#### HEALTHY LEARNERS Newsletter | Fall 2024

# Bridging

Moving to a new country can be overwhelming, especially for individuals facing language barriers and lacking a local support system.

After moving from Guatemala to Columbia, South Carolina, Maya was excited to settle into her new life with her young son, Juan, while preparing for the arrival of her second baby. However, navigating the healthcare system quickly became overwhelming. Without family support and facing a language barrier, Maya struggled to find the help her son desperately needed.

Juan was experiencing persistent ear infections, severe stomach pain, headaches, and a loss of appetite. His symptoms made it difficult for him to sleep, and his lack of weight gain added to Maya's growing concerns. Both mother and son endured sleepless nights as Maya worried about his health, feeling unsure how to get him proper care.

It was then that Maya was connected with Yessenia from Healthy Learners, who spoke with her and coordinated medical visits for Juan. Being bilingual, Yessenia helped Maya understand the healthcare process, which gave her confidence in the care her son was receiving. Another significant obstacle for Maya was transportation—without a car, she had no way to take Juan to his appointments. Thankfully, Healthy Learners arranged transportation, lifting yet another heavy burden from her shoulders.



With the support of Healthy Learners, Maya found the relief she needed. Juan's health improved, allowing him to attend school and adjust to his new community without the barrier of illness. Both Maya and her son were finally able to rest, knowing they had the guidance and support to navigate these challenges.

Many families face similar challenges—limited resources, language barriers, and uncertainty about where to seek help. It's crucial to ensure they feel supported every step of the way.
- Yesenia



# A Sense Of Overwhelm...

When I talk with our staff about the families we serve at Healthy Learners, one theme comes up often: a sense of overwhelm. Parents and caregivers face tough choices, working tirelessly to provide their children with the best life possible. In our fast-paced world, the stress of a child's health problems can often feel insurmountable.

For school staff, this overwhelm manifests differently. Nurses and teachers dedicate themselves to identifying health issues in students but often lack the resources to ensure these children receive the care they need—until Healthy Learners steps in.

At Healthy Learners, we pride ourselves on offering peace and hope. For parents, it's the assurance of having a trusted partner to help navigate their child's health challenges. For school staff, it's the comfort of knowing they have a committed ally closing the gap between health and learning, ensuring no child is left behind.

Our holistic services empower children and families to access necessary healthcare, addressing the logistical and financial hurdles they face. When parents know their child's health needs are met, it fosters a calmer, more stable home environment, allowing children to thrive in school.

Together, we are building a healthier, brighter future for families—one child at a time.



Amy Splittgerber Executive Director



## From Overwhelmed To Empowered...

The Jones family faced a challenging transition when they moved from Florida to Columbia, South Carolina. Yvette, Shane, and their four children had to adjust not only to a new community but to the complexities of a new healthcare system.

In Florida, Medicaid enrollment had been a straightforward process for the family. However, after six months in South Carolina, Yvette discovered that her children were not enrolled in Medicaid in their new state. With their busy schedules, which included overnight shift work, the Joneses felt overwhelmed by the application process and the need to coordinate medical care. To make matters more complicated, Yvette and Shane's work hours made transportation to the children's appointments a significant barrier.

• We were so overwhelmed trying to figure everything out on our own, but Healthy Learners stepped in at just the right time. Knowing our kids are getting the care they need and not having to worry about missing work or finding a ride has been a huge relief for our family.



The turning point came when a school social worker introduced the family to Healthy Learners. Jaylen, a Student Services Site Coordinator, quickly stepped in to help the Jones family navigate the Medicaid application process. Within just two weeks of applying, all four children were receiving essential medical, dental, and eye care services.

Jaylen also arranged transportation for the children's appointments, eliminating the financial and logistical stress that taking time off work can cause for parents. This lifted a huge burden off the family's shoulders, allowing them to focus on other priorities without worrying about healthcare logistics. By the end of that first week, the Jones family could breathe a sigh of relief. With their children's health concerns addressed and their Medicaid enrollment secured, they could return to their normal routines. For the Joneses, this meant enjoying their weekly Friday night tradition of family game night. Monopoly, a favorite of all four children, could now be a time for the family to have fun and relax together. Removing healthcare barriers brought peace to the Jones family.





Healthy Learners has helped **2,959** students so far this year by removing nearly **13,000** health barriers to learning. We aim to serve **3,555** students by year-end but still need support for **596** students. Each student typically requires **3-4** medical appointments, costing about **\$625**. Would you consider helping one of these students or sharing the cost with other generous donors?



### Hurricane Helene Relie

Greenwood, South Carolina, was hard hit by Hurricane Helene. For the past two weeks, Healthy Learners has teamed up with local businesses to serve meals, distribute water, and support other recovery efforts to help those in need.

Our community came together in a time of need. Thanks to our partners and volunteers, we made a real difference by providing meals and essentials to those hardest hit.

- Aimee Clark



