Dear Friends,

The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton, when beginning its Quality Child Care Initiative, envisioned “a community that values its children and provides the opportunities and support necessary for them to develop their full potential.”

Twenty years ago, the Foundation created the Early Childhood Resource Center to make that vision a reality. In this report, we show you our work over the past year—and our growth over two decades.

In our ten-year report, we stated that our goal was “to fill the space of the new facility with exciting activities, programming, and partnerships.” We have certainly accomplished that. By continuing to ask the community what they need—and really listening—we’ve been able to provide the services and resources that are genuinely needed, which make a meaningful and lasting difference for children and families.

As needs evolve throughout our region, we must be prepared to meet them. So our board is conducting a strategic planning process. By the end of this year, we will have a plan to inform future operations, including strategies for:

• Expanding fatherhood programming,
• Making the SPARK kindergarten readiness program available to more Ohio families, and
• Increasing the number of high-quality early childhood options available.

The Early Childhood Resource Center would not exist without the vision of the Sisters of Charity Foundation and its continued dedication and advocacy. And our work would not have the impact or reach it has without the numerous funders and collaborative partners that make our programs possible. Together, we have spent the past two decades changing lives.

The Early Childhood Resource Center belongs to the entire community. Our success is the community’s success. We celebrate two decades of serving our community, and with our 2020 vision, we see a bright two decades ahead.

With appreciation,

Taylor Schauer
Board Chair

Scott Hasselman
Executive Director
My, how we’ve grown! The numbers show our measured success.

VISION: Progress

During its first year of operation, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton chose early childhood as the area of focus for its very first initiative. Following in the footsteps of our founding Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, we knew that to truly make an impact, we couldn’t do our work alone. So we met with stakeholders from across the community, making sure we heard directly from those we wanted to serve.

This was during the national “welfare to work” movement; many women were entering the workforce for the first time. They needed child care, as did many other working families. In addition, newly emerging research showed that early brain development has a major lifelong influence. It seemed clear that a significant investment in early childhood would directly impact the root causes of poverty.

Parents, child care providers, community leaders, and representatives from community organizations told us four things were needed:
1. Higher-quality early childhood options;
2. Professional development and workforce supports;
3. Additional supports, like curricula & classroom materials; and
4. Public awareness about the importance of early childhood.

Interestingly, we didn’t think the work would require its own organization, or its own space. But as we worked with internationally recognized early childhood expert Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan and an advisory committee of local and regional university representatives to plan, things changed. After a year of planning and discussion, the concept of the Early Childhood Resource Center emerged. The recommendation was that because the work was so complex, it would require its own space and, more importantly, its own organization and board.

The Sisters of Charity Foundation provided all the initial funding for furniture, equipment, and operations.

During its first decade, the Center operated with a small, dedicated staff and a modest budget, the vast majority of which was funded by the Foundation.

As it has grown, the Early Childhood Resource Center has really developed into a model resource; there’s no place like it in the state. I hope the Center continues to listen and respond to the communities it serves and continues to reflect the values of the Sisters: compassion, courage, respect, justice, and collaboration.

Joni T. Close
President, Sisters Of Charity Foundation Of Canton

Stark County children in 2003, its first year 140
2,168 Ohio children in 2019

Evidence-based sessions provided between 2013 and 2019 to more than 5,324 parents

In 2010, we provided 519 hours of professional development for 2,891 early childhood educators.
In 2019, we provided 2,180 hours to 19,000 educators

The increase in grant revenue between 2013 & 2019

Between 2013 & 2019, our staff grew from 11 to 52
We believe involving parents in their children’s early learning is critical to lifelong success. Our SPARK kindergarten readiness program is engaging parents early—when their children are three and four years old. SPARK delivers in-home modeling of the skills needed for kindergarten, so that children start school on track for success, with their parents as their learning advocates.

I BELIEVE SPARK has changed our culture because kids come in ready and more prepared to come to school, in terms of following directions, their literacy skills, the concept of print, how to track. I think they just come in a little more advanced and prepared to be in school all day, every day.

Achievement as a whole is increasing for sure. I see a direct correlation between SPARK and passing the third grade test: SPARK kids outperform on the third grade test, and their parents are more involved in their education.

I wish we could get every parent involved in SPARK. The more hands we have to intervene, encourage, and nurture, the more our kids benefit.

Christen Sedmock
Principal, Allen Reading and Math Preparatory School

*Statistically significant (p<.01) A score of 263 indicates readiness.
WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER, I had a vision of expanding the Center to serve families, invite in the community, and become more of a multi-purpose community resource. Today, our parking lot is always full, as educators, families, and community members visit for meetings, classes, and numerous other purposes. We have been successful at becoming the region’s early childhood hub. Staff professional development is instrumental to that success. Our staff members have a tremendous amount of drive to fine-tune their own expertise. We invest in staff, making sure they stay current, so they can better serve the community. As our program offerings continue to expand, the staff continually evaluate program effectiveness and revamp as needed.

