



**2024–2025
Impact Report**



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Resilience, Innovation and Commitment

Dear Friends and Partners,

As I reflect on my time leading 4C for Children, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride in the work we've accomplished together. Though I officially retired three months ago, I'm honored to share this message in our 2024 Impact Report—a powerful snapshot of the difference we made together over the past year.

The focus of our work—to ensure every child has access to quality early education and care, and every family has the support and resources they need to help children thrive—remains more vital than ever. Thanks to your dedication and belief in our shared vision, we've continued to expand our reach, deepen our impact and serve as a trusted resource for families, child care providers and communities across our region.

This year's Impact Report tells a story of resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to children and families. Our team has worked tirelessly to support early childhood educators; connect families to high-quality child care; provide resources to all families, including those exploring becoming foster parents; and advocate for a system that recognizes the essential role child care plays in our communities.

Every story, every data point, is a reflection of your support and the commitment of our incredible staff.

I made the decision in early January to retire after 10 years of serving as president/CEO of this remarkable agency. The months leading up to my retirement were bittersweet as I looked forward to the next chapter in my life but knew I would miss the daily work of advancing our mission alongside such passionate colleagues and community members.

I am proud of what we have built together and confident that this organization is well-positioned to grow and thrive in the years ahead under the leadership of 4C for Children's new president/CEO Dean Woodring. She brings a deep commitment to strengthening and advancing 4C for Children's mission and services. Under her leadership, I know 4C for Children's next chapter will be the most impactful yet for all those we serve.

I want to thank each of you—our partners, supporters, staff, and board members—for your unwavering support and shared commitment to the children and families we serve. The future is bright, and I look forward to seeing the incredible work that will continue in the next chapter of this agency's story.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Vanessa Freytag



Vanessa Freytag and Dean Woodring

[Check out our
Year in Review.](#)



OUR MISSION

To educate and support the adults who care for young children and advocate for public support for quality early education and care for all children.





Serving Our Community for More Than 50 Years



Starting & Expanding Child Care



Child Care Careers



Child Nutrition Program



Foster Family Support



Coaching



Child Care Referrals



Training



Parent & Youth Ambassadors





STARTING AND EXPANDING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

4C for Children has developed tools, documents, training and coaching that will successfully guide those interested in launching a child care business. Our early childhood experts walk with entrepreneurs to make the journey as easy as possible, from helping obtain the required training classes to providing business support and coaching.

64 child care businesses
earned new/
expanded licenses
creating **1,574**
child care seats

2,108
hours of business coaching delivered
to new or existing child care programs

161 active
applications in
process to open
new child care
programs



A Dream Three Years in the Making

Walking into the newly opened Little Playful BEARS in Botkins, you're greeted with bright colors, ample space to play and activities to entertain and educate. Owners Greg and Joyce Behr say 4C for Children helped every step of the way.

In fact, Joyce says they almost gave up. "Almost gave up is an understatement," Greg adds.

With training, business support and advice from 4C for Children, the Behrs officially opened the doors of Little Playful BEARS in June 2025. The idea to open a child care center came three years ago, when Joyce and Greg were separated by the Pacific Ocean.

The couple met online in 2019 while Joyce was teaching at an English-immersion program in Kuwait and Greg was working construction in Ohio. Joyce says he saw her love of kids from the start and as their relationship grew and they eventually married, he suggested they open a child care center.

After seeing an article about available funding to cover child care business startup costs, Greg connected with 4C's Business Services team.

"4C was really there for us from the very beginning until we got our license," Joyce says. "Even now that we're open, they're still with us."



Joyce and Greg Behr

Cheryl Carter, a 4C Specialist, has worked with the couple and says their passion to keep going despite the hurdles also lifted her up.

Cheryl adds that 4C for Children's support to the couple was two-fold. "We were cheerleaders to encourage the Behrs" and provided them with technical support Cheryl says. "But we also worked in a parallel way with other agencies in Shelby County to help" with other requirements like the inspection process.

After opening, Greg sees the joy Joyce has for the work and children enrolled in the program.

"She's pulling 12-hour days," he says. "I've never seen her happier or more full of energy."

Joyce gives the following advice to anyone considering opening a child care program. "Ask yourself: Do you really love it? Are you financially ready for it? Are you emotionally and physically ready for it? And then contact 4C because they are going to help you every step of the way."

