

Mama B's Place
Empowering Vulnerable Youth in Chicago



Mama B's Place

Mama B's Place: Empowering Vulnerable Youth in Chicago:

Executive Summary

Mama B's Place is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a safe, supportive refuge for youth aged 13-25 in the Chicago area facing abuse, homelessness, and neglect. The organization empowers residents to achieve stability and independence through housing, counseling, life skills training, and educational resources.

In a secure residential neighborhood, Mama B's Place can accommodate 6 -10 individuals at a time. The home offers essential resources, including food, hygiene supplies, school materials, and job readiness training, as well as referrals to counseling, medical care, and other vital services. While not a state-licensed group home, it operates with the highest ethical standards, partnering with social workers, therapists, and legal professionals to ensure each resident's well-being.

Mama B's Place focuses on supporting marginalized youth, particularly those from the LGBTQIA+ community, who often face rejection due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Its mission is to help these individuals heal, gain life skills, and reintegrate into society.

The organization is funded through private donations, grants, fundraising, and contributions from its founder, Bianca. This approach ensures operational independence, allowing flexible, tailored support for residents.

By addressing the unique needs of vulnerable youth, Mama B's Place aims to break cycles of abuse and homelessness, offering a pathway to hope and self-sufficiency.

Mission Statement

Mama B's Place is dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for abused and homeless teenagers and young adults, including those from the LGBTQIA+ community. We offer shelter, resources, and comprehensive support services to help youth heal, grow, and build resilience. Through counseling, life skills training, and educational support, we empower them to transition to independent living or reunite with their families, fostering a brighter and more stable future.

Objectives

- Provide a safe, welcoming space for youth in crisis.
- Support healing from trauma, including abuse, neglect, and rejection.
- Equip residents with resources for societal reintegration and self-sufficiency.
- Advocate for and raise awareness of the needs of LGBTQIA+ youth and marginalized groups.

Services Offered

Safe Housing:

- Capacity: 10 residents, including private and shared rooms.
- Length of Stay: 6-12 months, with extensions based on individual needs.

Support Services:

- Trauma-informed counseling.
- Academic tutoring, college readiness, and GED preparation.
- Job readiness training (resume writing, interview skills).

Life Skills Training:

- Budgeting and financial literacy.
- Cooking, cleaning, and personal care.

Community Partnerships:

- Collaboration with local schools, healthcare providers, and employers.

Funding Strategy

Mama B's Place will be primarily funded through Bianca's employment income, private donations from family and friends, and community fundraising efforts. Additionally, small grants may be sought from local nonprofits or governmental agencies that support homelessness, LGBTQIA+ youth, or mental health services.

Key funding strategies include:

1. Individual Donations: Encourage friends, family, and other community members who believe in Bianca's actions to make monthly or one-time donations.
2. Corporate Sponsorships: Partnering with local businesses and/or corporations for in-kind and monetary donations.
3. Grant Funding: Applying for federal, state, and private grants for youth services, homelessness, and LGBTQIA+ issues.

Impact Stories

Small acts of kindness can spark transformative change. Bianca's decision to open her home has not only changed the lives of the children she supports but has also inspired those around them. By offering love, lessons, and support, Bianca helps these children thrive. These stories highlight the power of community, acceptance, and providing a safe space, showing how one person's compassion can create hope and lasting impact.

Owner's Background: Bianca Thompson

Bianca Thompson's life is a story of resilience, transformation, and purpose. Born in Alabama and raised in Chicago, Bianca faced profound loss at age 12 when her mother passed away from cancer. Despite this hardship, she found refuge and love under the care of her aunt, who became a vital maternal figure.

However, her teenage years were marked by personal struggles. Without mental health support, Bianca often felt unloved and unwanted, leading to poor decisions. By 19, she had her first felony conviction, and by 2014, at age 34, she had accumulated 19 felonies, ultimately serving two years in prison for computer hacking. During her incarceration, Bianca confronted the impact of her choices, reflecting deeply on her future. Determined to rebuild her life after her release in 2016, she joined the Safer Foundation's job readiness program, which supports individuals with criminal records. Through this program, she secured a job with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) under its Second Chance Program, starting as a bus servicer apprentice and eventually becoming a full-time bus operator.

