WHY NOW?



Friends Center *for* Children

2025 - 2026
Report to the Community



Friends Center *for* Children

OUR VALUES

We believe in the values set forth by and founded upon the Quaker principles: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equity, 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 will be 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 in a culture that fosters acceptance of our common humanity.

OUR MISSION

educate children
empower families
inspire teachers
engage community
embrace diversity
embody equity

2025 - 2026 Report to the Community
Produced by Friends Center for Children

Photography by Ian Christmann

REPORT FROM THE BOARD



Dear Friends,

When I first joined the Friends Center community as a parent more than fifteen years ago, I could not have imagined what that small school would become. What I did know was that I had found a place where children were deeply known and cared for, families were welcomed with warmth, and values were not simply stated, but lived. My daughter, who was once a student at Friends Center, is now an intern, a reminder of just how much time has passed and how deeply this place has shaped our family.

Those things that drew us here remain true today. But the scale of what Friends Center is being called to do has changed dramatically.

This year's report asks a simple question:

WHY NOW?

For me, the answer is equally simple: because the need is urgent, and Friends Center has demonstrated that meaningful solutions are possible.

This year, we opened our new location at First Haven in Dixwell, welcoming a new community of children and families to Friends Center. We continued planning the expansion of our Flint Street Family Campus. At the same time, an idea that began at Friends Center is becoming something much larger. Our Rent-Free Teacher Housing Initiative was created to confront a fundamental inequity: the educators entrusted with some of the most important work in our society too often cannot afford housing on the wages the early childhood system can sustain. Today, Friends Center is nearing completion of the nation's first Early Care and Education Rent-Free Teacher Housing Village, while communities across the country are putting versions of our model into practice.

As a Board, we know that this kind of growth is only possible with exceptional leadership. We have tremendous confidence in Allyx Schiavone and Miriam Sutton, whose partnership brings together bold vision and a deep commitment to the children, families, and educators at the heart of Friends Center.

Friends Center is not growing simply for the sake of becoming larger. We are growing because children only get one childhood. Because families cannot afford to wait. Because educators deserve economic stability and respect. And because when something works, we have a responsibility to share it.

I am deeply grateful to our educators and staff, to the families who place their trust in Friends Center, and to the donors, partners, volunteers, and fellow Board members whose commitment makes this work possible.

WHY NOW?

Because the moment calls for exactly the kind of courage, creativity, and community Friends Center has always brought to its work.

Thank you for being part of what comes next.

With gratitude,



Scot Wrocklage
Clerk of the Board

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



WHY NOW? It is the question running throughout this annual report — and one we find ourselves thinking about often.

Why grow now? Why build new schools? Why invest in housing for educators? Why advocate for systems change?

The answer is simple: because children only get one childhood.

Families cannot wait for affordable, high-quality care. Educators cannot wait for an economic system that values their work. And communities cannot thrive without the infrastructure that allows children, families, and teachers to flourish.

Our task now is to act with the urgency this moment requires.

This year, we opened our fourth school at First Haven in Dixwell, expanded our rent-free Teacher Housing Initiative, advanced the next phase of our Flint Street Family Campus, and helped communities across the country begin bringing teacher housing to their own educators.

Even as we grew, Friends Center received a 100% score during our recent surprise NAEYC accreditation visit, a powerful reminder that growth does not have to come at the expense of quality.

As we look ahead, we are organizing our work around three priorities: Educate, Innovate, and Advocate. Expand high-quality early childhood education. Scale solutions that strengthen the workforce. Change the systems that determine who has access to opportunity.

It is ambitious work. But Friends Center has never been interested in accepting the world exactly as we find it.

And none of this work happens alone.

We are deeply grateful for our educators — the soul of our community — who bring extraordinary care, skill, joy, and love to our children every day. We deeply value our Board and committee members, whose time, leadership, and belief in Friends Center help us continue to think bigger about what is possible. And we are fortunate to have donors and partners who believe in this work alongside us, whose generosity, trust, and partnership allow us not only to imagine a different future, but to build it. Most of all, we are honored by the trust families place in us every day. Their children are at the heart of everything we do — and the reason we approach this work with such urgency.

We know what is possible. Now is the time to build it.

