2016 ANNUAL REPORT

159th Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 9, 2016
In mid-nineteenth century Rochester, many children were not properly cared for; often they were seen begging in the streets. In 1857 a group of civic-minded women, led by Mrs. Ebenezer Griffin, founded the Industrial School of Rochester. Their first act of generosity there was to offer a Christmas meal to 300 poor children.

Our founders believed that children living in poverty deserved to learn, to work, to obtain honest and honorable support, and to “become special members of society.” Today RCN continues to give children the skills they need to reach their full potential.

As the third-oldest early education center in the United States, RCN has evolved with the changing needs of society and children. At RCN we emphasize social-emotional skill development that helps children develop positive relationships with each other, their teachers, their families and their communities. RCN’s content-rich programs help children develop foundational skills in language, literacy, math, problem solving and self-control.

RCN’s work is based on the most current research and best practices available, including the Teaching Pyramid. Thanks to the Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP), QualityStarsNY and other assessments, we use data to inform our decisions and formulate instruction. RCN’s outstanding reputation attracts children and families from the City of Rochester, Pittsford, Brighton, Penfield, Greece, Rush-Henrietta and of course the South Wedge.

Beyond the walls of our South Avenue and Center City locations, RCN provides nutritional support and professional development for professionals who care for children in their homes. RCN is dedicated to the quality child care throughout our community by making sure the Family Child Care providers have best practices to serve the thousands of children in their care.

Rochester is a special place, and RCN has a special place in its history. As we celebrate our 159th year of serving children, we’re proud to bring together our staff, our community partners, and families that come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, to ensure that we provide Child care built for life.

**OUR MISSION**

RCN is a not-for-profit agency dedicated to advancing the quality of early education and care in Western New York through leadership, advocacy, and innovative direct services to children.

**OUR VISION**

Every child will grow up safe and strong, able to achieve his or her full potential.
Dear Friend of RCN,

People sometimes ask me, “What is Rochester Childfirst Network, and what does it do?” I always smile, because that’s a great question—but it doesn’t go to the heart of the matter. You see, RCN isn’t a “WHAT”—it’s a “WHO.” I believe the question should really be, “WHO is Rochester Childfirst Network?”

For more than 150 years, RCN has been people. And it still is all about our people. The many thousands of children who have passed through our doors at Exchange Street near the Erie Canal, at South Avenue and at the Sibley Building. The thousands of teachers, staff, volunteers, family child care providers and the donors who sustain our work. Thanks to the tireless work of all these people, Rochester Childfirst Network continued to be a shining light for children and families throughout Greater Rochester over the past year.

First, I want to thank those people who have worked side by side with the leadership team on a daily basis. Here at RCN that begins with our caring, dedicated and talented teachers and staff, working under the direction of Lynn Lubecki and her leadership team. I also need to thank my fellow Board Members who support RCN with their time, talents and treasure. I trust you will join me in thanking all of these people; it only takes a moment of your time, and it makes all of our efforts that much more appreciated and worthwhile.

As part of this Annual Report, you’ll see that RCN had a very good year in terms of finances. We are a healthy, growing organization that is expanding its outreach in the Greater Rochester Region. Part of our financial success has been the support of you, our friends and donors. Your annual gifts provide that extra edge that enable RCN to do more in support of the children we serve.

RCN’s success this year is apparent wherever you look. At South Avenue, our classes are full, we are offering Expanded Pre-Kindergarten to children as young as 3 years of age, and we’re trying to imagine how, where, and when we can expand. Seeing the need to invest in our own facilities, we set and exceeded our $275,000 fundraising goal to renovate our outdoor play areas as well as our indoor facilities. We’ve already started planning for Phase II of capital projects in the South Wedge, jumpstarted by a pledge of $125,000 through the efforts of Assemblymember Harry Bronson.

Likewise, our cutting-edge programs at Center City (the Sibley Building) are filled, with a waiting list. Throughout Monroe County and Western New York our Family Child Care (FCC) program continued to provide valuable parent and family training.

Going back to the original question: What does Rochester Childfirst Network do? Simply this: RCN advanced the quality of early education and care through leadership, advocacy, and innovative direct services to children. We want every child to grow up safe and strong, able to achieve his or her full potential. It’s hard work, but it’s worth it when you witness the success stories that we see every day!

