



The Story Continues



*Early Childhood Resource Center
25th Anniversary Celebration*

Thursday, October 16

Massillon Fraternal Order of Eagles (Eagles #190)

303 Weirich Blvd. NW | Massillon, OH 44647



EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESOURCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System



Presented by



Welcome

Celebrating 25 Years of Impact

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 25th anniversary celebration of the Early Childhood Resource Center!

Tonight, we honor a journey that began humbly—much like a tiny caterpillar with a big appetite for change. Just as in the beloved story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, our organization started with a simple but powerful hunger: a desire to nurture early learning, support families, and empower educators across our community.

Over the years, we've grown steadily, feeding on new ideas, partnerships, and programs. We've munched through literacy grants, professional development initiatives, and innovative new models, like the recently launched Unified Early Learning System. We've expanded our physical spaces, deepened our impact, and built a team of passionate changemakers.

And just like the caterpillar, we've transformed.

Through dedication, reflection, and resilience, we emerged as a vibrant butterfly—an organization that now soars across six counties, impacting thousands of lives with every flap of its wings.

Tonight, we celebrate not only our transformation, but 25 honorees who have been instrumental in our success. These individuals and organization have served as visionaries, partners, advocates, and leaders who have helped us grow, evolve, and fly. Their contributions are woven into the very fabric of our story, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

As you enjoy this evening of reflection and recognition, we invite you to join us in looking back with pride and forward with hope. The ECRC story is still unfolding, and with your continued support, our wings will continue to carry us even farther.

With heartfelt thanks,



Angela Moses
Executive Director



Joseph Luckring
Board Chair



**A strong
community
is built on a
solid foundation.**

It takes dedication, hard work, and a smart and steady approach to help a community thrive.

That's why PNC is proud to celebrate
Early Childhood Resource Center for all it
does to help make our community brilliant.



**BRILLIANTLY
BORING
SINCE 1865™**

Brilliantly Boring since 1865 is a service mark of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
©2025 The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. All rights reserved. PNC Bank, National Association. Member FDIC.

Table of Contents

A general order of events for the evening

Prologue: Welcome to the Story

Opening remarks, introducing main characters, and setting the scene

Chapter 1: From the First Page to Today

Reflecting on 25 years of history and impact

Chapter 2: Every Number Tells a Tale

Highlighting key mission milestones and happy endings from our most recent fiscal year

Chapter 3: Honoring the Heroes of Our Story

Recognizing some of the many early childhood champions who have helped shape our story

Chapter 4: Be Part of the Story

Help us write our next chapter!

Acknowledgments

Closing remarks, final thank yous, and a hopeful look ahead

Footnotes:

1. *Sr. Judith Ann Karam, CSA, LFACHE will give the blessing ahead of the buffet opening at 5:30 p.m. Please wait until your table is dismissed to join the buffet line.*
2. *Bid early and bid often! The online silent auction will close at 7:30 p.m. If you need assistance, raise a help paddle or see Holly Claus.*
3. *Don't miss the gift card pull. Just look for the Chicka Chicka Boom Boom tree.*



Wishing you many blessings
on your 25th Anniversary!

We are so proud of the
work that you do for God's
children. Congratulations!



ECRC Board of Directors



14
Years of
Service

Bradley Belden
President, The Belden Brick Company



6
Years of
Service

Michele Benson
Chief Executive Officer, GBS Corporation



2
Years of
Service

Daniel J. Boyer, Esq., CPCU
*Associate Vice President
Schauer Group, Inc.*



2
Years of
Service

Miguel Chavez
*Senior Vice President, Mission & Ministry
Sisters of Charity Health System*



3
Years of
Service

Melissa Chow
*Director of Marketing, Hostess
The J.M. Smucker Co.*



1
Year of
Service

Zachary Hostetler, JD, MBA
Chief Operating Officer, Employers Health



2
Years of
Service

Chad Isler, CPA, MT
Partner, 415 Group



7
Years of
Service

Joseph Luckring
*Regional President
PNC Financial Services Group*



5
Years of
Service

Dr. Anju Mader
*Chief Integration Officer, Stark County Mental
Health & Addiction Recovery*



3
Years of
Service

Ellen McWilliams-Woods, PhD
*Founder,
Illumine Integrated Solutions, LLC*



3
Years of
Service

Brian Mertes
*Managing Partner, Black, McCuskey,
Souers & Arbaugh, LPA*



1
Year of
Service

Monique Cox Moore
*Northeast Ohio Regional Liaison and
Statewide Cultural Outreach Coordinator
for Ohio Governor Mike DeWine*



3
Years of
Service

Shelley Morgenstern
*Former Child Care Center
Owner/Director*



1
Year of
Service

Nate Petry
*Vice President of Sales
TTx, Inc.*



4
Years of
Service

Marisa R. Rohn
*President, Sisters of Charity Foundation
of Canton*



8
Years of
Service

Kirstin Toth
Principal/Owner, K.S. Toth Associates

IN MEMORIAM



3
Years of
Service

April Porter
*We remember with gratitude the service
and dedication of April Porter, a valued
member of our Board of Directors, who
passed away September 30, 2025.*

2025 Officers

Joe Luckring, Chair
Anju Mader, Vice Chair
Michele Benson, Treasurer
Brad Belden, Secretary
Kirstin Toth, Immediate Past Chair

ECRC Senior Leadership Team



Angela Moses
Executive Director



Tiffany Roper
*Director of Outreach
& Parent Education*



Taylor Weaver
*Dir. of Communications
& Fund Development*



John Neidert
*Senior Program
Director*



Maria Spencer
*Director of Early Care
& Education Services*



Amy Wise
*Director of Strategic
Initiatives*

we congratulate **EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER**

on 25 years of promoting the healthy development of young children. With the ECRC being a ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System, we're thrilled to support the tremendous work done to build a stronger, more connected community—one child, family and provider at a time. Here's to the next 25 years of ensuring the future is filled with promise for so many children!

