

what
helps
us
grow
?



Friends Center for Children
2017 - 2018
Report to the Community



What helps us grow?

YOU!

Whether you are a parent, advisor, educator, donor, partner, caregiver, or community member who cares about the education of our youngest children, you help Friends Center for Children grow!

We learn and grow best from each other, from relationships that embrace, encourage and sometimes challenge us. Your involvement and support helps us grow as individuals — children, families and educators — and as a program. Because of you, Friends Center is excited to enter a new season of growth, to extend our roots and expand our branches as we strive to meet the continued need for high-quality early care and education in the New Haven area.

Produced by Friends Center for Children
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reflections
from
the director

Allyx Schiavone

What helps us grow?

LOVE

My love for Friends Center is profound. I enjoy coming to school each day. I look forward to being in our space, interacting with the community and finding ways to grow. Being a part of the Friends Center community has changed the way I think about the world, the way I lead and the way I parent my own children.

This love is fully rooted in relationships. As an educator, I know the profound importance that relationships play in the growth of a child. At Friends Center, we work to build and nurture the bonds that help us grow, as individuals and as a community. We work in partnership with families to support each child's development. Our child-centered curriculum emphasizes learning through play and interaction and we strive to foster a community that values one another.

It takes a lot to make relationships thrive — communication, time, empathy, understanding — to name a few. But the most important aspect of all is love. This love, along with Friends Center's clarity of purpose and values, emboldens me to think about growth for Friends Center and the city of New Haven.



thoughts from the board clerk

Bob Harrity

As Friends Center for Children celebrates five years in our beautiful building in Fair Haven, we look forward to continuing our positive trajectory of growth and development. New Haven has a persistent need for quality early childhood care. In an effort to respond to this urgent need and to expand our educational impact, FCfC leadership has spent much of this past year exploring opportunities for replication with community partners. We are:

READY TO GROW

A potential joint project entails creating a new stand-alone preschool classroom at the Dixwell Avenue United Church of Christ this winter, while plans are underway for a major replication of FCfC in a brand new building slated to open in 2020. This expansion is possible due to the endorsement of our mission by many loyal supporters, community leaders and current and prospective families.

On behalf of FCfC Board of Directors I wish to thank the individuals, foundations, businesses and volunteers whose generosity helps Friends Center create a high-quality, inclusive and heterogeneous early childhood program. FCfC thrives thanks to the dedication of our skilled and caring teachers who work in tandem with parents to nurture all of our children as they develop and grow. And, finally, FCfC's dramatic success is directly attributable to the leadership skills, insight, determination and passion of our Executive Director, Allyx Schiavone.





a growing need

New Haven has long had an urgent and persistent need for quality early child care. At Friends Center, we consider it an honor and responsibility to respond to that need by providing a learning community that is progressive, child-centered, family-empowering, diverse and accessible.

While Friends Center is thriving at capacity, the need for high-quality early childcare slots, especially for infants and toddlers, far exceeds their availability in New Haven. As the need continues to grow, so must our response.

We've been busy: strategizing, dreaming, planning how we can expand our reach and leverage our space and our assets to create more opportunity and access to the early childhood care that children need and families seek.

It has required much creativity, flexibility and persistence, but the hard work is coming to fruition with expansion plans that allow us to magnify our mission: educate children, empower families, inspire teachers, engage community, embrace diversity.



branching out

What does expansion look like in our current and future landscape?

Our most immediate expansion has already germinated. Friends Center was offered 10 new state-subsidized preschool slots for 2018 - 2019. Since our existing classrooms were already full, we needed a creative solution to accommodate new friends. So we formed a temporary classroom on the lower level of our existing facility, and we are exploring creating a stand-alone classroom on Dixwell Avenue.

The Dixwell classroom will continue our partnership with the Dixwell Congregational United Church of Christ and provide immediate opportunities for 16 families. It blazes the trail for a much larger permanent expansion in the Dixwell neighborhood, a brand new Friends Center facility, projected to open in 2020.

