

HOW
DO YOU
SEE
THE
WORLD

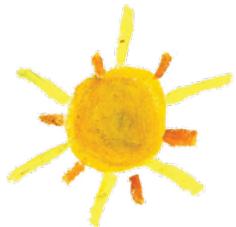


It has been said, "She sees the world through rose-colored glasses." The truth is, for good or for bad, we all have tints on our lenses. Our families, the groups to which we belong, our society — all impact the way we see the world and each other. At Friends Center for Children we are working to be aware of these lenses and the impact they have on us, the community, and children's development, relationships and opportunities. Exploring our inherent biases allows us to support children and families with empathy and integrity.

FRIENDS CENTER FOR CHILDREN

2016 - 2017

Report to the Community



Produced by Friends Center for Children

Design: Catalyst Collaborative

Photography: Ian Christmann and Johnathon Henninger





message from the director

This year marks the 4th year in our new building, and the first year that Friends Center did not expand as a program — simply because we are out of room! We have creatively used up every nook and cranny in our fantastic building; there is nowhere left to go on this site. This success is certainly exciting, but it is also disheartening since we have 105 children on our waiting list with new families calling every day. Now we need to focus on forging partnerships and alliances so that we can continue to find ways to share our mission with more children and families.

This year we completed an exploration into our personal and group lenses, the ways in which we see the world. We submerged ourselves in a year-long study of inherent lenses to better understand the origins and implications of our belief systems, as well as our implicit biases and the ways that these biases show up in our daily lives. We invited Niyonu Spann from Beyond Diversity 101 to support this learning by facilitating our professional development. Becoming more aware of our biases helps us see the need to offset them, and furthers our commitment to the Friends Center teaching practices and policies that help us do that.

As we move into the coming year, we will continue to explore our lenses and biases while we turn our year-long study to two generational explorations (2Gen). We have always been committed to finding ways to meet the needs of both the children and the families in our program because we believe that children learn best when the adults around them enter into a partnership of support. This year we will continue to offer 2Gen services such as our Adverse Childhood Experiences Program, Circle of Security training, and serving as a FOOD RESCUE US site. We also will work to grow our 2Gen services including workforce development support and access to financial services. We are excited to delve into this aspect of our mission.

Each year I am amazed at the Friends Center community. I feel tremendous gratitude to all the various groups that come together to provide opportunities for our youngest friends. Each individual shares their perspective with our community and, in turn, we find commonality and pathways for understanding. It is through this synthesis that we realize our vision: the shared commitment to educate children, empower families, inspire teachers, engage community, embrace diversity.

Thank you for your support of our work.

ALLYX SCHIAVONE
DIRECTOR



message

from the clerk of the board

BOB HARRITY
CLERK OF THE BOARD

FCfC is strong because of people who care, people who embrace our mission and serve others. First, a big thank you to the teachers and staff who support our children and to the parents and volunteers who donate their time and efforts to Friends Center for Children. Thank you to the individuals, foundations, local businesses and corporations whose generosity helps to make FCfC possible. And, thanks to our Board members for their commitment of time, resources and expertise and to members of the New Haven Monthly Meeting and our Advisory Councils for their guidance and support.

2016-2017 was a very successful year! The school is full and has a lengthy wait list. Financially, FCfC hit its yearly target of a balanced budget. Total Annual Fund giving generated more than \$231,000 or 16% of our budget. Parent tuition and government grants together provide the other 84% of the budget. We spend more than 75% of our revenue on teacher and staff compensation. The remainder is expended for supplies and overhead. We remain committed to our cooperative model, diverse population and sliding scale, and to the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship.

Because the demand for high-quality early childhood care is so high and the requests for enrollment greatly exceed our capacity, the Board is exploring opportunities with community partners for replication at additional sites in New Haven. This exploration will be a multi-year process, as we work diligently to expand our impact. At the same time, we are mindful of the adverse budgetary environment in the State of Connecticut and the need to protect and nurture our current operations.

Last but not least, I want to thank and acknowledge our Executive Director, whose talent, passion and leadership has brought us so far and will guide us into the future. We are so grateful to all of our partners who invest in the work of Friends Center to educate children, empower families, inspire teachers, engage community, embrace diversity.

