2019 Year in Review

Celebrating 50 Years of Creating Opportunities through Education
For 50 years, The Community Group (TCG) has been guided by its mission to create, manage, and nurture high-quality programs focused on education and related services that support Lawrence children, families, and educators. Established in 1970 as a preschool center to serve the child care needs of working families, TCG has steadily expanded its programs in response to the education, child care, training, and enrichment needs of children and families.

Today, TCG is a multifaceted nonprofit organization that provides a wide range of educational programs reaching nearly 4,000 children annually from infants through 8th grade. Current TCG programs include:

- **Early Education and Care Programs** - Center-based care, Family Child Care (FCC) homes, Lawrence Early Achievement Partnership (LEAP), Teen Parent Infant/Toddler Program at Lawrence High School, and Early Head Start

- **Community Day Schools** - the Community Day Charter Public Schools (CDCPS) network and Community Day Arlington (CDA)

- **Enrichment Programming and Out-of-School Time (OST) Care** - School-day enrichment programming, after-school and summer enrichment programs

- **Child Care Circuit (CCC)** - child care information and referral services, as well as early childhood educator trainings

*Cover photo shows the first-ever CDCPS soccer game held at Lawrence High School Stadium on Oct. 4, 2019*
LETTER FROM THE CEO

2019 marked a pivotal year for The Community Group. For the last 45 years, TCG was led successfully by a visionary and remarkable Executive Director, Sheila Balboni. Sheila's decision to retire as Executive Director triggered a comprehensive search for succession and I was honored to be considered and selected for the position of Chief Executive Officer. During this transition, because of the solid foundation at TCG, our agency continued seamlessly providing high-quality care and education services to children and families, adapting to the community needs and to the dynamic field of early education, and exploring additional ways to continue our development.

During my first six months in the new role, I've learned the importance of “knowing what I don't know.” The best way to continue guiding TCG effectively is by recognizing the value of teamwork and the extraordinary talents and skills that already exist within our team. Combining all of our aggregate knowledge while focusing on our common mission will ensure growth and enhancements for our already outstanding agency!

Teamwork has informed and facilitated many of the projects currently underway at TCG. We recently embarked on a strategic planning process, which quickly identified some immediate enhancement opportunities in the areas of technology and internal/external communications and partnerships. These areas impact every program within the organization as well as our effectiveness. Our teamwork approach will ensure enhancements are noticed and felt by all, including our community partners and customers. Our strategic planning will continue during 2020 and we expect additional initiatives to develop as a result.

As an added benefit, teamwork is resulting in more familiarity with each other within the agency. Members from all programs are working together on projects with common goals and hearing their different perspectives. A significant portion of silos existing between different programs is disappearing as our familiarity with each other increases. Sharing expertise and identifying commonalities will continue strengthening our team and will result in better aligned efforts. Together, during 2020, we will continue identifying new opportunities and direction for TCG and I look forward to sharing results with you next year!

In this pivotal year, I am especially proud to share some of our 2019 accomplishments.

Un abrazo,

Maria Gonzalez Moeller
Maria Gonzalez Moeller was born and raised in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. She moved to the U.S. mainland to attend Tulane University where she earned her BS in finance and international marketing. After graduating, she moved to the Boston area to attend Bentley University, where she received her MBA.

Maria and her husband Bob have three children and one beloved cat. Robert, 24, attends UMass Lowell, Thomas, 21, is at Northern Essex Community College (NECC), and Sara, 16, attends Brooks School where she plays soccer, basketball, and softball.

Maria's parents, siblings, and extended family still reside in Puerto Rico, allowing her to visit multiple times a year and maintain a close connection to the island.

In 1994, Maria first joined TCG as a translator for a special project. She was inspired by the organization, its mission, and the community of Lawrence, so she soon transitioned into a full-time role. Over her two decades at TCG, she held multiple positions: Chief Operating Officer for Child Care Services, Human Resources Manager, Operations Manager at CDPCS, and in her early years, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director. Her past roles spanned all TCG areas, giving her first-hand knowledge of all our programs and the connections they share. As a member of the senior leadership team for many years, she was an instrumental figure in the organization's strategic growth and success.

In her free time, Maria enjoys cooking, baking, running, and, above all, spending quality time with her family.
Nearly 4,000 Youth Served Annually
# of students in TCG programs

- PK-8 public schools: 1,800
- Enrichment: 1,200
- Early childhood: 830

2023
Residents in the region trained through TCG in FY19

195
TCG staff members living in Lawrence

Employing Lawrence
# of TCG staff who are Lawrence residents

- Lawrence
- Other

Growing Entrepreneurs
% of FCC Providers who are Latina women

- Latinas
- Other

Pioneering and Investing in High-Quality Programs

2019
CDCPS-Webster named National Blue Ribbon School

100
Percentage of TCG Teen Parent Infant Toddler program seniors who graduated in 2019

9
Number of Lawrence Public Schools that TCG collaborates with on out-of-school programs

$22 M
Distributed in Child Care Subsidies for Lawrence Children
FINANCIAL NUMBERS

