



We need your support!

We are always seeking new funding to further develop current programs and develop new ones that are needed in the community. One way we want to improve is working with our current and alumni families to assess whether the places where families work might become a valuable resource for our programs.

Many companies offer volunteering grant opportunities for agencies that are referred to them by their employees or possibly offer volunteerism programs through their employees to improve conditions for nonprofits. We would be interested in both opportunities.

A good example of a project we would like to address in this way would be upgrading the play area at our Child Care Center in Oak Forest. To accomplish this task, we would like to replace the ground cover currently in place with rubberized tiles, acquire some new playground equipment and upgrade our flower boxes to make them more inviting for our children.

There are countless ways we could use support, so please check with your employer to inquire if the company has a Social Responsibility program and if so, how you might be able to share that information with a nonprofit that has or does serve your children.

For example, Dollar General has a robust Social Responsibility program. They have a robust program you can see by going to their website www.dollargeneral.com or by scanning the QR code below.



Know that while nonprofits do receive funds that cover daily operations, opportunities such as corporate support are what certainly aids in improving the quality of programs we are able to offer. In advance, we thank you for your continued support!



UPDATE



Acorn Academy's students engage in the exploration of birds thanks to grant funding provided by Flossmoor Service League.

Students immersed themselves in the exploration of the world of birds, different species, their habitats, and behaviors. Birds are environmental indicators about natural changes in the health of an ecosystem including climate, drought, or habitat changes.

Our students plugged into nature, not a wall outlet, ensuring that they stay present to the world around them, a much needed break from a screen.



A Message from Good Shepherd Center's Executive Director

Each year at this time, as our fiscal year ends, it provides a time to look back at our success stories and appreciate our staff who continue to play a positive role in the lives of **all** children and adults with and without intellectual / developmental disabilities. Our staff at Good Shepherd Center and Acorn Academy all seem to keep our agency mission statement in mind each day as they know their job here is the mission which states:

"Good Shepherd Center, a community advocate for children and adults, with and without disabilities, provides support, service, and education that empower individuals and families to lead exceptional lives."

In fact, there are numerous times each year that a person may contact us needing help that we do not have a program to address their need, yet our staff takes the person's contact information and reaches out to other non-profits in our area to find the support that person or family may need. They then call the person back to share the resources they need. There are not many businesses that take that extra step. I would like to believe that this is what makes us stand apart as a valued resource for families.

We also shared retirement wishes with Rosita Nardi who had worked as our Training Coordinator for the Spanish speaking Providers in the Community Partner program.

We are excited about all the new people that have joined us this year including Latonia Clark, our new Acorn Academy Director, Juanita Williams, our Early Intervention / Insurance Coordinator, LaRon Washington, our new Finance Director and Kayla Torres, our Development Coordinator. We look forward to many more years of them aiding our efforts in assuring that many new children and families receive the support they need.

While we celebrate our new staff members, we still need to find more. The biggest challenge we still face is the recruiting of staff needed to provide respite care services. This program provides an occasional bit of relief for parents so they can go into the community with the comfort of knowing their children will be well cared for in their absence. Having the ability to call a teenager into the home to "babysit" is usually not an option as they are not properly trained to meet the special needs of the children in the program. So, if you know of a person that might be a positive addition to our staff as they go into family homes to work with children and adults with intellectual / developmental disabilities, please have them contact Mary Ellen McLoughlin at 708-985-3722. We will provide them with training to assure they can best serve the child and parents needs. We are always in the market for new staff to aid us in our mission.

So, as we continue to celebrate our 60th anniversary of services for individuals with and without intellectual/ developmental disabilities, as well as all children and their families, please know that if you are ever in need of assistance, we are only a phone call away!



Brendan P. McCormick



While the staff at Good Shepherd Center and Acorn Academy provide all the day-to-day services for the children, young adults and families we serve, we also have a special group of people that provides us with great oversight and support - our Board of Directors.

We could never achieve the high quality of service we provide without this most valuable group of people.

At this time, we would like to invite you to consider joining this group by serving on our Board of Directors. We would certainly welcome current or alumni parents to consider joining us as we continue to grow and strive for excellence. If the idea of Board Membership sounds good to you or if you have questions about what would be required, please contact **Brendan McCormick** at bmccormick@gscenter.org or **(708) 985-3726**.

We would also like to establish an Associate Board of young professionals of those who are brothers, sisters, cousins or friends of people that receive or are alumni the services we offer. This group would then develop activities and events aimed at attracting a younger crowd to assist in sharing our mission with their friends and coworkers. We hope that eventually, those on the Associate Board can jump onto the Board of Directors once they better understand what the agency requires of that role.

