



Community Services
for Children

Update



Dear Friends of Community Services for Children,

In the last 4 months, Community Services for Children has been startled and then shaken by the events unfolding in the world around us! Beginning March 14, 2020, we said an abrupt goodbye to the thousands of parents and children we were engaged with across Northeastern PA, as the world pandemic unfolded. The agency quickly transformed our work into a new and different type of service, providing a much-needed safety net for the childcare community, families and children impacted by PA's near complete shutdown and preschool/school closures. We are grateful to the conscientious decisions made by our state and federal legislators, prioritizing the critical role of Head Start/ Early Head Start, Pre K Counts and the Early Learning Resource Centers, while protecting the public.

During this tumultuous time, we continue to learn a lot! We have learned that our staff are amazing people, so committed to families in need! We have learned that our community has in place a strong network, that pulled together to ensure children and families had food, emergency assistance and access to extraordinary health care. CSC's Educators created digital messages, and a series of lessons using common items found in the home addressing all areas of learning for children birth to age five! Family support staff reached out weekly to families, providing health, parenting education, community resources and ongoing sources of childcare. CSC's Early Learning Resource Center staff worked with the childcare community to ensure continued quality funding, and ongoing funding of the Child Care Works program, while serving as a central resource of support and care to parents and the childcare industry.

We have been reminded that families facing poverty, lack the technological capacity and access to actually participate in the maelstrom of digital learning that has become our educational system. We saw that low income families making up a large part of the essential work force and living with suboptimal health status, were disproportionately affected by Coronavirus facing loss after loss. And sadly, we were confronted by the horrific murder of George Floyd, demonstrating once again, that systemic, active racism pervades our society and continues to be endured by Black children and families today.

Though we share the value that racism has no place in CSC's culture, we must acknowledge that racism is institutional, conscious, unconscious, and interwoven in every system. Understanding that early experiences in life shape brain architecture and who we become as adults, we must actively work to protect young children from the traumatic and long term negative impact of racism. CSC commits to reexamining our thoughts, feelings, actions, policies, practices, and values. Head Start was born out of the civil rights movement in 1965, with the core belief that every child and parent is valued and deserving of equal opportunity without bias. This legacy still serves as CSC's foundation. As we move forward with a renewed commitment to antiracism, I hope that you will join us in ensuring that every child has the equal opportunity to reach its full potential, in learning and in life.



Best,

Paula J. Margraf, CEO/President



What's New



Head Start

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During the month of July, **Head Start/Pre-K** Teachers will implement Summer Start, a summer program targeting current Head Start children who are transitioning to kindergarten in the fall. There will be ten classrooms located throughout Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton, serving a total of 100 students. Children will attend four days each week for four hours each day. Teachers will target language and literacy development and key indicators in mathematics. Social/emotional development will take center stage as Family Engagement Partners and teachers support children and their families with the transition back into a school based setting. Nutrition services, including both breakfast and lunch, will be provided for all enrolled children. Transportation services will also be available for a select number of classrooms. The Summer Start program has been made available through the Office of Head Start utilizing funds designated from the CARES Act.



Early Head Start

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The **Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC)** have been working remotely throughout the COVID-19 shutdown to make sure that families still have access to the resources and child care that they need. Many child care providers were able to obtain waivers to operate during the "red phase," in order to serve the families of essential workers. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) continued to provide funding for providers who had children enrolled in the Child Care Works program at the time of the shutdown, so that even if providers were not open, they still received necessary funding. In addition, the ELRC distributed \$9.3 million in CARES Act funding to certified child care providers in June. Additional CARES Act funds will be distributed to providers in July. In May and June, the ELRC's also successfully completed annual compliance monitoring conducted by OCDEL.



Early Learning Resource Center

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Community Services for Children in partnership with the Allentown School District has launched a new school readiness and transition program – **Kindergarten Jumpstart Center**. Earlier this year, the Kindergarten Jumpstart team was able to visit over 125 childcare centers in the Allentown area to assist families with kindergarten registration. Due to the current climate of COVID19, our School Readiness Partners are hard at work making virtual contact with childcare centers and providing assistance with the online kindergarten registration process. The Kindergarten Jumpstart team is looking forward to welcoming families to one of our convenient community based locations; Jackson Early Childhood Center, Roosevelt Elementary, and the Neighborhood Resource Center. We look forward to serving families by assisting with kindergarten registration, providing school readiness materials and hosting family-friendly community events.



