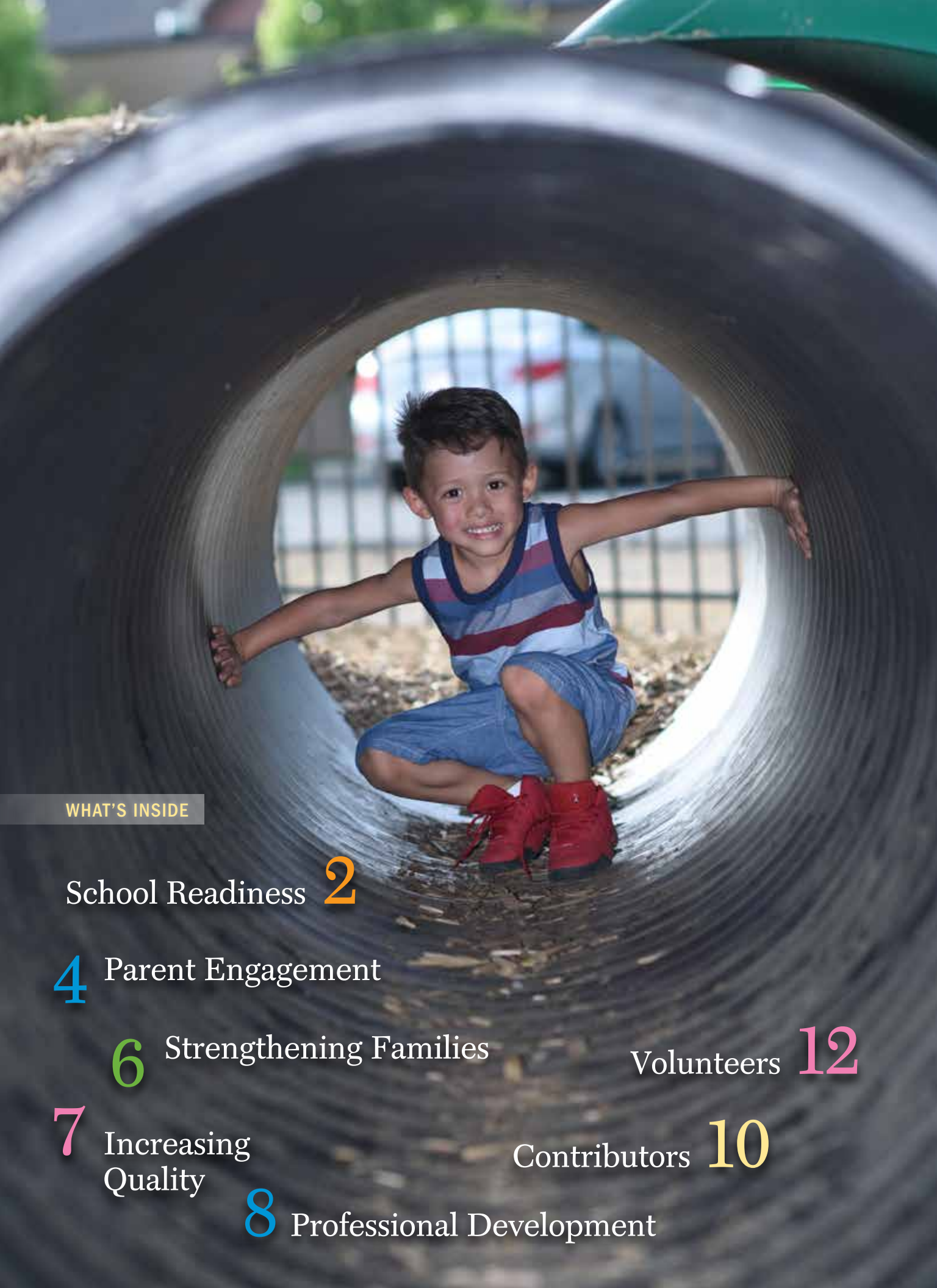




Early Childhood Resource Center

Impact Report Fiscal Year 2018





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Volunteers **12**

Contributors **10**

This past year, we've seen our most dramatic growth and made our greatest strides toward most fully realizing our mission.