[Learn more.](#)





CHILD CARE CAREERS

An innovative program launched by 4C for Children in 2023, Child Care Careers (CCC) focuses on attracting new people to the early childhood education field with 4C staff dedicated to helping them get the foundational training needed to quickly move into a child care role. This program's goal is to help reduce the staffing crisis faced by child care programs in the regions we serve.

70 individuals met the training requirements for the program

52 CCC graduates are currently working in child care programs



Career Path Paved with Support of Family, Friends and 4C for Children

Maria Perez has a powerful support network. The group of family, friends and employers was key to helping her—and inspiring her—to pursue a career as an early childhood educator. And they were there when she began the journey, the first step of which was to get her GED.

Maria left high school during the pandemic because, like many students, she struggled with online learning. While she was working at her old high school following the birth of her daughter, her manager continually encouraged her to get her diploma.

Thanks to the flexibility her manager provided, Maria was able to enroll in an in-person GED program. Motivated to be a role model for her siblings and her daughter—and with a strong desire to make her parents proud—she earned her GED in just six months. Then a friend recommended she reach out to a 4C for Children career navigator to explore getting the training and credentials she needed to become an early childhood educator.

“Working with 4C for Children was so helpful,” Maria says. “Jenette (4C career navigator) has been there with me every step of the way, supporting me and helping me get everything I needed. She’s been one of my biggest cheerleaders.”

Jenette guided Maria through essential basic health training and provided access to targeted professional development opportunities that built on her natural strengths and addressed her growth areas. Maria calls the training “amazing.”

Today, Maria is a teacher at Learning Grove—City Link, the same center her daughter has attended for the past five years. “The past three months have been great,” Maria says. “I’m learning about each of the children...they are all special and different in wonderful ways.”

She says her favorite thing is to come into work each day. “You never know what a child may be going through. At the center, I try to create a world without any concerns, where they can feel safe and learn.”

Maria’s learned that “if you keep a goal in mind and have people around you who are supporting you, then anything is possible. I’m so proud of what I’ve accomplished and am so grateful to everyone who has been part of my journey.”

What’s next? “I’m not sure,” Maria says. “But I know 4C will continue to be there to help with whatever I need!”



Maria Perez



CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

4C for Children administers the child care component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for licensed family child care providers in Southwest Ohio and the Miami Valley. The 4C Child Nutrition Program (CNP) focuses on improving the diets of children under the age of 13 by helping child care providers deliver nutritious, well-balanced meals and helping children develop good eating habits.

403

participating child
care programs

Reimbursed

\$3,939,776

to local child care programs through CACFP

Conducted

1,027

visits to child care programs

IMPACT

More Than a Meal: A Journey With the Child Nutrition Program

Nine kids play, read and paint at Latoya's Daycare in College Hill while family child care (FCC) provider Latoya Spraggs prepares chicken sandwiches, potato wedges and fruit for lunch. After the children wash hands, they grab the sandwiches and let out an "Mmm!" as they dig in.

As a Gold-rated Type A family child care business, Latoya can have up to 12 children at her program. On days when her program is full, she and her staff provide 24 meals and 12 snacks. She says participating in the 4C for Children Child Nutrition Program (CNP) is a great resource for FCC providers like herself. "It helps me serve nutritious meals. I don't go broke trying to feed the children."

CNP administers the child care component of the CACFP federal meal reimbursement program. The 4C coaching team focuses on helping child care providers improve children's nutrition by providing well-balanced meals.

Latoya has been a part of the program for about 20 years. In addition to receiving coaching to help her serve nutritious meals, she has also received almost \$60,000 in reimbursements for purchased food over the past 10 years.



Latoya Spraggs

Without 4C for Children and CNP, Latoya doesn't think she would have been able to grow her business. In 2021, she expanded from caring for six children as a Type B provider to becoming a Type A provider and doubling her enrollment. She says it was all possible due to the support from her CNP specialist and the financial reimbursements she received.

"CNP helps (child care providers) be able to care for children and learn about food and portion sizes," she says. "It may even help you in your own life as you also eat better."

Latoya's 4C specialist has also encouraged her to further her own education. That encouragement resulted in Latoya looking forward to receiving a bachelor's degree next spring. "I have never run into a problem my specialist couldn't help me understand," Latoya says.