How do you see him ?

PART I: RECOGNITION

“We are interested in learning how teachers detect challenging behavior in the classroom...”

These were the instructions given to a national group of educators watching a video of four children playing: a Black girl, a White girl, a Black boy and a White boy. The educators, all volunteers from around the country participating in a study by the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development at the Yale Child Study Center, were instructed to press the enter key whenever they perceived behavior that might become problematic. In reality, none of the videos contained challenging behavior, only preschoolers engaging in traditional classroom activities. Yet, by tracking the eye-movement of participants, the findings revealed that, when expecting challenging behaviors, teachers gazed longer at Black children, especially Black boys.

The study brings to light implicit bias — the idea that even the most aware and fair-minded among us have unconscious “automatic preferences” which act as lenses through which we see people. Friends Center has focused its attention on these automatic preferences to ensure that we are best supporting the children and families in our program.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

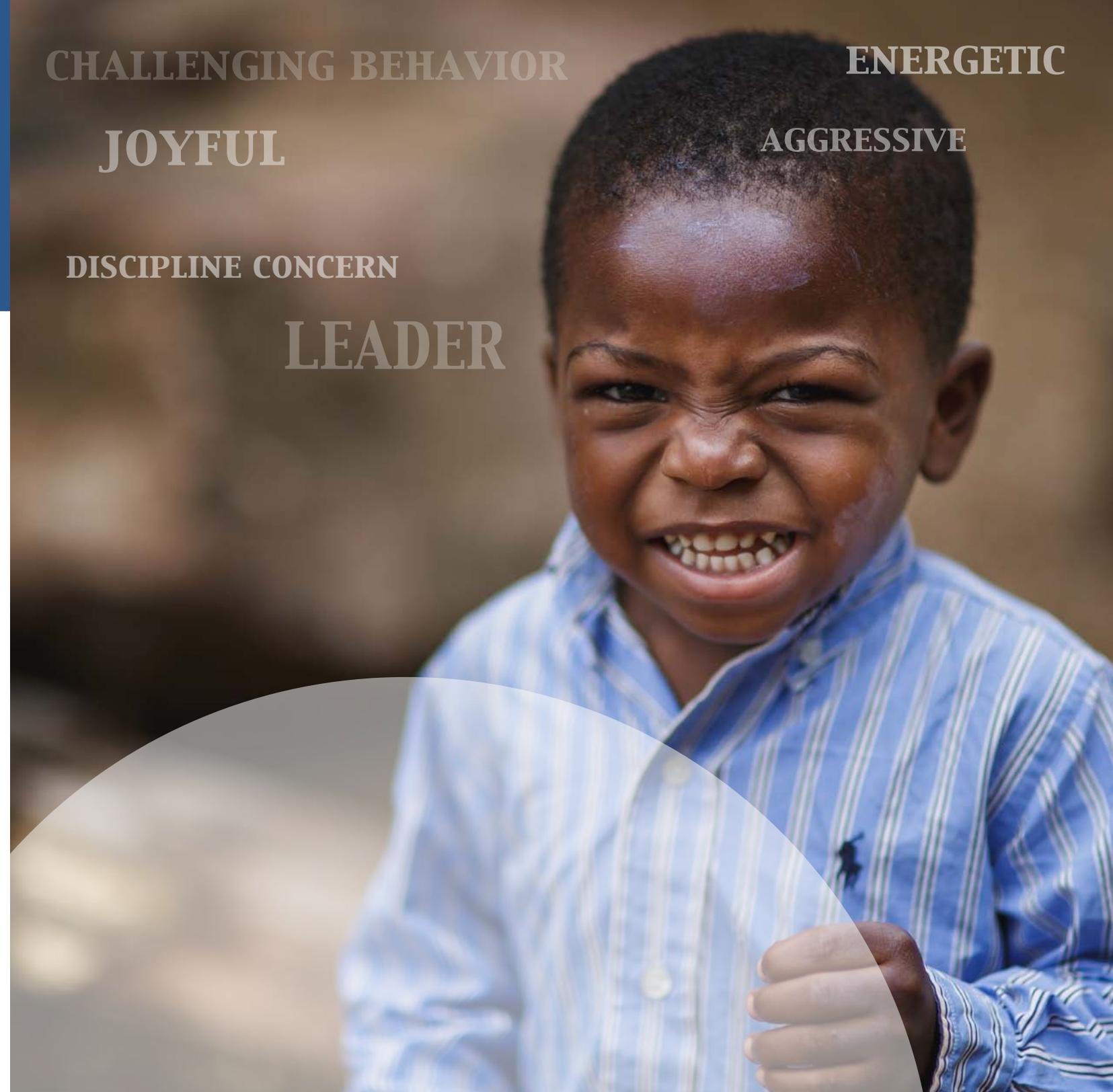
ENERGETIC

JOYFUL

AGGRESSIVE

DISCIPLINE CONCERN

LEADER



How do you see her ?

PART II: RESPONSE

How do we counterbalance automatic responses?

The teacher was concerned. The child had been acting out during morning meeting time...a lot, or so the teacher thought. During teachers' meeting, classroom staff, along with the Emotional Wellbeing Coordinator, discussed how they can best support the child, and the teacher began keeping a specific record of incidents when she noticed her concern. Friends Center's policy of observation and data collection provides an objective view of any particular behavior, which allows for better avenues of support. Data collection is also one of the many ways Friends Center works to bring awareness of, and counterbalance to, the implicit biases that may influence our views and automatic responses.

The awareness comes first. Being aware of our implicit biases allows us to explore the essential question: How can we — as individuals and the Friends Center program itself — counterbalance these perspectives? Often self-awareness alone can make all the difference. When awareness is then combined with empathy, culturally reflective teaching practices, and intentional systems and policies, we can make huge strides in offsetting implicit biases. But it is not a one-time task; the exploration is continual. At Friends Center we have learned that biases manifest themselves regularly, and we must remain diligent and intentional in our attempts to counterbalance them.

EAGER

CURIOUS

UNRULY

INQUISITIVE

DISRUPTIVE



DISCOVERY

