

EMERALD
SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

IMPACT REPORT

2024-25



Education through Faith, Fitness, and Fellowship

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LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



Dear Emerald Family,

From the bottom of my heart—thank you. It's because of your unwavering support, encouragement, and generosity that we're able to do what we do each day: create a safe, sober high school environment where teens in recovery can heal, grow, and thrive.

This past year, we had the privilege of walking alongside 42 students and their families. Since opening our doors in 2019, 52% of students served have celebrated one year or more of continuous sobriety while working their recovery plans. These moments aren't just statistics—they are transformations made possible by our supportive community.

As we celebrate our sixth year, we've reached new milestones. But even with these wins, we know our work is far from finished. There are countless teens and families in the Charlotte area still struggling and many don't even know that help exists.

That's why this year we're making marketing and outreach a top priority.

One of the most powerful takeaways from our recent community events has been this: Show up. Speak up. Keep the conversation going. There are adolescents silently battling substance use and mental health challenges who need to hear that they're not alone—that there's a safe, supportive place for them to heal and learn.

If you know a teen or a family in need, I encourage you to reach out. Whether you're looking for resources, support groups, or a school tour—we are here to help.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Mary Ferreri
Founder & Principal
Emerald School of Excellence

110

students served

80%

average retention rate

50

Emerald alumni



OUR PROGRAM

Mission:

Provide quality education in a recovery-friendly environment to teens with substance use and mental health challenges.

Vision:

We strive to strengthen the continuum of care for teens by serving as a resource to support them in pursuing substance use and mental health recovery.



Academics



Recovery



Community

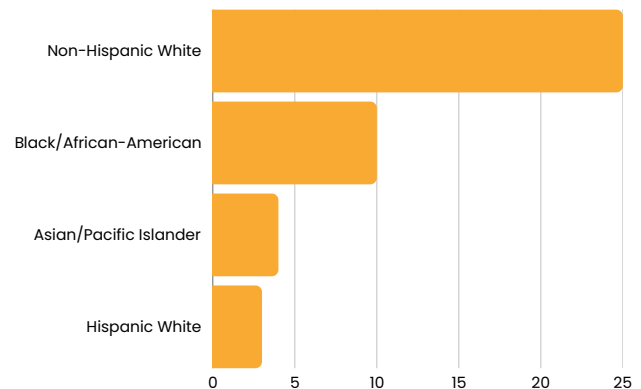


Purpose

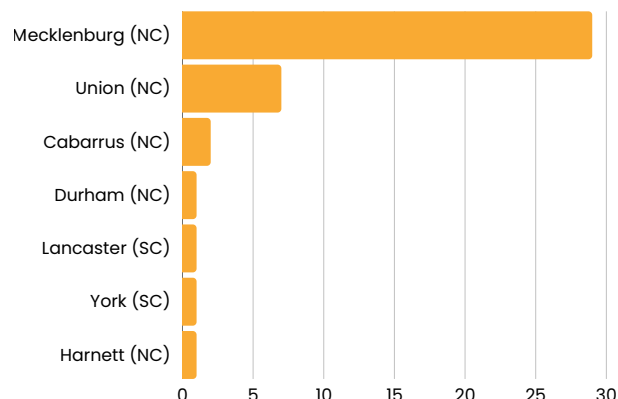
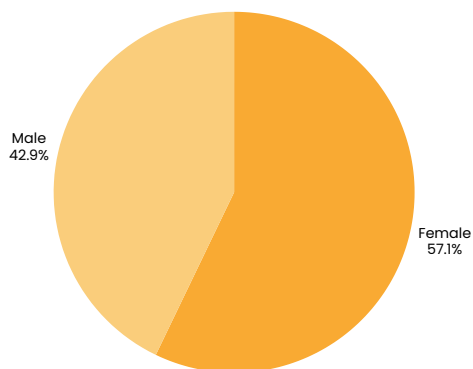


STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Emerald School of Excellence serves high school students ages 13 to 21 who are striving to stay on a path of wellness and self-improvement. Students are committed to remaining sober and working on their recovery through pursuing therapy, support meetings, or other local resources. Our unique approach provides support and accountability to help teens thrive.

