

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# FINDING A WAY TOGETHER





## *Message from Our Board Chair*

Hope found a way this year. You found a way. Our collective resilience has sustained and lifted all of us. We are one community and together we navigated our way forward. Yet, we still have work to do.

Your partnership supported us in a year of unimaginable challenge. Last March, the world came to a screeching halt. Uncertainty paralyzed us - and then we acted. We adjusted. We pivoted. We found new ways to connect and support each other.

With your support, we facilitated emergency childcare in the throes of the pandemic, remote learning hubs for young Worcester Public School students to learn virtually, and resources and support to family childcare providers whose businesses were jeopardized. With your support we successfully advocated for increased funding, PPE, health and fiscal policies that enabled childcare providers to safely re-open.

We found heroes. We learned. We are reimagining.

Still, many young children have been left behind. The pandemic starkly revealed the chasm of inequities that keep too many young children on the perilous edge of hunger, need, homelessness, and disconnection. We can do better. We have to.

Our community must be one where all children thrive.

We can wrap around our most vulnerable and equip all families with the tools needed to provide for their children. We can ensure that those caring for and educating our youngest are not themselves financially vulnerable and reliant on state subsidies. We can ensure all families have access to the global learning economy. With your support we can achieve the change we seek.

Thank you. Together we held onto hope and took care of our youngest and most vulnerable throughout 2020. Join us as we take on 2021. Let's keep young children and families at the center of our best decisions and investments.

With gratitude and hope,

*Monica M. Thomas-Bonnick*

**Monica Thomas-Bonnick**  
Chair of the Board



## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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## *Our Mission*

**Edward Street** collaborates to improve the quality and impact of early education and care, enhancing the development of young children and strengthening families in Central Massachusetts.

## *Strategic Goals / 2017 - 2022*

- **Support** a thriving early learning workforce
- **Advance** high-quality early learning environments
- **Influence** the investment in early education & care
- **Lead** cross sector alignment for early learning

## *Board of Directors / 2020 – 2021*

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UMass Memorial Health Care

PRASHANT HINGE

Hanover Insurance

ROGER WORLEY

MAPFRE Insurance

GEORGE JOSEPH

Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

## *Staff & Consultants / 2020*

EVE GILMORE

Executive Director

JO ANN BORINSKI

Master Teacher

KIM DAVENPORT

Managing Director Birth to 3rd Grade Alignment

TONI OSTROW

Administrative Assistant

ROSE HAYES

Director of Special Projects

DENISE WHITE

Consultant, [earlychildhoodcentral.org](http://earlychildhoodcentral.org)

## *Annual Report Credits*

KIM DAVENPORT, Copy

EMILY HENDRICKS-BRAMLEY, Graphic Design

TAMMY WOODARD, *Day of Play* Photography

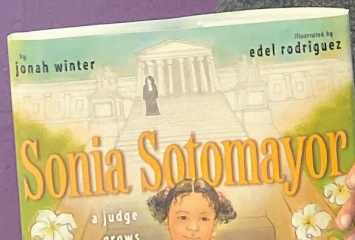
DAVID NILES, *Remote Learning Hub* Photography



strong

smart

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# *Finding a Way to Respond & Innovate -Your sup*

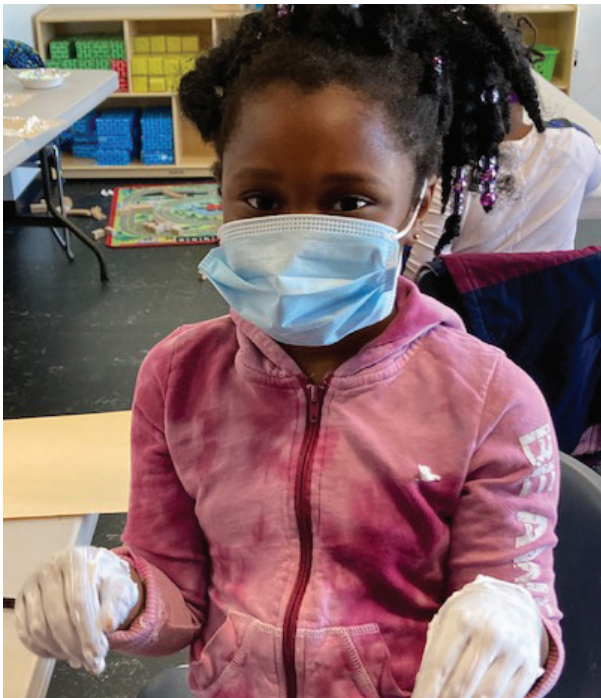
## **FRONTLINE HEROES – EARLY EDUCATORS SUPPORT DOCTORS, NURSES, AND FIRST RESPONDERS**