BLOCKS

DESKS

EXAMS

EYE CONTACT

MUD

TEXT BOOKS

How do you see learning?

“What if we try to build a house for the acorns?” the teacher asks while the children investigate the bounty of their nature hunt from the outdoor classroom: tin buckets and wooden bowls full of acorns, twigs and assorted leaves. Eager to explore the possibilities, the class begins to create their acorn homes, some use folded paper with crayon windows while others stack blocks around the seeds.

Whether dancing like leaves or weighing acorns by stuffing them in pockets and stepping on the scale, progressive, play-based, child-centered learning at Friends Center incorporates the textures and wonder of the seasons, and the children’s own interests and curiosity, into all development areas: motor/physical, cognitive, social/emotional, communication/language, and across all disciplines: science, reading, mathematics, dramatic play, music and movement, art, sensory exploration and social studies.

Yet we know learning starts long before a child can begin collecting acorns. In the earliest years of brain development, the most significant learning occurs naturally through connections and relationships. The interactions between a caregiver and a baby epitomize this: gazing, exploring faces and reacting to shifts in smiles, eyes, gurgles, coos and conversation. Every interaction fires off millions of synapses in a child’s brain, creating pathways for learning and communication.

As relationships deepen — extending to family, friends, educators and community — so too do the pathways. These relationships set secure brain neuro-pathways which in turn allow for more intense relationships and learning experiences which creates more pathways. A positive growth cycle is established, and children find secure attachments and enhanced capacity to learn. For infant/toddlers and preschoolers, Friends Center’s curriculum encourages the connections and communication that foster learning in the critical early years, and sets the stage for a child’s learning long into the future.



educate
children

WONDER

FOOD INSECURITY

FIRST STEPS

JOY

BUBBLES

STRESS

How do you see childhood ?

Every fall, Friends Center for Children’s annual potluck proffers a feast of community and culture. We fill our plates with arroz con pollo, fried okra and lasagna; perch on child-size chairs; connect and reconnect with fellow Friends Center families, all the while filling our bellies with the goodness of the traditions and conditions that nurture us. Like the recipes and meals of our family table, our upbringing impacts our tastes...and views. The experiences of our childhood, many of which pre-date conscious memories, shape us. And while youth is a season of much wonder and discovery, many of us, in our earliest years, experience toxic stressors or traumas that have a profound impact on our development and outlook.