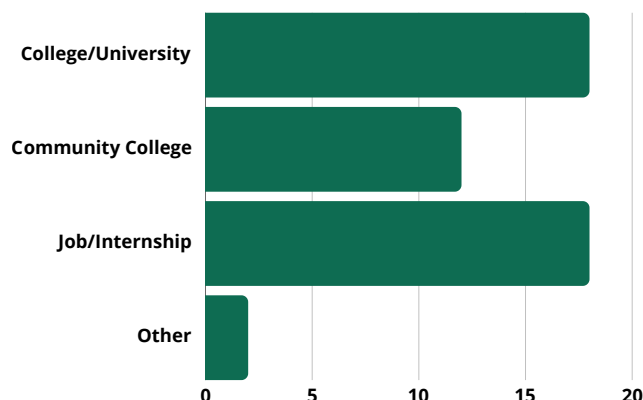


Students attend Emerald from counties across North and South Carolina from many diverse referral sources including treatment centers, therapists, and schools. Our goal is to create a recovery-friendly community welcoming for any teen who needs support taking the next step towards working on their recovery.



ACADEMIC IMPACT

Alumni Next Steps:



Building Brighter Futures:

- **Individualized Education Plans:** We tailor our approach to your needs and learning style.
- **College and Career Readiness Resources:** Prepare for your future with dedicated college and career planning guidance.
- **Supportive and Caring Environment:** Feel empowered in a safe and encouraging community.
- **Small Class Sized:** Receive instruction in an intimate setting designed for student success.
- **Recovery-Informed Education:** Get the support you need to thrive academically and maintain your recovery journey.



3.33

*average Emerald graduate
weighted GPA*

3.12

*average Emerald graduate
unweighted GPA*

“

When our son walked through the doors of Emerald School of Excellence nearly two years ago, we were relieved to have found a place not only to teach him academically but to support his recovery and continue the healing process. Little did we know that our entire family would begin to heal. Emerald is a "family program" and a strong foundation that supports recovery for the entire family unit. Not to mention that our son, now a senior, is thriving and starting the college application process for major universities across the country! We will be forever grateful for Emerald School of Excellence!

”

RECOVERY IMPACT



Emerald has helped me to be more self-aware and confident. I now believe in myself and know anything is possible if I do the work. The best part is they meet you where you are so you're not alone.

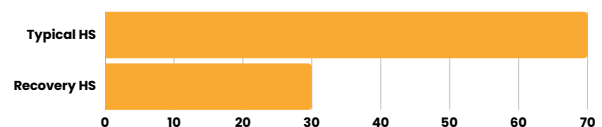
Emerald Student, Class of 2026



Holistic Support:

- **Personalized Support Plan:** We'll create an individualized plan that outlines your personal goals for recovery.
- **Dedicated Recovery Staff:** Recovery Support Staff available throughout the day to offer guidance and support.
- **Regular Check-Ins:** Meet one-on-one every three weeks to discuss progress and collaboratively set new goals.
- **Supportive Community:** Morning and afternoon recovery groups provide a safe space to connect and learn from each other.
- **Open Communication:** Collaborating with families and external support providers to create a strong support network.