The question is whether we are willing to act with the urgency this moment requires.

WHY NOW? **Because there is simply too much at stake to wait.**



Allyx Schiavone
Chief Executive Officer



Miriam Sutton
Chief Operating Officer

WHY NOW?

BECAUSE THE MOMENT CALLS FOR ACTION

As Friends Center continues to grow, we are intentionally strengthening the leadership that sustains our mission and prepares us for the future. This year, we transitioned from an executive director and director model to a C-suite leadership structure, strengthening our capacity for strategic growth and long-term sustainability.

As part of this transition, we are proud to announce the promotion of Miriam Sutton to Chief Operating Officer. In her new role, Miriam continues to lead our educational programs by stewarding classrooms, supporting educators, and partnering with families to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

This investment in leadership is reflected throughout our organization. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's leading accrediting body for early childhood education, consistently awards Friends Center scores of 95% or higher across all ten accreditation standards. Our performance in Leadership and Management, a standard that reflects the strength of the systems, culture, and people guiding our work received 100%. As Friends Center continues to grow, this recognition affirms something deeply important to us: growth does not have to come at the expense of quality. We can expand our reach while continuing to hold ourselves to the highest standards for children, families, and educators.

This year, we are especially proud to have received a 100% score during our surprise accreditation visit — a powerful affirmation of the quality our educators and leaders sustain every day.



Chapel Haven Schleifler Center Award



Albertus Magnus College St. Dominic Medal

This year, our work was recognized through a series of awards, appointments, and invitations that reflect the growing influence of our model locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally.

ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE ST. DOMINIC MEDAL

Friends Center was honored for its mission that reflects the Dominican values of Study, Prayer, Community, and Service. Albertus President Marc Camille recognized Friends Center's commitment to "equity, joy, and belonging" and our leadership in expanding access to high-quality early childhood education.

YALE UNIVERSITY DOMESTIC REVOLUTION AND FEMINIST CITIES SYMPOSIUM

CEO Allyx Schiavone joined international leaders from Europe, Latin America, and the United States to explore how community policy and design can better support caregiving. As a panelist, Allyx highlighted early care and education as essential infrastructure for thriving families and communities.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ENDOWMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Allyx was appointed to help steward one of the most significant public investments in early childhood education in Connecticut's history, helping guide the future of the state's Early Childhood Education Endowment.

REDWOOD FELLOWS PROGRAM

Allyx was selected to join a statewide network of leaders working collaboratively to address Connecticut's most pressing challenges.

ARBOR RISING GRANTEE

Friends Center was selected as an Arbor Rising grantee, receiving unrestricted funding and strategic support to strengthen our comprehensive model of early childhood education, educator workforce development, family well-being, housing innovation, and community development.

LEVITICUS FUND CORNERSTONE AWARD

Friends Center's model of education, housing, and community development was honored for advancing economic justice by expanding opportunity in historically underserved communities.

GREATER NEW HAVEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUNSPOT INNOVATION AWARD

Friends Center's Free Teacher Housing Initiative was recognized as an innovative solution to one of the early childhood sector's most pressing workforce challenges.

CHAPEL HAVEN SCHLEIFER CENTER

Friends Center was recognized for our nearly decade-long partnership with Chapel Haven, creating meaningful employment opportunities for adults with different abilities and building an inclusive workplace where Life Interns can contribute, grow, and thrive.

WHY NOW?

BECAUSE EDUCATORS DESERVE MORE

What began as a local solution to persistent systemic challenges — low educator wages, razor-thin budget margins, high family fees, and the high cost of housing — is becoming a model for strengthening the early childhood sector nationwide. Friends Center's rent-free Teacher Housing Initiative demonstrates how one investment can transform the lives of educators while creating lasting financial sustainability for early childhood programs.

The concept is simple: invest once in infrastructure to build or renovate housing where educators live rent-free as a salaried benefit. Within just a few years, those savings exceed the original investment, enabling programs to sustainably increase educator compensation while improving recruitment, retention, and long-term financial stability.

We're thrilled to see this scalable model taking root both near and far.

NEAR

October marks Friends Center's completion of the nation's first Early Care and Education Rent-Free Teacher Housing Village, and the second village is underway. Together, these communities will provide housing for 24 teachers and their families.