"CNP helps (family child care providers) afford the food that the children need and it also educates us on what's nutritious, what's not nutritious and the portion sizes. I think everybody should be on it."

[Learn more.](#)



FOSTER FAMILY SUPPORT

The Children Services Hub is a resource for families interested in providing stable and loving homes for children. 4C staff partner with public and private agencies to recruit, support and retain foster, adoptive and kinship care families in Southwest Ohio and Miami Valley.

Received

712

inquiries
from families
interested in
foster care

Engaged in active
collaboration with

31

partner
agencies

Distributed

84

health and safety
kits to foster and
adoptive families

IMPACT



► Partnership Helps Foster and Adoptive Families Get Needed Resources

When Ashley Fisher talks to prospective foster families, she not only brings her expertise as a licensing associate with Necco, a local foster care agency, she also brings almost 20 years of lived experience as a foster and adoptive parent.

She and her husband Jon have adopted eight children and are preparing to adopt three new members of their family this fall. They have also provided foster care for a number of children.

"There are so many children (14,000 in Ohio) who are in foster care and need stable, loving homes," Ashley says. "We can provide that. I had a wonderful life growing up and want to give that to other kids too. We've been super blessed."

It was in her role at Necco that she first connected with 4C for Children's staff who work to recruit and support foster, adoptive and kinship care families. "This partnership has been a vital asset in removing practical barriers for potential and current foster families and has enabled more children to be placed in safe, loving homes, often together as siblings."

For example, 4C provided a family with bunk beds, enabling a group of four siblings to stay together. In another instance, a \$750 Kroger gift

card was provided to a foster family to purchase needed groceries and other items for three children they welcomed through an emergency placement.

"By providing critical resources—both emergency support and material support—4C has helped families get the items they need to pass safety audits, maintain a safe home environment and sustain long-term placements," Ashley says.

She's quick to point out that the 4C support is presented as "one-time support" and that through the 60–90 days it takes to complete the training, background checks and paperwork that's part of the foster care journey, families learn that they need to have the resources to stand on their own.

"But in the instance where there's an emergency or if we're faced with a situation where we are trying to keep siblings together, which is our primary goal, then it's great to know 4C may be able to help," she says.

This partnership has meant that "more families are equipped, supported and able to welcome children into their homes and hearts," Ashley says. "It's been amazing."





COACHING

4C for Children offers individualized coaching to help Southwest Ohio and Miami Valley early childhood educators develop and implement strategies that enhance the quality of care for children. Coaching is free and provided one-on-one or in a group setting.

Provided

10,890

hours of coaching

Impacted

58,676

children through coaching
child care programs

Implemented LENA in 28
classrooms helping

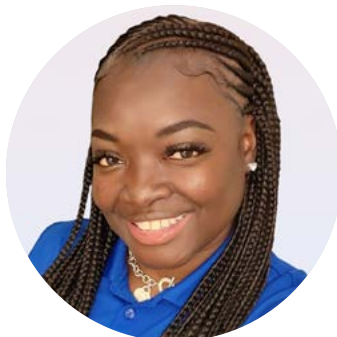
200

children
improve
language
development



Tiny Steps, Giant Leaps: Dedication Leads to Improving Quality Child Care

Tiny Steps Development Center owner and administrator Rokeisha Quarles knows every child in her program, many of whom are the third generation to attend her program. As she walks into each classroom, she proudly shares the accomplishments of dozens of infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children.



Rokeisha Quarles

Rokeisha has spent three decades working in early childhood education. She started with just six children in a family child care (FCC) home in the 1990s in Madisonville. Today she owns and runs a Gold-rated center in the same town. She's become a staple of the community.

"I didn't have the experience (starting out) as far as the education that everybody typically looks for," Rokeisha says. "That is something that I think 4C for Children is for." Over the years Rokeisha has relied on 4C for Children's coaching and training to grow her business.

4C for Children coach Marlo Parlin has worked with Rokeisha's program for the past five years. She provides both individual and classroom coaching to Rokeisha and her teachers.

One opportunity Marlo shared with Rokeisha is the LENA (Language ENvironment Analysis) program that helps children increase brain-building conversation in the first five years. In this program, the children wear a device that measures

interactions they have with their teachers. Then, teachers take the data and make changes to increase conversational turns.