The Early Childhood Resource Center went from serving Stark County to becoming the state-designated child care resource and referral agency for Service Delivery Area 4, which includes Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull counties. Now, in addition to our main administrative office in Canton, we have satellite offices in Akron and Warren. Each location serves as its own community early childhood hub, offering resources, referrals, training, and assistance.

We're so proud to offer you this report featuring the impacts we've made between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. The report shows the multifaceted, highly collaborative, and widely productive work we're now doing throughout our six-county service area. While it doesn't show everything we do, it does capture many of our accomplishments and partnerships.

Going regional was a major strategic goal and a significant achievement. As we continue forging new partnerships throughout the region, we will continue our practices of excellence and collaboration. We cannot wait to see what the next year has in store.



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School Readiness

If a child starts kindergarten ready to learn, he's far more likely to graduate from high school, go to college, and become a successful, productive adult. The Early Childhood Resource Center manages the SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) kindergarten readiness program in Stark County and administratively supports replication sites in Stark and nine other counties. SPARK in Stark County benefits greatly from a unique partnership with the Stark County District Library. The Library directly employs many parent partners.



A SPARK PROFILE

Rosetta and Carter: School Readiness is a Family Affair



Having parents engaged in a SPARK lesson makes all the difference in the world.

Rosetta's a busy mom with three young children. She appreciates that SPARK lessons give her uninterrupted time to be just with her son, Carter. They're working together to be ready for kindergarten.

As Rosetta takes the book from their SPARK Parent Partner Missy, she turns to Carter and says, "The name of this book is *Bunny Cakes*. Who do you think makes the cake in this book?"

"Bunny rabbits," he replies.

Rosetta pauses after reading each page and asks Carter a question. Sometimes his eyes stray to the other items on the table, but Rosetta always brings him back to the book by asking a question or

having him point to an item on the page. Together, they read and talk about how the bunny made a cake for her grandma.

For each activity Missy brought, mom and son engage together. The *Bunny Cakes* lesson uses the cakes in the book to teach counting, sorting, shapes, and colors. Carter names the shapes of various cakes, and then Missy asks him which cake was his favorite. He says, "The Spiderman cake, and I know my mom would like the heart-shaped cake." Rosetta agrees.

Missy asks Carter to come up with ingredients for a cake he would like to make. He decides that his cake will require one dozen eggs, five cups of sugar, a hundred teaspoons of jelly, one bag of chips, seven sticks of butter, two cups of flour, and seven cups of honey. Rosetta has him mix the imaginary ingredients by telling him to "use those muscles you always show me to stir."

When Missy asks Carter to draw a cake in his journal, he says, "Mom, you draw a cake too."

And so she does.

Carter's Cake

INGREDIENTS

- One dozen eggs
- Five cups of sugar
- A hundred teaspoons of jelly
- One bag of chips
- Seven sticks of butter
- Two cups of flour
- Seven cups of honey

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix ingredients together, using the muscles you always show your mom. Bake.





12,692

Home visits

1,018 Stark County families impacted

14,478

Books distributed



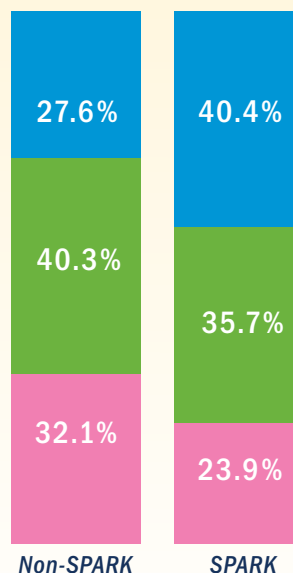
HOW SPARK WORKS

A SPARK parent partner visits the home monthly to conduct lessons and activities based on Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards. Together, the parent partner and the parent follow an individualized learning plan to make sure the child will be ready for school.

SPARK also assesses children's skill levels and conducts developmental screenings. If a child is found to have barriers to school readiness (such as speech or behavioral issues), SPARK initiates referrals to needed community resources. The goal is to address concerns long before the child arrives at the schoolhouse door. That way, when kindergarten begins, the child is excited and ready to succeed.

