



Friends Center for Children

TEACHER HOUSING INITIATIVE

Despite the importance of early childhood education (ECE), programs are underfunded and educators underpaid. In searching for a solution for ECE teachers to earn more realistic compensation, Friends Center for Children developed a unique, collaborative approach to meet one of the highest expenses teachers face – housing costs. Through our Teacher Housing Initiative, we support our essential workforce without burdening families with increased tuition — and we are able to ameliorate operational cost increases. Launched in 2021, our Teacher Housing Initiative offers eligible teachers rent-free housing as a salaried benefit.

Teachers participating in the Teacher Housing Initiative are paired with a financial coach who helps them identify and pursue personal financial goals. As of fall 2023, Friends Center will provide rent-free housing to six teachers, representing 20% of our existing teaching staff. Our goal is to offer housing to 30% of our anticipated expanded 80-teacher workforce by 2027.

“Our teachers are molding minds and futures each day by teaching children, and it is truly sacred work. It is a travesty that these same people are struggling to pay rent, buy groceries and afford other basic necessities. When talking to educators at Friends Center, it became clear that housing costs were the primary financial burden, so we began to imagine a world where that wasn’t an issue. We wanted our teachers to be able to have community but be relieved of the financial stress. That thinking led to our funding and establishing the Teacher Housing Initiative.” — Allyx Schiavone, Executive Director, Friends Center for Children



Photos by Ian Christmann

Partnerships with Yale Schools of Management and Architecture

We partnered with the Yale School of Management Social Impact Consulting Club to create a proforma tool to make fiscal and timing projections for our Teacher Housing Initiative. These calculations demonstrated the significant community value of donor investment in this initiative. Because compensation increases for teachers who live in Friends Center housing come in the form of rent-free housing, our teacher salary cost savings are considerable. Projections estimate that with 24 housing units, teacher salary costs can be reduced by \$500,000 annually by 2030 and each following year.

Friends Center partnered with the Yale School of Architecture through the Jim Vlock First Year Building Project program to build five houses for Friends Center by 2027. Each house will become home to two teachers and their families. The first home was completed in fall 2023, and planning has begun on the second home with anticipated move-in in fall 2024.