Hello All,

I can't believe that it is summer – the busy Spring flew by, and now we are at the end of another great fiscal year. As we step into FY27, I am filled with gratitude for everything our team, board, and community accomplished together in FY26. This is the first board meeting of our new year, and it feels right to pause and honor the hard work, resilience, and dedication that carried us through a truly meaningful year. There is much to celebrate and much to look forward to.

Please refer to the new BOD Webpage for all meeting prep, fundraising progress, meeting minutes, and more. You can add comments about any of the materials within the form on the webpage after you have reviewed. **Please bookmark this page!**

WHEN WE LAST LEFT:

With Justin's leadership, we created the first Round Up partnership with the restaurant El Jefe, based in MA, PA, and NJ! With El Jefe's support, we raised $12K through the Round up program.

At our April Board meeting, Sam shared Q4 program metrics alongside findings from two mentor focus groups facilitated by Catalyst Campaigns: current mentors are our strongest recruitment tool, and time-commitment concerns remain the biggest barrier for new applicants, insights that are now shaping our first formal Marketing Plan. Based on Board feedback, we also finalized new mission statement language: "Empower's mission is to support, connect, and empower children and young adults up through age 24 who have experienced the death of a parent, working to overcome the negative impacts of early parent loss."

The Advancement Committee reported back on Catalyst's 30+ donor discovery calls, which validated our direction toward a more structured, Board-led fundraising approach built on relational trust and clearer storytelling; we also began transitioning to a new donor CRM, Little Green Light. On the funding front, Senator O'Connor confirmed Empower's inclusion in the Governor's budget for a $100,000 state appropriation, and with Justin Shaw's guidance, we submitted two federal congressional funding requests ($750,000 for a school-based outreach program and $400,000 for caregiver support) ahead of the April deadline. We were recently notified that our School Partnerships initiative is under consideration with the Appropriations Committee and we should be notified later this summer if we will receive the funding. Finally, Ropes & Gray shared a legal update on the Empower Change/Jeff Kimball matter: no trademark infringement was found, though a potential labor issue tied to his severance agreement remains, and next steps are underway to include notifications to our donors and community at large.

WHY THIS BOARD MEETING IS IMPORTANT:

During the Board meeting, we will consider several timely issues that will help shape Empower's path forward. We will review next steps related to Empower Change and Jeff Kimball, following the trademark findings and broader considerations that have been shared with the Board. While this may not require an immediate decision, it is important that the Board is informed and aligned as we assess any potential risks, future implications, and appropriate response.

We will also share more about how the Advancement Committee will help to follow up with our Major Donors and discovery calls to continue to deepen relationships and engagement. This will help guide a thoughtful discussion about how the Board can continue building a stronger culture of philanthropy.

Finally, this meeting is an important opportunity to discuss our efforts related to State and Federal funding. As we continue to pursue new revenue streams that can strengthen and sustain our mission, Board awareness and engagement in these conversations will be essential. Together, these discussions will help us stay proactive, informed, and aligned around key strategic opportunities and decisions in front of us.

PROGRAM

What's happening now:

- In FY26, we hosted 10 community-based events, made 34 matches, completed 138 Mentor Screenings, and enrolled 123 youth into our programs.

- We have been strategizing our program infrastructure for FY27 and will be recruiting and onboarding new Program Coordinators and Events Coordinators to implement our programs and meet our FY27 programmatic goals.

- We met with a representative of Red Sox pitcher, Peyton Tolle, and will begin a partnership with him this summer, starting later this month where Mentors, mentees, and families will join Peyton for a Boston adventure. Peyton lost his mother and feels passionate about our mission and supporting our organization.
- We celebrated both our Mother's and Father's Day events this spring:
    - Mother's Day Event (US): Sunday, May 10th 11am - 4pm EST at the Southline in Boston, girls and nonbinary youth gathered at Southline while boys and nonbinary youth headed to Fenway Park for a Red Sox game. It was a day full of connection and fun!
    - Father's Day Event (US): Sunday, June 14th 11am - 4pm EST at the Southline in Boston, complete with Board Chair Dave Clayman showing off his Mustangs to the kids during a fun car session!
- We will be hosting a "Gratitude Garden Party" on Saturday, August 22nd in honor of our volunteers and supporters at Empower. Terrain Gardens in Wayland, MA will be hosting this event and all goods and services will be donated. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, you can do so HERE.

What's on the Horizon / How you can help:

- We're strategizing on the best ways to recruit male mentors and how to bring Mother's and Father's Day-style events to key areas outside of Boston.

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

What's happening now:

- We are restructuring our Communications Department and looking to hire contractors/fractional employees to take on social media, website, and digital marketing. If you know anyone who might be a good fit, please reach out!
- We continue to analyze our MailChimp newsletter engagement to identify the most impactful ways to communicate with our community — feedback is always welcome!

What's on the Horizon / How You Can Help:

- We are strategizing an Empower podcast in 2026. If you have anyone in your network who is experienced in podcast production, please email Cara HERE.
- Senior leadership has begun writing the Marketing Plan and will be forming a Marketing Advisory Committee to help shape it. Do you have anyone in your network who is an experienced Marketing professional and may have time and talent to lend to the process? Please email Cara HERE.

ADVANCEMENT/DEVELOPMENT

What's happening now:

- Click HERE to view the fundraising tracker (this is updated weekly)
- We have a 1-page Why document for all BOD members to save on their laptop. You can find it on our dedicated BOD Resource page HERE.
- The Advancement Committee will work with the Staff and Board to identify donors from our list of discovery calls to support follow-ups.
- Cara and Sam visited Senator O'Connor at the State House where he shared that Empower will be awarded a $100,000 appropriation from the State of MA. He later spoke to this at a May Senate session HERE, formally proposing the amendment to support Empower, his remarks were so powerful that we plan to feature them in our own materials.

- Empower attended a check reception with IICF (Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation) in NYC to accept a $35,000 grant.
- The Heather Bone Foundation recently awarded Empower $20,000 in June at their annual parade.
- With guidance from Justin Shaw, we pursued federal and state funding this spring: a $750,000 grant application (through Senators Warren and Markey's offices) to support school partnerships — we expect to hear whether we were selected by the end of July. Thank you, Justin, for your guidance on this work!

What's on the Horizon / How you Can help:

- The Empower round-up pin-pad donation program concluded on June 30th. We are grateful for all of the support we received from Justin Schall and the team at El Jefe! We are always strategizing on other cause-marketing opportunities, and if you have any connections, please reach out to me.

ORGANIZATIONAL

What's happening now:

- Trademark findings: We are in the process of speaking with our lawyers at Ropes & Gray to take the next steps with Empower Change and Jeff Kimball. Their initial guidance was to send a cease and desist letter and note the breach of the severance agreement. We are still awaiting an assignment of an attorney to review our draft letters to Empower Change and to our donors and whole community to distinguish between our two organizations. The Governance Committee is helping to drive this down with Ropes & Gray.

Financials:

Budget to Actuals

YTD Income Goal: $735,000
YTD Income Actual: $714,910

YTD Expense Goal: $735,000
YTD Expense Actual: $682,921

UK Write-off: $12,662

FY26 Net Income: $19,326

What's on the Horizon / How You Can Help:

- Help us build a strong culture of philanthropy as we begin FY27; your introductions, personal outreach, and presence in donor meetings make a real difference.
- We are always brainstorming new Directors and non-directors and as always, please share your nominations on the nomination form on the webpage