FAR

Through our technical assistance, partners in Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri and Georgia have already opened pilot homes, while additional communities are exploring or developing programs of their own.

FUTURE

We're forging partnerships with housing developers, municipalities, and capital partners while advancing state and federal policies that support teacher housing as a long-term workforce strategy.

"THE HEALTH OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY RELIES HEAVILY ON THE STABILITY OF OUR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND THAT STABILITY BEGINS WITH THE EDUCATORS WHO MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE. WITHOUT CHILDCARE, PEOPLE CAN'T WORK, AND WITHOUT PEOPLE WORKING, OUR LABOR FORCE AND OUR ECONOMY LOSE."
- Friends Center COO Miriam Sutton



WHY NOW?

In the earliest years of life, children's brains are developing at an extraordinary pace, forming over one million neural connections every second. During this critical time, every interaction matters. The relationships children build and the environments they experience create the foundation upon which their future is built, influencing the course of their lives for years to come.

1,000,000

NEURAL CONNECTIONS FORM EVERY SECOND

Understanding the profound difference high-quality early care and education can make in a child's life, Friends Center is committed to supporting the optimal development of young children. This is reflected in every aspect of our program — from the design of our centers and the selection of toys to the creation of our child-centered curriculum and landmark emotional well-being program.

We know the urgency. Not only the urgency to support families during the vital and fleeting season of early childhood, but also the moral imperative to address the systemic societal obstacles that keep high-quality care out of reach for far too many.

The cost alone is a significant barrier. That's why we fight for much-needed state and federal funding and develop innovative programs — like our rent-free teacher housing initiative — that allow us to pay early childhood educators the compensation they deserve without raising tuition for families.

Lack of high-quality spaces is a persistent concern. That's why we are building new centers in underserved communities and equipping them with inspiring learning environments where children, families, and educators can thrive.



BECAUSE CHILDREN ONLY GET ONE CHILDHOOD!

EDUCATE CHILDREN

In the foundational first three years of life, children have only one chance for the learning that shapes the years to come. Yet in Connecticut alone, we are tens of thousands of early care spaces short of meeting the need, leaving too many families without access to the care their children deserve.

Understanding this, Friends Center is working hard to create new opportunities for high-quality early education in areas with the greatest need.

In June, Friends Center Dixwell opened its doors in ConnCORP's landmark new development, First Haven in Dixwell. Located in a state-of-the-art building alongside a diverse group of community-serving partners, Friends Center Dixwell serves 68 children and their families through six infant/toddler classrooms and one preschool classroom, as well as a dedicated music and movement room, administrative offices, a conference room, a staff lounge and seven outdoor classrooms.

Meanwhile, at our Flint Street Family Campus, we are working with GOA Architects to finalize the design of a new 15,600-square-foot building that will expand our Flint Street capacity to serve a total of 120 children.

Together, these projects represent more than new buildings. They are investments in children, families, educators, and communities. As these expansions come online, Friends Center will grow from serving 224 children to 312 children across four campuses — creating hundreds of new opportunities for children to thrive during the most critical developmental time in their lives.







OUR NEW DIXWELL SCHOOL IS PART OF THE GROUNDBREAKING FIRST HAVEN IN DIXWELL DEVELOPMENT, BRINGING HIGH-QUALITY COMUNITY SERVICES TO A VIBRANT AND HISTORICALLY UNDERFUNDED NEIGHBORHOOD

WHY NOW?

BECAUSE THEY'RE GROWING, SO WE ARE TOO

EMPOWER FAMILIES

The first five years are among the most important in human development. Research tells us that 90% of a child's brain develops during this time, making access to high-quality early care and education one of the most important investments a society can make. Yet for many families, that access remains out of reach.

In Connecticut, the cost of early care and education can exceed $20,000 per year — more than tuition at many in-state colleges and universities. For countless families, child care is one of their largest household expenses. The high cost and limited availability of care force parents to reduce work hours, delay career advancement, leave the workforce entirely, or make difficult choices between financial stability and their children's well-being.

At Friends Center, we believe that supporting families requires more than providing excellent care within our classrooms. It also requires advocating for the public policies and investments that make high-quality early care and education accessible and affordable for all families.