"LENA was so much more than I thought," Rokeisha says after seeing a dramatic growth in conversations in her infant classroom. "Whether we're diaper changing, washing hands, switching them from one toy to another toy, we're seeing the growth."

One of the many outcomes of the program was increasing the classroom engagement of an infant in a full body cast. Teachers used the LENA data and created a specific plan for that infant that resulted in tripling of conversational turns in just one week.

Making small changes in how teachers and other children interacted with the child really made a difference for the infant Marlo says. "Also, socially and emotionally, it made her more excited to be engaging with her peers."

Rokeisha says 4C for Children's coaching is enhancing the natural talents and gifts of her staff and is guiding them towards common goals. They are helping the program "get to the top of the line" and offer the highest quality early education possible.

[Learn more.](#) 



CHILD CARE REFERRALS

4C for Children referral specialists focus on providing referrals to families to help them find quality child care, while empowering them with the resources they need to choose the best care for their children. The referral team provides families with resources and strategies to help care for children.

Served

871

families with
child care
referrals

86%

of families found care or are
still looking with our assistance

526

families needed care
for infants or toddlers

IMPACT

Without Child Care, Family's Life Would Have 'Fallen Apart'

When Brittany Bell contacted 4C for Children's referral specialists to help her find child care for her 2-year-old daughter and her 5-year-old son, she was desperate.

"I couldn't get a job because I didn't have child care and I couldn't find a child care program that was equipped to meet the needs of my son Caven," Brittany says. Caven is nonverbal and has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

As a result, the family's income dwindled and the bills began to pile up. Adding to the waterfall of events, lead was discovered in the family's home and both children tested positive for lead poisoning, which they are still being treated for.

"We didn't have anywhere to go so we moved to a shelter," Brittany remembers. That's when she found out about 4C for Children's referral service.

Brittany can't say enough about working with 4C. "I was frustrated because everyone we reached out to for help didn't help. But when I contacted 4C, I immediately got a reply," she says. Even after receiving a list of more than 15 potential child care providers, finding specialized care for Caven wasn't easy.

"If something didn't work out all I had to do was message 4C and they prepared another list for me," Brittany says. "And if I couldn't get through to a child care program, they contacted them for me. I also received information about what I needed to look for and questions to ask when I visited programs."

After an extensive search, she connected with Wee Haven in Dayton and says it has been a perfect match. Her children have been in care for several weeks. "Caven was my biggest worry but he's thriving. He comes home happy and my daughter asks to go to school every day."

If she had not found child care, she says her life would have fallen apart. "I probably would have had my children taken away from me because I couldn't support them."



Brittany Bell

With the children in child care, things are definitely looking up for the family. Brittany has jumped into searching for employment and her family has at last found stable housing.

"I hope my story helps other parents overcome their challenges," she says. "I highly recommend working with 4C for Children to find child care, especially if you have a child with special needs. Working with them is a blessing."



TRAINING

4C for Children offers Ohio Approved in-person and virtual training to help early childhood professionals advance their skills, programs and careers. Health and safety training is also offered to better serve and protect the children in their care.

151 early childhood professionals completed 120 hours of training toward their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential

Offered 55 health and safety classes for
739 early childhood educators

Educated
5,253 early childhood professionals



▶ DECL Expands Skillsets, Knowledge

Plans and dreams change. That's something Jenisse Knight knows too well. After earning her education degree 15 years ago, she realized being a teacher to middle schoolers just wasn't for her. She decided to open a child care business.

She searched "how to open a child care business" online, found 4C for Children and tapped into the training she needed to open her business—and she hasn't stopped attending 4C training since then.

She opened her family child care (FCC) program in 2010. Ten years later, she expanded her business and opened Heavenly Playground Daycare center in Paddock Hills.

"I was busting out the seams as an FCC," Jenisse said. "I thought, 'Well if I'm growing and growing then why not grow with the business instead of just staying within the smaller four walls.'"

With a lot of hard work and with the support from her 4C for Children coach, Jenisse's center recently received a Silver rating in Ohio's Step Up To Quality rating system.



Jenisse Knight

But Jenisse isn't done learning. Over the years she has taken part in other 4C for Children training opportunities, including the Developing Early Childhood Leaders (DECL) seminar. She recently spent 10 months participating in the seminar that focuses on strengthening the leadership skills of child care center administrators.