I’m very happy with our progress and growth. But of course, you never rest on your laurels. Early childhood is always changing. It’s hard to predict what the best practices will be down the road, so we need to stay adaptable, fluid, and receptive as more innovative programs and services emerge.

Scott Hasselman Executive Director, Early Childhood Resource Center
VISION:

Supported Educators

According to the GAR Foundation, “Research tells us that high-quality teaching and engaged learning means better outcomes for kids and greater kindergarten readiness. We know that helping young children ages 3-5 get the right start is the most important investment we can make in the educational continuum.”

The Early Childhood Resource Center works to advance the early childhood workforce by providing research-based curricula, data-informed technical assistance and coaching, and professional development, so that early childhood professionals are equipped to turn knowledge into practice.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER was the first local resource just for early childhood. That was no small thing; it meant our staff weren’t running around all over creation to get professional development hours. There was no Step Up To Quality system at that time: accreditation was the focus. With that, there was a need for training, and the Center was the place that got us organized. If you needed training, that’s where you went. It was there for us then, and it has grown to meet the needs of the early childhood community.

Back then, early childhood just wasn’t recognized as truly important to community strength. It was a struggle to get funding or recognition as an actual profession. The Center was an integral part of helping people understand how important early childhood is to this county. Without the Center, it would have been much more of a struggle.

The Center has always been highly collaborative, and it became the hub. They helped bring the early childhood community together (us, JRC, Interfaith, YMCA, OakPark). They were the glue that helped make us strong.

Scott Hasselman has always been at the table, advocating for early childhood. The Center has also been an integral part of helping bring in significant funding, as it did with its partnership in pursuit of the Early Head Start grant that made high-quality early childhood services available to many more Stark County families. Through the years, we’ve survived, but there weren’t a lot of funds available. The affordable training and support the Center offered was critical. It’s a safe place we can call if there are issues/need support. It’s never you’re doing this all wrong, it’s let’s work together to get this fixed. The Center’s team is great at that. They push us, they help lead the way, they’re an invaluable resource.

Cathy Jennings
Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Canton

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

IN 2019

2,306 training classes were held, impacting 19,270 educators/care providers.

6,883 technical assistance sessions were conducted, impacting 693 child care programs.

243 individuals completed Child Development Associate classes.

IN 2019

60 Programs in 9 counties worked to cultivate family engagement, impacting 3,592 families.

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2019 Contributors

We thank the following organizations and individuals. They make our work possible!

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Double Foundation
GAR Foundation
The Hoover Foundation
Ohio Children’s Trust Fund
Ohio Commission on Fatherhood
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
OhioMeansJobs
Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton
Stark Community Foundation
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Timken Foundation of Canton
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Students from Hoover High School, Perry High School, and GlenOak High School
CiltonLarsonAllen
PNC Bank: Cascade and Lake Avenue branches
Ann, Drew, Elaine, Kim, Michelle, Morgan, Nancy, and Vicki

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list, and we regret any errors. Please notify Sandy Turner of any inaccuracies or omissions by contacting her at sturner@akronpubliclibrary.org

2019 Volunteers

Alpha Phi Omega members and other students from the University of Mount Union
Canton Kiwanis members
Richard Craig and his children
Day of Caring volunteers from Hendrickson
Employers Health employees
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Senior Group
Interns: Abbey and Elizabeth
Jamie Murphy
Notre Dame Alumni Club
PNC Bank managers and regional managers
Students from GlenOak High School, Hoover High School, and Perry High School
Building Expansion

We opened our expanded facility to the public in January 2020. The expansion will enable us to help our region’s children and families learn, connect, create, and thrive.

We thank the generous donors whose investments made our expansion possible:

- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton
- Timken Foundation of Canton
- Stark Community Foundation
- The Bill and Janice Conti Charitable Fund
- The Hieronimus Trust Fund
- The William J. Lemmon Charitable Fund
- The Schroer Family Charitable Advised Fund
- The Shira Charitable Fund
- Jeff and Lisa Zellers
- Paul and Carol David Foundation
- GAR Foundation
- The Hoover Foundation
- Canton Rotary Foundation
- Rice’s Landscapes Redefined
- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
- The Belden Brick Company

OUR VISION

The Early Childhood Resource Center is a leader, recognized for working together with community partners to ensure:

- Parents have the knowledge and resources to support their children’s healthy development;
- Children have access to high-quality early learning experiences staffed by educated professionals;
- Children begin school ready and eager to learn;
- Schools are ready to receive, educate, engage and involve all children and families; and
- Communities and policymakers understand and actively support the development of young children.
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.