



# ECRC Community Chronicle

EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER :: *Spring News 2013*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER PROVIDES \$1 MILLION IN ANNUAL LOCAL IMPACT

*The Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) annually provides \$1 million in value to the early learning community in Stark County, according to an independent research study.*

Throughout the past year, the ECRC has worked with Dr. Joseph A. Rochford from Stark Education Partnership Inc. to evaluate the impact of the center's efforts to improve early childhood education in Stark County over the past decade.

"This objective analysis of the ECRC's effectiveness shows an excellent return on our efforts, which provide \$1 million in direct value each year to the early childhood community in Stark County," said Scott Hasselman, ECRC executive director. "We are incredibly pleased to share these findings, especially with the foundations and other supporters in the community that have invested in our mission to advance early learning."

In his report, *Early Returns: How the Early Childhood Resource Center Helps Maintain Stark County's Investment in the Early Years*, Dr. Rochford recognized that there are

other centers throughout the country with similar missions, but few offer the breadth of services found at the ECRC. The study itself is also unique in that the distribution of resources and training is embedded within early childhood programs themselves in most cases, and the program is evaluated, not the center.

Because the impact study could not directly assign a cause-and-effect relationship to the ECRC, Dr. Rockford's approach assigned value to the purpose and activities of the ECRC. He found that the ECRC was both a resource center and acted as a "backbone" agency, working with other early childhood initiatives to support the improvement of early childhood education and care. The \$1 million in direct benefits was based on estimated values, such as circulated materials, training, staff consultation time, and scholarships and grants.

The report also noted that the ECRC provides many indirect benefits to the community that can't be quantified, such as more accredited Family Child Care homes, more child care workers with Child Development Associate credentials

*continued on page 7*



## WELCOME TO OUR INAUGURAL NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Early Childhood Resource Center's first edition of the *ECRC Community Chronicle*. After 12 years of working to improve the quality of early education in Stark County, we want to share our initiatives with the community. In this inaugural edition, we are pleased to share a recent impact study illustrating the tremendous benefits the ECRC provides. This edition also highlights how our programs, services and resources lend a hand to families in our community and our partners throughout the community.

Although our initiatives change from year to year, our mission and focus remain constant. We are committed to supporting the organizations and people impacting the lives of young children. By providing professional development that emphasizes the importance of positive interactions, early childhood curriculums and classroom management, we strive to show early childhood educators that the key to harnessing each child's potential is environment. Children need enriching experiences. They need to have their senses stimulated through music, books, toys and especially people who love them.

By sharing research confirming that the early years of life provide the best opportunities to influence a child's moral, intellectual and physical growth, we can help show families how important their role is in providing high quality early childhood experiences. Children with those experiences are more likely to graduate from high school, go to college and be productive members of the workforce. Early education does not require young children to learn to read early or be drilled with flash cards. Early childhood is the time to build the foundation for learning.

Recent research shows that every dollar invested in early education has an \$8 return on that investment. Your support continues to be critical to supporting our mission and ensuring we get the best return on your investment—giving all children the proper foundation so they enter kindergarten ready to learn, which paves the way for future successes.

SCOTT HASSELMAN, Executive Director

**MEET OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES** *The Early Childhood Resource Center Board of Trustees plays an important role in providing fiscal and legal oversight, making policy decisions, providing strategic planning and more. Chosen for professional expertise and understanding of early childhood education issues, each board member can serve a maximum of three, three-year terms.*

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EDUCATION  
IN ACTION

## Center Provides Education, Empowerment for Entire Family

Daniela's first introduction to the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) was nearly two years ago after she took an offsite parenting class called "Incredible Years for Parents." Little did she know just how incredible her future ECRC experience would be.

The parenting class held a graduation ceremony at the ECRC, where Daniela toured the center and received a free membership. She was intrigued by the ECRC's production lab, which included equipment and supplies where she could create her own educational materials.

"I didn't think of myself as a very creative person," said Daniela. That changed once she took advantage of the lab. "Creating a calendar opened my eyes to how much I could really do at the ECRC."

She also created a laminated bedroom-to-bathroom footprint path to help her son Braden, 6, who has a sensory integration disorder with autism characteristics. "The wonderful production lab gives parents like me the ability to create visual learning tools," she added. "These tools have helped Braden tremendously."

Daniela, Braden and his 5-month-old sister Zoey visit the ECRC twice a week for Braden's creative arts class in the Inspiration Station, which is an interactive classroom and play area. Apart from attending organized programs, Daniela and her children often go to the ECRC to learn, play, read and tap into the expertise of ECRC employees who are available to discuss a child's learning plans and challenges.

