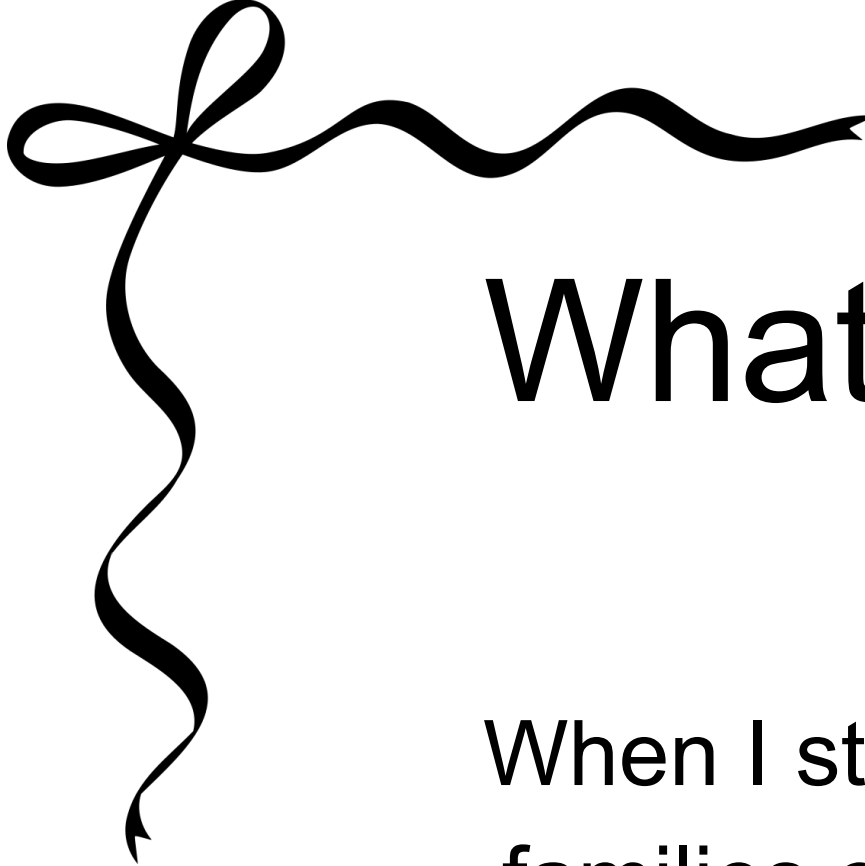
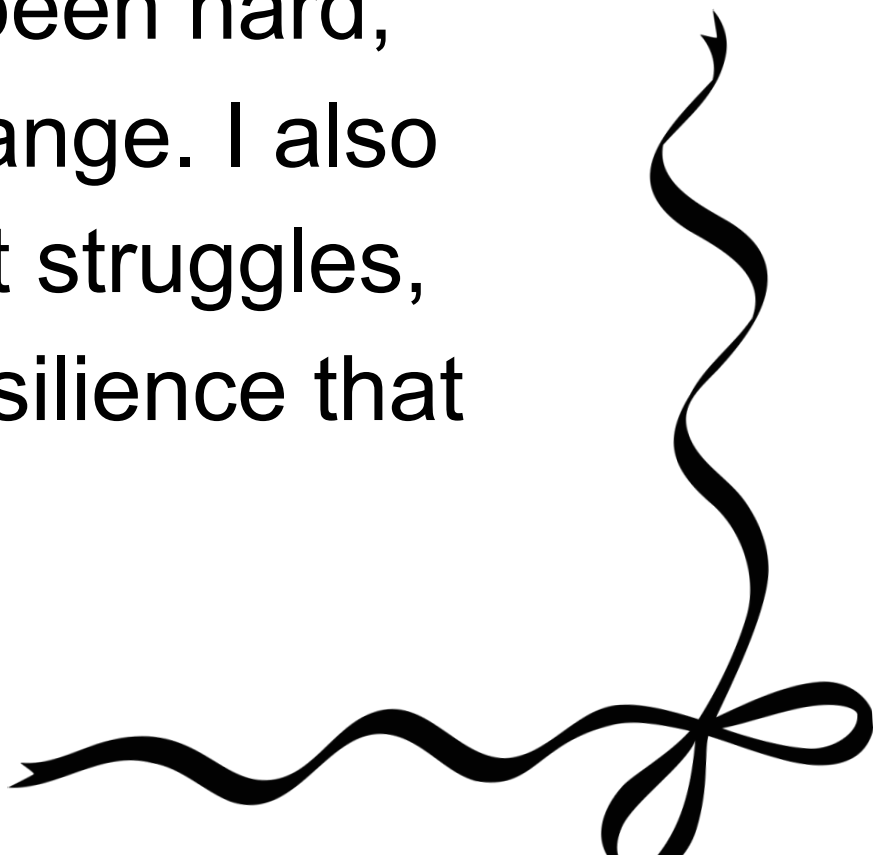




What opportunity or challenge were you hoping to address?