Operating at two sites, Friends Center will nearly double its reach from 84 to 150 infants, toddlers and preschoolers!

84 → 150

values help us grow

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.

As Simon, a white boy, walked out of the preschool room with his dad, he saw Franklin, an African American man, bending to put on the blue shoe covers required to enter the infant toddler pod where he would pick up his daughter. Simon noticed Franklin and asked his dad, "Is he the janitor?" Simon's dad paused, then responded, "What makes you think that?" To which the boy answered, "He looks like the janitor I saw."

Simon's innocent observations and assumptions opened the door for a conversation about how we see each other — an opportunity for Friends Center to live out the Quaker values that inform our program.

A teacher who had observed the interaction joined Simon's father as he knelt beside Simon. Together they encouraged Simon to look through the window and watch Franklin interact with his daughter Jayla. While Simon observed, the teacher talked about how Franklin was a daddy here to pick up Jayla just like Simon's dad was here to pick him up. The teacher then explained that Franklin was a medical doctor and a PhD doctor. They talked about how Franklin took care of Jayla and fed her and sang to her at night and held her hand when they crossed the street. At the end of the conversation, Simon turned to the teacher with a smile and said, "He's a daddy just like mine."





**educate
children**

children
grow
through

play

interactions

love

exploration

relationships

mistakes

“What do you think the animals are feeling?” asked the teacher, holding open a page in the book “Brick by Brick” by Giuliano Ferri. The page displayed a beautiful illustration of solemn-faced animals facing each other across a water-filled divide.

“Sad!” “Lonely!” chimed the children. But pages later they cheered to see the animals use the bricks that once formed a wall to build a bridge between them. For the preschool classes at Friends Center, this wordless book sparked countless bridge-building creations with blocks, logs and cardboard during playtime, both indoors and outdoors. The book also inspired conversations and reflections on friendship, problem-solving and understanding.

In one classroom, children in the block area built colorful bridges with Magna-Tiles to connect their separate creations, then marched farm animals and wooden figures across the colorful paths to explore each other’s towers and buildings.

Books are an integral part of Friends Center’s child-centered curriculum, and “Brick By Brick” had special significance as the feature book for the “Little Read,” a community event organized by the New Haven Early Childhood Council’s Resource Center housed at New Haven Children’s Museum, during the National Association of the Education of Young Children’s Week of the Young Child celebration.



**empower
families**

families
grow
through

Once upon a time there was a boy named Tyler. Tyler wanted the screwdriver and it was hard to wait for a turn. And he felt frustrated. Another day, Tyler wanted the blue camera and it was hard to wait, and he felt frustrated. Then Tyler played on the easel while he waited. He played with the saw. He took a deep breath and was able to wait in a calm way!

Social stories such as this, narrated by the children themselves, are one of the many ways Friends Center helps children identify and learn from their feelings, especially during challenging times. After a difficult moment when a child has settled, and feels calm and secure, Friends Center teachers or Emotional Wellbeing Coordinators encourage him to tell his story in his own words. The stories, written down, then repeated back to the child and shared with their family, become empowering tools to let children discover their voice and grow from their experiences.

Whether navigating day to day obstacles or transitions, or facing more intense traumas and situations, our Emotional Wellbeing Program works to engage and support all the families in our community. This help takes many forms, from heartfelt wisdom and guidance on addressing a child's behavior with empathy, to evidence-based information, strategies and resources for additional support as needed.

This past year, out of our 84 families, Friends Center worked closely with 32 families experiencing difficult life events and provided another 41 families with general emotional wellbeing support.

support

partnership

time

love

acceptance

relationships



**inspire
teachers**

When Maria began her internship at Friends Center for Children, she felt both excited and nervous. Trepidation quickly gave way to inspiration as she worked alongside teachers and our Emotional Wellbeing Coordinators and learned more about the Friends Center program. The concept of Quaker values piqued her interest, especially in the context of their impact on children's character development. Maria decided to study this deeper and develop her thesis on the topic.