On behalf of Rochester Childfirst Network, I thank you for all that you do for the children and families that we serve.

Sincerely,

Jeri G. Rombaut, CPA, CIA

2015-16 RCN Board Chair
Dear Friends of RCN,

Rochester Childfirst Network has always been known as an innovative and nurturing organization. Whether responding to the needs of impoverished Rochester children over 150 years ago, or implementing effective, cutting edge programs today, RCN exemplifies outstanding childcare and education.

I sense that there is a growing movement, a reformation within early childcare and education. While we proudly point to our achievements in the Greater Rochester area over the past two decades, it’s clear that “the system” isn’t working for every child. Too many are left behind socially, emotionally and economically. Too few are graduating from high school, ready for work or college. During the 2015-16 fiscal year, people and organizations across the state have come together in a way that seems more positive, more hopeful than in the past.

At the center of this change is the Teaching Pyramid Model. In 2016, Mackenzie Albert and I earned the designation of Master Cadre Trainers for the Pyramid Model. Only 50 trainers statewide have earned this title, and RCN has two of them! We’re working to make Rochester and RCN the flagship for the New York State, and are poised to become one of the first demonstration sites for the Pyramid Model in New York State.

The Teaching Pyramid focuses on implementing evidence-based practices that support social-emotional intelligence in infants and young children. By systematically implementing established and effective practices throughout our community, we are igniting the spark to a new day for early childcare and education. We all should be very proud of RCN’s role in making our communities more vibrant, healthy, and productive for our children.

Two key components of RCN’s Mission—leadership and advocacy—were stronger than ever this year. RCN worked alongside the Children’s Institute, the Early Childhood Development Initiative, the Rochester City School District and surrounding districts, the Children’s Agenda, the Rochester Area Community Foundation, the United Way, and so many others. Through hard work and collaboration, we have been able to garner the resources and support necessary to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and grow.

In addition to our advocacy efforts, RCN remains true to the central component of its mission—providing innovative direct services to our children. We once again are participating in Summer LEAP program, a program based on the successful Horizon’s program for older children. This program is designed to prevent summer learning loss for children heading to Kindergarten. We recruited some of our best teachers and leadership personnel ever, enhancing the teaching that goes on in RCN’s classrooms every day. And, as I always like to point out, we have the data to prove that what we do works!

RCN implemented Teaching-Learning Collaboratives: small groups of teachers meeting every two weeks, to critique each other and share best practices. Our teachers are working together to learn and improve RCN’s teaching methods, and utilizing their evaluation process as an opportunity for growth and collaborative improvement.

Another addition to RCN’s business model this year was the Expanded Pre-K program (EPK) through the RCSD. Basically, you can think of this as taking the existing UPK program in Rochester (for four-year olds) and extending it down to three-year olds who face barriers to academic success. EPK will give children coming from poverty and those with special needs a much needed boost as they get ready for school in two years.

Rochester Childfirst Network is truly leading the way toward a better day for all of our children. Thank you for joining us in that journey!

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Lubecki, Ed.D.
Executive Director/CEO
INFANTS, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOL  (6 weeks to age 5)
This is a perfect start to a child’s early development. Children will learn the fundamental skills through play in RCN’s Pathways accredited programs. Children of all abilities share in the experiential learning exploratory fun, while developing their social and emotional skills. Soon these children will enjoy an innovative new outdoor learning environment on their playground.

EXPANDED PRE-KINDERGARTEN (Age 3-4)
Rochester Childfirst Network was selected to participate in the Rochester City School District’s Expanded Pre-K program for 3 year olds. RCN will offer this program at both our Center City and South Wedge locations, offering the opportunity for early learning and building a foundation of social emotional development.

UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN (Collaboration with Rochester City School District)
Our Universal Pre-K program continues the perfect start to a child’s early path to success. A collaboration with RCSD, we offer an instructional program taught by certified teachers that prepare children for school and life success. Children who participate in quality early childhood programs are more likely to develop reading and writing readiness and strong social and emotional skills.