Though Daniela relies on the ECRC to help with Braden's unique needs, the ECRC provides early childhood education support services for all Canton-area children, their parents and local teachers.



Daniela and her two children visit the ECRC at least twice a week for classes and informal play and learning time.

Daniela is also using the ECRC to sharpen her parenting skills as Zoey grows up. She enrolled in the "Happy to Be Me, Zero to Three" course, which is taught from the child's perspective of how they learn.

*"It is unbelievable how much is included with my membership, which only costs \$15 per year," said Daniela. "We don't pay extra for classes. We are so fortunate to have a place nearby that's nice, safe and educational at the same time. Kids and parents learn new things and parents get tools to help our children in different ways."*

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

# Friend-Ship Center Steps Up with Help from ECRC

For Friend-Ship Center Director Sue Neading and her staff, the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) has been a valuable resource since both centers opened in 2000. The Friend-Ship Center fills an important gap on Canton's south side, providing pre-school and child care to 125 young children, before- and after-school care for children to age 12, and a full summer program. The ECRC provides the Friend-Ship Center with a variety of staff training and use of the ECRC production lab, and helps the center implement the latest best practices in early childhood education.

*We love the ECRC's programs and resources. They offer so much to the community and to the entire early childhood field. — Sue Neading, Friend-Ship Center Director*

The center is currently involved with the ECRC's Strengthening Families program, in which an ECRC consultant visits the center once a month to provide oversight, and staff from the center attend regular training sessions at the ECRC. The program is designed to build upon the relationship between families and child care programs to reduce the likelihood of family violence. It helps families grow closer together through evening activities like art sessions, music events and more. The center also participated in the Communication Friendly Spaces approach, which was a collaboration between the ECRC and the ELIZABETH JARMAN® Foundation. The program emphasizes that environment greatly affects behavior. Two staff members attended training, applying what they learned by incorporating brighter, softer colors and lighting into their classrooms. After seeing a noticeable behavior change in the two classrooms, the center is applying the same look to all classrooms.

The Friend-Ship Center also recently received its first star in Ohio's Step Up to Quality rating system. The voluntary rating system recognizes child care centers for exceeding state minimum standards and provides funding for making quality improvements. The ECRC helped provide staff training so the center could become approved.

"I've always been a big advocate of the ECRC because they're a tremendous asset to our center and are always on the cutting edge of early childhood education and care in our community, which allows us to be on top of what's new and fresh," said Neading.



*The Friend-Ship Center provides pre-school and child care, before-and after-school care, and a full summer program on Canton's south side. The center relies on the ECRC for staff training, educational resources and to implement best practices in early childhood education.*

# A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

*The Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) received nearly 90 donations over the past year to its annual fund. Thanks to you, the ECRC raised \$462,500 from generous individuals, foundations and organizations, which goes directly to improving the quality of early childhood education and care.*

*Listed here are the names of our generous donors. Please consider making a gift to the ECRC's current annual fund. Any amount will go a long way toward our goal of building the foundation for learning during early childhood.*

**FOUNDATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS:**

- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton
- Stark County Job and Family Services
- United Way
- PNC
- The HealthPath Foundation of Ohio

**PROFESSORS:** 1,000 + over

- Diebold Foundation
- Scott Hasselman
- Thomas and Melissa Rogers

**EDUCATORS:** 500 - 999

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- David and Cindy Gansmiller
- Martha Lottman

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- Beginning Years Christian Preschool
- Diana Boggia and Robert Mayone

*Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this listing of donors. If your name has been misspelled, listed incorrectly or omitted, we sincerely apologize and ask you to please contact the ECRC at 330.491.3272 ext. 5682 so that we may correct our records.*

## SUPPORT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

Early education and care are more important than ever—and so is your financial support. Your support helps promote the healthy development of young children by improving the quality of their early education and care. Please send your gift in the enclosed envelope, donate online at [ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org) (click on the GET INVOLVED tab) or call 330.491.3272 today.

**ECRC IMPROVES LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR BOTH HISPANIC AMERICAN PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN**

The Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) launched a unique Hispanic Outreach Program in September 2012. The program provides Hispanic American children with kindergarten readiness skills through weekly sessions while their parents learn English as a Second Language (ESL) at the same time through a unique collaboration with the Canton City Schools.

The program evolved from a monthly storytelling program for Hispanic families that began in 2011. On their evaluations, parents responded that they appreciated the gatherings, but wanted to learn English while their 3- to 5-year-olds were benefitting from early childhood education.

“This dual learning approach is a win-win for parents and children,” said Sister Karen Lindenberger, who coordinates the outreach program at St. Anthony All Saints parish. “It immerses children in an atmosphere where they have to understand English and speak it. At the same time, their parents gain essential ESL skills and begin to blend into the Canton community and develop relationships within their new culture.”