Kindergarten Jumpstart Center

Powered by CSC



More Info

For more information about any of these services, contact:

Head Start & Early Head Start: info@cscinc.org or 610-437-6000 ext. 2171

ELRC: info@elrc-csc.org or 610-437-6000

Kindergarten Jumpstart: jump2k@cscinc.org or 484-656-0016



Partnerships



City Center Investment Corporation and Community Services for Children continue to grow and expand their successful partnership! Beginning in 2018, City Center, with the leadership of JB Reilly, President and CEO, made possible the first of its kind “Learning Hub” to allow Head Start of the Lehigh Valley to expand its programming, and serve 110 economically disadvantaged children and families at 6th and Linden Streets, right in their own neighborhood. City Center invested \$1.3 M in the beautiful renovation of the space, to create six state-of-the-art enhanced classrooms in STEM, Arts and Literacy, an Innovation /Technology Laboratory, Training and Chat rooms for parents and a thrilling indoor exercise center. Our shared vision was to create a vibrant learning center for children and their parents, to ensure that every child was ready for success in school and in life, fully engaging families in the vision.

Only through City Center’s ongoing generosity totaling over \$750,000 in-kind annually, have we been able to deliver on our promise. The City Center and CSC partnership has brought the arts, human service, education, and additional corporate partners to the program. Due to collaboration with Allentown School District, we have been able to successfully integrate preschool aged children and families into their neighborhood school and support their successful transition. Corporate support through PPL, PNC, Air Products, United Way and PBS have made possible enhanced educational opportunities for both children and families throughout the year. Due to City Center’s leadership and redirection of funds, The Allentown Art Museum, Baum School of Art, and the Allentown Symphony were able to provide cultural arts experiences that were previously not affordable. By working together, we have created something unique, and impactful.

Results of child educational assessments demonstrate that children served in Head Start at The Learning Hub, outperformed their peers in other settings on every area of learning, especially in science, and literacy. Results of family participation data demonstrates that families connected to The Learning Hub were 50% more engaged than families of enrolled children at other sites. Serving families right in their neighborhood, in a beautiful environment, with partnerships embracing and enhancing each service has proven to be a successful community model of innovation and a true demonstration of caring.

Because of our success, we reached out to City Center once again, and they responded, allowing us to expand and create a Neighborhood Resource Center at The Learning Hub. This center will provide families with answers to their needs – one stop shopping - by co-locating the Early Learning Resource Center, Head Start/Early Head Start enrollment services, Kindergarten Jump Start school transition services, and Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital health services. Due to the Covid- 19 Pandemic the renovation and opening of our new program has been delayed but we are excited to open August 3, 2020!

We are proud to be part of the revitalization of Allentown, ensuring that all families are included in the community growth. We thank City Center for its tremendous support, and for sharing in CSC’s vision of Putting Children First.

Teri Haddad, Ed.D.
Vice-President
Community Initiatives & Advancement

Molly Kranzley Driscoll
Director
Communications & Advancement



Teachers at Home



When Community Services for Children made the difficult decision to shut down our buildings as a precaution to keep staff, children, and families healthy, it was certain to everyone that there was a need to develop a new way to communicate with those who depend on us. As Paula Margraf shared we quickly pivoted to develop a new way to stay connected with our enrolled children by providing valuable education, but also to help them maintain routine and continuity, which is equally valuable in addressing social and emotional needs of the child. Addressing all facets of wellness is especially important among the disadvantaged population we are serving, who are often already confronted with much uncertainty.

The teachers at CSC began to develop recorded lessons, which were posted on the Community Services for Children YouTube Channel. In just a three-month period, the channel has been viewed over 20,000 times. Courses of study included lessons in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Arts, Literacy and Fine Motor Skills. Early Head Start video lessons were developed for the youngest children we serve ranging in age from birth to three years old. Additional lessons are available in Spanish.