SISTERS of CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM
A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

sistersofcharityhealth.org
Canton • Cleveland • South Carolina

About ECRC

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.

At the Early Childhood Resource Center, *the child is the Center of everything we do.*

Every day, the Early Childhood Resource Center serves hundreds of families and early childhood educators in numerous ways. Whether we're guiding parents, helping them find child care, partnering with them to get their children ready for school, or training and coaching teachers, we keep the child at the center of all of our efforts. Our nonprofit organization has grown quite a bit since we were first established in 2000.

Today, we are proud to provide a wide range of services and supports throughout Northeast Ohio:

- We offer parenting classes, resources, mentoring, and case management services to increase parent engagement and strengthen families.
- We help parents find high quality childhood care programs that meet their needs.
- We operate and manage the SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids)
- Kindergarten readiness program, serving families of 3- and 4-year olds.
- We offer training, mentoring, coaching and Child Development

Associate credential classes for early childhood professionals and provide additional technical assistance to child care centers and family child care providers.

The Early Childhood Resource Center serves as the state-appointed Child Care Resource and Referral agency for Service District Area (SDA) 4, which covers Stark, Summit, Medina, Portage, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties. Throughout these six counties, and beyond, we partner with many local organizations to bring the aforementioned services into local neighborhoods and family homes.

The Early Childhood Resource Center has offices in three locations across the region: Akron, Boardman, and Canton.

25 Years of History and Impact

The Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) was founded in 2000 and is a ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System. The organization was established in response to a community needs assessment that was conducted in 1998 through which the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton identified a need for accessible, high quality, trustworthy child care in Stark County, Ohio.

Since its inception, the ECRC has grown significantly, but still focuses on serving young children and families. The following timeline highlights some key milestones in the organization's ministry over the last decade.

2000 With funding from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton, the Early Childhood Resource Center was established in 2000, as an integral part of the Foundation's Quality Child Care Initiative. The Center was initially created to increase the amount of high-quality early childhood education and care available in Stark County. Upon its formation, the ECRC's primary offerings focused on professional development courses; child care accreditation courses; and technical assistance and mentoring to those working in the early care and education field.

2011 The Center began serving families with young children. Parent engagement, education, and support services offered included parenting courses and mentoring, which were offered both at the new building and in the surrounding neighborhoods/throughout the community.

2013 The Center became the parent organization managing and operating the SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) kindergarten readiness program. SPARK is a free, family-focused program, where a participating parent and child meet monthly with a specially-trained SPARK parent partner, typically in the family home. The SPARK parent partner empowers the parent to engage his/her child in learning, and SPARK families receive books, supplies, and resources needed to support school readiness.

2014 The Ohio Division of Child Support partnered with the Center to provide parenting education for noncustodial fathers who were behind on their child support. This prompted an emphasis on serving fathers and a 2016 partnership with the THRIVE infant mortality prevention project.

2017 The State of Ohio designated the Center as the Child Care Resource and Referral agency serving Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull counties. In this role, the Center equips early childhood professionals with the knowledge and resources needed to provide high-quality education and care; helps families find high-quality early childhood programs that meet their needs; and raises public awareness about the importance of early childhood development. Additionally, in 2017, satellite offices were opened in Mahoning and Summit counties.

2019 Fatherhood programing offered by the Center was expanded throughout Stark and Summit counties.

2020 Community support enabled the Center to expand its Canton presence by creating an early childhood campus that includes a new building for the training, mentoring, and coaching of early childhood professionals.

2021 The State of Ohio awarded the Center additional funding to continue serving as the Child Care Resource and Referral agency serving Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull counties. As part of this renewed award, the Center became the Children Services Hub for Service Delivery Area 4, leading regional work to provide support to foster and adoptive families and agencies.

2023 The Early Childhood Resource Center SPARK program was recognized as a Best Practice by the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP).

2025 The Early Childhood Resource Center celebrates 25 years of ministry and joins with more than a dozen community partners, including the City of Akron, to launch phase one of a Unified Early Learning System pilot project in Summit County.



Every Number Tells a Story

Impact at a Glance: Then and Now

When the Early Childhood Resource Center first opened its doors in 2000, the organization had just one employee, a budget of \$600,000, and was focused on providing professional development to child care providers and early care professionals. Over the past 25 years, our story—and mission—have grown volumes. Each year has added a new chapter, and, over time, a powerful legacy has begun to unfold.

Today, the Early Childhood Resource Center has more than 50 employees across three office locations, a budget exceeding \$6 million, and proudly offers a broad portfolio of services supporting local children and families. In addition to providing professional development to early childhood professionals, we now provide child care referrals; the SPARK kindergarten readiness program; parent education; fatherhood programming; supports for kinship, adoptive, and foster families; and so much more. What began as a single chapter has grown into a story of lasting community impact.