Return to Use by Type of School Environment



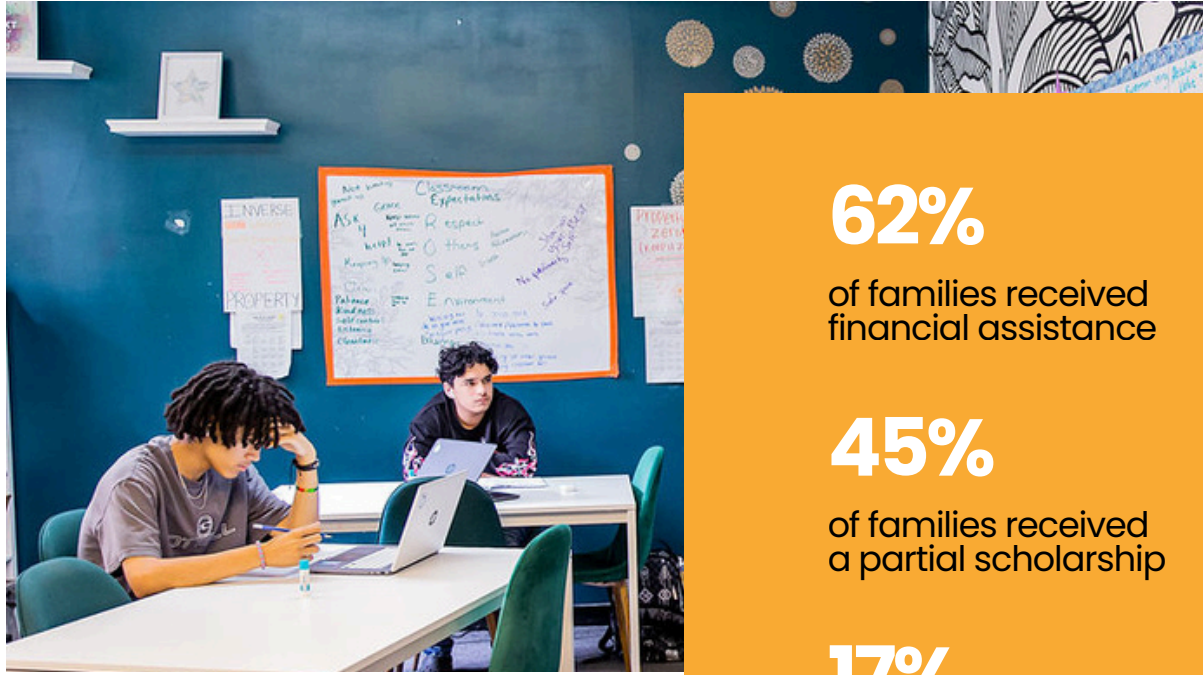
64%

of Emerald School of Excellence students remained sober for the entire 2024-2025 school year - about a 7% increase from the previous school year.

52%

of Emerald students served reached a year or more of continuous sobriety

FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM



62%

of families received financial assistance

45%

of families received a partial scholarship

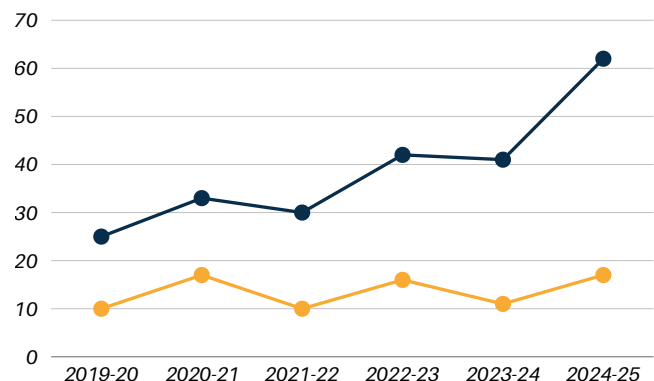
17%

of families received a full scholarship

Making Emerald Accessible:

At Emerald School of Excellence, we understand that the cost of recovery and education can be a significant concern. We believe that financial limitations should not prevent deserving students from pursuing their recovery journey and academic goals. To ensure that finances do not serve as a barrier for potential families, we strive to provide financial aid to over 24% of our students each academic year, the national average for all private schools. **Since we opened our doors in 2019, we have not had to turn a single family away due to financial need.**

Our Scholarship Fund removes barriers for potential families in need, allowing more teens access to a Recovery High School education. **The generous support of our Scholarship Fund provided twenty six students with financial assistance this past school year, seven of whom received a full scholarship.**

