Staying focused on child care

2003 proved to be a year of both challenges and celebrations. Child Care Resources met the challenges by focusing steadfastly on our mission and seizing new opportunities to help improve the quality of child care in King County. In our communities it was an encouraging year for the expansion of thought on early learning and its connection to success in school and life. In King County alone, ballot initiatives such as the Education Trust Fund and Seattle’s Families and Education Levy included substantial sections on the early years. Project Lift-Off, a broad King County network that supports the development of children birth to 18, merged with the United Way’s Children’s Initiative to form SOAR, Helping Kids Reach for the Sky. And the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce launched an effort that brought businesses and the early learning community together. So, indeed, understanding and interest in our youngest children are growing!

As always, Child Care Resources is extremely grateful to all of you who support early learning issues, and in particular, the funders and donors who supported our efforts this past year to improve access to and quality of child care in our county. This Annual Report tells the inspiring story of one child care center – Tiny Tots – and their road to accreditation. On a recent tour of Tiny Tots, we saw first hand how a dedicated staff can utilize resources to improve child care. We believe that, after reading this report, you too will appreciate the intense effort and dedication it takes to pursue accreditation – a credentialing process proven to enhance the quality of child care. Many other excellent examples of accredited centers exist in our county, but there is still much work to be done to increase the quality of child care in all of our communities. Accreditation is one method. Other complementary methods include on-site training, CCR’s resource centers for providers, and TEACH – a program that provides scholarships so that child care professionals can pursue higher education.

James Heckman, a Nobel Prize winning economist, co-authored a book titled Inequality in America. In the book, he includes a graph that depicts the “rate of return” on equal investments of funding for individuals across age ranges. The graph (shown here) reveals a steady and dramatic decrease in that rate of return, as children grow older. The point the author makes is that investing in social and educational programs during the first few years of life leverages the biggest return in terms of savings on incarceration and unemployment later in life.

The message is clear – children in high quality early learning programs are more likely to do better in school and thrive as adults. Child Care Resources’ mission is to make sure this happens – to ensure that we are making the best investments we can by improving the quality of the earliest learning environments for all of the children in King County. Again, thank you for being partners with us in this work!

Linda Roundtree, Board President
Nina Auerbach, Chief Executive Officer
One child care program’s journey

It was a time for celebration. In April 2003, after two years of hard work and with help from Child Care Resources (CCR), Tiny Tots Development Center earned national accreditation. An enormous undertaking, national accreditation requires staff, parents and independent observers to document a child care’s performance in ten key areas. At first, Tiny Tots Executive Director Angelia Maxie had wondered whether the exhaustive process would be worth the trouble. But along the way, she discovered that setting high standards not only improved day to day practices at Tiny Tots, it completely transformed – among staff and parents alike – ideas about what a child care center can be.

Champions for Children aims high

Tiny Tots is one of almost 50 child care programs that have participated in the Champions for Children accreditation project initiated by CCR in 2001. Only 11 percent of the child care programs in King County hold accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Champions project, cosponsored by local businesses and governments, aims to increase that number and make a visible impact on child care quality by helping programs – especially those serving low-income families – achieve accreditation. To aid in the process CCR supplies mentoring and technical assistance. Because of Champions, King County now has ten more NAEYC-accredited programs and several others awaiting approval. In 2003, Champions surged ahead as an additional 24 programs began to work toward accreditation.

“If you think you can do it - go for it.”