Her work focused on the relationship between the Quaker values-based curriculum at Friends Center (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship) and positive character traits as defined in child development literature. Through a qualitative study of staff descriptions, she found a positive relationship with traits such as kindness, gratitude, self-regulation, generosity, creativity and social responsibility.

Friends Center gave Maria a platform for career development, as well as academic accolades. Her thesis — Assessing Quaker Values and Character Strengths Among Young Children — won 3rd place at the 33rd Annual National Association of Social Workers CT Conference.

Each year, Friends Center invites 7-10 interns in social work and early childhood education to join our dedicated team. For our interns, and all of our staff, Friends Center is committed to providing professional development and cultivating a culture of respect and honor — which makes Friends Center a perfect place for teachers to grow.

teachers
grow
through

passion

**professional
development**

observation

**fair
compensation**

respect

experience



engage
community

"I think early childhood education would bring New Haven together — allow us to really care for each other through our children — working for a common purpose." - New Haven Parent

We agree. We see tremendous potential in the power of early childhood education, potential for the child, the family, the educator and the entire community. The possibilities are vast, and so is the task: to provide opportunities for ideal early learning experiences to all 15,000 children under the age of 8 in New Haven.

This would require massive adjustments to the way we, as a city, think about early childhood education, but thanks to a new collaborative initiative, New Haven Children's Ideal Learning District (NH ChILD), we're poised to rally around a common goal that can transform lives and our community. Created through a partnership of Friends Center for Children, The Trust for Learning and Bank Street College of Education, NH ChILD is a true collaborative effort, guided by a dedicated and knowledgeable advisory board, and committed to elevating all programs that provide ideal learning for New Haven children and families.

NH ChILD focuses on two pathways: **Access**, which includes addressing infrastructure; funding structures; and creating a common application, and **Quality**, which promotes family engagement, empowerment and partnerships; professional learning and quality measures; and degree granting and professionalization of the workforce.

The impact is clear, the partners are ready and the momentum is growing. Now, thanks to a substantial donation from the local foundation, A Stone's Throw, the work can truly blossom. The contribution from A Stone's Throw has supplemented seed money provided by The Trust for Learning and Jean and Bill Graustein, and in-kind donations from Bank Street College of Education and Friends Center for Children. We are on our way, and, with a community working together, we'll see ideal early learning flourish and make a difference for all young children in New Haven.

community
grows
through

innovation

leadership

tolerance

celebration

opportunity

neighborhoods



**embrace
diversity**

diversity
grows
through

Amelie felt apprehensive. She had been attending Friends Center for more than a year, but this morning she would be walking further down the hall to a new space, a preschool class where the landscape was less familiar. Karina, who had transitioned to the same class just weeks earlier, saw her friend hesitate in the entry. Without a word, Karina took Amelie's hand and walked together toward the new door.

Shara showed her excitement. As she diapered a doll in the dramatic play area, she shared all about the hard work of baby-caring and her new baby sister at home. Paulo, normally shy with friends, quietly picked up another doll and placed it in the highchair beside Shara's. "I have a new sister, too," he offered quietly. Shara smiled and the pair proceeded to play together, mimicking the different ways their mamas soothed their infant siblings — one singing a Spanish lullaby and the other using a cloth to wrap and hold the baby close to her chest.

At Friends Center, we nurture an intentionally diverse community, which means cultivating empathy and understanding is essential for us to thrive. We work to encourage children as they discover connections and create bonds of understanding. Finding common ground gives us solid footing to celebrate our differences.

empathy

**understanding
tolerance**

relationships

compassion

**self-
awareness**

our accreditation
results are in:

**100% +
in all areas!**

But what exactly is accreditation?

Accreditation is a comprehensive review and ratings process that has become the national benchmark of quality in early childhood education.

