

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is On Ramp?

On Ramp is a drop-in resource center for any young adult 16-24 years old who may need help making the successful evolution from youth to being an independent adult. Through case management and structured support, our resource center staff empowers young adults to find employment, education and housing opportunities, ultimately leading to independence.

2. Who do you serve in our community?

Many young adults at our resource center are transitioning from circumstances like foster care, mental health services, homelessness, and unstable living situations. Others may simply just need additional help ensuring they are prepared to face the world as adults

3. Why did you need a new Resource Center?

The previous facility housed On Ramp as well as all our administration offices and was much too small for the number of clients we serve. With this new facility we will be able to do more for our young adults and provide additional services such as individual GED nooks, a teaching kitchen, showers, laundry facilities, private offices for staff to work with clients and flex space for outside partners to come and help the clients.

By moving into this larger facility, we anticipate we will double our numbers to serve more than 1,200 young adults in three years.

Like our Crisis Shelter on East Blvd., this new facility is a permanent home for our On Ramp Resource Center.

4. What is the location of the new building?

The new building is located at 2219 Freedom Drive, which is the area of town where most of our clients list as home. It is very close to public transportation providing easy access for clients, volunteers and service providers. The location is also near many of our partner resources and next door to a free health clinic, a critical service for our young adults. We believe this location will allow us to serve many more who need our services.

5. What was your criteria for location?

For the last several years, The Relatives worked with a local architect to ascertain the space needs as well as with a building committee on location specifications. We surveyed staff, clients and volunteers. Ultimately, it was determined we needed at least 15,000 square, a site of one to two acres and adequate parking to accommodate staff, very active volunteers and service

providers. The location needed to be within three miles of uptown Charlotte one stop from the Transportation Center.

2219 Freedom Drive has 2 buildings on the property, an 11,500 square foot “front” building and a second “back” building with another 4,500 SF. The property is 1.25 acres with ample parking.

6. How will On Ramp enhance our community?

Our city’s recent Opportunity Task Force Report stated that there are 45,000 young people in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area who are considered disconnected. They lack the support networks necessary to successfully navigate their transition into adulthood.

The Relatives is in a unique position to help young adults make changes now to avoid chronic homelessness as an older adult. A recent study by Chapin Hall, University of Chicago reported on youth homelessness across the United States. The research showed that young adults who do not have a high school diploma or GED have a 346% higher risk of becoming homeless. Unmarried, parenting youth have a 200% higher risk of becoming homeless, LGBTQ youth – 120%, black or African American youth – 83% and youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 – 162%. At On Ramp, our clients fit into at least one of these categories. Most of our clients fit into multiple.

It is estimated that our community has to invest an average of \$40,000 per year to care for a homeless person. In our new building, The Relatives will assist over 1,000 young adults per year further their education, increase their income and/or find housing. This new facility will save our community millions in taxpayer dollars and produce happier, healthier adults who contribute to their community.

7. How does The Relatives measure outcomes?

We set aggressive goals each year in five critical areas of advancement for the young adults we serve. We track the following:

- 1) Secure safe and stable housing
- 2) Become employed
- 3) Enroll in education
- 4) Attend to their own health
- 5) Increase their own natural networks of support

Additional questions please contact Spencer Guthery- sguthery@therelatives.org