

Celebrating 60 Years Of Service!

by Brendan McCormick

We are so pleased to announce that this year we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of providing needed support services for children and families. The purpose of our founding in 1963, was that children with intellectual and developmental disabilities were not allowed to attend grammar school until age seven at that time. This fact was unacceptable to our founder, Mrs. Louise Schweinfurth. She approached her church Good Shepherd Lutheran in Park Forest, about using two dormant classrooms in the church building to open a school. With the physical and financial assistance of her husband, Roy, they developed the classrooms to begin early education services for these children.

Since that time, the staff at the agency has continued in the tradition of opening programs to meet the needs of the community, while staying true to our agency mission—"Good Shepherd Center, a community advocate for children and adults, with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, provides support, service, and education that empower individuals and families to lead exceptional lives."

Programs that we offer today have all been developed to meet the needs of the community and include:

-In-Home Respite Care, which provides parents throughout south suburban Cook and northern Will counties with a much needed, occasional break so they may become energized to best meet the needs of their children and family.

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Provider Trainings Underway ECEC Update By Elise Simcox

Website and technology trainings have begun for the Early Childhood Care and Education Cohorts developed through the 'I Got Love Grant' awarded to our Community Partners Program back in June of 2022.

The website for this program is ever-evolving, and serves as a one-stop resource for both providers and parents and providers.

Providers are able to promote their businesses, and increase search engine optimization, as well as post job listings to assist with staffing issues caused by the pandemic. The providers can also find resources for continuing education and certifications.

Parents are able to access the site to find much-needed childcare by using a geographic-map search. They can also utilize the site for assistance with financial resources such as CCAP.

To visit the site head to ecec.gscenter.org.

60 Years continued-

- Community Partner program, provides training and support for childcare Providers throughout south suburban and northern Cook counties.
- Strong Children, Strong Communities conference provides topical trainings on the care of children with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities for anyone that wishes to make a positive difference in the lives of children, with sessions in English and Spanish.
- Our Children and Adults Waiver programs provides case management and direct services for individuals with intellectual/ developmental disabilities to maintain and improve their life in the community.
- Finally, our Acorn Child Care Center provides a welcoming place for parents to bring their children where they can begin a high quality early childhood education.

We look forward to continuing to meet the needs of those in the community for yet another 60 years and beyond! Keep an eye out and plan on joining us for various celebration events we plan on hosting this coming year.

A Message from Good Shepherd Center's Executive Director

Brendan McCormick



As we celebrate our 60th anniversary of service for children and adults, with and without developmental disabilities it is ever so important to continue to celebrate our success stories as well as plan for the future. With this mind, please know that we will initiate our next strategic planning process in May.

We last accomplished a strategic plan in October 2018 when we hosted a cross section of stakeholders to provide feedback on the operations, collaboration, health of the organization and its impact on the community and families served. The feedback was informative and laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive Strategic Planning process.

If you are reading this story then you are obviously a stakeholder of the agency. Whether you are a customer, your family member currently receives services, are an alumni of our services, a supporter, a funder or simply a friend of the agency, your input in the agency's future is highly valued. Please contact me at bmccormick@gscenter.org or at 708-985-3726 if you would like to participate in this process. Your input on the future of the agency is very important and welcomed.

Brendan P. McCormick

Maggie Kearne

A Message from Good Shepherd Center's Associate Executive Director

Happy Spring!



This time of year leads me to think about gaining a new purpose and recommitment. My first thought is to the children we serve. Children everywhere have been through a few tough years and we need to keep that in our focus. Statistics are showing since COVID-19 more that 50% of children under the age of 8 are having trouble transitioning back to group settings. Teachers and caregivers are seeing issues of regression, aggression, anxiety, depression, and separation. Because children look to their parents and caregivers for signs of safety, parents may need to put more effort into expressing confidence and security with words and body language in addition to facial expressions. This is particularly important for young children who are not yet able to talk about feelings.

Children are generally flexible and can adapt, but strategies that protect children's health makes this an important time to understand children in your life need extra nurturing from loving adults to help them assimilate. In addition, children today have many challenges to deal with, with the rise in violence in schools. Keep children in the forefront as we move forward throughout the year. Parents, educators, and caregivers let's work together to provide support to help children by planning the thoughtful transitions, making strong connections, and establishing new routines and providing comfort and confidence to children as try our best to navigate a positive future for our children.

Finally, with the right support, children will thrive and gain the confidence and find that soft place to land.