For 25 years, we’ve been writing a story of growth, connection, and hope. The below numbers summarizing our FY2025 work are so much more than mere statistics on a page; these figures represent real parents, children, and educators whose lives have been impacted, thanks to your support.

Over the past year, we’ve added to our story by...

Strengthening Families

Every class, conversation, and connection builds stronger families and safer, healthier futures for children.

451 parent education classes offered.
156 Parent Cafés facilitated.
450+ dads engaged.

Serving as a Community Hub

From play to parent support, we are a welcoming space for learning, connection, and growth.

3,137 children from
visited our Canton office with
their families.



Supporting Child Care Providers

With more than 8,600 early educators trained, the ripple effect of this work reaches classrooms across six counties.

608 programs served.
5,696 coaching sessions provided
631 professional development
classes offered.

Helping Families Find Care

When families need safe, reliable care, we’re here to help them find the right program that meets their unique needs.

326 families referred
to high-quality child care
programs.

SPARKing Kindergarten Readiness

Locally, ECRC’s SPARK team continues to prepare children for school success. Through a number of replication sites, the SPARK program operates in 24 school districts across nine Ohio counties. Statewide, the program serves 2,000+ children annually, with 20,000+ children completing the program since its inception.

577 SPARK children served.
4,259 in-home lessons
completed.
4,655 free books distributed.

EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

Celebrating
25
2000 - 2025
Years

PRESENTING SPONSOR



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

PLATINUM SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS



TABLE SPONSORS



25 years of dedication to the mission of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine!

The board and staff of the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton proudly celebrate the growth and success of the ECRC. What began as an inspiring vision through the Foundation's *Quality Child Care* initiative has transformed into a vital resource that positively enriches Stark County and beyond.



Thank You to Our In-Kind Donors

Anonymous	Dorothy Gray
Akron Children's Museum	Dough Co
Akron Zoo	Dr. Anju Mader
Aladdin's Eatery	Elizabeth Schilling
Alexandra Neal	Embassy Suites by Hilton Akron
Amy Wise	Canton Airport
Angello's 2 Go	Finesse Customs
Anna-Marie Bjornstad	GBS Corporation
Arrowhead Golf Course	George Beatty
Atwood Lake Marina	Gervasi Vineyard Resort & Spa
Aura Salon & Spa	Gina Lynn Photography
Biggby Coffee	Gone Again Travel
BJ's Brewhouse	Holley Turner
Brad Belden	Holly Claus
Buffalo Wild Wings	Joe Luckring
Canton Art Museum	JRC
Caribou Coffee	Juanita Fout
Carlisle Inn Walnut Creek	Kave Coffee Bar
Carrabba's Italian Grill	Kelley Moffett
Center Ice Sports Complex	Kendra Scott
Chad Isler	Kirstin Toth
CheerVille — North Canton	Landoll's Mohican Castle
Chick-Fil-A	LED Transportation
Chuck E Cheese	Loby's Grille
Cleveland Browns	Longhorn Steakhouse
Cleveland Guardians	Maria Spencer
Columbus Blue Jackets	Marisa Rohn
Cooper's Hawk Winery	Mayfair Country Club
Dan Boyer	McAlister's Deli
Danielle Triplett	Meadowlake Golf Course
Dave Claus	Melissa Chow
Decia Beck	Michele Benson
Dillard's	Miguel Chavez

Missy Beebe	Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens
Nate Petry	Standard Printing
Ohio Star Theater at Dutch Valley	Stark State College
Old Carolina BBQ Company	The Canton Symphony Orchestra
Olivia Smyser	The Ohio Lottery
Outback Steakhouse	The Ohio State Reformatory
Petitti Garden Centers	The Pink Door Beauty Bar
PNC	The Step2 Company, LLC
Pro Football Hall of Fame	Thom and Janet McKinney
Raising Cane's	Tiffany Roper
Red Robin	TTx, Inc.
Screamer Properties, LLC	Watershed Distillery
Shelley Morgenstern	YMCA of Central Stark County
Sherry Kauffman	Zach Hostetler
Snow Trails	

An Information Solutions Provider



Industry Leader • Innovation • Diversity • Longevity • Integrity



Technology Solutions

- Software Solutions for Healthcare Organizations
- Revenue Cycle Management Services
- Comprehensive Software & Hardware Maintenance
- IT Support & Disaster Recovery
- Network Design
- Implementation & Consulting Services
- Document Imaging & Conversion Services