Bianca's journey didn't end there. After leaving the CTA, she joined the Common Ground Foundation, an organization dedicated to empowering youth. Starting as a mentor, she rose to the role of operations manager, using her experiences to guide and support young people facing adversity.

In addition to her professional growth, Bianca pursued higher education. In 2021, she earned a Bachelor's in Psychology with a concentration in Addictions from Southern New Hampshire University. Despite facing her own battle with ovarian cancer in October 2021 and the devastating loss of her youngest son, Rhakiim, to cancer in January 2023, Bianca remained steadfast in her goals. Driven by her son's memory, she completed a Master's degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology in October 2024.

Through these personal and professional milestones, Bianca discovered a deep passion for supporting at-risk youth, particularly those facing abuse, homelessness, or rejection. Recognizing the unique challenges of marginalized groups, including LGBTQIA+ youth, she founded Mama B's Place—a safe haven where vulnerable teens and young adults can heal, grow, and thrive. This vision stems from her own experiences of finding refuge and mentorship during difficult times.

Bianca's journey—from losing her mother and struggling with incarceration to becoming a successful professional and advocate—highlights the power of second chances, education, and mentorship. Today, she is dedicated to creating lasting change and empowering the next generation to overcome obstacles and build brighter futures.

Impact Story 1: A Journey of Healing, Support, and New Beginnings

- **Background:** Mya, the first resident of Mama B's Place, fled an abusive home with her brother Malik after their mother rejected Malik's identity as a gay male.
- **Finding Safety:** After three days of sleeping in Washington Park, Mya contacted Bianca, who welcomed her despite the risks. Malik and their cousin later joined, finding acceptance and support.
- **Rebuilding Lives:** Bianca provided counseling and facilitated a safe reconciliation between Mya and her mother. She also arranged for Malik and his cousin to relocate to their aunt in Las Vegas, ensuring they were safe and cared for.
- **Thriving Future:** Mya, now a student at Arizona State University, shares a deep bond with Bianca, whom she calls "Mom Dukes." Their relationship reflects the lasting impact of love and guidance.
- **Key Takeaway:** Mya's journey from fear to confidence demonstrates how safe spaces and support can create second chances and transform lives.

Impact Story 2: Malik's Journey of Healing and Hope

- **Background:** Malik, Mya's brother, faced rejection, homelessness, and an HIV diagnosis, leading to a suicide attempt.
- **Support and Care:** Bianca stepped in, securing medical care, mental health resources, and therapy for Malik while providing him with a safe space.
- **Turning Point:** She connected Malik with a housing program for LGBTQ+ youth with HIV, offering stability and a supportive community.
- **Current Life:** Malik is now managing his health and working toward independence, empowered by resilience and Bianca's unwavering care.
- **Key Takeaway:** Malik's story underscores the importance of community and the transformative power of consistent support.

Impact Story 3: The Journey of Dennis and Bianca

- **Background:** At 12, Dennis witnessed his stepfather murder his mother, leaving him traumatized. After enduring further abuse from his biological father, he was rescued by his grandmother.
- **Healing Through Connection:** Bianca, who also experienced profound loss, became a source of comfort and guidance. Over time, Dennis trusted her, found solace in her home, and began therapy.
- **Transformation:** With Bianca and his grandmother's support, Dennis excelled academically, rediscovered joy, and became an honor student at Kenwood Academy.

- Ongoing Journey: Dennis continues to heal, embracing life with a newfound purpose and learning to transform pain into strength.
- Key Takeaway: Dennis's resilience, nurtured by love and compassion, shows that healing and hope are possible even after profound loss.

Appendix

- Bianca's Resume: Highlighting her qualifications and experience in youth services and nonprofit work.
- Partnerships and Collaborations: Letters of support and collaboration agreements with local organizations and individuals.

Conclusion

Mama B's Place is more than a shelter—it's a sanctuary for healing and transformation. Driven by Bianca's empathy and dedication, it provides vulnerable youth with safe housing, guidance, and the tools to reclaim their futures. With the support of donors, volunteers, and the community, Bianca's passion project continues to help young people heal, grow, and thrive one life at a time.