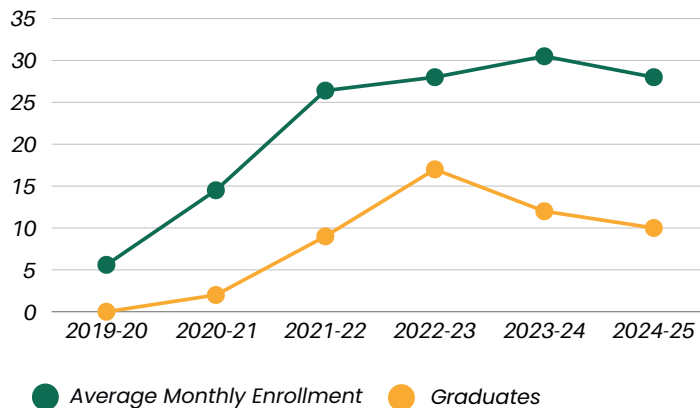


● % of Students Receiving Aid ● % of Students on Full Scholarships

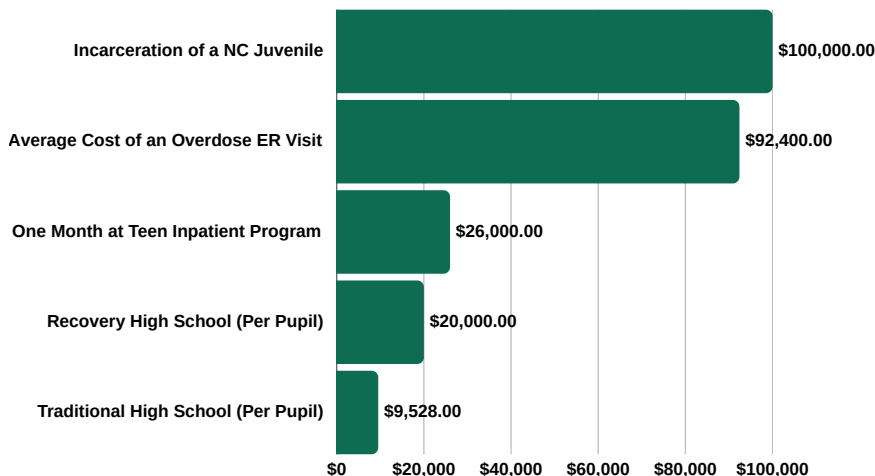
COST-BENEFIT OF A RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

Educating a student at Emerald School of Excellence costs about twice as much as in a traditional public school—but only a fraction of the cost of juvenile incarceration or emergency care for an overdose. By helping teens avoid both, **Recovery High Schools (RHS) like Emerald School of Excellence not only change lives but also save taxpayers significant dollars.**

Enrollment Growth:



Cost-Benefit Analysis of a RHS:



By helping 57 students reach a year or more of continuous sobriety, Emerald School of Excellence may have saved our state over \$5 million in emergency room visit costs alone. **As enrollment continues to grow, Emerald School of Excellence can continue to save taxpayer dollars.**

Supporting Recovery High Schools like Emerald not only gives teens the tools to recover and graduate, it also saves taxpayers significant resources turning potential tragedy into hope and a brighter future.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2024 Income:

Emerald School of Excellence is funded in part through tuition, which is determined on a sliding scale based on each family's financial need. Most families receive aid to cover some or all of the cost.

