FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2025-26

REAL CHAMPIONS



"Through this partnership, **REAL CHAMPIONS HAS PROVIDED IMPACTFUL MENTORING, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, AND POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR STUDENTS**, particularly those who are most vulnerable and in need of additional guidance and encouragement."

– **Dr Laura Hickson**
Interim Superintendent
Jasper County Schools

"We are especially proud of our partnership with Real Champions. This relationship is incredibly meaningful to USCB Athletics—it not only **ENRICHES THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR STUDENT-ATHLETES BY CONNECTING THEM TO A PURPOSE GREATER THAN COMPETITION**, but it also allows us to make a lasting, positive impact in the lives of the children and families served by Real Champions."

– **Genia Montford**
Deputy Director of Athletics
University of South Carolina
Beaufort (USCB)

"This summer reminded me that **CHILDREN THRIVE WHEN CARING ADULTS WORK TOGETHER**. Organizations like RCI play an invaluable role in that mission, but teachers are part of it too. Every interaction is an opportunity to encourage, to listen, and to invest in a student's future."

– **Juliann Moua**
RCI Intern and
Charleston County Teacher

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MEGAN TICE
Executive Director
Real Champions, Inc.

I am so excited to share this year's impact report with you all. This year has been a year that shaped, molded, and launched RCI to the next iterations of our program. Like a child bringing home a report card that shows you the final grade, this report shows some big picture moments in our program. It would be impossible to truly show you every interaction, intervention, and moments of hope that went into the results you see here. But behind every number is a story and behind every story are dozens of moments filled with time in schools, community outings, volunteer hours, donor belief, and children's dreams.

This year we had the privilege of serving 95 children in 15 schools across two counties. We spent our time in-schools partnering and creating road maps to success for the children we serve, in our community supporting real growth, and with parents navigating hard circumstances and celebrating little wins. We collected data and made key decisions around time spent with children and families, activities attended, partnerships gained, and experiences with our students.

We believe that impact requires evaluation-sometimes uncomfortable but always informative because the children are worth it.

This year has also been one of change, not just for the children in our program, but for our own organization. We celebrated our fifth year of working with children, we have 15 new middle schoolers, we had a leadership change from our fearless founder to myself as the new executive director, and we expanded the program by 24 children. But through it all, the foundation remains the same: a paid, trustworthy adult, year after year from kindergarten to high school graduation, no matter what.

While the mentors spend the hours with the children every week, every donor who supports RCI is part of the invisible support system for the children. You are the reason we can do what we do year after year. Even if the families never know your name, your spirit is carrying them through some of the most challenging moments of their lives, helping them overcome all the obstacles on their path to who they are becoming.

As we approach the end of this year, we ask if you will continue your impact by partnering with us through an end of year donation or by introducing us to others in your own network who may resonate with our mission. Could you consider a one-time gift or a monthly donation? Any amount helps us continue to sustain our operations and care for the children year after year.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your impact and for partnering with us as we serve the children on the edge of opportunity across the state. We are so grateful!

FOCUSED ON DATA

We expanded our program by 38% this year.

Thanks to funding from the **Stronger Connections Grant** and a new partnership with **Jasper County School District**, we enrolled **24 additional children** beginning in January, increasing our reach to **95 children** by the end of the school year.

OUR STUDENTS

95 KIDS

- **55** kids in Jasper County
- **40** kids in Charleston County
- **54%** Female
- **46%** Male
- **83%** African American
- **12%** Hispanic
- **5%** white

OUR SCHOOLS

15 SCHOOLS

- **11** in Charleston
- **4** in Jasper
- **37%** kids attend a below average school

BIG NEWS!

We have launched the **RCI Middle School program** as **15 children** in our program began middle school this year!



20 Dedicated Professionals. One Shared Mission.

Every relationship, every home visit, every school meeting, and every milestone achieved by our students begins with a team of dedicated professionals committed to walking alongside children and families every day.