In recent years, strides have been made in recognizing the symptoms and impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). According to the Center for Disease Control these experiences range from common situations such as divorce or poverty to more severe occurrences of abuse and neglect. Friends Center also acknowledges the impact that racial and cultural factors can have on emotional wellbeing.

With proper intervention, the potential negative impacts of ACEs can be mitigated, and the earlier the action, the better. Friends Center’s Emotional Wellbeing Program continues to be a critical part of our community. Our Emotional Wellbeing Coordinator helps all our families in any areas where they need support, especially when families face difficult situations. Teachers are knowledgeable in the behaviors of children experiencing disruptions and work in partnership with families to alleviate stressors. Our commitment to this work stems from our understanding that cognitive growth comes when children are emotionally ready to learn.

Empowering families takes many forms at Friends Center. Many are in the more abstract but important areas of emotional and social support, while others are more simple, tangible...and tasty! In partnership with FOOD RESCUE US, each week Friends Center offers our families access to fruits, vegetables, breads and other nutritious eating options.



empower families

CARING INVOLVED
DISCONNECTED STERN
LOVING

How do you see educators ?

Niyonu, from Niyonu Spann Associates,
working with FCfC teachers.

What behaviors were celebrated in your family growing up?

What groups do you associate with? What does the society you belong to value?

As educators, we asked ourselves these questions during our year-long exploration into implicit bias. Niyonu Spann, from Beyond Diversity 101, supported Friends Center staff as we examined our backgrounds and experiences to help us understand the lenses through which we see each other and the children in our care. We also explored the ways, when necessary, we can shift these lenses, increasing our own emotional intelligence and strengthening the aspects that make Friends Center unique:

- **We are a diverse community with varying belief systems and cultures**

Having the skills to be self-aware and regulate are imperative when integrating varying cultures and identities. Giving our community a shared language and the tools to work through differences makes us a stronger and more committed school. It helps us understand one another and builds empathy.

- **We acknowledge and respond to systemic racism**

68% of our learners are Black and Brown children. In the world they are frequently viewed and treated in ways that are different from their White counterparts. For example, while African American children make up only 18% of public preschool enrollment they represent 48% of preschoolers suspended. In order to respond to marginalization and create a community where differences are honored, valued and explored, we must address our biases.

Through this focus, Friends Center's educators gain new skills and perspectives which allow us to continue to create a loving, safe and positive space for growth.



inspire
teachers

VIBRANT

DIRTY

GREAT

POOR

VIOLENT

How do you see New Haven?

Envision a child-friendly city where all children have access to high-quality early childhood care and education.

This year Friends Center for Children joined with other local and national partners to embark on a bold new initiative. Our goal is to revolutionize the early care and education landscape in New Haven by bringing the community together around a common vision of Ideal Learning that is developmentally meaningful, play-based and trauma informed. The project, named New Haven Children's Ideal Learning District (NH CHILD), aims to make New Haven a national model for Ideal Learning by providing all children ages zero to eight with access to quality early care and education experiences.

Ideal Learning lays the early foundation to help children develop into well-rounded individuals who embrace life and are capable of seizing opportunities and overcoming challenges. Ideal Learning programs partner with parents to develop children who are morally, emotionally and behaviorally prepared for the real world.

To see this vision come to fruition, we have identified two major pathways: access and quality. To address issues of access, the path ahead includes creating infrastructure to meet the proven need for additional slots for infant and toddler and preschool care; creating a common application system for early care; addressing transportation obstacles; and pursuing shared-cost models such as joint purchasing and shared staffing. On the quality pathway, NH CHILD will work with local, state and national policy makers to develop a universal rating scale; emphasize coaching and mentoring through a universal professional development program; and establish degree-granting programs for early care and education professionals.

At Friends Center we are committed to high-quality early childhood education, and thrilled to be a partner in this initiative that will help extend the benefits of Ideal Learning to all children in New Haven.



engage
community

EXCITING

CURIOUS

DISTANCE

STEREOTYPES

FEAR

How do you see differences?