Through her role as Chair of Child Care for Connecticut, Friends Center CEO Allyx Schiavone helped advance landmark legislation establishing Connecticut's Early Childhood Education Endowment in 2025. The legislation aims to make child care free for families earning under $100,000, and cap costs at 7% of household income for families earning more. Over the last two years the endowment has grown to $711 million bringing Connecticut closer to a child care system that works.

"A BUDGET IS A PROFOUNDLY MORAL DOCUMENT, REFLECTIVE OF THE CORE VALUES AND PRIORITIES OF OUR STATE. CONNECTICUT'S LEADERS HAVE BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY AND A RESPONSIBILITY TO DELIVER ON THEIR EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITMENTS. IF WE TRULY CARE ABOUT CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE FUTURE WELL-BEING OF OUR STATE, WE MUST INVEST IN THE SYSTEMS THAT HELP THEM THRIVE."
- Friends Center CEO Allyx Schiavone



INSPIRE TEACHERS





In October of 2026, we celebrated the opening of our fifth teacher house.

Friends Center educators do far more than supervise children; they are building brains during one of the most crucial times of a child's development. By creating intentional, play-based learning experiences, they shape how children learn and understand the world around them.

Recognizing the importance of their work, Friends Center is equally committed to caring for the educators that make it possible. We invest in their emotional well-being, professional development and financial stability, including above average compensation empowered by our first-in-the-nation Rent-Free Teacher Housing Initiative. This year, we added four additional units to our rent-free teacher housing portfolio. We purchased one home and completed another rent-free residence in Friends Center for Children's Rent-Free Teacher Housing Village, designed and built in collaboration with the Yale School of Architecture through the Jim Vlock First Year Building Project.

The Lantern (pictured above), a three-story home, stands as a beacon of the progress we are making to support early childhood educators — providing rent-free housing that increases their take-home pay and strengthens workforce stability. The home features a skylight in the bathroom and a large bay window with views of the New Haven skyline, along with the unique addition of a community space on the ground floor. Both in name and design, The Lantern reflects Friends Center's Quaker values of light and guidance in community life.

Learn more about the First-in-the-nation Rent-Free Teacher Housing Village here. Scan the QR code for details.

WHY NOW?



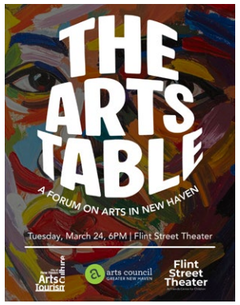
BECAUSE CHILDREN THRIVE WHEN TEACHERS DO

ENGAGE COMMUNITY

In a time when division and isolation too often affect our lives and discourse, spaces that invite conversation and shared experience are more important than ever. Art has the ability to help us see through another person's eyes, create belonging, and strengthen connections that hold us together.

When Friends Center purchased the former Cine-4 property and transformed it into the Flint Street Family Campus, we intentionally preserved one of the theater spaces — not just as a cinema, but as a community gathering place. Today, as New Haven's only functioning movie theater, the Flint Street Theater is increasingly becoming a hub for community life. We've hosted conversations on early childhood policy and social change, welcomed local thinkers and innovators through TEDx New Haven, and celebrated the enduring influence of artists such as Nina Simone. The theater also became a home for local artists, filmmakers, authors, and community organizations. Elm City Reels and Elm City Books, two new initiatives, create opportunities for residents to engage with storytelling in its many forms — from film and literature to live discussion and collective reflection.

As we grow, we want the Flint Street Theater to be a place where creativity thrives, and people from across our community come together to share stories and experiences that deepen our connection to one another.







FROM FAMILY MOVIES AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCES TO EDUCATIONAL FORUMS AND ARTS EVENTS, THE FLINT STREET THEATER HELPS US GATHER AND GROW INDIVIDUALLY AND TOGETHER.



EMBRACE DIVERSITY

At Friends Center, we know that books, stories, and language are among the most powerful tools for helping children make sense of themselves, each other and the world around them. By creating environments rich in literacy experiences, we promote healthy development, and nurture curiosity, empathy, communication and a lifelong love of learning.