SPECIAL EDUCATION; INTEGRATED & EARLY INTERVENTION  (Birth to age 5)
RCN is a recognized leader in Early Intervention and preschool special education. Thanks to our nurturing professionals and comprehensive programs, our children develop critical skills to help them reach their full potential.

“KIDS CLUB” A SCHOOL-AGE WRAP AROUND
RCN provides a before and after school care program for children in grades K-6. Our AfterSchool Works accredited program fosters healthy habits, good citizenship, and academic success in a safe, supportive environment. RCN’s curriculum infuses anti-bully lessons that encourage trust and communication so kids can be themselves.

BACKYARD ADVENTURES SUMMER PROGRAM (Grades K-6)
RCN provides a safe learning environment for many children each summer. Summer is a wonderful time in a child’s life to make friends, grow, and explore life! We offer engaging, weekly themed activities that address summer learning loss by preparing and implementing the lessons based on the New York State Common Core standards. This program includes the AfterSchool Works accredited programming, assuring high-quality before and after school care. Activities include: special events, weekly field trips, science, nature exploration, sports, dance, art, and so much more!

FAMILY CHILD CARE (FCC)
RCN offers quality professional development and assistance to over 150 home-based child care providers with workshops on child development, health and safety issues, and state licensing procedures. RCN also sponsors the Child and Adult Care Food Program that offers reimbursement for providers serving nutritious meals to children in their care.

FAMILY CHILD CARE SATELLITES OF GREATER ROCHESTER (FCCSGR)
RCN and The Community Place of Greater Rochester partner to help family child care providers through advocacy, advanced level training, in-home technical assistance, and member benefits such as free tickets to the Zoo.

EARLY LEARNING TRAINING ACADEMY (ELTA)
A community education resource that strengthens the local early childhood infrastructure through innovative, skilled based professional development supports to practitioners and leaders. ELTA targets trainers, administrators, teachers, consultants, assessors, and others interested in working towards improved early care and education for children.

RCN CENTER CITY IN THE SIBLEY BUILDING (6 weeks - 4 years)
RCN Center City is located in the beautifully restored Sibley Building in Downtown Rochester. We are within walking distance to The Strong National Museum of Play and have aligned our program with the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education.

NURTURING COMMUNITIES
RCN Center City also supports young mothers to care for their babies on-site. Eligible mothers work with RCN staff as they learn new child development concepts and are simultaneously enrolled in classes to earn their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
The Jim Robinson Award is presented to individuals for their outstanding volunteer service to RCN. This year, the Board of Directors honors two of our best friends and advocates, Barbara Reifler and Jean Williams.

“Barbara and Jean have demonstrated their dedication, caring and commitment to Rochester Childfirst Network throughout the years,” said Board Chair Jeri Rombaut. “They embody all the qualities of great volunteers—leadership, thoughtfulness, hard work and wisdom.”

Barbara’s work with children began as the chair of the first educational day care center in North Carolina, tutoring children who were hospitalized. Upon arriving in Rochester, Barbara immediately became involved. Barbara has served as director of the RPO's annual campaign and Director of Development for GEVA Theatre. She has volunteered on the Brighton School Board, the RPO’s Youth Orchestra, and the boards of Friends of the U of R Libraries and the Seneca Park Zoo Society.

Barbara joined the RCN Board in 1996. She is very active in both the fund development and program sides of the house. Perhaps her strongest dedication is her work on the Mad Hatter Tea Party and Fashion Show. Barbara and a small team of volunteers work for many months to make the Mad Hatter one of Rochester’s most distinctive, fun and successful fund raising events.

Jean Williams is retired from B. Forman Co. as a Fashion Consultant and was a respite care volunteer. She and her husband Mitchell co-chaired the Kidney Foundation fundraising galas and many events for Visiting Nurse Services. Jean also served on the Memorial Art Gallery Council.

Jean joined the RCN Board in 2006. She was recruited by Muriel Steinberg, whose husband Chuck Steinberg was a colleague of Jean’s husband, Mitchell. Jean has always stepped in when she saw a need. She is a dedicated and intrepid worker whether working on the Mad Hatter, preparing for garage sales or setting up staff appreciation events. In fact, the 2015 Tea Party was dedicated to the memory Mitchell Williams.

