



Rochester Childfirst Network

SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1857

## ANNUAL REPORT

# 2022-2023





**Ann Marie Stephan**  
**MS, EI**  
**Executive Director**

Dear Friends,

The past several years have been extremely challenging for all of us—children, caregivers, parents, guardians and in-home childcare centers. The demand for RCN's programs has increased, while the competition to hire and retain the best staff has grown exponentially. Beyond childcare needs, the demand for our special education offerings continues to grow, as we now serve families from sixteen local school districts. And, while we've invested over \$2M in our facilities since 2015, there's always more to do!

So why do we continue to do what we do at RCN, 165 years after we first opened our doors? To answer that question, just look around your community. There are more children than ever who need the high-quality, affordable programs that we offer. For the Greater Rochester region to succeed, we need to raise up the next generation of students, citizens and community leaders. RCN is uniquely positioned to address these challenges by doing what we've done since 1857: giving children learning environments that are safe and fun, overseen by our talented and loving teachers, therapists and staff.

Thanks to your support, RCN will continue to realize our vision that ***every child grows up able to achieve their full potential, creating a thriving, equitable community***. We deeply appreciate your partnership in our vital mission.

Dear RCN Community,

When I joined RCN's Board of Directors in 2016, I knew that I wanted to give back to the community. Coming from a family of educators, RCN seemed like an excellent choice.

Over the past seven years, I have seen the great support that RCN provides to all of our students. Integrating children with different abilities into each classroom helps teach important life skills like patience, acceptance, and the value of diversity. RCN's wide variety of programs and services helps develop relationships that grow as the years go by. This is critical to the success of children, and makes RCN such a special place for our students, families, teachers, therapists, in-home childcare providers and staff.

Going forward, I would love to see RCN grow. The services we provide are amazing, but they are limited because of our size. I would love to impact even more children and families throughout our community. Won't you join us in making that vision a reality?



**Joseph Sergio Ed.D.**  
**Chair**  
**RCN Board of Directors**

## BRAND ESSENCE

RCN's Heart and Soul

**Joyful learning  
and growth  
for all!**

## BRAND PROMISE

Only RCN is relentless in its pursuit of educational and social-emotional growth for every child. We put children and families first, offering comprehensive in-house resources and support. Our children thrive in an inclusive, fun-loving and curiosity-inspiring environment, centered around intentionally designed indoor and outdoor spaces.

## BRAND PERSONALITY

Our Five Key Traits

**Inclusive Nurturing Professional  
Compassionate Accountable**

## 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, private pay and subsidized child care, special education, wraparound care, and in-home childcare business support and monitoring.

**68%**

of RCN families are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

**30%**

of RCN children have special needs and are served in classrooms with typically developing peers with full access to physical, occupational, and speech therapies.

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**43%** Black

**32%** White

**19%** Hispanic/Other

**6%** Asian



# CAUGHT IN THE ACT!



RCN's Caught in the Act! Awards recognize employees who go "Above and Beyond" their jobs on a regular basis.

**Angela Gatti, Special Education Teacher** demonstrates her love, generosity and concern for the Honeybees, each and every day. "I like to know all of my parents personally," said Ms. Angela. "Sometimes they call me before school starts, to say that 'My child is having a bad day...can you greet them right at the bus?'" Of course, she does!

## Other RCN staff who were Caught in the Act! this year included:

- **Stephanie Andrews** at the front desk, the first face that people see at RCN
- **Violet Jarreau-Landers**, lead teacher in the Bookworms classroom
- **Orlando Reyes**, a greeter and parent liaison for 18 years at RCN
- **Nancy Rolon**, who has worked with our babies in the Ladybugs room for over 15 years
- **Valorie Stotz**, who keeps things running for our SMILE/Special Education programs
- **Savannah Swan**, who works in our Fireflies Room
- **Kara and Kris Taggart**, the "RCN Twins" in our classrooms
- **Beth Warner**, who has dedicated her service to SMILE kids for over 25 years

Join us in thanking all of our great staff who, together, serve our children and families every day!

# FCCSGR + CACFP = SUCCESS for Kids!

## What program at RCN...

- Supports over 180 small businesses in Greater Rochester, almost all of which are owned and operated by Women of Color?
- Serves 2,000 children in our region?
- Distributes over \$900,000 annually to in-home childcare providers?

The Family Child Care Satellites of Greater Rochester (FCCSGR) supports in-home, family childcare providers in Greater Rochester. FCCSGR was founded in 1981 by the United Way, Rochester's Child and the Rochester Area Community Foundation, and is coordinated by longtime childcare advocate Nancy Kaplan. In-home providers serve families with flexible schedules, neighborhood locations, language and cultural preferences, and quality care at affordable costs.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded outreach that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to childcare centers (like RCN) and day care homes.

“Working together, FCCSGR and CACFP enable thousands of children to receive high-quality care and education,” said Ivelisse Marrero, Director of these programs.