OUR ORGANIZATION

20 PROFESSIONALS

- **11** Advocate Mentors
- **2** Regional Program Directors
- **1** Reading Specialist
- **1** Executive Director
- **1** Chief Financial Officer
- **1** Volunteer Coordinator
- **1** Office Manager
- **1** Marketing Executive
- **1** Grant Writer

Together, these **20 professionals** provide the consistent relationships, academic support, family advocacy, and community partnerships that allow Real Champions to serve children with excellence across South Carolina.

The Challenges Our Students Face.

The children served by Real Champions are navigating far more than academic challenges. Many experience multiple forms of adversity that affect their ability to learn, build healthy relationships, and thrive. These experiences reinforce why consistent, long-term relationships remain at the center of our model.

ACROSS THE FAMILIES WE SURVEYED:

- **More than 90%** live in households experiencing housing instability or receiving housing assistance.
- **More than 85%** live in single-parent households.
- **More than half** have experienced emotional or physical neglect.
- Many are also impacted by caregiver incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness, or domestic violence



Childhood Should Not Require This Much Resilience.

Learning to read is hard enough without worrying about where you will sleep, witnessing violence at home, or missing a parent who is incarcerated.

These hardships, along with abuse, neglect, and other traumatic experiences, are called **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**. They can affect a child's ability to feel safe, concentrate, learn, and trust others.

AMONG THE FAMILIES SERVED DURING THE 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR:

- **6.24 was the average ACE score:** more than six different types of adversity per child.
- **59.1%** had experienced **six or more.**
- **27.3%** (more than 1 in 4) had experienced **nine.**

These scores count types of hardship, not individual incidents. One may represent years of repeated harm. But hardship does not determine a child's future. Harvard's Center on the Developing Child identifies **a stable, supportive adult relationship as a key protective factor for children facing adversity**. Real Champions provides that **consistent support through full-time Advocate Mentors** who help children succeed in school, support their families, and remain alongside them through high school graduation.

These realities underscore why Real Champions invests in consistent relationships, individualized academic support, and long-term mentoring that addresses the whole child—not just their performance in the classroom.

FOCUSED ON CONNECTION

3,492 Direct Connections Made This Year

Every meaningful relationship is built one interaction at a time. Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, our Advocate Mentors consistently engaged with students, families, teachers, and schools to provide individualized support beyond the classroom.

CONNECTION TYPE

- **1,156** Meetings with Students in School
- **641** Individual Student Meetings
- **1,135** Parent Meetings
- **418** Teacher Meetings
- **88** Hours of Academic Activities
- **54** Student Experiences & Field Trips



FOCUSED ON THE RCI MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL

As our students grow, our program is growing with them.

Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, Real Champions will launch its **Middle School Model**, ensuring students continue receiving consistent, relationship-based support during one of the most influential stages of child development. While adolescence brings increased independence, it also introduces new academic, social, and emotional challenges. Our enhanced middle school model is designed to help students navigate this transition with confidence while continuing to build the skills necessary for long-term success.

STUDENTS ENTERING THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL WILL RECEIVE:



Four hours each week of individualized support from their Advocate Mentor through both in-school and community-based programming.



Individualized tutoring through our partnership with the **University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB).**



Access to our Reading Specialist, providing targeted literacy support when needed.



Expanded cohort activities that strengthen peer relationships, reinforce the Real Champions identity, and create positive peer accountability.



Two community service projects each year, helping students develop leadership, responsibility, and a commitment to serving others.

QUARTERLY EXPOSURE EXPERIENCES

Each quarter, students will participate in hands-on experiences designed to expand their understanding of the world around them. Every experience will intentionally focus on one of four areas:



Community – Connecting students with local leaders, organizations, and careers that shape their own communities.



Arts – Encouraging creativity while exposing students to artistic careers, performances, and cultural expression.



STEM – Building curiosity through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics experiences that introduce future educational and career pathways.



Culture – Broadening students' perspectives through new places, traditions, and experiences that help them better understand both their own communities and the world beyond them.

