



Rochester Childfirst Network

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South Wedge Campus & Office

941 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620

Center City Campus

250 East Main Street, Suite 110
Rochester, NY 14604



Rochester Childfirst Network

2018 Annual Report

160 Years of Putting Children First

Dear Friends,

RCN's story began with a group of civic-minded women in 1857. Seeing the plight of children in need, they founded the Industrial School of Rochester, which evolved into Rochester Children's Nursery, and then Rochester Childfirst Network. Just like our founders, we believe that all children deserve a safe place to learn, play, and reach their full potential.

As our 160th school year comes to a close, we reflect on our successes, the countless children and families we have helped, and we look ahead to the ways RCN will continue to serve the Rochester Community in the future.

We are still finding new and innovative ways to put children first. Our children learn and play on beautiful, natural playscapes, developing skills and knowledge as they explore nature. We empower teachers and caregivers, not just at RCN, but throughout the community, giving them the tools to help children thrive. We collaborate with organizations and businesses in the community to achieve mutual goals.

As we look ahead to the future, we will continue to innovate and collaborate. We will continue to put children first as we strive to realize our vision that every child in Rochester grows up safe and strong, able to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,



Jeri G. Rombaut, CPA, CIA
2017-18 Board Chair



Lynn M. Lubecki, Ed.D.
Executive Director/CEO

1858

Moved to the former residence of Mrs. Albert C. Smith at 133 Exchange Street, where it would remain for nearly a century

1924

Vocational training ends; name changed to **Rochester Children's Nursery (RCN)**

1981

Special Education is initiated at RCN

2006

Rochester Children's Nursery changes name to **Rochester Childfirst Network** to better reflect services and mission

1857

Incorporated as the **Industrial School of Rochester** at the old Rochester House, 75 Exchange Street

1918

Became one of the original 36 local agencies to receive funds from the newly founded **Rochester Community Chest**, forerunner of the United Way of Greater Rochester

1954

RCN relocates to current 1 acre campus on **South Avenue**

1982

Family Child Care Satellites of Greater Rochester (FCCSGR) is established

2014

RCN Center City opens at 250 East Main Street





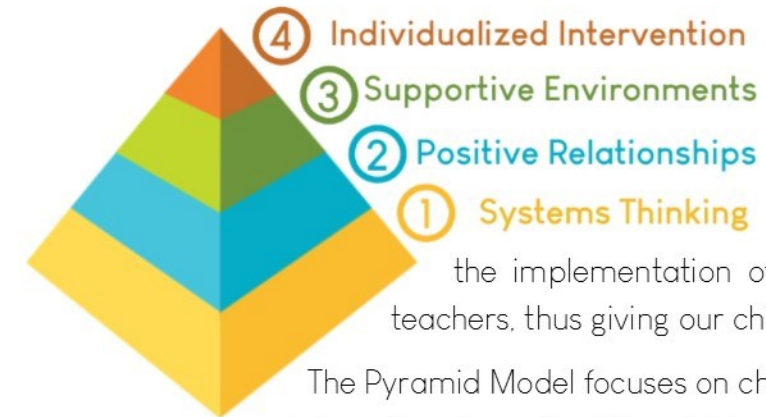
“The team is **working together** with the same perspective and language; it helps teachers be more successful. Everyone is at the same starting point and **working toward the same goals.**”

-Tony Scarlata, Special Education Teacher

“I learned how to talk **with children** instead of talking **at children...** and started focusing on **building relationships** with my students.”

-Kris Iaggart, Assistant Teacher

The Pyramid Model at RCN



In 2013, Executive Director Dr. Lynn Lubecki discovered the Pyramid Model as a solution to challenging behaviors. RCN is known for serving children with challenges, including kids that other centers had refused to serve. Dr. Lubecki began the implementation of the Pyramid Model to support and equip RCN’s teachers, thus giving our children the skills and support they need to succeed.

The Pyramid Model focuses on changing teacher practice and behavior to support the social emotional growth of the children in their care. Mackenzie Albert is RCN’s Director of Quality Programming, and she and Dr. Lubecki are Master Cadre Trainers in the Pyramid Model. “This is not just something that we do,” Ms. Albert says. “The Pyramid model has become who we are. It is a framework that embodies our mission and how we impact children. We aren’t just making sure they are school ready, we’re making them life ready.”

RCN has committed to training every teacher and investing in our staff. Teachers are more prepared and supported, have a deeper understanding of why children do what they do, and now see how teacher behaviors affect children. Most importantly, kids with challenging behaviors are starting their education with positive school experiences, thwarting future suspension, expulsion, and incarceration.