APPENDIX

BIANCA T. THOMPSON RESUME

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Dynamic and Organized Operations Manager with a proven track record in overseeing office functions and leading administrative teams to support executive needs. Performance-driven and detail-oriented, I bring extensive expertise in contract negotiations, budgeting, grants management, and payroll administration. I prioritize and execute multiple tasks efficiently and am known for handling sensitive information and transactions with the utmost discretion. My strong communication and organizational skills are the backbone of my work, allowing me to foster positive relationships and enhance operational effectiveness. I seek to join an organization that aligns with my commitment to public service, allowing me to leverage my background and further develop my skills in assisting others.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Southern New Hampshire University <i>MS: Industrial Organizational Psychology</i>	Manchester, NH 10/2024
Southern New Hampshire University <i>BA: Psychology conc Addictions</i>	Manchester, NH 04/2021
Sinclair Community College <i>AA: Computer Information Systems/User Support</i>	Dayton, Ohio 02/2016
Sinclair Community College <i>Call Center & Customer Service Certificate</i>	Dayton, Ohio 12/2015

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Type 85 wpm with 97% accuracy
- Mac & Microsoft operating systems and applications
- **Communication Skills:** Interpersonal and small group; excellent written and oral communication; work well with clients, as well as personnel at all levels of employment.
- **Customer Service:** Highly motivated, goal-oriented individual with persuasive ability. Ability to work with clients and fellow employees in various settings and assess customer concerns to determine the most professional approach.
- **Leadership:** Coordinated companywide activities; ability to analyze all aspects of business environments and streamline operations to optimize productivity.
- **Problem-Solving Abilities:** Identify issues in policies or procedures; develop and evaluate alternatives and implement positive solutions.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Common Ground Foundation <i>Operations Manager</i> <i>Office Manager & Program Assistant</i> <i>Office Assistant</i>	Chicago, Illinois 12/2023 - Present 09/2021 - 12/2023 09/2019 - 07/2021
• Provided operational and administrative support for one or more programs with the Common Ground Foundation. Contribute to fundraising, budgeting, research, and community outreach efforts. Prepare program event calendars, schedule meetings, and coordinate training sessions for	

mentors and staff. Respond to inquiries from the public with information and materials. Additionally, I process and maintain the database related to mentees, mentors, staff, donors, fundraising, volunteers, and partners using a client relationship management (CRM) system and generate reports as needed for grants and other research. Assist with the creation of promotional materials, mailings, and website content. Assist the Program Director with department-related activities. Coordinate internal department meetings and record minutes. Manage department travel and expense reports for the director and staff.

Chicago Transit Authority

Chicago, Illinois

Bus Operator

10/2017 - 05/2021

Bus Servicer Apprentice

10/2016 - 09/2017

- Operated a bus over an established route, adhering to a predetermined schedule safely, efficiently, and courteously to allow passengers to board, travel, and alight at scheduled stops. Inspected passes, ascertained appropriate fares, and ensured customers deposited only appropriate coins and bills into the fare box. Contacted the Control Center regarding all problems. Operated lift to board and discharge disabled passengers. Tallies various categories of boarding passengers by manually operating a recording device. As well as performed other duties as assigned.
- Inspect and clean buses to meet the expectations of quality control. Cleans buses, including scrubbing exteriors, mopping bus floors, and cleaning interiors (walls, seats, and windows, spraying for insects). Clean vehicular interiors using appropriate equipment and chemicals, including driver's compartments, walls, ceilings, windows, handrails, mirrors, seats, step wells, and floors. Removes gum, candy, and other foreign materials from vehicular interiors. Assisted in cleaning work areas and preparing cleaning materials. Reports damage, broken items, and upholstery defects on defect forms. Blood-borne pathogens protocols were used to sanitize exposed vehicular interiors. Inspect and clean buses to ensure quality control expectations are met. Train new hires on properly cleaning buses to ensure proper standard operating procedures are followed.

My Virtual Personal Assistant

Chicago, Illinois

Principal Consultant

02/2006 - 06/2014

- Provided customers with high-quality services personalized for their unique needs as a remote administrative assistant (virtual assistant) to individuals, businesses, and non-profits. Provided the following services: bookkeeping services, payroll services, bill management, calendar/schedule management, checking voicemail, correspondence (personal and business), data entry, database management, email and social media handling and responses, event planning, gift ideas, and invitations, follow-up/reminders, internet research, online shopping, resumes, and reservation services and travel arrangements (Domestic & International).