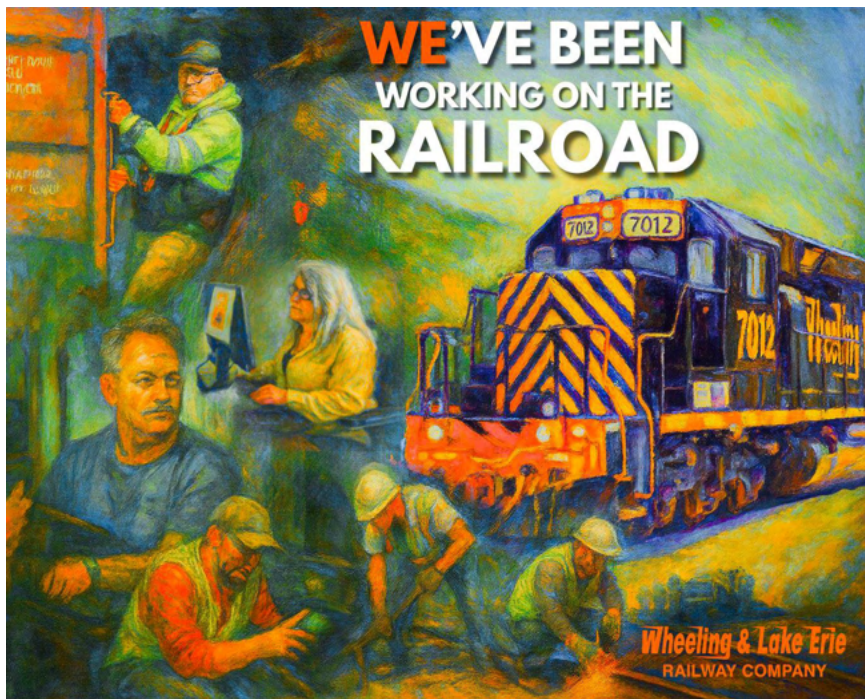
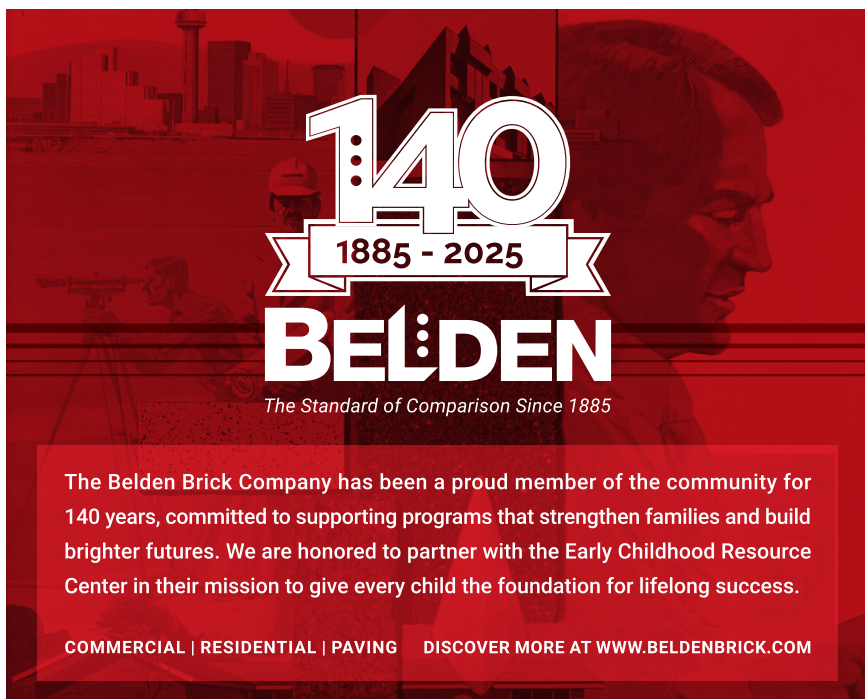
BrandConnect

- Print Management
- Creative Services
- Design Consulting
- Point of Purchase & Point of Sale Materials
- Branded Apparel & Promo Items
- Fulfillment & Distribution
- Document Analysis
- Customer Portal

PrinTech

- Product Identification Labels
- Shipping Labels
- Custom Packaging
- Brand Protection
- Extended Text Labels
- RFID Technology

GBS | 7233 Freedom Ave. NW | North Canton, OH 44720 | 800.552.2427 | www.gbscorp.com

140
1885 - 2025
BELDEN
The Standard of Comparison Since 1885

The Belden Brick Company has been a proud member of the community for 140 years, committed to supporting programs that strengthen families and build brighter futures. We are honored to partner with the Early Childhood Resource Center in their mission to give every child the foundation for lifelong success.

COMMERCIAL | RESIDENTIAL | PAVING DISCOVER MORE AT WWW.BELDENBRICK.COM

25th Anniversary Honorees



Akron Area YMCA

Since 1870, the Akron Area YMCA has been a strong place to launch and a safe place to land for generations of individuals and families. A cornerstone in the community, the Y has always answered the call when support was needed most.

The Akron YMCA was founded with a simple but powerful idea: to support young people in spirit, mind, and body. What began with lectures, music, and physical activity has grown into a vibrant, welcoming space for all.

In 1972, the Y opened its first child care center—Hope Child Care Center—in collaboration with the Florence Crittenden Home, First Presbyterian Church, United Way, and the YMCA.

Through changing times, the Y remains a steady presence, serving Summit, Medina, and Portage counties with inclusive health programs, child care, camps, and more.



Bradley Belden

Brad Belden currently serves as the president of The Belden Brick Company, a role he has held since 2019. Prior to his time at Belden Brick, which began in 2004, Brad graduated from Boston College with a major in Finance and worked on the Chicago Board Options Exchange and in New York City for JPMorganChase.

In addition to serving on the Early Childhood Resource Center board of directors, Brad currently serves on the boards of the Brick Industry Association, the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Aggregates & Industrial Minerals Association, and the Ohio Manufacturing Association (OMA), where he also chairs the OMA Energy Group.

He is a proud member of the 19th Class of Leadership Stark County. Brad is happily married to Aimee Belden and has a daughter who attends Ohio State and a son who attends Jackson High School.

25th Anniversary Honorees



Robert F. and Kathy K. Belden

Bob and Kathy Belden have been consistent supporters of the Early Childhood Resource Center since the organization's earliest years, as Bob served as one of the original board members for the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton.