Ms. Albert and Dr. Lubecki are bringing the Pyramid Model to organizations throughout Greater Rochester. They train teachers and child care providers from schools, child care centers, and libraries. Their vision is to ensure that all local children learn social emotional skills. For their efforts and success in implementing the Pyramid Model, Dr. Lubecki and Ms. Albert were awarded the National Pyramid Model Champions Award in April.


Our Network of Programs



RCN touches the lives of more than **2,000 children** in the Rochester area. RCN provides comprehensive, whole-child, early childhood education services to children through Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Expanded Pre-Kindergarten, private pay and subsidized child care, special education, school age wraparound care, and in-home childcare business support and monitoring.



Special Education



“Everything
about Chase has
Improved at RCN.
When I see the way
other children
interact with him,
it gives me hope.”

“They were so
empathetic and
understanding.
It didn’t feel like a
business, RCN was
really trying to
help us.”

Chase is a happy 4 year old, living life to the fullest with his three cats, two dogs and his parents, Melissa and Jarrod. Chase says “Hi!” to everyone, engages in full-fledged conversations and loves to tell his friends what he did the night before.

Chase was diagnosed with autism at 18 months. He struggled to communicate, at times flipping over chairs in his frustration. He attended a local childcare until Melissa, Jarrod and Chase found Stepping Stones. At last, Chase was in a place that understood him. He made wonderful progress, while Mom and Dad learned how to help their son interact with his world.

Melissa and Jarrod were devastated when Stepping Stones closed abruptly in 2017. In their search for a new center they found RCN. Within a few days Pat Graff, RCN’s Director of Special Education, made room in one of integrated settings for Chase. Still, Melissa and Jarrod were terrified. With a child who was so strict about routine, a change could disrupt Chase and his entire family. “But,” Melissa says, “We all immediately fell in love with RCN. While we were filling out his paperwork, Chase quietly played with the other kids, went outside with them, and came in to have a snack. It was as if he’d been going to RCN for years!”

Chase started in RCN’s Inchworms classroom. Our teachers worked closely with him to understand why he responded in certain ways, and then explaining things in a way that Chase could understand. “Chase is a different kid since he started at RCN”, Melissa says. “He regulates his emotions more consistently and can verbalize his wants, needs, frustrations, and accomplishments. Chase’s ability to function in a non-structured environment is worlds better than it was a year ago. Everything about him has improved at RCN. More than anything, it gives us hope.”

Chase starts Kindergarten this fall in a class with a small number of children. “I don’t worry about his ability to fit in, as long as his new teachers give Chase the individualized attention that RCN so effortlessly provided.” Melissa also has encouraging words for parents of children with special needs. “At first, hearing the word ‘autism’ is a hard pill to swallow. Once you’ve mourned the possibility of having a ‘typical’ child, you realize how incredible your child can be. You’ll find many amazing allies in your journey as you advocate for your child.”

“Children with special needs are challenging, but life with them is worth the time and effort. I wouldn’t change a thing about Chase. He lives in a whole different world, one that I am honored to be a part of. I can’t totally explain how thankful our family is for Ms. Pat, Mr. Mike, Ms. Keyana, and Ms. Katie. I hope that RCN continues to impact children and families the way they have affected us. I thank you so much!”

Family Child Care

On the outside, Luv U 4Ever Learning Academy blends into the neighborhood. You'd never suspect that inside there is a cozy classroom filled with learning and laughter. Ms. Regina Brown (pictured right) is the owner of Luv U 4Ever Learning Academy, an In-Home or Family Child Care (FCC) provider in Henrietta. She and her husband, Clemont, care for up to eight children during the day in addition to a couple after school. Though they are licensed to care for more children, they keep their enrollment at 8 because they want to ensure every child receives the care and attention they deserve.

"I want to make sure *I touch the life of every child* in my care."

-Regina Brown, Family Child Care Provider

When Ms. Brown decided to start her own business in 2011, she organized her approach to give children the attention and focus on learning they need. With 16 years of experience as a Head Start Teacher, Ms. Brown combines elements from both the High Scope and Creative Curriculums along with elements she has created. The children differ in age, but during circle time, they support and challenge one another. They have a daily schedule and routine, and the class runs like a well-oiled machine. Luv U 4Ever has the educational feel of a school, but the love and comfort of a home.

Ms. Brown's main goal is for children to have what they need when they leave to go to school, and she knows that earning a child's trust, helping them know they are safe, and being a part of children's development are the most important things to shape happy, confident children. "I love being a part of the children's lives," she says. "I really do love them. It's a special treat running into them years later and listening to them talk about things we did together."