As the pandemic tightened its grip, first responders struggled to find care options for their children. Your support enabled us to jumpstart a COVID-19 response, working alongside Worcester area hospitals and early education and care providers to construct an emergency childcare system for doctors, nurses and other first responders who were called to the front lines. Our community's early education workforce bravely stepped up to care for our children amidst the pandemic. Edward Street remained nimble, connecting resources, bringing new partners to the table, and working directly with municipal and state leadership to create a system that supported hundreds of frontline workers. When costs to provide care exceeded what the state would pay, Edward Street partnered with providers and local philanthropy to fill the gap, ensuring programs kept their doors open.





*Support helped us meet COVID challenges head on.*



“When the call went out from UMass Memorial asking for help in taking care of our caregiver’s children during the COVID-19 surge this spring, Edward Street organized community childcare centers and the Commonwealth’s Dept. of Early Education & Care, responding immediately and compassionately with knowledge, resources, time and talent. Every community needs a village. Lucky for us, our community has Edward Street.

– Cheryl Lapriore, Chief of Staff

### **TEACHER SUPPORT FROM A DISTANCE**

One of our signature programs – The Master Teacher Coaching Program – thrives because of on-site, in-the-moment coaching and mentoring support. That changed in March 2020. Master Teacher, Jo Ann Borinski could not go into shuttered classrooms, and given COVID-19 safety regulations, wouldn’t be able to return for the foreseeable future. Jo Ann and the team of program directors got to work to figure out a tapestry of supports that could be offered. Teachers needed professional development in delivering curriculum in COVID-safe ways and children needed to enjoy their learning without the dark cloud of COVID hovering. Through a series of trainings and professional learning communities, teachers across our program partners adjusted and adapted. Leveraging technology, we connected educators across programs to amplify trauma-informed strategies, practice self-care, and exchange strategies.



## *Finding a Way to Respond & Innovate –Your sup*

### **REMOTE LEARNING HUBS SUPPORT YOUNG STUDENTS**

Working from home was not an option for all families and their children needed help navigating the new online learning environment. In an unprecedented learning experiment, school went virtual. Kindergarteners just learning to recognize the letters in their name were asked to navigate technology and participate for long stretches using laptops and tablets. Movement was curtailed and learning became increasingly one-dimensional. Families needed support to return to the workforce. So, in the fall of 2020, Edward Street and the United Way of Central MA convened a group of early education and care and youth-serving organizations to develop a solution. The community stood up 85 remote learning hubs – safe, engaging spaces where Worcester Public School students could log into their Zoom rooms for their school day.

Serving more than 1,200 students each day was not an easy feat. These programs swiftly upgraded their technology infrastructure and staffing to provide one-on-one support, meals and activity breaks to ensure young students (Kindergarten through 3rd grade) had a supportive and engaging learning environment.

“Since [my daughter] started Learning Hub, she seems more motivated and happier. I know with this pandemic, kids get very bored and sad being at home but she is doing way better and I [think] this program is awesome. Thank you so much!”

– Parent of Learning Hub Girl at Girl’s Inc.

“It has provided me the opportunity to go to work without the worries or challenges of looking for childcare or being at risk of losing my job. Thank you for helping me and my family during such a challenging time.”

– Parent of Boys & Girls Club Member





*Support helped us meet COVID challenges head on.*



### **CONVENING CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTORS TO NAVIGATE THE CRISIS**

Connection meant more than ever this year. Throughout the crisis Edward Street was at the Worcester Area Director's table to listen, understand and give voice to the issues center directors experienced as they continued to provide care for young children throughout the pandemic. Weekly, the group assembled over Zoom to share information and exchange strategies. Edward Street brought updates, fresh thinking and special guests to the virtual table to help inform their critical work on the ground.

### **BUILDING RESILIENT CLASSROOMS AND CHILDREN**

Two years ago, our work included a deeper focus on resilience. How might trauma-informed care and developing skills to cope and healthfully address social-emotional needs be threaded into our early learning classrooms? We collaborated with UMass Medical Center to develop training and resources to support trauma-sensitive classrooms. The work grew to include an online resource that early educators and families could access to support their ongoing work to create classrooms to help young children build resiliency and thrive. The pandemic ushered in a new sense of urgency and need. Master Teacher Jo Ann Borinski curated a suite of resources, videos, training opportunities, and hosted a professional learning network to enhance educators' skills.