2017 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Scoring Bands

SPARK VS. NON-SPARK CHILDREN (STARK COUNTY)



Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

When the school year begins, the school administers the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to incoming kindergarteners. It measures a child's social, physical, and academic readiness for school.

Demonstrating Readiness: *The child demonstrates the skills and behaviors that indicate readiness for kindergarten.*

Approaching Readiness: *The child demonstrates some skills and behaviors that indicate readiness for kindergarten.*

Emerging Readiness: *The child demonstrates minimal skills and behaviors that indicate readiness for kindergarten.*

SPARK works! More SPARK children start the school year already demonstrating readiness.

A photograph of a woman with blonde, wavy hair and glasses, wearing a dark green shirt, smiling and holding a young girl with blonde hair and a pink dress. They are in a library, with bookshelves visible in the background.

142 Classes held

1,373

Parents attended

1,734
Children
impacted

Parent Engagement

Children are happier and healthier when both parents are engaged in their lives. The benefits include increased self-esteem, academic success, and a more secure life path.

To increase overall parent engagement and strengthen father engagement, the Early Childhood Resource Center collaborates with many community organizations. These include THRIVE (Toward Health Resiliency for Infant Vitality & Equity), the Stark County Department of Job and Family Services, and the Ohio Children's Trust Fund to offer resources that strengthen families, enhance engagement, and foster healthy child development. These resources include parenting education classes, Parent Café sessions, peer support groups, individual coaching, and job readiness services for both custodial and non-custodial parents.

PARENT PROFILE

Shaun Brown: Positive Parenting

Shaun says, "A few aspects of my life shaped me to have the attitude that I didn't matter." These included his arrest, the loss of a college track scholarship, and the death of his best friend.

"I got down on myself, my outlook on life. This *24/7 Dad* class brought me back." The class helped him realize he needed to make a better life for himself and his four young children.

He claims the class "is the reason why my life is going in a whole new direction. This class has brought me where I used to be. The conversations we had brought me out of my funk. I have a different approach to my kids now, with more understanding of what they want and working on their perception of me."

24/7 Dad is one of a number of Early Childhood Resource Center classes that teach parents how to understand child development,

how to be role models for their children, and how to use positive parenting techniques to strengthen family bonds.

24/7 Dad taught Shaun about the importance of communication. He now communicates constantly with his children. He also has regular conversations with their mothers—with none of the emotional spikes that used to be common.

One thing that's helped is coming to understand that people react differently to life events. While he may not always see eye to eye with his co-parents, he now knows how to respect their perspectives. And because he understands that his children are always watching, he's learned never to disrespect their moms. He's learned to become an engaged father.

As he says it, "I realize the better I raise them, the better they will raise their children."



"I realize the better I raise them, the better they will raise their children."

Strengthening Families

Parent engagement is so crucial that the state of Ohio requires each child care program to devise and implement a parent engagement plan in order to earn and maintain a Step Up To Quality rating. With Ohio Children's Trust Fund support, our staff members are working to cultivate family engagement with 60 programs in nine counties, and working directly with parents in Stark County.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROFILE

Color Our Rainbow Academy

When parents are engaged with what's going on at their child care program, it enhances the child's learning and development and strengthens family bonds. It also makes the child care program an integral part of the family's community of support.

Akron's Color Our Rainbow Academy has been working with the Early Childhood Resource Center's Brittany Kinstler to implement a wide variety of very well received family engagement activities, including a Mommy and Me Tea, a STEAM night, and a Valentine's Day dance featuring dinner and a DJ. Color Our Rainbow's Fall Festival offered a trunk or treat, a dance, and

a haunted hallway. Attendance was so high that they're already planning to accommodate increased attendance for next year's event.

The staff have even been gradually building up an emergency fund for center families experiencing unexpected needs. One family became the recipient of those funds when their home suffered a fire last fall. That's the kind of magic that happens when families and staff bond. The staff at Color Our Rainbow really live the family engagement mission and have worked hard to cultivate community.

60 programs
cultivating family
engagement within
9 counties,
impacting
8,037 families

24
Strengthening
Families centers
increased
star ratings





Increasing Quality

3,405

Technical

assistance sessions

conducted, impacting

1,114 child care programs

225 Referrals made to parents seeking care

134 Participated in Child Development Associate classes

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL SERVICES

As the state's child care resource and referral agency serving Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull counties, we ensure that parents, educators, and the community have the information and resources they need to give children the best possible start.