NAEYC accreditation is administered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest organization of early childhood professionals. The voluntary process includes internal self-study and continuous quality improvement. It's in-depth and intense, so only undertaken every five years. Our last time around, Friends Center achieved high scores, and this time, the results were even better. We exceeded 100% in all 10 Early Learning Program Standards, which are research-based best practices for young children's development and learning.

Created with input from experts and educators around the country, these standards include:

- Promoting positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth
- Implementing a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social
- Using developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching practices



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A Legacy of Learning

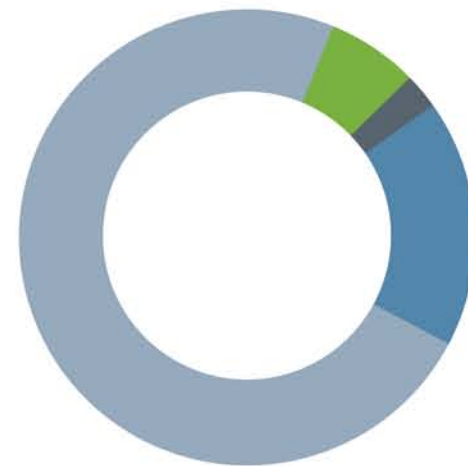
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your gifts help us grow

FY 2018 Financial Statement

Contributions



● Mark R. Kravitz Fund	\$ 14,175
● Foundations	\$38,500
● Individuals	\$ 160,975
● Corporations	\$5,529

Total **\$ 219,179**

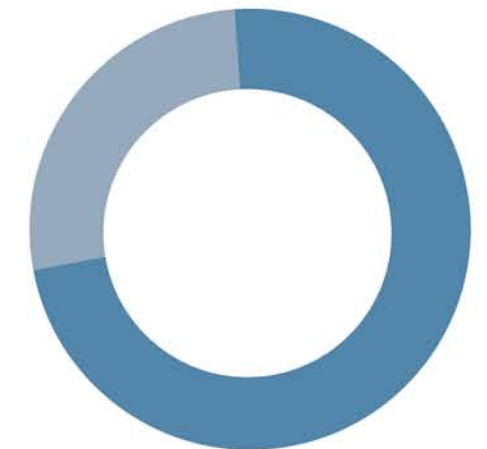
Revenue



● Care4kids	\$ 127,762
● New Haven Day Care	\$ 247,801
● School Readiness	\$ 334,647
● Total Government Grants	\$ 710,210
● Contributions	\$ 219,179
● Tuition	\$ 611,021
● Grants	---

Total **\$ 1,540,410**

Expenses



● Salaries and Benefits	\$ 1,211,210
● Other Operating Expenses	\$ 444,746

Total **\$ 1,657,956**

rooted in
relationship

advisors
help us
thrive

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Member, New Haven Friends Meeting

Linda Miller

Founder and Emeritus Board Member, Friends Center for Children;
Member, New Haven Friends Meeting

Mary Lee Morrison

Member, Hartford Friends Meeting

Greg Moschetti

Founder and Emeritus Board Member, Friends Center for Children;
Member, New Haven Friends Meeting

Ronald Netter

Member, New Haven Friends Meeting; Volunteer, Alternative to Violence
Program (AVP) and Prisoner Visitation Services (PVS)

Allyx Schiavone

Director, Friends Center for Children

Drew Smith

Director, Friends Council on Education

Michael F. Wajda

Member, Goshen Friends Meeting

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 photograph of two young girls with brown hair, wearing bright pink zip-up jackets. They are standing outdoors, holding hands and looking upwards with expressions of wonder and curiosity. In the background, there is a large tree with green leaves and a wooden structure, possibly a play area or a fence. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting a sunny day.

what
helps
YOU
grow
?



Friends Center for Children
227 East Grand Avenue
New Haven, CT 06513

www.friendscenterforchildren.org