and the child benefit from the continued support, resources, and opportunities offered through Our House. Leola and her great-granddaughter are a beautiful example of the growth, success, and empowerment our programs can ignite through the Two-Generation Approach, even when those generations are decades apart.