This work is a crucial part of realizing the state's vision of all children being valued, healthy, and happy.

We help families by providing referrals for high-quality child care that meets their needs.

We provide professional development for educators and care providers, and offer them technical assistance to strive for and maintain quality.

We educate the community about the importance of high-quality early childhood resources.



The Step Up To Quality star rating system recognizes early care and education programs that provide high-quality early learning experiences to Ohio's children. Our Early Childhood Specialists help child care providers improve their quality so they can earn, maintain, and increase their stars.

Professional Development

When early childhood professionals are equipped with best-practice knowledge and strategies, children get the high-quality early experiences they need to build their best lives. The Early Childhood Resource Center provides professional development on a wide range of topics, to meet the needs of our community's early childhood professionals.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Lindsay: Starting a Career



As a child living in Brazil, Lindsay loved to babysit. Now that she's an adult living in Ohio,

she's thankful for the opportunity to make early childhood her career.

As part of a nine-month program offered through Ohio Means Jobs, Lindsay took classes at the Early Childhood Resource Center to earn her Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, while also spending 480 hours observing and helping in the toddler room at the Canton YWCA Child Care Center.

Lindsay was part of a group of women who went through 120 hours of training on topics such as child development, first aid and safety, and developmentally appropriate learning environments. The instructor, Stacey, provided support, encouragement, and feedback. Learning as a group gave the women critical peer support, so they were never alone.

Stacey mentored Lindsay through

the process of completing the required portfolio that showcased her work, ideas, and essays. After a four-hour interview, Lindsay took and passed the CDA exam.

Lindsay feels the journey was tough, but worthwhile. She's learned that each child learns differently and at a unique pace, which requires patience. She's learned how to help those who need extra attention. She guides them, encourages them to express themselves, and bends down to listen at their level.

Once Lindsay earned her CDA credential, she was offered a full-time position at the YWCA. Her colleagues say she's dependable, flexible, and loves working with the children. They're so glad they found Lindsay, and she's thrilled that she found them.



37 Child care providers earned their Child Development Associate credential

563 Training classes offered, impacting **10,000** educators and care providers

WHAT IS THE CDA?

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally recognized early childhood credential. For many early educators, the CDA is the foundation of a lifelong career.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), “Obtaining a CDA is an important accomplishment and one that develops well informed practitioners, knowledgeable in child development and best practices for teaching young children.”

The demand for CDA classes continues to increase, because an Ohio child care center can only enter the state’s Step Up To Quality rating system if at least half of the staff members have a CDA.

Since 2000, the Early Childhood Resource Center has provided CDA classes, mentoring, coaching, and support to hundreds of students.