We also know that literacy begins long before a child learns to read. It begins with conversations, questions, songs and the stories they hear every day. That is why every Friends Center classroom is filled with books that reflect the diversity of our community and our society, celebrating a wide range of cultures, languages, family structures, abilities, identities, and lived experiences. These books are thoughtfully curated and rotated throughout the year to reflect the interests of the children themselves.

This commitment to diversity and belonging extends beyond our libraries. Children see themselves and one another reflected throughout our classrooms: in family photographs displayed on the walls, in dolls and art materials that represent a range of skin tones, and in experiences that honor the traditions and cultures of our community. From classroom cooking projects to community potlucks, families share foods and traditions that enrich our collective understanding of one another.





WE LOVE OUR LIBRARY AND WE'RE TAKING IT ON THE ROAD. OUR NEW BOOKS WITH FRIENDS TROLLEY IS ON THE MOVE. LAST FALL, WE UNVEILED HER AT NEW HAVEN READS RIGHT TO READ EVENT AND SHE'S READY TO BRING LITERACY RESOURCES AND TRAINING TO EVENTS AND PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT NEW HAVEN.

WHY NOW?

BECAUSE EVERY CHILD SHOULD SEE THEMSELVES IN THE STORY

EMBODY EQUITY

At Friends Center, embodying equity is both policy and practice. It's a daily commitment to ensure that a child's future is not determined by their zip code, family income, race, home language, or life circumstances.

Far too many children begin life facing challenges beyond their control. Poverty, food insecurity, housing instability, family separation, community violence, and other forms of trauma can profoundly affect a child's development. Without the right support, these early experiences create barriers that can impact health, education, relationships, and future opportunities.

At Friends Center, we know that children cannot learn, educators cannot teach, and families cannot flourish unless everyone feels safe and valued. That belief is the foundation of our Emotional Well-being Program, which provides classroom support, family partnerships, individualized interventions, and connections to community resources. Rather than asking, "What's wrong with this child?" we ask, "What has this child experienced, and how can we help?"

Across our country, children — particularly Black and Brown children — are too often punished for behaviors rooted in systemic stress, trauma, or unmet needs. Instead of receiving support, they are disproportionately suspended, expelled, restrained, or referred into systems that further marginalize them, contributing to what has become known as the school-to-prison pipeline.

This year, Friends Center welcomed educator, advocate, and filmmaker Dr. Karen Baptiste to screen her Emmy Award-winning documentary, Preschool to Prison, and lead a community conversation about systemic inequities in early childhood education. Dr. K also facilitated a multi-day professional learning experience for Friends Center educators, encouraging us to examine how our biases, assumptions, systems and practices can either perpetuate inequity or create opportunities for healing and justice.



Left to right: Karen "Dr. K" Baptiste, director of *Preschool to Prison*; Pia C. Johnson, cast member; Thorin Daye, cast member

RATHER THAN ASKING, "WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS CHILD?" WE ASK, "WHAT HAS THIS CHILD EXPERIENCED, AND HOW CAN WE HELP?"

WHY NOW?

BECAUSE POTENTIAL IS UNIVERSAL, BUT OPPORTUNITY ISN'T

NEXT STEPS

As Friends Center continues to grow, we have begun to organize and frame our work around three strategic priorities: Educate, Innovate, and Advocate.

EDUCATE

EXPAND ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Friends Center is scaling our program model to meet the growing demand for access, while retaining our unwavering commitment to equity and quality. Following the opening of our Dixwell school, three additional expansions are planned over the next couple of years. When complete, Friends Center will serve 412—428 children across five schools and employ 145—150 staff. This growth will allow us to reach more families while strengthening the infrastructure, resources, and workforce needed to deliver high-quality early care and education. Each expansion is designed not only to increase capacity, but also to create sustainable, welcoming spaces where children, families, and educators can thrive.

- **Valley Street School**: Phase 1 (Fall 2026): Relocate our currently rented 44-child Blake Street location to a newly purchased facility, enhancing financial sustainability. Phase 2 (TBD): Expand and create space to serve an additional 48 children.
- **Flint Street Phase 2 (2028):** Construct a new building with six infant/toddler and two preschool classrooms, serving at least 88 additional children, along with a centralized community library and teacher training center.