As many as 15 to 20 parents and children attend the free weekly kindergarten readiness and ESL classes, with transportation provided by the St. Anthony All Saints parish van for families who need it.

“There are nearly 7,000 Hispanics in Stark County,” explained Sister Karen. “There are other excellent ESL classes offered in the county, but they are held during work hours and do not offer transportation or child education. This has proven to be a magnificent arrangement.”



*Hispanic American children attend free weekly kindergarten readiness classes while their parents learn English as a Second Language (ESL).*

**REACHING OUT**

**ELIZABETH JARMAN “BAGS FOR FAMILIES” PROGRAM HELPS IMPROVE HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**



*Elizabeth Jarman*

Effective communication skills are building blocks for learning. Research identifies the importance of a stimulating and language rich environment in the home for long-term effective child development. With that goal in mind, the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) collaborated with the ELIZABETH JARMAN®

Foundation to implement its award-winning Communication Friendly Spaces (CFS) approach, which is a research-based way to re-think learning environments to improve children’s speaking and listening skills.

The foundation focused on its CFS Bags for Families program to help families understand how the environment at home can impact children’s communication, behavior and emotional well-being, as well as improve communication among parents, children and child care providers. Eight child care centers around Canton were involved, receiving training at the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) and family bags, which contained soft pillows, tents, rugs, blankets, wicker baskets and more to create communication friendly spaces at home. Fifty-two families were involved in the project, which occurred between July and October 2012.

Families and educators were surveyed to determine the program’s impact. Most families participating reported improved communication with their child care provider/ educator and educators reported improvements in the frequency of conversations with families and improvements in the quality of communication. Educators reported

**COVER STORY** *continued from page 1*

and more people in local colleges receiving early education degrees.

“The \$1 million in direct value provided by the ECRC each year in the early childhood community is in addition to many indirect benefits,” said Hasselman. “There is a marked increase in the number of post-secondary early childhood education degrees awarded in Stark County compared to the colleges throughout the state, further supporting that our impact is significant.” ♦



*Bags for Families contain items that help parents create communication friendly spaces at home.*

significant advances in the quality of communication with a large proportion of families. Tangible items in the family bag generated more focused communication. One educator commented, “The parent has grown increasingly interested in how her child behaves in the center and how his interactions with other children are daily.”

All centers involved in the training are involved in an international research project measuring the impact of using Elizabeth Jarman’s tools.

**COMING EVENTS** SAVE THE DATE

**APRIL 27: EARTH DAY AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR VISIT**

Imagination reigns supreme during this Earth Day celebration at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 27 at the ECRC. Children’s book author Julie Goulis and illustrator John Ferguson from Bubblegum Books will read from their series of picture books that encourage children to go outside and use their imaginations to entertain themselves, plus lead children in imagination-building activities.



**SEPTEMBER 29: A DAY IN CANDY LAND FUNDRAISER**

Join us for a fun-filled, family-oriented “Day in Candy Land” fundraiser September 29. Guests will be transported into a life size version of the popular Candy Land board game with all of its colorful characters and whimsical addresses that will enchant children (and adults) of all ages. Everyone can walk the Candy Land board game, receiving treats and surprises along the way, plus vital childhood information. The journey ends with a trip to King Candy and his magical candy shop. Local and regional companies will participate in a family fun village, which will include interactive experiences, one-of-a-kind shopping opportunities and delicious food. Musical entertainment and creative performers will entertain guests throughout the event.

**When: Sunday, September 29, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**  
**Where: Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton**  
**Cost: \$15 per person (2 and under free)**

*For more information on sponsorships, contact Scott Hasselman, ECRC executive director, at [shasselman@ecresourcecenter.org](mailto:shasselman@ecresourcecenter.org) or 330.491.3272*

**FIND US ONLINE**

Visit [ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org) to learn more about our programs, services and volunteer opportunities, and make secure online donations.

**did you know?**

Children’s brains develop more rapidly in the first three years than any other time in their lives, shaping future health, happiness, growth and development.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System*

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## OUR MISSION

*In the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the mission of the Early Childhood Resource Center is to promote the healthy development of young children by improving the quality of their early education and care through comprehensive programming, resources, and support services for families and early childhood professionals, to be leaders and advocates at the state level, and to promote the professionalism of the early childhood field.*

### CENTER HOURS

Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday	8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Friday & 2nd & 4th Saturday	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

*ECRC has chosen to print responsibly on recycled paper.*

**SEPT. 29, 2013** *(details inside)*