# Special Events

RCN held its 16th Annual Mad Hatter's Tea Party and Fashion Show on November 19th, 2022, at the Irondequoit Country Club. Our 2022 Honorees were Board Member Jennifer Takatch and her husband Steve. Jennifer served on our board from 1999 to 2022 and is President of Architectura, where both she and Steve work. Adam Chodak of WROC-Channel 8 once again served as our Master of Ceremonies, and our program featured RCN alumna Hon. Samra Brouk, NY State Senator for the 55th District.

The fashion show was provided by Chandelier's Boutique of Pittsford, featuring models from the Mary Therese Friel Modeling Agency.

Special thanks to the Mad Hatter's Lead Sponsor Dr. Eileen Ryan and to sponsors Architectura; Cobblestone Capital Advisors; the ESL Charitable Foundation; Excellus; Lewis Tree Service; Christopher Moore/Merrill Lynch; Liz Steinberg; and Jim & Georgine Stenger.

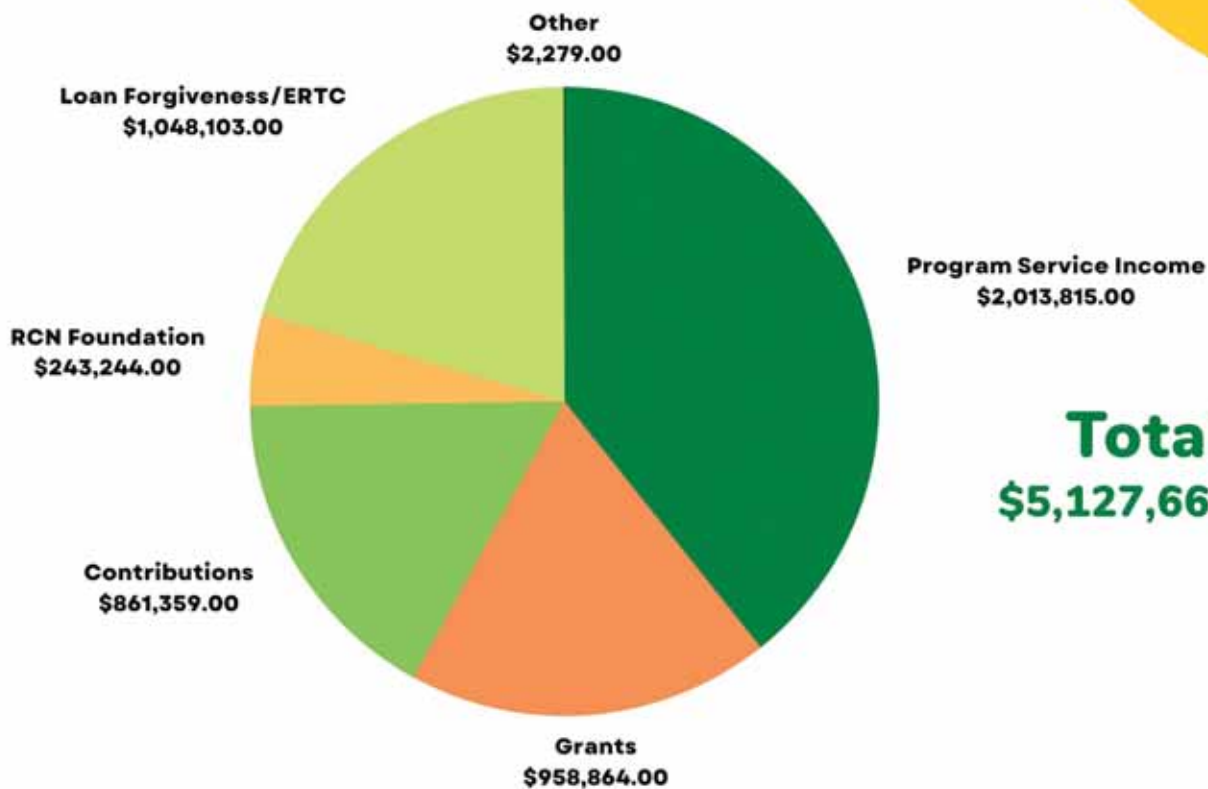


Fairport Brewing Company played host for the 2023 RCN Caribbean Casino Night fundraiser. The evening featured presentations of Caribbean dance from Rochester's Borinquen Dance Theatre under the direction of its founder Nydia Padilla-Rodriguez. We also enjoyed the steel drum sounds of Jason Stotz and gaming provided by Upstate Vegas Events. Authentic island food was provided by Lindsay Steinberg-McGrail and Green Zebra Catering; and Carmen's Cooking and Catering.

Our Lead Sponsor for Casino Night 2023 was IDEX Health and Science. Other sponsors included the Hon. Samra Brouk, NY State Senator for the 55th District; Green Zebra Catering; Heveron and Company; Lewis Tree Service; LMT Technology Solutions; Dr. Joseph Sergio; Liz Steinberg; and SWBR Architects.