At Friends Center for Children, embracing diversity is not just an abstract concept or idea, it is a principle we intentionally put into practice every day of our program. For our staff, Friends Center's year-long exploration of implicit biases has reinforced our commitment to embrace diversity. Understanding the prevalence and impact of implicit biases has strengthened our personal and program-wide commitment to offset these biases. We achieve this by proactively embracing each child and family for their individuality and differences.

Embracing diversity drives our admission and financial assistance programs as well. We are committed to maintaining no racial majority, and we work to ensure that our program provides equal access by reflecting the diversity of Elm City itself. Often, access to high-quality early care is limited by incomes and zip codes. Our sliding scale tuition ensures that we serve a diverse range of incomes. To further provide accessibility, even for children and families who may be struggling with behavioral issues or concerns, Friends Center maintains a no expulsion policy. We are committed to working with every family and child to help them successfully identify and navigate the experiences or emotions that may be contributing to the behavior.

Diversity is also an important part of the Friends Center team. Our teachers and leaders represent different ages, ethnicities and cultures, creating a community of educators and caregivers who are diverse in background, but united in our mission to provide the highest level of care to every child and family.



embrace
diversity

How do your values impact the way you see the world?

For those of us seeking unity and justice, our world often feels upside down, especially when facing today's pervading issues of racism, misogyny, xenophobia and sexism. Our collective work, regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, is to find ways to disagree without violence, hate and marginalization. Our collective work is to preserve the rights of all of us and to find balance between justice and civil liberties. At Friends Center, we see this work through our commitment to one of our core values: equality.

For us, equality lives in the daily interactions among our diverse community. We embody it by offering financial, life and/or emotional supports to families that need it in order to ensure that each child has access to the same educational resources. At Friends Center, fiscal equality comes in the form of a sliding scale tuition system subsidized by state grants and private donations. Life equality is envisioned through connections to scaffolding opportunities for families in need; and emotional equality lives in our emotional wellbeing program that supports families navigating life stressors. Collectively, we commit to equality among our community so that we can protect our values, find partnerships, advance the work, stay motivated and be in community.

Friends Center values statement

We believe in the values set forth by and founded upon Quaker principles: equality, peace, community, simplicity, truth and stewardship. We believe these values to be an integral part of our daily lives. They are universal and steadfast, fortifying the human spirit and improving the human condition.

As a values-based program, Friends Center for Children strives to maintain best practices in early childhood education by nurturing the whole child and bringing together curriculum, teachers, parents and the larger community within a supportive, inspirational environment.

We welcome and encourage the uniqueness of each individual who passes through our doors; they give depth to our program and broaden our reach. We seek to have a positive impact on the crucial issues of early childhood education that is lasting and far-reaching. Through demonstrating our commitment to every child's potential, we are dedicated to affirming the Quaker principles upon which we are founded.

Using a collaborative approach, we envision a time when all children are well-equipped to succeed and a culture that fosters acceptance of our common humanity.

PEACE

SIMPLICITY

EQUALITY

TRUTH

STEWARDSHIP



DONORS

- Annual Fund
- Capital Campaign
- Financial Aid

- Family Stroll
- Great Give
- Mark Kravitz Fund

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Drumbeats led the way, echoing through the park and over the river, adding pep to the step for the dozens of children, families and friends who strolled 1.5 miles as part of our 7th annual Fair Haven Family Stroll and Festival to support high-quality early childhood education. Following the walk, more than 915 people filled Quinnipiac River Park to enjoy raffle prizes, resources, entertainment and activities. Working with Elm City Montessori, and a multitude of community partners, donors and sponsors, the Family Stroll has grown to become the hallmark of Friends Center's commitment to community collaboration and involvement.