INNOVATE

SCALE SOLUTIONS THAT STRENGTHEN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR

Friends Center is expanding our first-of-its-kind rent-free Teacher Housing Initiative as a proof-point solution to four interconnected challenges: low teacher pay, inadeuate early care and education supply, labor shortage, and lack of housing affordability. Through scalable models and strategic partnerships, we are helping providers, cities, and states incorporate early educator workforce needs into housing development, financing, and policy.

- **Ongoing:** Support emerging teacher housing initiatives in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Missouri, Michigan, and Georgia. We are working with multiple partners at various stages, from initial inquiry through active development, with new organizations joining the effort each month.
- **Fall 2026:** Complete the nation's first Early Care and Education Rent-Free Teacher Housing Village, providing homes for nine teachers and their families.
- **2026–2028:** Purchase and develop the next housing village with the Yale School of Architecture's Jim Vlock Building Project, serving 10 additional teacher families.

ADVOCATE

DRIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

Friends Center is leading and advancing crucial policy solutions that strengthen early care and education statewide and nationally.

- **Connecticut Early Childhood Education:** As members of Child Care for CT, FCfC staff helped spur legislation establishing the Early Childhood Education Endowment, which has already secured $711 million in state funding. Our continued focus is on growing the endowment until it can sustainably fund free early care and education for families earning under $100,000 annually and cap costs at 7% of household income for families earning above that threshold. This approach would create greater affordability and stability for families while laying the groundwork for a stronger, more equitable early care and education system.
- **National Teacher Housing:** Expand rent-free teacher housing throughout Connecticut while working with federal leaders to establish sustainable funding for educator housing nationwide. By advancing a scalable model that addresses the economic barriers facing educators, this work will strengthen the early childhood workforce and help ensure that high-quality early education is accessible to every family.



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NEW HAVEN FAMILY STROLL



Photo by Isabel Chenoweth

On a wonderfully windy Saturday in May, children, families, educators, and community partners gathered at Quinnipiac River Park for our 14th Annual New Haven Family Stroll, a joyful celebration of New Haven families and our shared commitment to high-quality early childhood education.

Inspired by the children's book *Peace* by Baptiste Pau and Miranda Paul, Friends Center's theme for the day was peace. Our educators brought the theme to life through activities for children and families as the park filled with music, movement, art, play, and opportunities to connect with organizations from across our community.

The Stroll began with a drum-led walk along the Quinnipiac River before returning to the park for a community festival featuring more than 50 resource partners. Local early childhood programs, businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations came together not only to make the day possible, but to connect families with resources supporting their health, learning, and well-being.

For fourteen years, the New Haven Family Stroll has demonstrated what is possible when a community comes together for its youngest members. We are deeply grateful to the many partners, sponsors, educators, families, and friends who walked alongside us and helped raise awareness for high-quality early childhood education throughout New Haven.

DONATIONS

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IN-KIND DONATIONS

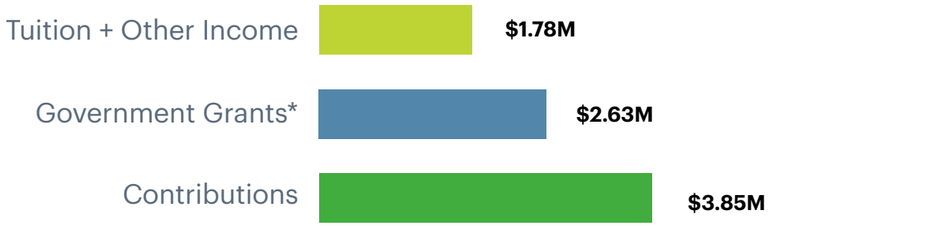
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The Well for Women
West Haven Academy of Karate

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Revenue

Total: $8,265,914



***Government Grants $2,633,491**

Early Start CT $ 1,820,756 Care4Kids $812,735

Expenses

Total: $6,716,828



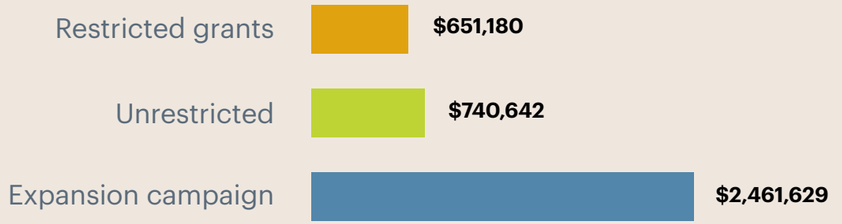
Salaries and Benefits $4,248,756 **Other Expenses $ 2,468,072**

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions

Total: $3,853,451

This is a breakdown of the contributions line shown on the facing page. It is not additional income.