RCN works closely with In-Home and Family Child Care providers to ensure children and families throughout the Rochester area have access to quality care and education, whether in a school, or in-home or family setting. RCN facilitates reimbursement for the nutritious meals FCC Providers serve through the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In addition, RCN offers professional development, technical assistance, and capacity building to FCC Providers through RCN's FCC Satellites of Greater Rochester office. Ms. Brown is part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program administered by RCN. She has taken a variety of classes with RCN and especially likes the in-home trainings.

FCC providers like Ms. Brown play a vital role in caring for and educating the children in our community, with 350 providers operating in Monroe County alone. By working with over 125 providers in Rochester, RCN helps to ensure that FCC providers touch the lives of every child they care for, just like Ms. Brown.



Jim Robinson Award



The Jim Robinson Award is presented to individuals for their outstanding volunteer service to RCN. This Year, the Board of Directors honors RCN Foundation Board Chair **David P. Veniskey**. For three decades Dave has given his time and energy to leading and supporting RCN through service on both the RCN Board of Directors and the RCN Foundation Board. Dave is a Partner at EHPR Group, LLP and has been with the firm since 1984. Dave graduated from St. John Fisher College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting in 1980. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants (NYSSCPA) and its State Level Estate Planning Committee. Thank you, Dave, for your years of dedication and support!

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Children's Institute, Inc.
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Delta Environmental
Early Childhood Development Initiative
Early Childhood Education Quality Council
Flower City Down Syndrome Network
Foodlink
Girl Scouts of Western New York
Greater Rochester Health Foundation
Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association
Healthy Baby Network
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WXXI-Kids

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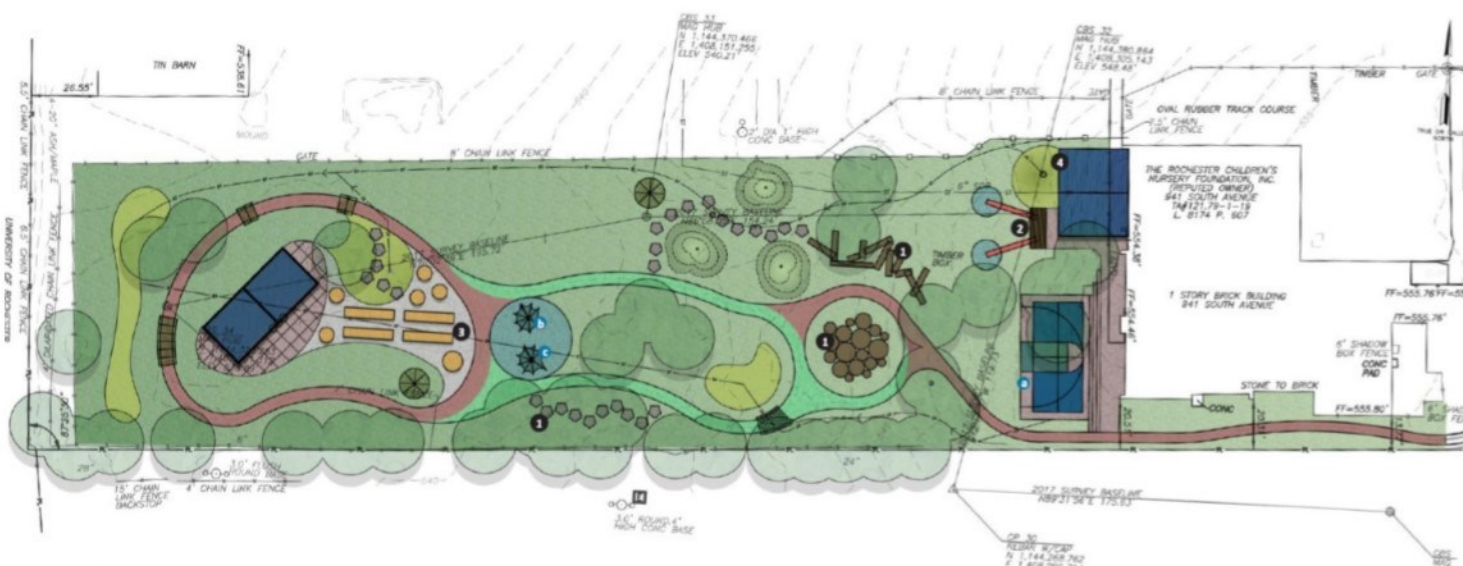
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Celebrating Kids, Changing Lives



Not to scale. Not for construction.