When I started this project, I wanted to create a space where Black families could honestly talk about what it's really like raising young children. So many times, programs and policies are created without asking the people they're supposed to help.

I wanted families to have a chance to share what has been hard, what has helped them, and what they think needs to change. I also wanted to make sure we talked about strengths, not just struggles, because Black families have so much knowledge and resilience that often gets overlooked.



What did you accomplish?

I was able to bring families together for a listening session where they felt comfortable sharing their stories. We talked about things like housing, child care, healthcare, transportation, and what support really looks like.

Afterward, I took everything they shared and turned it into a community report called Love & Liberation Looks Like: Listening to Black Families Raising Babies.

The report doesn't just talk about problems. It also includes the ideas and solutions families came up with and shares them in a way that organizations and leaders can actually use.

What did you learn?

One of the biggest things I learned is that families aren't looking for someone to save them.

They're looking for people to listen to them, trust them, and treat them like partners.

I also learned that relationships matter just as much as resources. Families told me over and over that having someone they trust makes a huge difference when they're trying to get help.

Another thing that stood out was how much strength already exists in our communities. Even with all the barriers families face, they continue to support each other, love their children, and find ways to keep moving forward.



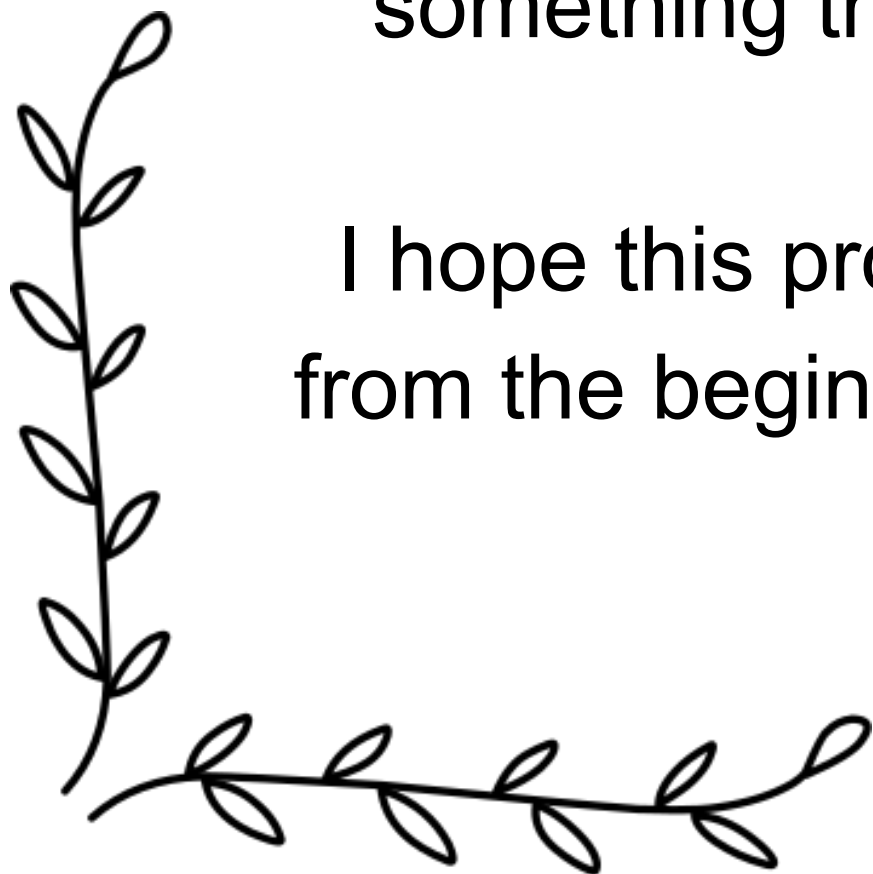
What impacts did you see?