Revenue & Support*

$112 M Total FY2019 combined revenue for CDCPS and TCG

Amount of voucher money passed through Child Care Circuit (CCC) to child care providers throughout northern Massachusetts, 31% of whom are located in Lawrence

$71 M Total TCG FY2019 revenue without CCC voucher pass through

$24 M Total CDCPS FY2019 revenue

Expenses By Category*

Expenses By Program*

* Charts do not include $71 Million in CCC pass through
Studies show that access to high-quality preschool experiences have a profound impact on economically-disadvantaged children. TCG continues to work with our partners in the field to expand access to high-quality preschool opportunities for children and support early childhood educators. In April 2019, the Lawrence Early Achievement Partnership (LEAP), a partnership between the Lawrence Public Schools, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. and TCG, was awarded a Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative grant “to continue to expand high-quality pre-kindergarten or preschool opportunities on a voluntary basis to children who will be eligible for kindergarten” (MA Department of Early Education and Care). The grant will provide LEAP the opportunity to continue the work of expanding access, and aligning and enhancing the quality of the city’s early education system, serving 3 and 4 year olds.

A data analysis recently compared kindergarten students at Community Day Arlington who attended LEAP with students who did not attend LEAP. Based on results of the September Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) literacy assessment, data for academic years 2016-17, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 demonstrate significantly higher levels of literacy development and school readiness for LEAP students.

**LEAP Students vs. Non-LEAP Students**

*CDA Kindergarten students STEP results for LEAP students vs. non-LEAP students*
2019 was a year of exciting milestones for the Community Day Schools. Community Day Charter Public School (CDCPS)-Gateway and CDCPS-R. Kingman Webster are now at full capacity with 400 students each and 2020 will see their first 8th grade classes graduating. These schools, launched in 2012, were modeled after CDCPS-Prospect.

Founded in 1995, in the first cohort of Massachusetts charter schools, CDCPS-Prospect celebrates its 25th anniversary in the 2019-2020 school year. CDCPS strives to achieve exemplary academic outcomes for Lawrence children.

Once again, Community Day Schools proved that with hard work, focused support, and inspired instruction, all students can succeed despite challenges. CDCPS 2019 MCAS scores for grades 3 through 8 students again surpassed the state average for English language arts and math, and remained comparable or higher for science.

**CDCPS Students Close the Achievement Gap**

*CDCPS Students Who Meet or Exceed Expectations versus the State Average*
The commitment of students, staff, and parents resulted in CDCPS–R. Kingman Webster being awarded the distinguished National Blue Ribbon School award from the U.S. Department of Education. The program recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools for school excellence, turn around stories, and closing achievement gaps.

In addition to their academic accomplishments, CDCPS students continue to excel out of the classroom. The CDCPS soccer team made it into the playoffs in their first season, CDCPS-Gateway Upper School students translated and performed *Beauty and the Beast* for friends and family, the CDCPS girls basketball team again won the Massachusetts Charter School Athletic Organization Division 2 basketball championship, and the outdoor adventure club started at CDCPS-Prospect is now in full swing at all three schools.

Our partnership with Lawrence Public Schools at the Community Day Arlington Elementary School continues resulting in strong outcomes for students, families, and educators. This powerful collaboration significantly improved academic performance over the past seven years and transformed the school culture and its community engagement into a model worth replicating.
Natalie Garcia, 2000 CDCPS Graduate
High School: Central Catholic High School
College: UMass Lowell
After joining the Army Reserves in 2003, Natalie received her bachelor’s degree and nursing degree from UMass Lowell. She transitioned to the Army National Guard in 2010. In 2014, after a bout with postpartum depression, Natalie worked with a health coach to change her lifestyle; long hours working as a nurse and trying to balance it with family time. After seeing results, Natalie decided to help other women who were suffering with lack of confidence, depression, anxiety, and weight gain and started working as a health coach. She now has her partial life coach certification and is working toward full certification. As a nurse with the National Guard, Natalie is sent into harrowing situations. After Hurricane Irma, she was called to help on a humanitarian mission in the Virgin Islands and was there when Hurricane Maria hit. She lived through a category 5 hurricane, saw the devastating power of Mother Nature, but is grateful to this day that she was able to serve the Island of St. Thomas.

Alba Disla, 2011 CDCPS Graduate
High School: Phillips Academy
College: University of Pennsylvania
At both Andover and Penn, Alba dedicated time to working on diversity and inclusion initiatives, working with cultural centers, and uplifting marginalized populations. She joined Sigma Lambda Upsilon/Señoritas Latinas Unidas Sorority, Inc., in spring of 2017 because it combined all those interests in one organization (cultural enrichment, leadership, community service) and exposed her to a powerful network of professional and college-educated Latinas across the country. This served her well as she just started as a diversity and inclusion coordinator at Comcast headquarters in Philadelphia. In her free time, she celebrates her love of music combing through Spotify looking for new artists and going to small concerts in Philly.