Because tuition covers only a portion of our annual expenses, **we depend on the generosity of donors and the support of grants to bridge the gap and ensure every student has access to the education and recovery support they deserve.**

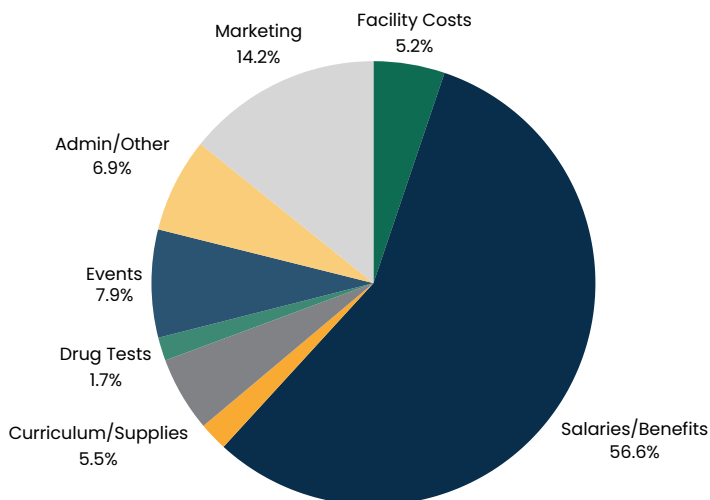
Tuition **24%**

State Grant **41%**

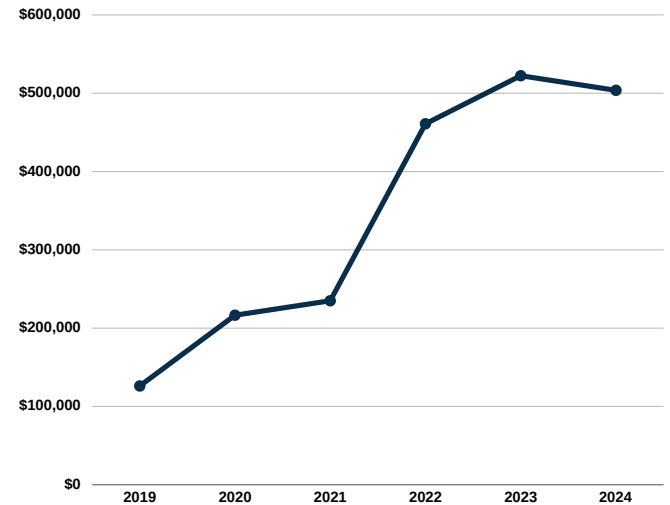
Fundraising **35%**

Program Expenses:

The **annual operating budget in 2024 was \$1,158,647**. Based on the actual expenses for 2024,



Annual Fundraising Growth:



OUR TEAM

School Leadership:

Mary Ferreri
Principal & CEO

Janelle Mortimer
Project Coordinator

Gabby Wohlford
Assistant Principal
& COO

Nicole Higginbotham
Community Development
Officer

Recovery Team:

Stephanie Behuniak
Recovery Support
Director

Mac Harrison
Recovery Support

Cooper Miller
Recovery Support

Academic Team:

Rachael Wilson
Science Teacher,
Lead Teacher

Dylan Sprinkle
History Teacher

Meghan Nance
Art Teacher

Sivonne Stone
English Teacher

Chris Fyfe
Math Teacher

Jesse O'Sheal
Music Teacher

Board of Directors:

Keith Bolt
President

Bridget Norris
Vice President

Lorraine Kieffer
Treasurer

Heather Teasley
Secretary

Michele Juliana
Board Member

Ward Blanchard
Board Member

Taber Cathcart
Board Member

Lynn Barnhill
Board Member

Mike Gminski
Board Member

Jamie Ergle
Board Member

Melissa Toro
Board Member

Fred Griffith
Board Member

Jim Boylan
Board Member



GET INVOLVED: DONATE, ATTEND, AND SERVE

Emerald School of Excellence is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that relies on monetary donations to support our operations. Your support fuels hope and opportunity for our students. Give through **monetary or in-kind donations**—such as contributing to our Scholarship Fund or providing healthy snacks. Celebrate with us at our **annual Gala** each February and **Golf Tournament** each spring. Or **share your time and talents**—whether by serving on an event committee, stepping in as a volunteer substitute teacher, or inspiring students as a guest speaker. Every gift, every hour, and every shared story helps transform lives.



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