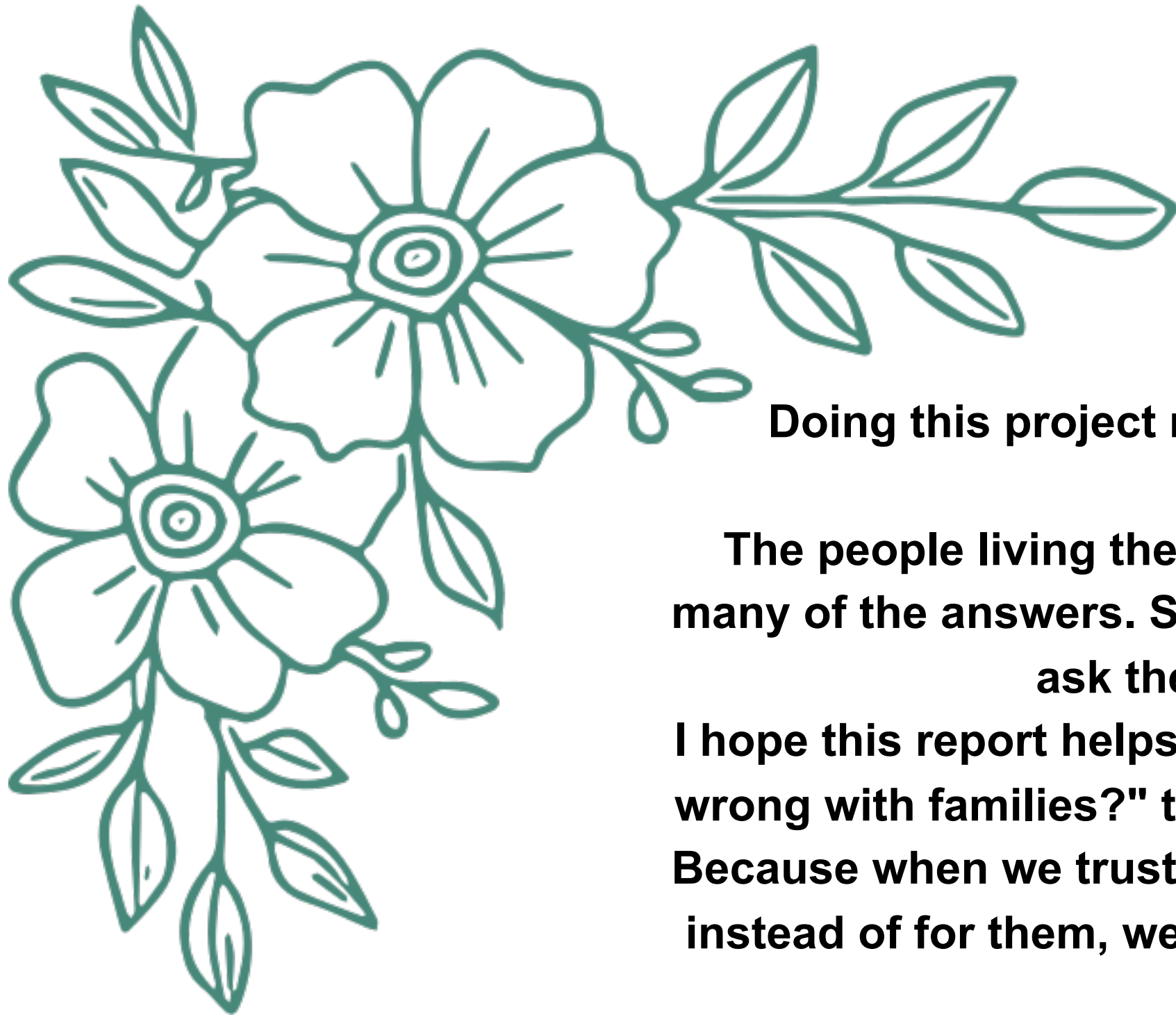
The biggest impact was seeing families realize their voices matter.

People opened up about experiences they hadn't shared before because they felt heard and respected.

Another impact was creating a report that can keep those conversations going. Instead of those stories staying in one room, they're now something that policymakers, healthcare providers, and community organizations can learn from.

I hope this project encourages more organizations to include families from the beginning instead of waiting until decisions have already been made.





Doing this project reminded me why lived experience is so important.

The people living these experiences every day already have so many of the answers. Sometimes they just need someone willing to ask the questions and truly listen.

I hope this report helps shift the conversation from asking, "What's wrong with families?" to asking, "What do families need to thrive?" Because when we trust families, listen to them, and build with them instead of for them, we create stronger communities for everyone.