WHY NOW?

Families need reliable, high-quality early care today, and the investments we make now will shape New Haven's future. Public funding and earned revenue provide a strong foundation, but they do not cover the full cost of care or the growth ahead. Donor support helps close that gap, expand access, and strengthen this work for years to come.

** Friends Center parent*
*** Friends Center alumni parent*
(m) Member of Quaker Meeting

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Former Emotional Well-being Coordinator, Friends Center
Author, Children's Literature
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Leadership Coach, Yarborough Coaching
Pastor, Black Church at Yale
Member, New Haven Board of Education
BioLaunch Program Director,
Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology

FORMER

Robert Jaeger
Ann Baker Pepe



Friends Center's Quaker identity continues to shape our mission, our relationships, and our approach to early childhood education. Rooted in the Quaker values of peace, equity, integrity, community, simplicity, and stewardship, we are part of a tradition of Friends schools committed to nurturing children who will help build a more just and compassionate world.

As an accredited member of the Friends Council on Education (FCE), Friends Center joins a national community of schools dedicated to values-driven learning, where children are encouraged to grow intellectually, spiritually, ethically, and socially.

One of the strengths of the Friends tradition is its commitment to continual reflection and growth. Building on our ongoing partnership with FCE and our commitment to deepening our internal practice in living Quaker values, Friends Center introduced a new role this year: Quaker Friend-in-Residence.

We were delighted to welcome Michael Roach as our first Quaker Friend-in-Residence. Michael is a preschool teacher and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coordinator at Westfield Friends School, and a member of Central Philadelphia Friends Meeting. Throughout their summer residency at Friends Center, Michael shared insight into Quaker educational philosophy while providing a calm, supportive presence in the daily life of our community.

QUAKER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Friends Center's Quaker Advisory Council helps ensure that our work remains deeply rooted in Quaker practice. Composed of Quaker leaders from across the Friends community, the Council serves as both advisor and ambassador — offering guidance on matters unique to Friends education, fostering relationships with individuals and institutions, and identifying opportunities for collaboration and support. Their partnership strengthens Friends Center's connections within the broader Quaker community while advancing our shared commitment to expanding access to exceptional Quaker early childhood education.

Michael Anderson
Founder and Emeritus Board Member,
Friends Center for Children
Unaffiliated Quaker

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Member, Hartford Friends Meeting

Greg Moschetti
Founder and Emeritus Board Member, Friends Center for Children
Member, Amesbury Friends Meeting in Amesbury, MA

Allyx Schiavone
Chief Executive Officer, Friends Center for Children

Drew Smith
Director, Friends Council on Education

IN MEMORIAM
JAN CHILDS

For over a decade, Jan was a dedicated and deeply loving member of the Friends Center community. She formed lasting, meaningful bonds with families, educators, and children alike, and her kindness and commitment were felt by everyone who had the privilege of knowing her. Jan's presence was a gift to every classroom she entered—she brought warmth, patience, and joy into each day, creating a space where children felt safe, seen, and valued. The impact of her spirit and kindness will continue to live on in our hearts, and most importantly, within all of the children who were fortunate enough to be guided by her.



"Jan had a way of being with children that put everyone at ease. Parents have shared how simply seeing her cradle their babies calmed their own anxieties, and colleagues remember her as a joyful partner in the work... quick to embrace you in the hallway, eager to talk about her family, and always bringing genuine care into the classroom. Her love for the children in her care was unmistakable and deeply felt.

I am grateful for the time we had with Jan and for the example she set of what it means to show up each day with patience, warmth, and heart. We hold her family and all who loved her in our thoughts as we honor the legacy she leaves behind." - Friends Center CEO Allyx Schiavone

Friends Center *for* Children

FriendsCenterforChildren.org

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