Please join us in making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve!





A Message from Good Shepherd Center's Associate Executive Director

Happy New Year!!! I am saying that because we have wrapped up Fiscal Year 2023. As you may recall, our financial year in the state of Illinois runs from July 1st through June 30th. We have ended another successful year of serving children and families. Let me give you a few program highlights of what we accomplished this past fiscal year.

The Community Partner programs have provided well over 200 hundred trainings to support quality child care. We were excited to host more in person trainings since we have come back from the pandemic. We also completed a full second year as Community Partner in the Northern Cook-County suburbs. This proved to bring us many new connections with homes and centers who are now finding us and utilizing our services more readily. In June, we held our first conference (English only) we had 100 register and 70% in attendance- a great turn out for our first time doing an in-person conference.

As far as the South Suburban Community Partners, we continue to have a steady flow of providers coming to our virtual trainings, but are still working toward a better turn out for in person trainings. The biggest news from the South Partners is that our long time Bilingual Training Coordinator, Rosita Nardi, retired in June. Rosita had a long career of over 40 years of working in the Early Childhood field, where she mostly gave voice to Spanish Providers.

This coming year we will once again host our Strong Children Strong Communities Conference on February 24th at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills.

Lastly, we ended the year with fulfilling our one-year grant for Early Childhood Recruitment Grant. This grant was designed to support Child Care with recruitment of staff and families. We did this through the development of a website, trainings that supported best business practice, and lots of outreach activities. The ECEC website gathered all providers who went through the business training in one centrally located place. The goal was to teach them the importance of learning new tools to be a better business leader. The website we developed became a one stop shop for clients to look for child care or, if you were a child care professional, you had acces to look for a job as programs posted open position on the website and other interesting information to promote their center or home. Check out the website by scanning the QR Code to the bottom right.

Maggie Keane

Best Wishes Rosita!



ECEC End Of Year Party



Celebrations!



Acorn
Academy

HALLOWEEN



**The Acorn Academy
faculty went all-out
for Halloween and
dressed up as the
lovable Care Bears.
Check out these
adorable kids!**



Upcoming Events

Don't forget to give to Good Shepherd Center on #GivingTuesday!

GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement that encourages people to do good by donating, volunteering, or spreading kindness. It falls on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and has grown into a worldwide celebration of generosity that inspires millions of people to give back.

SAVE THE DATE

11.28.2023

#GIVINGTUESDAY

JOIN THE MOVEMENT AND LET'S MAKE
THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, ONE ACT
OF KINDNESS AT A TIME!

Scan me
to Donate



Good Shepherd Center

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Join us for a celebratory breakfast with the big man, himself!

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
18324 ASHLAND Avenue
Homewood, IL 60430

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2023
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

FREE

To RSVP Scan me

Limited Spots Available! RSVP with Kayla Torres at ktorres@gscenter.org, (708)985-3728 or scan the QR code above.



Strong Children ~ Strong Communities Conference

"PROMOTING A SENSE OF SELF IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT"

- Reflective Discussions
- Bilingual (Spanish) Interactive Workshops
- Acquire Developmentally Appropriate Tools
- Create Individualized Care and Play Plans
- Network with Community Advocates

FEBRUARY 24, 2024

MORaine VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
9000 COLLEGE PKWY
PALOS HILLS, IL 60465

**\$50 EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION
ENDS DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Join us for a day of
interactive workshops and an
inspiring keynote speech by

Dr. Jennifer Rosinia!



REGISTER NOW!
CALL (708) 985-3740
OR SCAN THE QR CODE

SCAN



Good Shepherd Center is a Community Partner of Illinois Action for Children.
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Robin Philip Jesk & Associates
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Hearthside Realty- Lenny Feil
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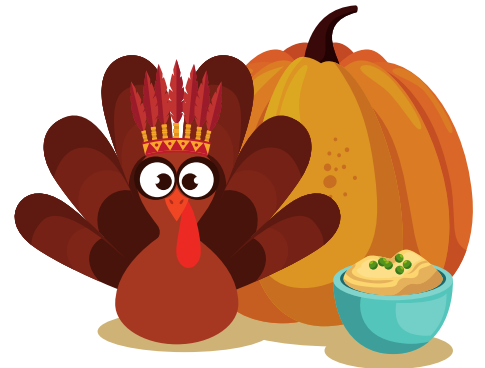
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'Tis the season of
GIVING...



Thank you very much for
thinking of Good
Shepherd Center and
joining us in advocacy
for Children!



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