Jamie Kemmerer, lead teacher in the Newton Classroom where curriculum focuses on STEM education recently took time to share her experience of being away from the classroom and separated from the children she is passionate about educating.



What was your first thought when you heard classrooms were closing?

When we got the email stating classrooms would be closing for the remainder of the school year I was very shocked and sad. Shocked because I couldn't believe the impact that this illness was having in our day to day life and the fact that from now on there was going to be a new "normal". I was also very sad because I never had the chance to say good-bye to my students, tell them how proud I was of them for all they achieved this school year, or give them one last hug as I sent them off to kindergarten.

When you first heard about creating teach at home lessons, what did you think?

I thought it was an awesome idea and a great way to keep our students involved academically during such an unprecedented time. The videos allowed us to help our students practice skills in different learning domains and prepare them for kindergarten as best we could from being stuck at home.

What was your favorite lesson you created?

My favorite lesson was a science lesson about trees. In this lesson I taught the students about their five senses, we sang a song together, and then explored the different characteristics of a tree using our senses. I ended the lesson with encouraging the students to get outside and explore a tree in their backyard or neighborhood. This was my favorite lesson because being outdoors and getting to explore nature is something very exciting for children. It allows for observation, creativity, and discovery.

What are you looking forward to most upon returning to the classroom?

I am looking forward to getting back into a routine and a normal schedule. I am also looking forward to seeing my co-workers, they bring me so much happiness! I have missed seeing their smiling faces every day. Lastly, I am super excited to meet my new students and begin another great year at CSC!





Scholarships



Community Services for Children is proud to announce this year's recipients of the 2nd Head Start Alumni Scholarship. This scholarship was designed to award graduating seniors that are pursuing higher education and previously participated in a Head Start program. According to the National Head Start Association (NHSA), children who participated in Head Start have continued success in the following areas: vocabulary, cognitive skills, parent involvement, higher classroom quality, self-control, and self-esteem. All of these traits ultimately lead to improved high school graduation rates, college enrollment and completion. CSC is excited to be a part of these students' hard work and their journey as they embark on this next chapter in their lives.

The 2020 2nd Head Start Alumni Scholarship Winners:

Urcinia Arias graduated from Lehigh Valley Regional Charter School and will be attending Northampton Community College.

Richard Batista graduated from Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts and will be attending Penn State University.

Emelina Kraeutler graduated from Pleasant Valley High School and will be attending East Stroudsburg University.

Lizbeth Ramos graduated from William Allen High School and will be attending Lafayette College.

Victor Riche-Roman graduated from Lehigh Career & Technical Institute and will be attending DeSales University.

Julissa Santana graduated from Lehigh Valley Regional Charter School and will be attending Moravian College.

Community Services for Children commends each of these outstanding young adults on their accomplishments and wishes each of you the best in all your future endeavors.



Thank You

Thank you to our donors who made this year's scholarship program possible! If you would like to make a contribution to help future recipients contact mdriscoll@cscinc.org



Board Updates



Another area where partnerships shine at Community Services for Children is through the actions of our Board of Directors and we are especially grateful for their guidance in these ever changing times we are now faced with. We warmly welcome our new Chairperson of the Community Services for Children Board of Directors, Camie Modjadidi, as we send a grateful farewell to our former chair, Jay Kshatri.

Camie has been a standing member of our board since 2018 and has accepted the role of chairperson. She is a career educator with experience ranging from early childhood education through graduate school. She is recently retired from Moravian College's Education Department and brings career-long experience working with young people of all ages.

Sadly, we say farewell to Jay as our trusted chairperson. Paula Margraf, CEO, remarked "Jay has been a calm, purposeful, compassionate leader of our board, and helped us through so many changes, including changes in leadership, structure, and enormous growth of the organization. He has always been present for us whenever we needed his help. Jay's thinking about the world, what was right for children, and what could be realized, was a guiding force and helped shape our decisions."

We are fortunate for the expertise of our newest board members and welcome:

Rev. Dr. Christine Nelson of Allentown is the retired Director of Seminary Advancement at Moravian Seminary/College.

Charles Stinner of Schnecksville, is Vice-President of Taxes at Air Products.

Pamela Whitt of Phoenixville is Human Resources Project Manager Contractor at Comcast.