Bob is retired from The Belden Brick Company, where he represented the fourth generation of the family to manage the company. A native of Canton and Central Catholic High School grad ('65), Bob earned a degree in Mathematics from the University of Notre Dame in 1969 and an MBA from the University of Michigan Graduate School of Business in 1971. He is the interim CEO of Arcitell, LLC, a joint venture between Belden Holding & Acquisition, Inc. and Acell Ltd.

Bob was selected by the Dallas Cowboys in the 12th round of the 1969 NFL draft and spent two seasons as a backup quarterback for the team. Following his retirement from football, Bob completed his MBA and was hired by the 3M Company. He then spent seven years trading options as a market-maker on the Chicago Board Options Exchange before returning to Canton to assume the role of Vice-President of Marketing for the family business. In April 1995, he was named President of Belden Brick. In April 2008, he was named CEO of the company, and in January 2016, he was named Chairman of the Board. He became Chairman Emeritus in April 2024, before retiring from the company in January 2025.

Bob is married to Kathy Keniray Belden, who held roles as Alumni Director and Tuition Assistance Director for Central Catholic High School prior to her retirement. The Beldens have four adult children, and 14 grandchildren. The Beldens remain very involved in the community, serving on many local boards, including the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton.



Danette Bosh Alexander, PhD

Dr. Danette Bosh Alexander, Dean of the Learning & Engagement Division at Stark State College, is a proud former employee of the ECRC. She has held positions ranging from toddler teacher to Head Start education coordinator and adjunct instructor at Stark State College and the University of Cincinnati to department chair of education and social sciences. In her current role, Danette oversees a variety of holistic student support services, academic enrichment programs, and several federally funded grant programs. Danette also manages Stark State College's Teaching & Learning Council, coordinates the faculty-staff professional development team, and serves on numerous committees.

Danette earned her doctorate degree in Higher Education Leadership from the University of Toledo, a M.A. Ed. from Malone University, and a B.S. in Family Relations and Human Development from The Ohio State University. She lives in Dellroy with her husband Chip and her dog, Barney. She has three children, a daughter-in-law, a son-in-law, and two grandchildren.

Canton City School District



Canton City School District (CCSD) served as a pilot site for the SPARK kindergarten readiness program back in 2003. Since then, the District's partnership with the ECRC has continued to flourish, focusing on promoting kindergarten readiness for families with preschool-aged children.

CCSD has become a leading example of the positive impact SPARK can have—particularly within economically disadvantaged communities. Many children begin preschool with significant readiness gaps, which can widen over time without a strong educational foundation. To this day, the ECRC and SPARK program staff remain a vital partner of the District, working closely with families and students. Through an authentic, engaging, and supportive approach, SPARK models effective teaching and learning practices—ensuring that children, caregivers, and educators all benefit from a strong start on the educational journey.



25th Anniversary Honorees



Joni T. Close

Joni T. Close is the past president of the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton. In 1997, Joni began her tenure at the Foundation as its first program officer and served in a variety of capacities until her retirement in 2022. Joni also served on Ohio's Early Childhood Advisory Council since its inception under the Strickland administration and as Council Chair during the Kasich and DeWine administrations.

During Joni's time as program officer, she oversaw the development and implementation of the Foundation's first initiative, the Quality Child Care Initiative. With information gathered through focus groups, Joni worked closely with board and staff to develop a response to the unmet needs of children and their families. That response ultimately led to the creation of the Early Childhood Resource Center.

In 2002, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation staff chose Ohio as a site for its SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) Initiative and contacted Joni to assist in its site visit. This led to the selection of Stark County as one of eight SPARK sites, with a grant of \$4.2 million from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Later, a second grant of \$1.5 million was used to fund replication across the state. In 2013, SPARK was placed under the auspices of the Early Childhood Resource Center.

Joni has a BA in accounting and business management from Walsh University and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Akron. She and her husband, Daryl, have two adult children, Renee and Russ. They all live in North Carolina.



Vicki Conley

Vicki Conley was born and raised in Canton and attended Central Catholic High School, where she met her husband, Jim. She received her undergraduate degree from Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois, and a master's degree from the University of Akron.

Following college, Vicki was active in many community activities, including (Timken) Mercy Service League, Junior League, and volunteering with United Way. Vicki served on the board of United Way of Ohio, where she served one term as president.

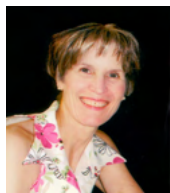
Vicki owned and operated Easterday's Flower and Gift Shop with friend and business partner Karen Belden, for a number of years before Vicki was selected to be the

founding executive director of The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton, where she served for 15 years. Among the earliest initiatives of the Foundation was the funding and development of the Early Childhood Resource Center, under the leadership of Joni Close.

Vicki and Jim have two children, Kelly and Dan, and three granddaughters, Katie, Sofie, and Hannah. Since retiring, Vicki's time has been filled with travel and watching her granddaughters grow.



25th Anniversary Honorees



Leslie Deem Honored posthumously. (9/6/1948–9/2/2005)

A message from the Deem Family:

We were so surprised and delighted that the ECRC wanted to honor our mother, educator and advocate Leslie Ann Kar Deem, at the organization's 25th anniversary celebration. The work our mother did was lifechanging, certainly for us, and it is amazing to know that even 20 years after her death, her legacy of advocacy lives on.

We remember all the ways our early childhood was enriched while we were growing up— through the time she spent working on the PTA and with other educational organizations to ensure we got the education we deserved. This passion extended beyond caring for her family to the larger community of Northeast Ohio, and especially the ECRC, so other young people could spend time writing, reading, dreaming, making art, and having access to the educational resources and teaching styles they deserved.