By combining consistent mentoring with academic support, positive peer relationships, leadership development, service learning, and intentional exposure to unique experiences, the RCI Middle School Model will prepare students to enter high school with stronger academic skills, greater confidence, and a broader vision for their future.

FOCUSED ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Celebrating RCI's Journey

Every milestone reflects our commitment to South Carolina's children. Through new partnerships and expanded support, we continue building a stronger foundation for their future.



Received a **clean opinion** on our first

ANNUAL INDEPENDENT AUDIT

WELCOMED MEGAN TICE

as **Executive Director**

AWARDED STRONGER CONNECTIONS GRANT

from **SC Department of Education** for Jasper County Program expansion

Piloted our new reading initiative with a full-time

READING SPECIALIST

USCB PARTNERSHIP

LAUNCHED BUSINESS CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

for business and organization partnerships

CELEBRATED 5 YEARS OF RCI

CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP

with **Heritage Classic Foundation**, hosted a hospitality house at the Harbour Town Golf Links during RBC Heritage Golf Tournament

Championed

15 5TH GRADERS

who are now entering **Middle School**

HONORED

to have South Carolina Superintendent of Education, **Ellen Weaver** at our Founders' Luncheon

Hosted

50 CAMPERS

at our

6th Annual Summer Camp

FOCUSED ON OUTCOMES

Measurable Outcomes
Lasting Growth

Behind every statistic is a child gaining confidence, resilience, and purpose. We measure impact through the daily progress of our students—equipping them to thrive in school, in their relationships, and in their future careers.



GOAL 1

COLLEGE, CAREER, & MILITARY READY

Equipping our youth with academic excellence, critical competencies, and purposeful career exploration so every student graduates prepared to excel in their chosen post-secondary trajectory.

GOAL 2

GROWING HEALTHY & ENGAGED CITIZENS

Cultivating physical well-being, emotional resilience, personal character, and civic leadership—ensuring children lead healthy lives and actively contribute to their communities.

Reading Specialist Initiative

This year, Real Champions launched a dedicated **Reading Specialist** position to strengthen literacy outcomes for students requiring additional academic support.

Using individual **state assessment data**, our Reading Specialist develops personalized literacy success plans for students identified as having the greatest academic need. These plans provide targeted interventions based on each student's specific areas for growth and are monitored throughout the year.

Recognizing that literacy development happens beyond formal instruction, our Reading Specialist also provides ongoing training and coaching for Advocate Mentors, equipping them with practical strategies to reinforce reading and language development during everyday interactions with students.

To extend learning beyond the school year, our Reading Specialist designed a **six-week summer literacy curriculum**, providing every student with **45 minutes of structured reading and writing instruction each day** of summer camp. Research shows that academic progress often slows or declines during the summer months when students lose access to consistent instruction and daily reading opportunities. The National Summer Learning Association reports that **nine out of ten teachers spend at least three weeks re-teaching previously learned material** at the beginning of each school year. By providing structured literacy instruction throughout the summer, Real Champions helps students maintain reading skills, strengthen writing ability, and return to school better prepared for success.



FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE 3 year Strategic Goals

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1:

ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY & CAPACITY

Build the governance, leadership, staffing, operational systems, and organizational culture necessary to ensure RCI thrives beyond any one individual, funding source, or leadership transition.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2:

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Develop diversified, community-based funding and strong financial stewardship that fully funds each county, supports administration, and builds long-term reserves.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3:

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Define, document, evaluate, and strengthen the RCI model while becoming South Carolina's trusted leader in relationship-based youth development.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4:

STRATEGIC GROWTH & EXPANSION

Develop a repeatable, financially sustainable expansion model that maintains program quality while entering new communities.

FOCUSED ON GRATITUDE

We are so grateful to the following organizations...