Tiny Tots Development Center has served working families of South Beacon Hill for 35 years. Starting out in the home of Helen Hicks – Angelia’s mother – the center moved in the 1980s to a portable building behind a church on South Renton Way. Generations of children have grown up in Tiny Tots, which welcomes families with subsidies (96 percent of
Quality care across the board

Because of CCR, more children of all economic and cultural backgrounds in King County have access to excellent care. In 2003 we helped nearly 400 homeless families take a step toward stability by finding and paying for child care programs for their children. We also worked to ensure that providers had the ability to help these families deal with problems that homelessness engenders. Meanwhile, children who spent their days with family members, friends and neighbors also had a better chance of receiving excellent care, as CCR endeavored to bring assistance and encouragement to the thousands of informal providers in our community. Along with 20 human services organizations across King County, we helped create networks of support – such as groups for people who speak Mandarin, classes for grandparents and workshops for recent immigrants – that brought people together to share experiences and learn about resources for caring for children.
King County families have more options than ever

In 2003 CCR continued to be the first place King County families turned to find child care. Available either by telephone or online, the CCR database contains information about more than 2000 child care programs. 6500 families consulted this source in 2003. Parents found small home-based programs or large comprehensive centers; programs that operated weekends and extended hours; and programs that had experience helping children with special needs. Parents could speak to our staff members in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian and they could view on-line information in Amharic, Spanish, Russian, Hmong, Vietnamese and Chinese. Due to various CCR initiatives, families from diverse backgrounds had better options for culturally relevant care. For example, in 2002 there were no licensed Somali child care providers in King County. One year later, families could choose from eight different programs run by Somali women, started by CCR.

the children) and always has a waiting list of parents hoping that their children can be cared for in this nurturing, neighborhood environment.

When the African American Child Care Task Force asked Angelia to consider taking part in the Champions accreditation project she consulted her board and learned that Tiny Tots had abandoned a similar effort ten years earlier. Angelia herself questioned whether the process would honor the cultural realities of a predominantly African American center. Nonetheless her board urged Angelia – who had been a tireless campaigner for Worthy Wages and other early childhood education issues – to follow her heart. “If you think you can do it, go for it,” they said. In the end she decided that the only way to judge the relevance of the process was to give it a try.

Child care under the microscope

The NAEYC accreditation materials – an extensive series of surveys and questionnaires – arrived at Tiny Tots in a cardboard box. Overwhelmed by the volume of paper, Angelia turned to her CCR mentor Lynn B. Wirta, the director of Small Faces Child Development Center, who assured her that the daunting workload could be divided into manageable parts. Encouraged, Angelia dove in. She recalls, “You look through the criteria and you immediately see the holes and you can begin to fill them in.” Rather than providing a rigid blueprint, the self-study offered a lens through which Angelia and her staff could assess their own program. As she says, “It allowed us to write our own story.”

Teachers and parents take up the challenge

NAEYC requires staff and parents alike to participate in the time-consuming self-study and Angelia asked her mentor to help get everyone on board. Lynn remembers how enthusiastically the parents embraced the chance to become involved. For their part, teachers...
soon became engrossed in observing the classrooms and completing questionnaires. Amid the hectic pace of child care they relished the opportunity to think carefully about the learning environment, materials and strategies they wanted to try.

**Working to make a good program better**

While Lynn compiled the parent surveys and administrative staff assembled a huge binder of required support documents, teachers plowed through the self-study and Angelia began to institute some changes. She altered her hiring practices so that all new staff would be required to have early childhood education qualifications. She provided staff training on health issues. She enhanced communication to maintain an ongoing dialogue with parents about their children’s progress. She developed a way for teachers to have more planning time. Throughout the process Angelia received advice and encouragement from Lynn and technical assistance from CCR staff. Eighteen months after commencing the effort, she submitted the self-study and began the long wait for a validator’s visit.

**Quality shines through**

On the eve of the validation visit, CCR helped Angelia quell some last-minute jitters by going through a practice-run. The next day – despite some rowdy toddlers – the staff handled their work with professional ease, and the center was alive with the love and energy of happy children exploring the world. The validator could see that Tiny Tots was every bit the high quality program it had represented itself to be. A few weeks later NAEYC commissioners granted accreditation to Tiny Tots.