As a new mother, Leslie's youngest daughter Whitney appreciates the care, consideration, and love of books that mom instilled. Like our mother, Whitney takes her sidekick to the library. He has his own library card, in his own wallet (which he is very proud of, obviously). Learning from Leslie's pedagogy and way of teaching—through books, Whitney and her son talk about the past and explore and celebrate diversity as books share the importance of things like kindness and acceptance. These resources instill a sense that he can be and do anything.

As a recent Columbia University MFA graduate, Leslie's middle child Morgan is especially grateful her mother made sure that at an early age her children had the resources needed to be able to excel in systems that were perhaps not made for how they learn. Because of this and Leslie's passion for books, creativity, and the arts, Leslie influenced more than just her own family. She shared the magic of how resourced young people can really flourish—a magic the ECRC is still weaving today.

We both loved getting books of all kinds from the ECRC that were full of stories and art styles from all cultures. Whitney still has these books today, and they still are pulled off the shelf for one (or five) more stories before bed. We remember attending Saturday workshops at the ECRC, like the Eric Carle *Very Hungry Caterpillar* inspired painting and collage sessions, where we got to make art alongside the teachers. Tissue paper roses a plenty!

Twenty-five years is a very long timeto be serving others; so, congratulations, truly! We think, as our mother hoped, that the world can be changed by small, committed actions. Making sure the fertile time of early childhood is appropriately resourced and that educators, parents, guardians, and organizations like ECRC have the time, money, and support to ensure strong creative foundations that will foster a generation of thoughtful, creative, kind, and just young people, is one way to encourage such change.

Fingers Crossed. Congratulations!

Whitney + Morgan

415 GROUP

**ACCOUNTING
CONSULTING
IT SERVICES**

Proud sponsor of the 25th Anniversary Celebration!

TOP WORK PLACES 2025

THE PLAIN DEALER
cleveland.com

INSIDE public accounting
TOP 300 FIRMS
2025

USA TODAY
MOST RECOMMENDED TAX & ACCOUNTING FIRMS
2025

Canton ♦ Alliance ♦ North Canton ♦ www.415group.com

25th Anniversary Honorees

THE GEORGE H DEUBLE FOUNDATION

The Deuble Foundation

The George H. Deuble Foundation primarily supports arts, education, health care, and human services initiatives. The Deuble Foundation has been a longtime supporter of the Early Childhood Resource Center, with family members serving on the ECRC board of directors.



Cindy Gansmiller

Cindy Gansmiller served as an Early Childhood Specialist for the Early Childhood Resource Center prior to retiring in 2024. She worked in the early childhood field for 35 years, and her philosophy has always been to put children first.

Cindy holds a BA in child development and started the first 12 years of her career at the University of Akron Center for Child Development, where she served as head teacher and then assistant director. She then went on to serve two years at Stark County Community Action Agency as a mentor to preschool teachers and supervisor of the agency's home visitor program.

Cindy spent the majority of her career with the ECRC, where she worked for 21 years. Among her accomplishments, Cindy served as a NAEYC Validator for 8 years and was an Early Childhood Professional of the Year award recipient while working with toddlers and preschoolers at The University of Akron.



GAR Foundation

Established in 1967, GAR Foundation was born of the philanthropic desire of the Galen and Ruth Roush to support the needs of those in the Akron/Summit County community. Today, GAR Foundation awards more than \$7 million annually to nonprofit organizations, focusing on early childhood through higher education; economic, workforce, & community development; arts & culture; and basic needs. The GAR team is committed to serving others and continuing the legacy of what was started over 50 years ago. GAR Foundation is a longtime supporter of the Early Childhood Resource Center and the SPARK program.



Geri Grove

Geri Grove dedicated 45 years to the field of education, working with preschool children, families, and educators across a variety of settings. Her academic background in child education (M.Ed.) and adult learning (Ph.D.) shaped a career that spanned day care centers, Head Start programs, community college teacher preparation, and in-service training at the college level.

When invited to establish the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) as the organization's founding executive director, Geri saw it as a meaningful opportunity to integrate her studies and experience into a mission-driven initiative. This role allowed her to collaborate with professionals from diverse backgrounds who were all committed to enhancing the quality of early childhood education.

After retiring from the ECRC in 2009, Geri continued her advocacy as a State Regional Early Childhood Specialist. In this role, she focused on building bridges between public schools and community-based programs to support smooth, developmentally appropriate transitions for children entering kindergarten. She is a champion for early childhood education.



We are proud to support
Early Childhood Resource Center
in its 25th year of promoting the healthy
development of young children.



Risk Management | Business Insurance
Employee Benefits | Private Client

schauergroup.com



Experience a family legacy of
exceptional service and reliability!

The M. Conley Company

Industrial Packaging
Janitorial Service
Food Service



mconley.com
800-686-6001

25th Anniversary Honorees



Happy Campers Learning Center

Happy Campers Learning Center of Youngstown, Ohio, began in 2000 as a Type B in-home child care center, founded by Tracy Jordan. Rapid growth and community need resulted in the center expanding into Bethlehem Lutheran Church in 2008.

Guided by the mission, “Working with families to build better communities,” Happy Campers provides faith-based, developmentally appropriate education rooted in Ohio’s early learning and academic standards. Their curriculum blends academics with art, music, drama, dance, nutrition, and foreign language to support holistic growth.