Four years ago, RCN launched a capital fund drive. Our four-acre property on South Avenue needed a lot of work. The play areas hadn't been improved in years. The original 1954 boiler was inefficient and needed regular repairs. The old doors and windows allowed too much heat to escape in the winter, and kept our rooms too warm on summer days. RCN even experienced occasional flooding in some classrooms after heavy rainstorms.

We set our sights on raising a modest \$250,000. The generosity of Rochester quickly surprised us. We shot past \$250,000 and revised our goal to \$1.2 million. The renovations began in 2015 and have continued since then.

In the 2018-19 school year, we will upgrade our heating/air conditioning systems and begin the complete renovation of our backyard play areas. We envision a natural play scape with a three-season classroom, and paved paths with inviting destinations (think terrain slides and rain gardens) along the way.

RCN welcomes your financial partnership as we move forward. Together, we will create a comfortable, efficient center that meets the needs of the 250 children who learn here each day, their teachers, and our programs that impact thousands of children across the region. For more information, contact our Development Office.

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Financial Statement

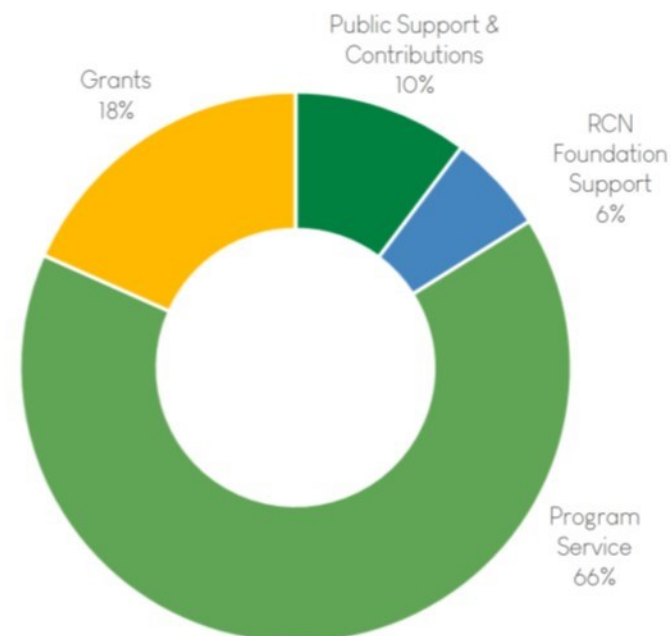
Rochester Childfirst Network Statement of Activities

Year ending June 30, 2017

REVENUE

Public Support & Contributions	\$	532,447
RCN Foundation Support	\$	301,853
Program Service	\$	3,397,547
Grants	\$	949,452
Other Income	\$	5,798

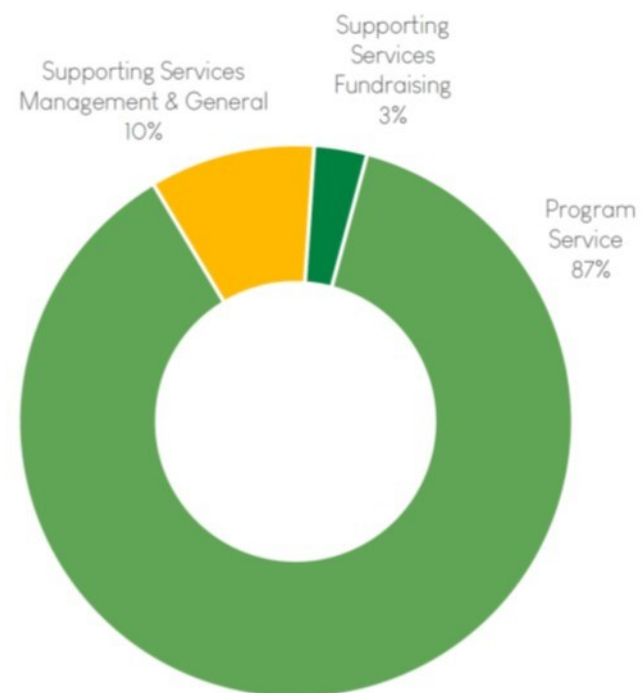
Total Revenue and Support \$ 5,187,097



EXPENSES

Program Service	\$	4,417,597
Supporting Services Management & General	\$	489,544
Fundraising	\$	156,555

Total Expenses \$ 5,063,696



SURPLUS \$ 123,401

Change in Net Assets of RCN Foundation	\$	(51,888)
Change in Net Assets	\$	71,513
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$	2,016,896

Net Assets - End of Year \$ 2,088,409



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