**For providers – a place to turn in tough times**

During 2003 the ongoing uncertainty of the economy strained child care programs across King County. Providers called CCR for advice on marketing, budgeting, and how to finance child care improvements. More than two hundred providers took advantage of CCR on Wheels, a mobile van that brings coveted equipment such as a laminator and dye cutters to child care programs across the county. Prospective providers asked CCR about state licensing requirements and signed up for training. Beyond basic first aid and CPR, teachers could attend a range of classes including “Movement for the developing brain” or “Reinventing circle time.” In 2003 our Child Care Careers program provided almost 50 more low-income and immigrant women with the skills that would allow them to get jobs in child care or set up their own licensed in-home enterprises.
Our community grows stronger

Each year our community gains strength in the effort to improve child care. Throughout 2003 the troubled economy and government cutbacks forced CCR to focus more than ever on the challenging issue of child care financing. The Scholarship Program grew as CCR persuaded more local governments to earmark some of their federal funds to help subsidize child care for low-income families. During 2003 cities provided almost $200,000 to assist 111 families with the cost of care for 142 children. The business community learned about child care needs and raised funds for CCR as they took part in efforts such as our computer recycling project. Whether through maintaining connections with the corporate world or taking the lead among government agencies and organizations to develop such initiatives as the School Readiness Action Agenda, CCR continued to fight for high quality child care for all children in our community.
Angelia has no doubt that gaining accreditation has improved the early learning experiences of the children in her program: “Their center is brighter and more focused. They have a more coordinated learning space in which they can really thrive. They have teachers that are more thought-provoking in their presentations and who are asking more of themselves.” Parents remain increasingly engaged. They visit frequently, ask lots of questions and, in some cases, take boxes to work to collect surplus materials and other donations for the center.

**For all of us – a work in progress**

Angelia used to believe Tiny Tots’ primary mission was to provide a service for working families. Now she sees their task is not only to meet a basic need, but also to create something lasting and profound – a rich learning environment that is constantly evolving in order to give children the very best possible start in life. Indeed, one of the aspects of the accreditation process that Angelia appreciates most is the willingness on the part of NAEYC to acknowledge that a child care program is a “work in progress.”

Everywhere you look in Tiny Tots offices you can see “NAEYC Accredited” certificates. Accreditation has given the staff a boost of pride, a mandate for change and a set of standards to guide their work with the children each day. As Angelia strives to bring her program to even higher levels, CCR will be at her side with training, resources, and unwavering support to see that she succeeds.
## 2003 Statement of Unrestricted Activity

### Unrestricted Public Support and Revenue

#### Unrestricted Public Support

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>United Way of King County</td>
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<td>Contributions and private grants</td>
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<td>In-kind contributions</td>
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<td><strong>Total Unrestricted Public Support</strong></td>
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#### Revenue

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<td>Investment income</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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#### Net Assets Released from Restrictions

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#### Expenses

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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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**Change in Unrestricted Net Assets**

$ (44,637)

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The financial records and accounts of Child Care Resources are audited annually by Jacobson Jarvis & Co., PLLC. The audited financial statements are available upon request.
Thank you to our Donors

Child Care Resources is extremely grateful for the generous support received from the community in 2003.

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8
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<th>Title/Role</th>
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**2003 Board of Directors**

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<tr>
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<td>President</td>
<td>Roundtree Consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lori Buecheler</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Community Volunteer &amp; Advocate for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Greer</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Cascadia Capital, LLC</td>
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<td>Laura Midgley</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Community Volunteer &amp; Advocate for Children</td>
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<td>Andrea Blander</td>
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<td>Peter Braman</td>
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<td>Community Volunteer &amp; Advocate for Children</td>
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<td>Debbie Brown</td>
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<td>Bright Horizons Family Solutions</td>
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<td>Michelle Buckman</td>
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<td>Becky Evans</td>
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<td>Michael Flor</td>
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<td>Doris Hill</td>
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<td>King County (retired)</td>
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<td>Janet Levinger</td>
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<td>Ruth Warren Designs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fannie Williams</td>
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<td>Primm ABC Child Care</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We lead community efforts to ensure that every family can find safe, quality, affordable child care.

Visit our web-site at: www.childcare.org or e-mail us at: ccr@childcare.org