Lakeside Community Committee

Chicago, Illinois

Quality Assurance Auditor

06/1994 - 09/2006

- Manage daily operations, including calendars, scheduling, meetings, and travel arrangements. Created a filing system to ensure proper submission and distribution of documents. Organized and maintained case files and other legal documents. Assist case managers in auditing case files and creating forms, charts, and graphs to compare and contrast findings in case files. Assisted with the creation and implementation of new office procedures and policies. Ordered supplies and coordinated office events. Provided prompt and courteous telephone support. Answered and screened a high volume of calls and inquiries from clients.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Dr. Mahalia A. Hines
1400 St. Charles Place #303
Pembroke Pines, FL 33026
mh13720@gmail.com
773-218-4204

April 1, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to strongly support Mama B's Place, an extraordinary nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a safe and supportive refuge for marginalized youth in the Chicago area. This essential organization has had a profound impact on the lives of young people facing homelessness, abuse, neglect, and the unique challenges encountered by LGBTQIA+ youth.

Mama B's Place offers more than just a roof over the heads of those in need—it provides a comprehensive support system that empowers residents to build stable, independent futures. Through housing, counseling, life skills training, educational resources, and job readiness programs, the organization helps young people overcome obstacles and take crucial steps toward self-sufficiency.

What sets Mama B's Place apart is its unwavering commitment to serving often marginalized youth, especially those from the LGBTQIA+ community. These young people, who may have experienced rejection or discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, are given the tools and resources they need to heal, grow, and thrive in a safe, nurturing environment.

Under the leadership of Bianca, the founder of Mama B's Place, the organization has created a model of compassionate care. Bianca's personal dedication to these youth and her commitment to providing individualized, flexible support are key reasons why Mama B's Place has been so successful in its mission. While the organization is not a state-licensed group home, its high ethical standards and partnerships with social workers, therapists, and legal professionals ensure the well-being of every resident.

The services provided by Mama B's Place, including access to food, hygiene supplies, school materials, medical care, and professional counseling, are vital lifelines for young people who have nowhere else to turn. The home's focus on developing life skills and preparing residents for employment and independence offers not only immediate relief but also long-term hope for a better future.

I wholeheartedly support Mama B's Place's mission and work. This organization fills an urgent and critical need in the community, and its impact on the lives of vulnerable youth cannot be overstated. I encourage others to contribute to this valuable cause through donations, partnerships, or volunteer efforts.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mahalia A. Hines

Educator, Retired Principal, Speaker, Board President for Common Ground Foundation, and Author of *Tomorrow's Children: How to Raise Children in a High-Tech Society*

Nathline Strothers
10109 Jefferson Village Drive SW
Covington, GA 30014
nathline17@gmail.com
404-723-0975
November 1, 2024

Bianca Thompson

Founder & Executive Director
Mama B's Place
4800 S. Lake Park Avenue #2407
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Bianca,

I am writing to formally express my support for the incredible work you are doing at Mama B's Place in providing a safe and supportive space for our youth facing abuse, homelessness, and neglect in the Chicagoland area. After learning more about your organization's mission and the vital services you offer, I am inspired by the impact you are making in the lives of young people.

I understand the unique challenges Mama B's Place addresses and am deeply moved by the work you do to help marginalized youth heal, gain independence, and reintegrate into society. The comprehensive services you offer—housing, counseling, life skills training, job readiness programs, and educational resources—are essential to empowering these young individuals and helping them break the cycles of abuse and homelessness.

As part of my commitment to supporting this important cause, I would like to contribute \$100 monthly to Mama B's Place to assist with ongoing operational costs. I understand that reliable funding is crucial for you to continue what you've started, and I wish I could contribute more; however, I hope that my monthly contribution can help further the mission of Mama B's Place.

I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to support your work in any way I can.

Thank you for your extraordinary work of providing hope and healing to those who need it most.

Sincerely,

Nathline Strothers
A single mother from ATL who heard of your work!