DONORS

- Annual Fund
- Capital Campaign
- Financial Aid

- Family Stroll
- Great Give
- Mark Kravitz Fund

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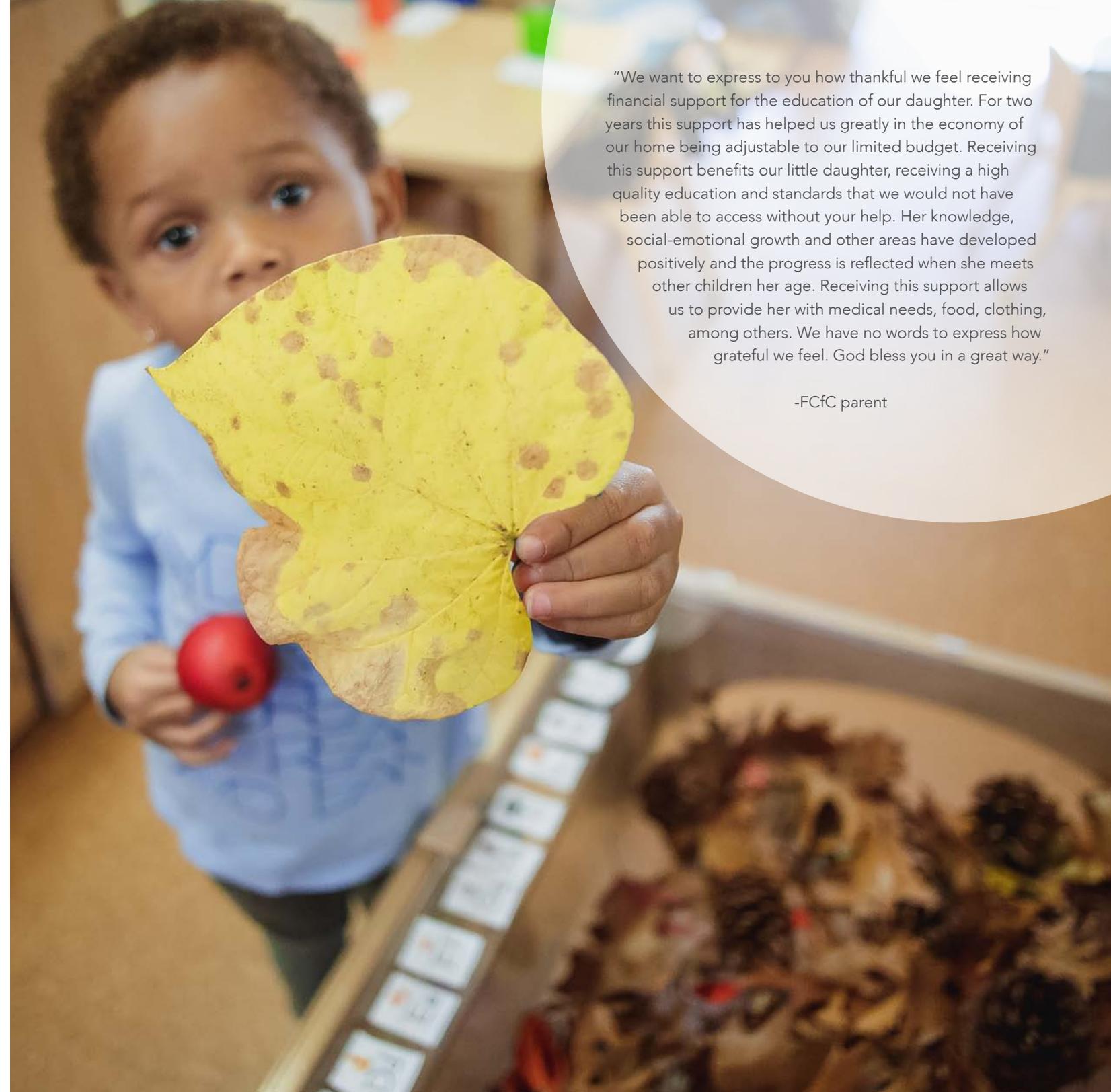
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* in-kind donation

"We want to express to you how thankful we feel receiving financial support for the education of our daughter. For two years this support has helped us greatly in the economy of our home being adjustable to our limited budget. Receiving this support benefits our little daughter, receiving a high quality education and standards that we would not have been able to access without your help. Her knowledge, social-emotional growth and other areas have developed positively and the progress is reflected when she meets other children her age. Receiving this support allows us to provide her with medical needs, food, clothing, among others. We have no words to express how grateful we feel. God bless you in a great way."