Abner Rojas, 2006 CDCPS Graduate
High School: Whittier Tech
College: NECC and UMass Amherst
Abner is currently working as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in Aichi Prefecture Japan through the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Program. He learned about JET at UMass Amherst where he minored in Japanese. He applied in 2016 when he was preparing to graduate and moved in the summer of 2017. The pronunciation of his name in Japanese sounds very much like the word for dangerous, so his students now call him Dangerous Sensei.

Felix Gomez, 2002 CDCPS Graduate
High School: Dublin School and Lawrence High School
College: Springfield College
Felix started his video production business seven years ago and found a great deal of success. He has worked with companies including Eastern Bank, Lawrence General Hospital, Elizabeth Warren, Haverhill Public Schools, Andover School of Montessori, Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union, and The Community Group! Felix and his wife Claudia have been married for nine years and have three children who all attend CDCPS-R. Kingman Webster. Since he is also a fantastic musician and singer, in his spare time he is actively working on a Christian music album.
ENRICHMENT

TCG out-of-school time (OST) enrichment programming has helped close the opportunity gap between low and high income students and families since 1974. In 2019, TCG enrichment programming served approximately 1,200 Lawrence children through age 13 across seven Lawrence Public Schools, Methuen Kids Place, and Community Day Charter Public School-Webster. Each site is staffed by a designated site director, who works directly with staff, to ensure TCG enrichment programming aligns with and supports the district strategic vision, curriculum, and instruction.

In 2019, enrichment programming had a strong focus on student-led Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) projects. Field trips and lessons were planned to provide experience with the engineering design process, engaging in hands-on, inquiry driven learning focused on real-world topics. Students reported some of their favorite and most memorable experiences included building recycled suspension bridges and exploring Newton’s Third Law of Motion through physics for balloon rockets!
### 50 YEARS OF INNOVATION

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 1970 | Community Day Care Established  
Community Day Care (CDC) opens a small preschool in Lawrence providing services for working parents. |
| 1974 | Latchkey Center Opens  
Established to provide after-school, vacation, and summer programs for school-age children. |
| 1975 | FCC System Set Up  
CDC establishes one of the first Family Child Care (FCC) Systems in the state to give parents a choice in licensed child care provider homes and to support child care entrepreneurs. |
| 1982 | Child Care Circuit Developed  
CDC receives state funds to develop a new child care resource, referral and training agency to serve families and programs in 53 cities/towns in the region. |
| 1984 | Teen Parent Program Funded  
MA funds CDC to develop a new model of care for teen parents with the goal of their graduation from high school and offering high-quality child care and early education services. |
| 1995 | CDCPS Opens First School - Prospect  
CDC receives one of the first Commonwealth charters in 1994, allowing them to open CDCPS, serving grades K-8 in Lawrence, at Prospect Street. |
| 2004 | The Community Group Launched and CPI Developed  
TCG developed as an umbrella name to convey the organization program scope. TCG starts the Community Partners Initiative (CPI) to deliver professional development opportunities to preschool through grade 12 educators. |
| 2010 | TCG Receives Promise Neighborhood Grant  
TCG receives a grant to develop the Arlington Community of Excellence, establishing services/programs to improve educational outcomes in Lawrence. This strengthened the groundwork that resulted in a productive partnership with the Arlington neighborhood and Community Day Arlington. |
| 2011 | Match Community Day Charter School Opens  
TCG supports Match Education to develop the model for Match Community Day Charter in Boston serving grades K through 2, with plans to expand through grade 12. TCG provided curriculum, assessment and instructional support. |
50 YEARS OF INNOVATION

Thank you to a pioneer!

In 2019, Sheila Balboni, the TCG Executive Director, announced her retirement after more than 40 years. Sheila provided outstanding leadership and grew the agency from a small day care on Wyman Street to the multifaceted organization it is today. Her foresight and entrepreneurial spirit built a legacy that touched the lives of many children and families in Lawrence. The boards, staff, volunteers, and friends of TCG admired her accomplishments over the years. She succeeded in her goal to provide outstanding education for children in Lawrence from birth through 8th grade. Thank you, Sheila, for your vision, perseverance, and drive. This organization will continue to thrive years into the future because of your hard work and dedication.

2012

CDCPS Opens Two New Schools and Assumes Management of CDAES

CDCPS Gateway and CDCPS R. Kingman Webster open serving grades K-1, with plans to expand through grade 8. TCG chosen as partner in turnaround of Community Day Arlington Elementary School (K-1 in 2012, 3-4 added in 2013).

2015

TCG Helps Expand Access to Early Education

TCG implements Early Head Start Childhood Partnership grant to increase low-income infant/toddler access to high-quality early education. Lawrence awarded Department of Education grant to expand preschool offerings; GLCAC, TCG, and Lawrence Public Schools form the Lawrence Early Achievement Partnership (LEAP), creating an additional 130 preschool seats.

2019

TCG Selected as StrongStart PDC

In partnership with EEC and UMass Boston, TCG selected to serve as one of five training and technical assistance StrongStart Professional Development Centers (PDCs) located across Massachusetts. Strong Start PDCs provide training and technical assistance to support quality improvement in early education and out-of-school time programs and the professional development of leaders and educators to steer that change.
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