"It was the best 10 months," she says. "Some of the things I learned, I didn't even learn in college." She calls it "a rite

of passage" for leaders.

"Each month you're learning something about yourself as a leader that you probably didn't know even had to do with being a leader, like knowing what your strengths are." She's also been able to take what she learned in DECL and build up her staff leadership skillsets.

Jenisse says she is still "eating" from the lessons she learned in the DECL seminar, describing the connections as "second to none. Any director that I come across, I would definitely suggest that they enroll in a DECL course."

[Learn more.](#)





PARENT & YOUTH AMBASSADORS

These specialists are skilled in helping families access state and local resources and support for children ages birth to 21. PYAs provide assistance in navigating and accessing services, referrals and benefits.

Attended

105

community
events to
connect with
families

Connected

65

families to
community
resources

Most needed resources included
Financial services (42%),
Child care (34%) and
Housing (17%).

IMPACT

Parent & Youth Ambassadors: A Gamechanger for Families in Need

"It was just so aggressive. Everything happened at once."

That's how Alisha Underwood remembers the events of 2024, calling it a year of challenges. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and lost her job, all while acting as legal guardian for her 5-year-old grandson who had been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. That's when she turned to 4C for Children for help.

Alisha initially connected with the Business Services team for help in opening a child care business in her home to have a viable income, care for her grandson and provide much needed child care services to the community.

But while at 4C for Children's Cincinnati office, she was also introduced to the Parent & Youth Ambassadors (PYAs). These specialists help families navigate social systems and provide assistance accessing state and local services, referrals and benefits for children ages 0 to 21.

With their assistance, Alisha was connected to community partners that could assist her with meeting critical needs such as a new car seat and most importantly, groceries.

She also started attending Parent Cafés led by the PYAs. These

sessions give families opportunities to connect, share their stories and receive parenting support.

"I would highly recommend it," Alisha says after attending two Parent Café sessions. "Every woman in there had different stories. It's just a place where your voice can be heard."

Things are starting to look up for Alisha and her grandson. She's completed her radiation regimen and is almost ready to apply to license her child care business. In addition, she connected with another Parent Café participant and they are planning a playdate for their children.

Because of her experience with 4C for Children, she says she'll definitely be a voice in the community for the agency's ability to help meet the needs of families and children.



Alisha Underwood

"Just knowing there are organizations out there like 4C for Children and (that those) who work for 4C and who have been so instrumental with their guidance and their tenacity to just get it done...." Alicia pauses. "It makes me feel like someone cares and that I'm not alone."

[Learn more.](#) 

Financial Information

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

Revenue



Government Grants	56%
CNP Food Reimbursement— Pass Through	29%
Community Philanthropy	10%
Program Service Fees	5%

Expenses



Child Nutrition Program	33%
Administration	20%
Child Care Professional Training & Coaching	17%
Child Care Business Support	13%
Child Care Referral/ Family Programs	12%
Fundraising	5%

4C for Children in the Community

Best Places to Work

4C for Children was selected and recognized as a Best Places to Work winner by the *Cincinnati Business Courier* in August 2024. Agency leadership has focused on creating a shared leadership model, comprehensive employee engagement plan and concentrated on ways to meet employee needs, which led to achieving this long-term goal and recognition of the efforts to create a superior work experience for staff.



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[More on Instagram](#)



Champions Gala

4C for Children celebrated four early childhood leaders at the Champions Gala, presented by PNC, at the Hilton Netherland Plaza in November 2024. More than 250 guests gathered for an evening of dining, dancing and supporting 4C for Children's impact in our community, local families, children and early childhood professionals.



[More on Facebook](#)



Leadership and Early Childhood Conference

The annual 4C for Children Leadership and Early Childhood Conference was held in October 2024 at the Sharonville Convention Center. Nearly 500 early childhood professionals attended for training, career development and inspiration. The professional development event featured breakout sessions, keynote speakers and more than 40 exhibitors.