### **WORCESTER TOGETHER YOUTH GROUP TACKLES THE EARLY YEARS**

Convened by the United Way of Central MA, Edward Street joined colleagues from across the community to focus on the needs of children and their families during the pandemic. A constellation of new partnerships formed to address food insecurity, housing insecurity, health & safety COVID needs, learning supports, and mental health. From PPE to diapers to EBT cards, the group harnessed the power of community to ensure children, youth and families had basic necessities to ride out the crisis.



# Finding a Way to Advocate - You

## **HANDLE WITH CARE**

Through the Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, Edward Street clarified the critical need to intervene early. Work to elevate and align community interventions on behalf of young children and families grew when Worcester Mayor Joe Petty made a strategic decision to combine initiatives focusing on our youngest citizens, creating the Mayor's Governance Council on Children, Youth and Family.

Over the past year, the Council worked diligently on building partnerships to meet the myriad of needs raised by the pandemic. The Council crafted the Handle With Care pilot program, a trauma-informed response through partnership with law enforcement, schools and mental health providers. Edward Street and the Together for Kids Coalition advocated for the inclusion of early education and out of school time programs into the initiative. Modeled after a state program launched in Brockton, and based on a national, evidenced-based program, HWC helps the community intervene early with supports to help children overcome adverse childhood experiences. Without divulging details, law enforcement provide a "heads up" to a school/early education provider with a simple message to "Handle Suzy with care" when a child is identified to be at a scene of a traumatic event. It provides a signal to ensure the child receives extra support by educators trained in trauma-informed practice. Research shows that with early intervention, children's resilience is bolstered, and they are better able to stay on track to learn, form positive relationships, and function in classrooms.



## **THE 9:30 CALL**

In the darkest hours of March 2020, a small group of passionate child advocates led by Strategies for Children came together over Zoom to connect, support and encourage each other. The charge: navigate the pandemic waters to ensure children had care and the early childhood sector could respond to community needs. The 9:30 Call" and boasting an invite list of over 500 child advocates, providers, CBOs, legislative aids, business leaders and others, these advocates continue to meet each morning for a powerful half-hour. Edward Street was an early member of this statewide call to raise issues, design solutions, seek resources and advocate for the needs of children, families, educators, and providers. State leaders turn to The 9:30 Call to seek input, test solutions, and hear needs. From re-opening childcare to fiscal policies, to health & safety protocols and state and federal legislation, The 9:30 Call harnesses the power of positivity and the fervent belief that we can create solutions through partnership – TOGETHER.



# *Our support made children count.*

## **COLLABORATING AND INFORMING IS ELEMENTARY**

Over the past year, Edward Street has been active in several initiatives through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). As school districts considered how to safely re-open, early education and out of school time leaders collaborated to provide insight, strategies and models to work with young learners, kindergarten through 3rd grade. Edward Street participated in this ad hoc Advisory Committee to help shape guidance on developmentally appropriate practice, community and family engagement, remote learning engagement and strategies to support diverse learners. We leveraged bright spots and lessons from the early learning program partners which were safely operating high quality, engaging programming. Through this work, DESE developed a professional development series drawing hundreds of district leaders and educators, and shaped grant opportunities to support community collaboration.

## **FAMILY IS FUNDAMENTAL**

Partnership with families is the key to ensuring children thrive. Respecting, valuing, and empowering the family's role in their child's education is central to our work. Recognizing the primacy of families, DESE and the Department of Early Education and Care launched a project to create a family engagement framework from birth to career. Edward Street joined partners, providers, and advocates from across the region to inform, craft and tweak the framework. Massachusetts's Strengthening Partnership: Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework was released in June 2020. It is designed as a road map for practitioners and families in health, human services, and education. This seminal framework commits the Commonwealth's education ecosystem to authentically engage families and build partnerships to ensure that all children thrive. Now our work turns towards professional development and tools to launch and activate the framework.





# *Finding a Way to Invest - Your support helps ea*

## **COMMONWEALTH CHILDREN'S FUND PARTNERED TO INVEST IN FAMILY CHILDCARE PROVIDERS**

When the pandemic tightened its grip, small family childcare businesses faced enormous safety burdens that threatened to crush them financially. Your support enabled Edward Street to collaborate with Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the Commonwealth Children's Fund to provide \$212,500.00 in grants to 85 local, high quality family childcare providers. This critical funding helped these businesses comply with a myriad of pandemic protocols to safely re-open and remain a viable option for families returning to work.