I also want to share with you The Strong Children Strong Communities Conference 2023 was a huge success! The conference was held on February 25th, at Moraine Valley Community College. It was heartwarming to see the smiles on everyone's faces as they passed through the halls, and witness the joy throughout the day. We couldn't have asked for a better way to return to being in person. The day included over 250 participants, 24 different training classes, and 25 vendors. It was awesome to be back with our regular clientele and wish to thank everyone who came out and supported the day- either as an attendee, a vendor, a sponsor or with raffle prize. It really was such a great day and show of collaboration in action!

It was a good reminder for everyone that we still need in person interactions to learn and grow from each other. Our overall theme of the conference was to remind providers all that they are an Every Day Hero, and we hope we achieved that goal because the work they do every day really MATTERS!

Maggie Kearne

Casche Knox, Provider Resource Specialist, North Campus

Casche is responsible for providing resources to childcare providers across Cook County, ensuring that teachers have the proper training to excel in Early Childhood Education. Additionally, she works directly with Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRA).

Casche is an alumnus from Western Illinois University graduating with a Bachelor's in Science majoring in Psychology and minoring in Sociology. During this time, she focused on outreach work within the community to help the development of children from ages 6 to 18. She is currently pursuing her Master of Business Administration.

For a fun time, Casche really enjoys spending time with her friends and family. She's a big foodie!

Maria Navarro Lopez, Early Childhood Education and Care Project Recruitment Supervisor

Maria holds bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from CEAMER University with a focus on Pedagogy, which refers to the method and practices of a teacher. She also has training in family social service, and experience as an independent education consultant.

She brings over thirty years of experience in the field of education, design, and implementation of professional development training for childcare providers committed to providing high quality care including providing early childhood policy consulting since 2010, when she was the Training Coordinator for Good Shepherd Center's Community Partner program which provides training and support for childcare Providers in Cook County.

Jerika Wilkins, Early Childhood Education and Care Project Recruitment Coordinator

Jerika graduated with her Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Xavier University and is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Business. She has been working with children and families for over 10 years. She believes that every child should have the experience of having a great teacher, someone whom they admire and remember as being a great influence in their lives, that encourages them to be great and excel beyond measure.

Michael Gillot, Early Childhood Project Specialist

Michael is a graduate of the Chicago State University (CSU) Master of Education program. Michael started his journey of service as a Constituent Service Coordinator for a Chicago Alderman, where he helped to keep Grant Park building free and open to the public for future generations. It was also at this time that Michael formed a passion to assist the public. After attending CSU, he went to work as a teacher in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood teaching 3rd through 8th grades. Here is where Michael developed an enthusiasm to help students living in underserved areas succeed.

Breakfast With Santa



Thank You
Salem Lutheran Church!

Upcoming Events



Good Shepherd Center

STAND UP COMEDY

SPECIAL GUEST :

Mike Toomey



21 APRIL | DOORS OPEN AT 6:30 PM
SET BEGINS AT 7:15PM, EVENT CONCLUDES AT 8:30PM
TICKET PRICE INCLUDES 2 DRINK TICKETS
AND PASSED BITES
SILVER LAKE COUNTRY CLUB | \$60 TICKET
14700 S 82ND AVE. ORLAND PARK, IL 60462



FOR TICKETS VISIT WWW.GSCENTER.ORG



Good Shepherd Center

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

JUNE 2, 2023



RAVISLOE COUNTRY CLUB
18231 South Park Ave. Homewood, IL
8:00am Breakfast- 9:00AM Shotgun Start
For more information e-mail esimcox@gscenter.org or visit www.gscenter.org

SCAN ME





Knights of Columbus/Marian Council

Doris J. Sweeney
Chuck Gaskill
Margarite Crivellone
Joann C. Zona
Michael and Janice Cholke
Christopher Sulla
Maggie Keane
David Kupiec
Larry and Karen Kettelson
C.A. Ward
Brendan and Lorraine McCormick
Frank Stanicek
John Carney
Rick and Kathy Filetti
Manjit Singh
Mindy Hodge
Luis Rodriguez
Laverne Mc Manemy
Dick and Mary Hertz
Beverly Sokol
Martha O'Boyle
Frank and Kathleen Brown
John McCormick
Dennis Ferriter
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Joyce Davidson in memory of Ed Sweeney
Richard and Diane Rada in memory of Anegle Arroyo
Deborah Greenberg in memory of John and
Mary Kay Brooks
Cheryl Assise in memory of Sandi Jones

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Serving Children and
Families Since 1963

17314 S. Kedzie Ave
Hazel Crest, IL 60429
www.gscenter.org



Thank you very much for thinking of Good Shepherd Center in a way to help the community!

Know that your support will make a huge difference in the lives of children and families with special needs.