In 2024, Happy Campers opened a sister site to serve infants and toddlers, and in 2025, Happy Campers North was opened, marking continued commitment to nurturing young minds across the region.



Scott Hasselman

Scott Hasselman served as Executive Director of the Early Childhood Resource Center from 2010 until his retirement in 2023. Scott holds a master’s degree in Special Education, and his career spans more than 35 years of experience

overseeing multiple sites and large-scale projects. Prior to his leadership of the ECRC, Scott served as Vice President of Community-Based Services for a large, multi-faceted social services organization that served children and youth from birth through age 21. He has supervised programs in eight states with an annual budget of \$30 million. He understands how to create multiple-site program systems demonstrating value through outcomes/metrics with policies and procedures, as well as continuous quality improvement. During his tenure, Scott helped grow the ECRC from a one-county provider with a budget of \$600,000 to a multifaceted provider serving more than six counties with a budget exceeding \$6 million.



JRC

JRC’s mission is to enrich lives through educating children, engaging seniors, and strengthening community. Early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning, which is why JRC’s two Learning Centers provide high-quality care and education for young children. As people live longer, ensuring quality of life for seniors is equally important. JRC’s Adult Day Center offers purposeful activities for those who need assistance, while also giving caregivers the chance to work or receive respite. JRC provides services such as showering and personal care and proudly accepts VA benefits. The organization’s goal is to help individuals remain in their homes as long as possible while enjoying meaningful, supportive days.

JRC also offers programs that build connections across generations. Healthy Habits provides nutritious meals for children and seniors, and Intergenerational Connections brings them together for activities that foster learning, joy, and understanding.



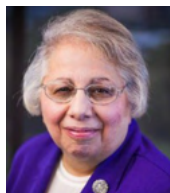
Congratulations on 25 Years

*We are proud to partner with
Early Childhood Resource
Center with our new
strategic focus on supporting
children ages 0-5.*

**Thank you to all of our area
preschool providers!**

(330) 745-5995 | 460 W. Paige Ave. Barberton, OH 44203 | barbertoncf.org

25th Anniversary Honorees



Sr. Judith Ann Karam, CSA, LFACHE

Sister Judith Ann began her distinguished health care career in 1962, serving as a pharmacy technician, pharmacist, and health care administrator. Her leadership spans decades, including her role as president and CEO of the Sisters of Charity Health System from 1998 to 2013. She previously

served as major superior of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. Her administrative accomplishments include leading multiple hospitals, developing a joint venture hospital, forming and restructuring health care partnerships, creating conversion foundations, and establishing a nursing home for 22 Catholic religious congregations. She has also been a passionate advocate for the uninsured, frequently lecturing on their behalf. In June 2018, Sister Judith Ann was inducted into the Ohio Hospital Association Health Care Hall of Fame. Most recently, she completed a six-year term on the Board of Trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous in the United States & Canada. She currently serves on the Cleveland Clinic Mercy Hospital Board of Directors, where she has been involved since its formation, prior to its acquisition by the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

Sister Judith Ann's influence extends nationally, having chaired the board of the Catholic Health Association of the United States in 2015–2016. A Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Sister Judith Ann has served on numerous boards since 1973, including those affiliated with the Sisters of Charity Health System. Her civic engagement includes board roles with the Greater Cleveland Partnership, the Center for Health Affairs, and participation in Cuyahoga County's medical industry panel for the Cleveland Medical Mart and Convention Center. She has also served on boards in South Carolina and Ohio, including University Hospitals Health System and Columbia HCA Healthcare Corporation. Her 12-year tenure on the board of Walsh University earned her trustee emeritus status.

Sister Judith Ann's contributions have been widely recognized. She has received the Sam Miller Goodness Award (2013), the Humanitarian Award from the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio (2012), and honorary induction into Sigma Beta Delta. Other honors include the Community Health Champion Award (2011), the Order of the Palmetto (2008), and the Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice honor from Pope Benedict XVI (2007).

Sister Judith Ann holds an honorary doctorate from Ursuline College and has received numerous awards for distinguished service and leadership in health care. Her legacy is marked by visionary leadership, deep compassion, and unwavering dedication to community and faith.



Sherry Kauffman

Sherry Kauffman has spent her entire life in Canton, Ohio, where she and her husband Kim have shared 57 joyful years of marriage. Together, they raised two children, Karla and Keith, and built a life rooted in love, learning, and community.

Sherry devoted 33 years to preschool education, retiring in 2012 after a fulfilling career nurturing young minds. During that time, she became a proud grandmother to two granddaughters, Emma Lou (now 26) and Kaya (19), whose growth into confident young women has been one of her greatest joys. Retirement brought even more blessings with the arrival of three energetic grandsons—Korbin (3), Kemper (10), and Kinkade (7)—who fill her days with laughter and keep her busy!

In their free time, Sherry and Kim enjoy traveling and discovering new places together. Sherry also finds joy in watching sports and keeping her mind sharp with word games—simple pleasures that continue to enrich her vibrant life.



25th Anniversary Honorees



Dr. Peter Leahy *Honored posthumously (12/18/1945 – 7/16/2025)*

Dr. Peter J. Leahy was a distinguished professor and researcher who had a long, impactful career in public administration. He served as Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies at the University of Akron from 1980 until 2013. He also held the position of senior research associate from the Institute for Health and Social Policy and directed the Center

for Public Service Research and Training. From 2016 until 2019, Dr. Leahy was a research professor at the Kent State University College of Public Health and held an appointment in the Center for Public Policy and Health.