[More on Facebook](#)

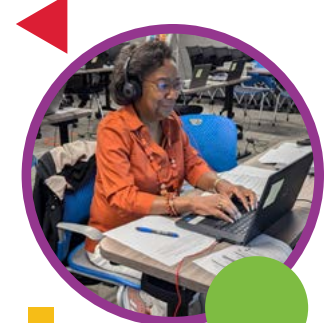


[More on YouTube](#)



Onsite Volunteerism

Volunteers from University of Cincinnati and 4C for Children board members staffed a phone bank and called more than 350 child care providers to complete a survey in December 2024. These surveys helped 4C for Children better understand the issues and needs of child care providers and helped inform areas where the agency could innovate and design services to meet specific needs.



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4C for Children in the Community

Provider Appreciation Day

Volunteers from Enterprise Mobility, 4C for Children staff and board members delivered gifts of appreciation to nearly 800 local family child care programs in May 2025 to celebrate Provider Appreciation Day. These small business owners often provide non-traditional hours that support working parents. All child care providers help ensure families can go to work and know that their children are receiving quality care and early education.



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[More on YouTube](#)



Day at the Cincinnati Zoo

More than 450 foster families and nearly 200 early childhood professionals and the children in their care enjoyed a day at the Cincinnati Zoo in June 2025 free of charge. 4C for Children staff, board members and volunteers helped make it a day filled with exploration and fun. Everyone received Zoo Bucks and took part in activities set up through the zoo. A networking session for foster, adoptive and kinship care families was also part of the day's activities.



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[More on YouTube](#)



Day of Discovery at Boonshoff Museum

4C for Children staff and volunteers welcomed more than 350 foster families and child care providers to the Boonshoff Museum of Discovery in Dayton in May 2025. The day was filled with fun, learning and discovery. This free event was very successful and memorable for everyone who attended thanks to the many volunteers who helped lead activities for the children to enjoy at tables positioned throughout the museum.



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Block Party

4C for Children hosted the first annual Block Party, presented by US Bank, at Xavier University Cintas Center in July. The event brought families together to have fun in a friendly LEGO building competition, all while raising funds to support 4C for Children's services. After some very creative building, judges from Champlin Architecture and emcee Evan Millward crowned a winner.



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Donor and Funding Partners



\$100,000 and above

Cincinnati Preschool Promise
City of Cincinnati
Hamilton County
L&L Nippert Foundation
LISC
Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association
Ohio Department of Children and Youth
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

\$50,000 and above

City of Cincinnati Human Services Fund
Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Haile Foundation
PNC Grow Up Great Foundation
Preschool Promise—Montgomery County

\$20,000 and above

Chemed Foundation
City of Kettering
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Donald C. & Laura M. Harrison Family Foundation
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The Spurlino Foundation
Frank M. Tait Foundation
Western & Southern Financial Group

\$10,000 and above

Anchor Fluid Power
Anonymous (2)
Enterprise Holdings
Carol & Richard Fencel
Joe Heyd
The Andrew Jergens Foundation
Mathile Foundation
Middletown Community Foundation
Sutphin Family Foundation

\$5,000 and above

Alloy Development Co., Inc. Pat Landi Access Fund
The Anonymous Fund
Sharon Arlinghaus Child Development Fund at Horizon Community Funds of Northern Kentucky
Katie & Tony Bezold
BT Rise
Butler County United Way
Constellation Insurance
Gary Freytag
Vanessa Freytag & Mark Crisanti
The Kroger Company
Pam Page-Boykins & Billy Boykins
The SP Storer Family Fund
Unneweher Foundation
Sallie Westheimer & Greg Rhodes

\$1,000 and above

Accelerate Great Schools
American Red Cross
Rick Bachhuber, Jr. & Bettye Beaumont
Denise Bartick
Kim Chiodi & Nick Beck
Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Community Action Agency
Cord Foundation
Brian & Sue Crosby
Kelly Dehan
Dean Dorton
H. Fort Flowers Foundation
FORVIS Foundation
Kim & Scott Ginn
Samantha Goldfeder
Ty Hare
HUB International
Katz Teller
Mindy McLaughlin & Dave Hinaman
Adia & Matt Molloy
Heather Muzumdar
Next Step Networking
E.W. Scripps Company
Colleen Swanson
Marcia & Bob Togneri
Sue Wilke
Jessica & Paul Yankie

\$100 and above

Alan Abes
Eric & Marcee Addington
Terri Alekzander
Stephanie Allgeyer
Haley Arlinghaus

Dave Bauer
Mona Beatty
Beth Benson
Andrew Bergmann
Bloch Family Fund at Dayton Foundation
Melina Braun
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