-FCfC parent



FINANCES: 2016 - 2017

CAPITAL GIFTS

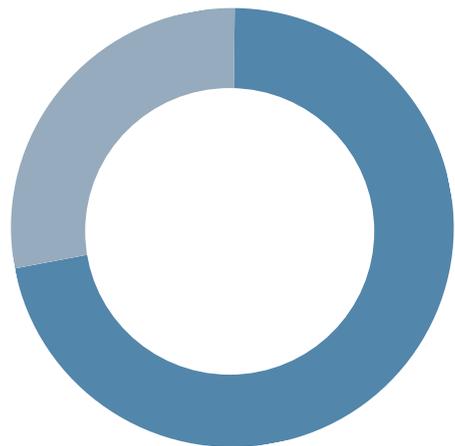
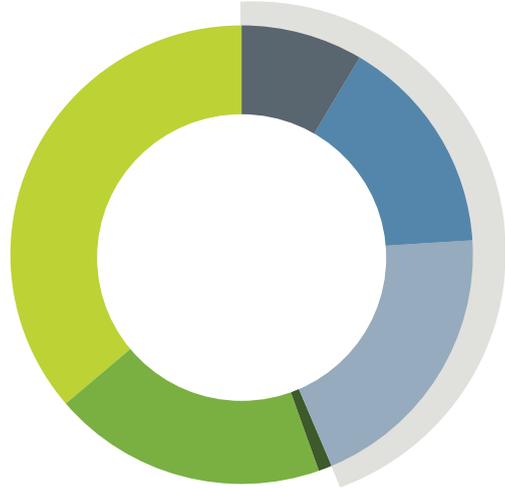
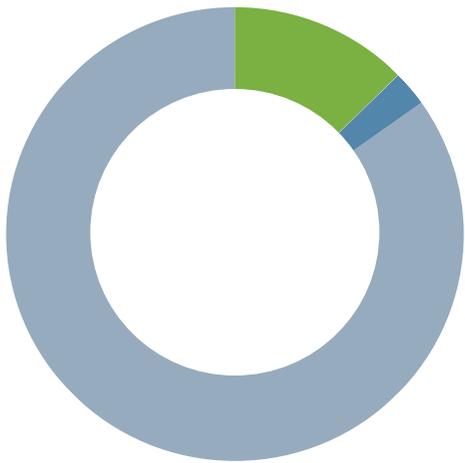
	FY 2017	FY11 - FY17
● State of Connecticut	-----	\$ 2,190,500
● Mark R. Kravitz Fund	\$ 10,025	\$ 121,250
● Foundations	\$ 2,000	\$ 613,000
● Individuals	\$ 67,200	\$ 1,309,100
● Corporations	-----	\$ 3,000
Total	\$ 79,225	\$ 4,236,850

REVENUE

● Care4kids	\$ 136,450
● New Haven Day Care	\$ 247,800
● School Readiness	\$ 314,550
● Total Government Grants	\$ 698,800
● Contributions	\$ 307,000
● Tuition	\$ 580,500
● Grants	\$ 15,000
Total	\$ 1,601,300

EXPENSES

● Salaries and Benefits	\$ 1,125,265
● Other Operating Expenses	\$ 441,035
Total	\$ 1,566,300





ACCREDITATION

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

NAEYC Accreditation of Programs for Young Children seeks to enhance children’s well-being and early learning by improving the quality of early childhood programs serving children from birth through kindergarten. The NAEYC Academy For Early Childhood Program Accreditation sets and monitors standards for high quality programs for young children and accredits programs that meet these standards — the mark of quality in early childhood education.

Friends Council on Education

Friends Council nurtures the spiritual life of Friends’ schools, strengthens the connections between the schools, and promotes Friends’ education by providing consulting services, professional development seminars, literature to support Quaker testimonies in school life, and peer network meetings across schools.