Jean and Barbara have both been instrumental in RCN’s fund development success. Both give generously of own resources while finding ways to bring others into the RCN Family, and Jean has lent her lovely home as a venue for RCN events.

“Jean and Barbara have consistently demonstrated their dedication to Rochester Childfirst Network and the children in our care,” said Executive Director Lynn Lubecki. “Their years of service have been a great gift to this organization. Their support and hours of volunteer time have helped to assure that all children grow to their fullest potential, and for this, we thank them.”

The Jim Robinson Award was instituted in 2002, in memory of a longtime board member, volunteer and supporter of RCN.
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Autism Up
  Kite flight event
- BOCES 1
  NYSED Regional Information Center
- Bryant & Stratton College
  Field Placements
- Child Care Council, Inc.
  Eat Well, Play Hard Champion Center, Farm to Preschool
- Children's Institute, Inc.
  Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnershi, GROW
- Early Childhood Development Initiative
  Advocacy & Summer LEAP Programs
- Early Childhood Education Quality Council
  Visiting Nurse Services
- Flower City Down Syndrome Network
  Host FCDSN Board of Directors meetings at RCN
- Medaille College
  Field placements and student teaching
- Monroe Community College
  Field placements and student teaching
- Monroe County & the NYS Dept. of Health & Human Services
  Early Intervention
- Nazareth College
  Field placements and student teaching
- NYS Education Department and local school districts
  Special Education, Related Services & NYS Teaching Pyramid
- Office of Refugee Resettlement
  Refugee microenterprise
- Rochester Association for the Education of Young Children (RAEYC)
  Children’s Film Festival, Inclusion Committee
- Rochester City School District
  Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Expanded Pre-Kindergarten
- Rochester Rehabilitation
  Refugee Microenterprise Recruitment & FCCSGR
- SUNY Geneseo
  Field placements and student teaching
- The Community Place of Greater Rochester
  Refugee Microenterprise, Health & Safety Training
- The American Heart Association
  Healthy Way to Grow Nutrition Program
- University of Rochester
  Pediatric Residence Programs

Benefits of Collaboration

At RCN, we believe collaboration with community partners makes us better stewards of the restricted resources available within the Rochester community. When we partner with others, we share strengths and learn from one another.
Rochester Childfirst Network Statement of Activities
For the year ended June 30, 2015

REVENUE

Public Support & Contributions $ 244,896
Foundation Support $ 321,801
Program Service $ 2,225,240
Grants $ 1,494,986
Other Income $ 5,517

Total Revenue and Support $ 4,292,440

EXPENSES

Program Services $ 3,810,595
Supporting Services $ 198,183
Management & General $ 372,053
Fundraising $ 198,183

Total Expenses $ 4,380,831

Deficit of Support and Revenue $ (88,391)
Change in Interest in Net Assets of RCN Foundation $ (184,622)
Change in Net Assets $ (273,013)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year $ 2,243,778

Net Assets - End of Year $ 1,970,765
GENEROUS DONORS
Annual Campaign Contributors
July 1, 2015—May 31, 2016

Gay and Sandy Abbey
Alicia Affronti
Wayne Andrews
Beth Aten
Christopher Bailey
Todd and Gina Baker
Michael Berke
Mr. and Mrs. Marc Berry
Kate and David Bingham
Ann Blauvelt
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Margaret Galgio
Betsy and Rick Garrett
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Breelle Granulle
Sally and Ned Green
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Patricia Guttenberg
Patricia Hainen
Esther and Paul Hammer
Stephanie Hanna
Judith Haravitch
Susan Hartwell
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Dirk and Linda Hightower
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Jane Hultberg
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Cindy Jackling
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Jan Winchell
Lillie Winston
Christy Wirth
Catharine Wise
Barry Wissel
Lisa and Dwight Wormely
Kanika Wright
Sandra York
Andrea and Jonathan Zuegel
FOUNDATIONS & SPONSORS

Foundation & Corporate Support

Allstate Foundation
Alstom Signaling Foundation, Inc.
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Andrew J. Kirch Charitable Trust
Capital District Child Care Council
C2C SUNY
Excellus
Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation
Glover Crask Charitable Trust
Goshorn Chiropractic
Greater Rochester Health Foundation
Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit
John F. Wegman Fund
Massie Family Fund
McCue Memorial Foundation
Nessler Trust
Rite Aid Foundation
Rochester Area Community Foundation
Rochester City School District
Rochester Marathon
Rochester's Child
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Russell Phillips & Associates
SBS Fund Counsel
United Way of Greater Rochester
Whole Kids Foundation
Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley

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Serving Children First
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Sue and Tim Murphy
Elizabeth Murray
Barbara Reifler
Nancy Robinson
Donald and Jeri Rombaut
Carol Sehlan
Muriel Steinberg
Jennifer Takatch
Robert and Ann Van Niel
David Veniskey and Michelle Prince
Garry Vernon
David Whitaker
Kevin Wilson and Sami Sheehan

RCN’s Capital Initiative Surpasses ‘Phase I’ Goal

Two years ago, RCN’s Board of Directors took a long look at our facilities on South Avenue. Like so many nonprofits, our site had issues with deferred maintenance, inefficient heating/cooling systems and, of course, the roof. Also, our play areas were in need of major upgrades. Clearly, the state of our facilities was keeping RCN from providing the best education possible to the children in our care. As Lynn Lubecki noted, “We know that learning takes places everywhere, both in and out of the classroom. Our kids needed better play areas, our teachers needed better classrooms, and we all needed to stay warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer!”

After much discussion, the Board agreed on a multi-phase capital campaign, with a goal of raising $275,000 in Phase I. About half would be for new windows, correcting some draining issues and interior needs; about half would transform the play spaces for our Toddlers and 3-4 Year Olds. These play areas were redesigned to promote inclusive play and exploration for our youngest students. It also met our primary objective of creating a universally-designed play space that is inviting and exciting for both typically-developing children and their classmates with special needs.

By early 2016, RCN had surpassed its Phase I goal with more than $290,000 in gifts and pledges. A special grant of $50,000 through Assemblymember Harry Bronson provided the largest gift, and there were many other significant contributions. RCN Board members personally pledged more than $60,000 to this effort.

We are now busy planning for Phase II of our capital initiative. Our wonderful campus on South Avenue was “state of the art” when it was built in 1954. Now, our building is showing its age and needs some upgrades and repairs. Phase II will also continue work on RCN’s outdoor playscapes.

We hope that you and your family will agree to join us in this campaign when we ask you during 2016-17. This is just another way for the RCN family to demonstrate to the community what an incredible resource we have here!
RCN’s History

1857   Incorporated as the Industrial School of Rochester at the old Rochester House, 75 Exchange Street.
1858   Moved to former residence of Mrs. Albert G. Smith at 133 Exchange Street; remained on site for nearly a century.
1867   Supported the State Orphan Asylum Fund.
1918   Became one of the original 36 local agencies to receive funds from newly founded Rochester Community Chest, forerunner of United Way of Greater Rochester.
1924   Vocational training ends; name changed to Rochester Children’s Nursery (RCN).
1954   RCN relocates to current four-acres of land located on South Avenue.
1957   Carriage House on site renovated for school-age program.
1968   One story multi-classroom building erected; former Carriage House used for kindergarten program.
1981   Special Education is initiated at RCN.
1982   Established the Family Child Care Satellites of Greater Rochester (FCCSGR) - a satellite network for family childcare providers from RCN, Eastside and Edgerton facilities.
2004   Capital Campaign allows expansion with two additional classrooms, a special education wing and new front entrance and offices.
2006   Rochester Children’s Nursery changes name to Rochester Childfirst Network to better reflect our services and mission.
2007   Rochester Childfirst Network celebrates 150th Anniversary.
2009   Nurturing Communities program is piloted.
2010   Dedication and grand opening for the new Lloyd Library located in the former kindergarten/Carriage House.
2014   Grand Opening of RCN Center City, 250 East Main Street, Suite 110.

RCN’s LEADERSHIP TEAM

Lynn M. Lubecki, Ed. D., Executive Director
Mike Evans, Director Facilities and Grounds
Patricia Graff, MS. Ed., SAS, Director of Special Education
Jeff Hoffman, Director of Development
Amy McBride, MS. Ed., Director of Family Child Care and Professional Development
Tiffany VanAuker, Director of Compliance and Human Resources