Dr. Leahy's area of academic specialization was program planning and evaluation. In this program planning and evaluation capacity, Dr. Leahy contributed his expertise to the Early Childhood Resource Center and numerous other institutions in the areas of education, drug and alcohol prevention and treatment, and human services delivery.



Gail Montana

Gail Montana and her husband of 49 wonderful years, Joe, reside in Plain Township. Together, they've raised four daughters whose love and accomplishments continue to enrich their lives. Their growing family includes six grandsons, one granddaughter, and one great-grandson. While most live nearby, their youngest daughter has made France her home for the past two decades.

Gail and her family have dedicated themselves to nurturing children and supporting families. She strongly believes that successful family child care depends on strong, collaborative relationships. Over the years, she has remained close with many of the families she's cared for—recently attending weddings of children she once cradled as infants.

Travel has long been one of Gail's greatest passions. Upon retiring from child care three years ago, she transitioned into a new adventure as a travel agent. She now delights in crafting memorable journeys for individuals and groups alike. Most recently, she led a group of 28 on an 11-night cruise through the British Isles.



PNC

PNC employees have been volunteering at the Early Childhood Resource Center since the PNC Grow Up Great initiative was launched in the Greater Akron Region in April of 2012. Since then, volunteers have contributed over 2,600 hours of volunteerism and earned over \$100,000 in Grants for Great Hours for the Early Childhood Resource Center alone.

Grants for Great Hours is a tiered incentive program where volunteers can earn grant dollars for the organizations they support by achieving specific volunteer hour goals.



Dr. Cecilia Schweizer

Born and raised on the southwest side of Canton, Ohio, near the historic Timken Roller Bearing Company, Dr. Cecilia Schweizer grew up in a home grounded in faith, compassion, and service. Her mother, a devout Catholic and dedicated primary school teacher in the Canton City Schools, instilled in her the values of self-sufficiency, education, and helping others—principles that continue to guide her life and work.

Dr. Schweizer earned her academic degrees from the University of Akron, beginning her career as a School Psychologist within the Canton City School District. She later completed her Doctorate in Counseling Psychology and became a Licensed Psychologist. For over three decades, she has provided individual psychological therapy to clients across the lifespan, offering thoughtful, evidence-based care rooted in empathy and respect.

Grateful for a close-knit family, enduring friendships, and a fulfilling career, Dr. Schweizer remains committed to the transformative power of education and the importance of serving others.

25th Anniversary Honorees



Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton

The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton supports and furthers the mission and ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. The principal components of their ministry are health, education, and social services. The Foundation's focus is on issues of social justice relating to the poor and underserved in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.



Stark County District Library

With their combined efforts, Canton's leading citizens founded the first library in 1884, becoming the Canton Public Library. The library was renamed Stark County District Library in 1971 and the Main Library moved to its current location in 1978.

Today, Stark Library serves the community through 10 locations and four mobile libraries. The Early Childhood Resource Center's library is linked to the Stark Library system, and the two organizations enjoy a strong partnership that spans SPARK program involvement, collaboration on community events, storytime offerings, and more.



Summit Education Initiative

Summit Education Initiative's mission is to increase personal and regional prosperity through educational attainment. Community leaders formed Summit

Education Initiative in 1996 to significantly improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all Summit County children. The organization engages a broad base of partners and stakeholders to seek innovative solutions to persistent educational challenges that face students, families, schools, and the local community.



United Way of Greater Stark County

United Way of Greater Stark County exists to improve the lives of children and families in Stark and Carroll counties by building our community's capacity to alleviate the impact of poverty and helping to build a stronger community in the process. Families in the most poverty-stricken neighborhoods are connected with resources and programs to help them succeed and thrive.

United Way of Greater Stark County has walked alongside those in need for over a century to create a stronger community and continue to help children and families who experience the burdens of poverty.

United Way of Greater Stark County reaches a population of 400,000, serving all of Stark County and parts of Carroll County, and has been helping the community for more than 100 years. The organization is a longtime supporter of the Early Childhood Resource Center.

*Promoting Togetherness, Peace, Truth,
Prosperity, Gladness, Hope, the Spirit of Liberty,
Justice and Equality*

Massillon
*Fraternel Order of
Eagles*
#190

303 Weirich Blvd NW, Massillon

DINING ROOM

GRILL ROOM

BANQUET FACILITIES
Seating up to 500

SERVING DINNER
(Members only • yearly membership just \$24!)
Monday-Thursday 4pm-8pm • Friday & Saturday 4pm-9pm
Specializing in Homemade Soups, Pasta Dishes, Steaks, Burgers, Wraps and Seafood Entrees

Visit us online: www.eagles109.com

The Early Childhood Resource Center has three regional offices located throughout the organization's service area:

1718 CLEVELAND AVENUE NW
CANTON, OHIO 44703

37 N. HIGH STREET, SUITE D
AKRON, OHIO 44308

6414 MARKET STREET
BOARDMAN, OHIO 44512

Visit & follow us on social media:

Facebook: @EarlyChildhoodResourceCenter

Instagram: @earlychildhoodresourcecenter

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/early-childhood-resource-ctr](https://www.linkedin.com/company/early-childhood-resource-ctr)

**Learn more or
DONATE TODAY:**



EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESOURCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