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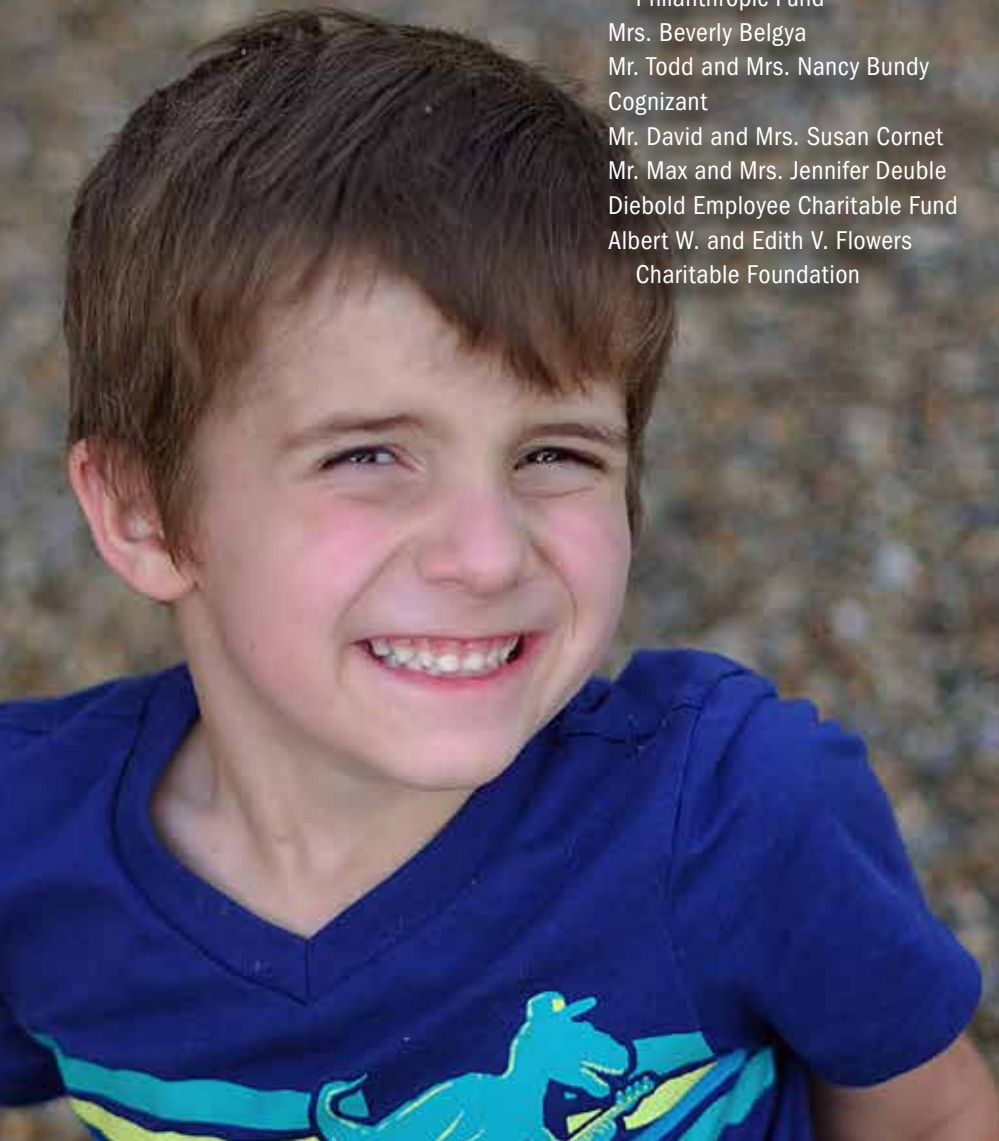
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Jennifer Meek Eells:
In memory of my father, Gale Meek,
who loved being a teacher
Gayle Harter:
In memory of Douglas Turner
State Support Team #9:
In honor of Lynne Clunk's retirement

THANK YOU!

Volunteers

We thank all the volunteers who have helped families and children with their acts of kindness!

Amanda, Audrey, Chelsea, Danielle, Jamie, Jennifer, Kristine, Lisa, Mandy, Melinda, Olivia and Sherry

Cognizant employees

Day of Caring volunteers from AEP and Marathon Petroleum

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Senior Group

Incept Employees

Kiwanis Club of Canton

Malone and Walsh students

Notre Dame Alumni Club

PNC Bank regional and district managers

Students from GlenOak, Hoover, Jackson, Perry and Sandy Valley high schools

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” – Aesop





The 2017 event was a rousing success.



REALLY BIG SUCCESS!



Our annual *Big, Big, Really Big Toy Box* fundraising event and family festival is always held on the last Sunday in September. Event proceeds support the programs and services that the Early Childhood Resource Center provides all year long.



More than **700** were in attendance, helped out by **86** amazing volunteers.

We couldn't possibly hold such a large event without our 32 generous sponsors and community partners.

We extend special thanks to title sponsor PNC Foundation, which extends its Early Childhood Resource Center support by generously providing funding, resources, and volunteers throughout the year.

Get involved in this year's event! High school students are encouraged to volunteer for five hours. Businesses are encouraged to sponsor tickets. And the whole community is invited to just come have fun with us.



OUR MISSION

The mission of the Early Childhood Resource Center is to promote the healthy development of young children by strengthening families, improving the quality of early learning experiences, increasing school and community readiness, and informing public policy.



**EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESOURCE CENTER**

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

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