“I cannot explain how much this means to me and how this gives me some room to breathe. Last night, for the first time since our mandated shutdown, I slept without nightmarish dreams.”

- Gina Hamilton, Over In The Meadow Family Child Care



# educators caring for our community's children.

## LANDMARK LEGISLATION AIMS TO INVEST IN YOUNG CHILDREN & FAMILIES

It's about starting early. Investing early reaps long term gains. We know this fiscal reality. Did you know the same is true for investments in young children, where there is a return on investment of between 7% – 15%? All families should have access to affordable high quality early education and care. After two years in planning and weaving together goals to reimagine the system of support, the Common Start Coalition submitted legislation this year. Within a month, support grew across the House and Senate chambers where more than 115 state legislators signed on in support of the legislation. Edward Street has been at the table informing the collective work. This past fall, we helped convene the Central MA Chapter to support the Coalition's work. Our goal is to broaden support so that families, businesses, municipal officials and our local delegations across Central MA understand the need and opportunity to support all families to choose and afford high quality early education and care settings for their young children from birth to age 8.



## MA EARLY CHILDHOOD FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE INVITES EDWARD STREET TO THE TABLE

In the fall of 2020, the newly established MA Early Childhood Funders Collaborative sought a diverse set of providers and leading advocates from across the state to inform its agenda and shape opportunities to create systemic change for children. Edward Street was asked to join the Community Advisory Committee to speak to provider and family needs and chronic points of pain and inform strategic investments to change the system that isn't working for children and families. The group meets bi-weekly, sharing information, expanding collaborations and supporting field needs. In partnership with EEC, the Collaborative launched a COVID-19 pooled testing initiative for early education and care providers across vulnerable areas throughout the state. Through the initiative, mobile testing sites were available exclusively for early educators who had previously been unable to access COVID-19 testing easily or in a timely manner.



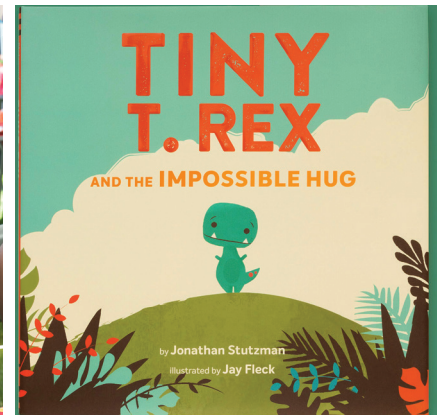
# Finding a Way to Play & Learn

## DAY OF PLAY GOES VIRTUAL

When our signature family event – The Day of Play Family Festival – was cancelled due to COVID-19 we were crestfallen. Our team, our Board, our supporters and thousands of children and their families eagerly look forward to this annual spring tradition. It simply wasn't possible in 2020. But that didn't mean our Day of Play Festival would be impossible. The planning team got to work to go where families were – home.

Families were searching for high quality activities to do at home, so we revamped our Day of Play website and curated activities for each area of play. Local organizations contributed activities and video content, and the Worcester Public Library offered live virtual events that families could sign up to attend. The community-read-along was transformed as award winning author, Jonathan Stutzman, read his story, *Tiny T. Rex and the Impossible Hug* for children and families. We asked local leaders to read the story in their home language, and we designed and curated activities around the book's theme.

500 Play Bags were distributed to families with materials to play along at home. Families enjoyed exploring a dinosaur themed website with 80 activities in literature, physical movement, music, STEM and art play. Opportunity led to innovation, and we thank all our partners for playing along with us. The videos and activities were a bright spot, reminding us of the healing power of play.



## WE PLAYED TOO!

How do you reinvent an annual board meeting on Zoom? Invite Crocodile River Music to play with you! In November, Crocodile River helped us put a creative twist to our meeting. Inspired by their “Everyday Sounds” video featured on our Day of Play Family Festival website, we made some music! Our evening event showcased an original – and impromptu - group production. We learned some history of African music, specifically, Mande, traditional West African music of Mali and its importance in bringing a community together. Board members, staff and guests came prepared to share their found objects and sounds and we made a little music, together.