Percentage of NAEYC Met Criteria By Program Standard

1. Relationships	100%
2. Curriculum	100%
3. Teaching	100%
4. Assessment	100%
5. Health	100+%
6. Teachers	100+%
7. Families	100+%
8. Community Relationships	100+%
9. Physical Environment	100%
10. Leadership and Management	100+%

Percentage of Met Criteria For Each Classroom Observed

Infant/Toddler	99%
Preschool	100%

educate
 children
 empower
 families
 inspire
 teachers
 engage
 community
 embrace
 diversity

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**New Haven Friends Meeting*

***Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting, New York*

As you have read in this report, Friends Center is in the process of exploring new partnerships to offer more high-quality early care and education to families in New Haven. We are fulfilling the desperate need for quality early childhood care and education at the highest level and are doing it within the context of core Quaker values. As a result of these growth opportunities, we thoughtfully reviewed our existing advisory support structures — the Advisory Committee and the Professional Council — to determine the best advisory model going forward. We came to this consensus: create a Quaker Advisory Council and a realigned Professional Advisory Council. As we evolve, we seek specific support with regard to our Quaker values as well as continued expertise in early childhood to help guide our pedagogy and inform our thinking about child development and parental involvement. We believe the newly configured Quaker Advisory and Professional Advisory Councils will provide this support.

Quaker Advisory Council

“Central to the mission of Friends education is the expectation that Friends Schools will provide an academically sound education in a values-centered learning environment that is rooted in the faith and practice of Quakerism” (Cary)

The Quaker Advisory Council is a group of Quaker leaders who recognize the positive impact that a quality, early childhood experience can have on a child's future and are committed to addressing the need for high-quality Quaker early childhood education. Members of the Quaker Advisory Council act as advisors to Friends Center about aspects unique to Friends Schools. As ambassadors and advocates they provide connections to individuals and institutions, opportunities for collaboration, and access to funding. The Quaker Advisory Council serves the critical function of expanding Friends Center's impact and presence in the Quaker community.

Professional Advisory Council

“It is imperative to change the way we look at education. We should invest in the foundation of school readiness from birth to age 5... The longer society waits to intervene in the life cycle of a disadvantaged child, the more costly it is to remediate disadvantage.” (James Heckman)

The Professional Advisory Council is a group of individuals with professional expertise in early childhood education, child development, literacy, parent engagement, teacher development, environmental curriculum, or other fields that impact Friends Center's work. Members are committed to helping Friends Center develop programs, establish relationships and research best practices related to providing high-quality early childhood education to a diverse community in an urban setting. Professional Council members serve as resources, advocates and advisors.



A Legacy of Learning

Friends Center invites supporters to make a provision in their wills, trusts or retirement plans to ensure the wellbeing of Friends Center for Children in perpetuity. We encourage you to look ahead to what your generous philanthropy can/will do to provide the highest quality early childhood education for New Haven's most vulnerable and promising young citizens.

Why scale?

Friends Center for Children believes that all children have the right to equal access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate early care and education from birth. Our mission — educate children, empower families, inspire teachers, engage community, embrace diversity — guides our efforts to maximize human potential and to foster an active, engaged approach to citizenship in our global society.

We believe that in expanding our program we will be able to educate more children in order to reduce the achievement gap; empower more families to give them the tools to successfully advocate for their child's future education; inspire more teachers to become developmentally-based early childhood professionals; and engage more community in impactful dialogue around the critical importance of high-quality early care. We know that vibrant communities thrive when we embrace diversity and increase the opportunities for success for every child.

We are excited to begin the 2017-2018 year exploring two significant opportunities for Friends Center growth within New Haven: NH ChILD and Friends Center Dixwell. Friends Center has entered into a vetting stage with Dixwell Avenue United Church of Christ to explore opening a second Friends Center site. Both endeavors would allow us to expand much-needed access to high-quality early childhood education in New Haven.

looking ahead

A photograph of two children, a girl in the background and a boy in the foreground, both wearing black solar viewing glasses with red lenses. They are looking upwards, presumably at the sun. The girl is wearing a dark blue tank top with green horizontal stripes. The boy is wearing a blue t-shirt with a green and yellow geometric pattern. The background is slightly blurred, showing green foliage and a white railing.

Friends Center for Children
227 East Grand Avenue New Haven, CT 06513
www.friendscenterforchildren.org