TEAM

backpack buddies of Bluffton & Hardeeville

BARRETT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, LLC

The Beaufort Fund

burnt church DISTILLERY

CAPA CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION ASSOCIATION

Charleston County SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHARLESTON COUNTY SOUTH CAROLINA

CHARLESTON LIBRARY SOCIETY

CAROLOPOLIS CONDITA A.D. 1670

CCF

CSB COASTAL STATES BANK

Colleton River Charitable Fund

ComfortMasters AIR CONDITIONING & REFRIGERATION

DABO'S ALL IN FOR THE TEAM FOUNDATION

DEER PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

Dominion Energy

DUNES real estate The Weaver Team

Eats & Sweets BAKERY & CAFE

FOOD LION FEEDS

GRACE community church

Harbor Light Insurance and Wealth Advisors LLC
Alan Rogers

HARVEST HOPE

HEARTS OF MONTAGE ASSOCIATE RELIEF FUND

Heritage Classic Foundation

Hopeful Horizons

JACK FROST HOME MADE ICE CREAM ITALIAN ICES

JASPER COUNTY SOUTH CAROLINA

JASPER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago

The Joanna Foundation

Junior Service League of Beaufort

KT DESTINY CENTER

Kuznik CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Lawtonville Baptist Church

LINDEN THOMAS AND COMPANY

Long Cove Fund

Lowcountry LEGACY FUND

Low Country PICKLEBALL CLASSIC

MOSS CREEK CHARITABLE FUND

of North Charleston

OCEANO BLUE MEDIA

PALMETTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Polaris Tech CHARTER SCHOOL

POWERUP EDU

Rogers-Slater Family Foundation

SAGE FINANCIAL PLANNING

SCDA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

scThrive

SOUTH STATE BANK

Stokes TOYOTA HILTON HEAD

triad BRAND MARKETING

CTS

USCB UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT

Wagon Branch Community Center

WATTERSON Family FOUNDATION

WJCL 22 abc

...and for **ALL of our faithful individual donors, volunteers, and community partners!**

FOCUSED ON FINANCIALS

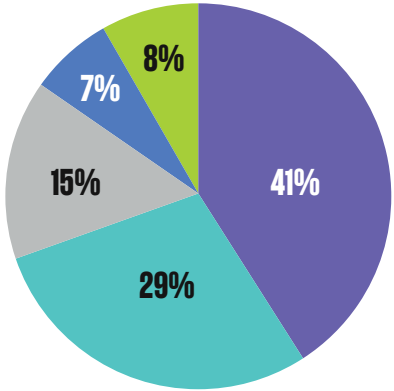
FY 2025-26 RESULTS*

Revenue	**$1.445 M**
Expenses	**$1.424 M**
Surplus	**$21,000**

FY 2026-27 BUDGET

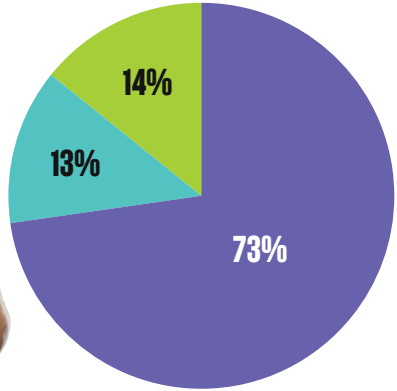
Revenue	**$1.736 M**
Expenses	**$1.727 M**
Surplus	**$9,000**





Source of Funds '26-27

- Individuals **41%**
- Government **29%**
- Foundations **15%**
- Businesses/Churches **7%**
- Events/Campaigns/Other **8%**



Use of Funds '26-27

- Program **73%**
- Administration **13%**
- Development **14%**

*Annual Independent Audit in progress

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Donate

The need is great but the opportunity for change is even greater. A gift of any amount makes this work possible.

Volunteer

Our volunteers provide helping hands and hearts to our mission.

Legacy Giving

Join us in creating a better tomorrow through legacy giving.

More About Us

Learn more about how we are helping transform SC.

Your belief in our mission makes this vital work possible, and we are deeply grateful for your continued support as we empower the next generation of leaders.

REAL CHAMPIONS



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