*Your support brought joy.*



### ART CELEBRATES CHILDREN'S LEARNING

As we welcomed spring, we teamed up with local programs to create an art show celebrating children's development and creativity. Spring is Bursting Out All Over celebrated children's learning and honored their artistic expression. Seventy-two pieces of art were curated for gallery display in the Printers Building. A virtual art show of all submissions was created and shared so that children, families and the broader community could enjoy the displays. Small group field trips brought children to the gallery to see the display. Children were eager to see their artwork as well as art from friends and other children. Back at their centers, children watched the virtual art shows and had discussions about what they noticed and learned.

### SPECIAL THANK YOU TO PARTICIPATING CHILDCARE CENTERS:

Webster Square Day Care Center, Rainbow Child Development Center, YWCA of Central MA Inc., Worcester Comprehensive Education and Care Inc., Guild of Saint Agnes, Children's Friend Early Learning Center, and to David Niles Photography for video production. This program was supported in part by a grant from the Worcester Arts Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.



# *Finding a Way to Reimagine – Your su*

## **PROJECT FLOURISH CHILD DEVELOPMENT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

The early education and care workforce is in crisis. Low professional status and chronically low to poverty-level wages have channeled talented educators to other settings or even other industries. Before the pandemic, programs struggled to find and retain staff. The pipeline has become a trickle, as newly minted graduates are not choosing the field. It is time to reimagine the system. Edward Street, Family Services of Central MA and Mass Hires collaborated to reimagine the early education profession through a trade lens. What if we could create an apprentice-type model to welcome, coach and develop staff? Looking at other state initiatives, a model was developed and recently received funding through the Department of Labor to launch the Child Development Apprenticeship Program in Central MA.

The 18-month apprenticeship program provides competency-based, on the job training with 150 hours of classroom instruction, 2,000 hours of supervised workplace training, and an assigned journeyman (mentor). This innovative program borrows strategies from skilled trades like plumbers and electricians – highly valued trades with specialized training and support aimed to help apprentices see themselves in a career. As apprentices reach competency milestones, they also receive small increases in compensation. It's a way to get started and become well-trained. Once they complete the program, apprentices receive a portable certificate, and can apply for a Child Development Associate and teacher certification through the Department of Early Education and Care.

## **TFKC REIMAGINES EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM – EVERY WORCESTER CHILD THRIVES!**

The Together for Kids Coalition's mission is to build a community in which every child thrives. Edward Street is a proud founding member and chair of TFKC. When the Worcester Together Reimagination Fund opened, TFKC saw an unprecedented opportunity to supercharge its work to create an early childhood system for Greater Worcester. The current system of children and family support is an underfunded, cobbled patchwork of programs that target a few and leave many unserved. Time to change the system. Imagine a system where developmental issues are caught and addressed early, where all families have equal access to critical resources to mitigate toxic stress, and we eliminate the stigma of developmental screening and family support. Instead, it would simply be how the community invests in its youngest citizens from birth to age 5. With crucial funding to get started, we are beginning to build an early childhood system for all.

“Edward Street is integral to the Together for Kids Coalition. We are so proud and grateful for the involvement of Edward Street in the implementation of the Early Childhood Strategic Plan for Worcester. They are wonderful partners in the work!”

– Dodi Swope, Coordinator, Together for Kids Coalition





# Support means a better tomorrow.

## WOO-LABS REIMAGINES OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME LEARNING

The pandemic forced us to reimagine a lot. And addressing learning loss or “unfinished learning” was top of the agenda for school children. The youngest might be the furthest behind. As a community, we realized that meaningful recovery would take participation



from all of us. Cultural institutions, youth serving agencies and early education and care providers all understood the necessity of enriching out-of-school time learning. We already have the high quality programs; we needed to reach more students in the earliest grades, we needed a deep focus on social-emotional learning and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and we needed to align our efforts. The Woo-Labs idea was born. As part of the Worcester Education Equity Roundtable, led by the Worcester Education Collaborative, Edward Street’s Kim Davenport chaired a subcommittee to engineer an ecosystem of out-of-school time learning in Worcester that is grounded in student centered, project- based learning, that is culturally responsive and harnesses the creative power of community-based programs. Funded in part by a Worcester Together Reimagination Grant, Woo-Labs will work to ensure Worcester Public School students in kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade have exciting out-of-school learning experiences that complement school-day learning to accelerate recovery and quickly narrow the achievement gap.



Promoting Early  
Childhood Success

### OUR NEW LOOK AND FEEL TAKES SHAPE

We are emerging from the pandemic with a new logo and branding, one that sharpens our message that we, in partnership with you, are committed to Promoting Early Childhood Success. Edward Street launched its own blog and we dipped our toes into social media. Check us out on Facebook and LinkedIn and explore our new content at [www.edwardstreet.org](http://www.edwardstreet.org).