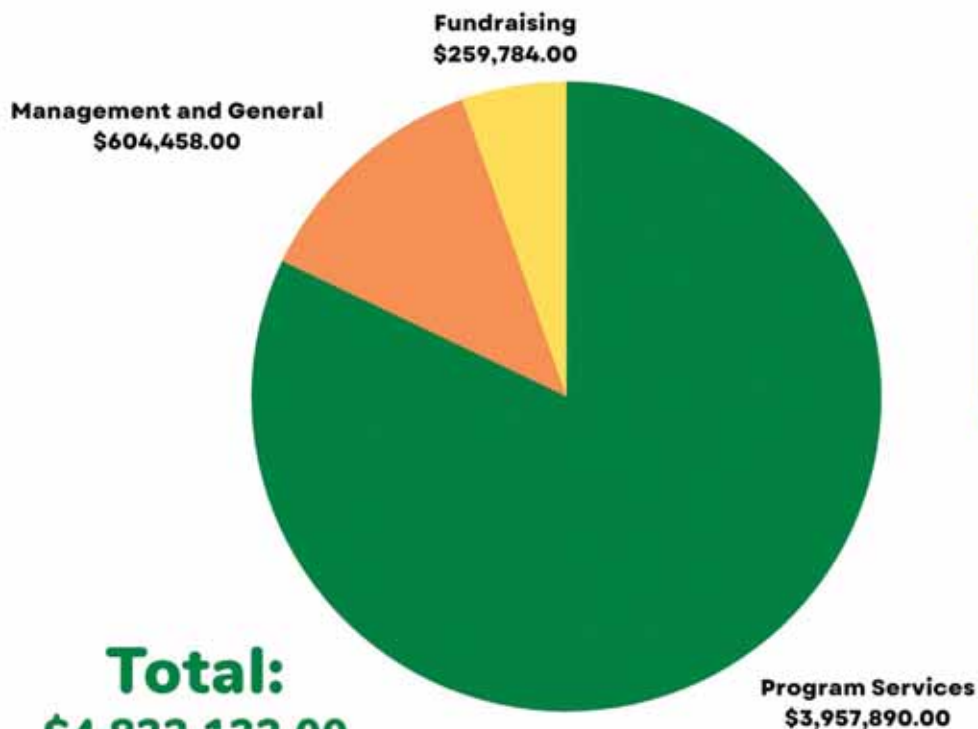
Finally, a special thanks to our Special Events Committee chaired by Stephanie Snow, and to all of our volunteers for the Mad Hatter and Casino Night!!

## 2021-2022 Income



**Total:**  
**\$5,127,664.00**

## 2021-2022 Expenses



**Total:**  
**\$4,822,132.00**

**Surplus/Deficit**  
**\$305,532.00**

## Elizabeth “Liz” Steinberg: A Family’s Legacy at RCN

The Steinberg Family has been a pillar of Rochester Childfirst Network for nearly 40 years. On June 15, 2023, RCN said goodbye to Board Member Elizabeth “Liz” Steinberg. Liz died at her home after a long illness.

Liz was born in Syracuse, where her father, Charles Eliot Steinberg, was finishing his law degree following his service in WWII. Liz’s mother Muriel was an undergrad, and they came to know each other at S.U. Her father went on to a successful law practice and teaching career--the Charles E. Steinberg Fellowship in Psychiatry and the Law was established in his honor at the U of R. Muriel was Vice President at Lincoln Rochester Bank on South Avenue, where she became RCN’s banker. Muriel fell in love with RCN’s mission and dedicated over three decades of her life to RCN.

Liz began a career as a paralegal, which led her into politics. She soon worked in the Washington office of Rep. Frank Horton, and later in Albany working for Assembly Leader Perry Duryea. She then returned to Rochester, getting involved with WXXI, the RPO, the Memorial Art Gallery and other nonprofits. Following her mother’s passing in 2020, Liz took up the Steinberg mantle on RCN’s Board.

“We truly appreciated Liz’s insights, her hard work and her generosity,” said Board Chair Dr. Joseph Sergio. “If you asked Liz to do something, you knew it would be done well.” Liz is survived by her daughter Lindsay (Warren) Steinberg McGrail and granddaughter, Isabel Jane (Seen in this photo with Liz). Gifts in Liz’s memory will be directed to the Muriel D. Scholarship Fund at RCN.



*Liz Steinberg and her granddaughter Izzie*

# Phoofa Luv Christine Walton-Carter 2002-2022

Phoofa Walton Carter, a staff person at RCN, died unexpectedly on September 8, 2022. She passed away just two days before what would have been her 20th birthday.

Miss Phoofa attended RCN as a child. We were blessed to have her return as an employee in 2021. During her too-short time at RCN she served as a greeter, a Teaching Assistant and a 1:1 aide in the Preschool Special Education Program. She filled in whenever and wherever needed, always with a smile on her face. Thanks to her many roles at RCN, she knew or interacted with just about every child in our care.

“Phoofa was a happy and joyful person who radiated positive energy,” said Executive Director Ann Marie Stephan. “She was a ‘natural’ in her work with children, always playful and engaging. She had excellent intuition and devoted herself to helping children grow and learn.”



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Rochester Childfirst Network

SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1857

941 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620

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