### REIMAGINING TOGETHER

Thank you for helping us navigate a tumultuous year. Your support made the difference. We know for certain that we can and should do better by children and families. The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in our health, mental health, nutrition, and housing supports. It also exposed the fragility of the early care and education system. Without bold change the early education and care structures will crumble. It is time for a sea change in our funding and re-engineering of our systems. Join us as we boldly step into 2021 together, finding a way forward.

## *Financial Report – June 30, 2020 and 2019*

### ASSETS

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Current</b>	93,063	62,050
Cash	5,851	6,111
Contributions Receivable	2,930	810
Prepaid Expenses	17,213	15,168
Interest Receivable	<u>119,057</u>	<u>84,139</u>
Total	<u>119,057</u>	<u>84,139</u>
 <b>Property and Equipment</b>		
	24,428	24,428
Computer Equipment	20,099	17,213
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>4,329</u>	<u>7,215</u>
Net	<u>2,479,167</u>	<u>2,691,824</u>
 <b>Investments</b>	<u>2,602,553</u>	<u>2,783,178</u>
 <b>Total Assets</b>	<u><u>2,602,553</u></u>	<u><u>2,783,178</u></u>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

	10,764	13,592
<b>Current</b>	9,740	-
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	<u>20,504</u>	<u>13,592</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions	2,504,093	2,694,586
With Donor Restrictions	<u>77,956</u>	<u>75,000</u>
Total	<u>2,582,049</u>	<u>2,769,586</u>
 <b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u><u>2,602,553</u></u>	<u><u>2,783,178</u></u>



**Since 1883**, Edward Street has worked towards ensuring young children have high-quality early learning programs. Quality guides our work, and partnerships and community collaboration drive it.

## *Sponsors & Funders / 2020*

AbbVie	Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
ArtReach	Metzger Family Fund of Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Alden Trust	PEACE Fund of Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Bay State Savings Bank	Seven Hills Foundation
Capital Advisors	The Hanover Insurance Foundation, Inc.
City of Worcester's Division of Public Health	Tufts Health Plan Foundation
Cornerstone Bank	UniBank
Coghlin Construction Services Fund	United Way of Central Massachusetts
Davis Publications	Webster Five
Elm Park Hotdogs	Worcester County Chapter of Massachusetts
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	Association for the Education of Young Children
Guild of St. Agnes	Worcester Family Partnership
Hester Wetherell Trust	YWCA of Central MA

## *Individual Donors*

Anonymous	Dr. Carol Donnelly	Dr. Linda Maykel	Joanne and R. Joseph Salois
Angela Avoryie	Warner and Mary Fletcher	Nina Mazloff	Dodi Swope
Ida Avoryie	Ann Flynn	John Monfredo	Shirley Taylor
Darlene Belliveau	Gerald Gates	Sharon Nutter	Monica Thomas-Bonnick
Thomas Belton	Gus Gerulskis	Wendy & Dennis O'Leary	Dr. Mark Vining
Dianne Bruce	Eve Gilmore	Karen O'Neill	Julian Wade
Dr. Danuta Bukatko	Joanne Gravell	Debbie-Ann Phelan	Wyatt Wade
Erin Carpenter	Jim Hayes	Gail Randall	Dr. Charles Weiss
Linda Cavaioli	Ann Lisi	Doryl Rourke	Roger Worley
Lisa Dalterio	Charlene Mara	Dr. Linda Sagor	

Our sincere gratitude to all who made a gift during the year.

## *In-Kind Community Partners*

Catholic Charities	UMass Graduate School of Nursing
Creative Hub	Vantage Printers
DCF Adoption Services	Vital Emergency Medical Services
HMEA's Autism Resource Central	WIC
Jumpstart for Young Children	Worcester Center for Expressive Therapies
Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook	Worcester Child Development Head Start
Polar Beverage	Worcester Family Resources Center
PC Doctectives	Worcester Fire Department
South High Marching Band	Worcester Public Library
Southeast Asian Coalition	Worcester Public Schools
Steven Craig's "Silly Time Magic Show"	



# FINDING A WAY TOGETHER!

"It's been 65 straight weeks. Throughout this incredibly challenging year, Edward Street has been a key partner to ensure our kids are safe, healthy and educated. I can think of no finer example of partnership and innovation in how much they have brought to our children, families, and community.

We are so very grateful."

- Tim Garvin

President & CEO United Way of Central MA.