

# Advocacy Campaigns THAT WOTCK

Children First: Advocacy Campaigns That Work

#### A LETTER FROM **OUR BOARD**

#### Children today face challenges we could have never imagined when this organization was founded 45 years ago.

In this unprecedented election year, the stakes for children are higher than ever. We've been here before – we know how this can turn out. Thankfully we've never stopped pushing for big changes for children that we know will make their lives much better. And going forward we will be re-doubling our efforts to protect kids.

Proudly, in this annual report, we share our successes in making schools better for the nearly one million students in our region and the pre-k programs that reach thousands of young ones. We can point to real progress making children healthier and safer as well.

We're able to tout these achievements because this organization is like no other and our donors are committed to our mission. We've been dedicated and consistent in our values and approach – that has allowed us to unlock impactful, scalable change.

Our determination to forge consensus behind solutions shifts the conversation from just talking about problems to solving them.

Our know-how enables us to tap the goodwill of civic and business leaders, youth-serving organizations, parents, and policy makers and unite them behind big changes for children.

Our longevity makes us a trusted messenger that can be relied on to have the facts, know the risks, and advance policies that are both practical and ambitious.

Now more than ever, kids need Children First to protect them from the hardships they face. Thank you for supporting our work so we're able to continue as the leading advocate for kids in PA. We must put Children First and hold the line against policies that turn back the clock on progress.

Since 1980, we have been knitting together a blanket of support needed to nurture every child. Over the years, we've woven an increasingly sturdy blanket that warms children's hearts, protects their bodies, and comforts their minds. There's more to do, for sure, and with the continued support of youth, caregivers, volunteers, donors, and our terrific staff, we will make that blanket stronger every day.

Javier Suarez, President

#### **ADVANCING A STRONG GROUND GAME**

#### A ground game is only as good as its capacity to deliver. This year, our ground game delivered.

Smart advocacy is intricate work that relies on constructing a sturdy and wide base in every community to succeed. For ten years, we've never stopped recruiting and training thousands of advocates to send a simple and clear message to lawmakers – meet the long-ignored school funding needs of low-income and minority students if you want to stay in office.

The odds against our success were great. Yet we were determined to never give up. We staffed an unwavering statewide coalition that was fueled by local advocates who relentlessly made the case for their students to their state lawmakers. These advocates extracted maximum value from a decisive state court decision on school funding equity and, with our support, strategically exerted the necessary pressure to produce bipartisan consensus for a history-breaking \$1.1 billion school funding increase and a new pattern for school funding that puts low-income students first.







times we've spoken out

advocates mobilized

legislative contacts

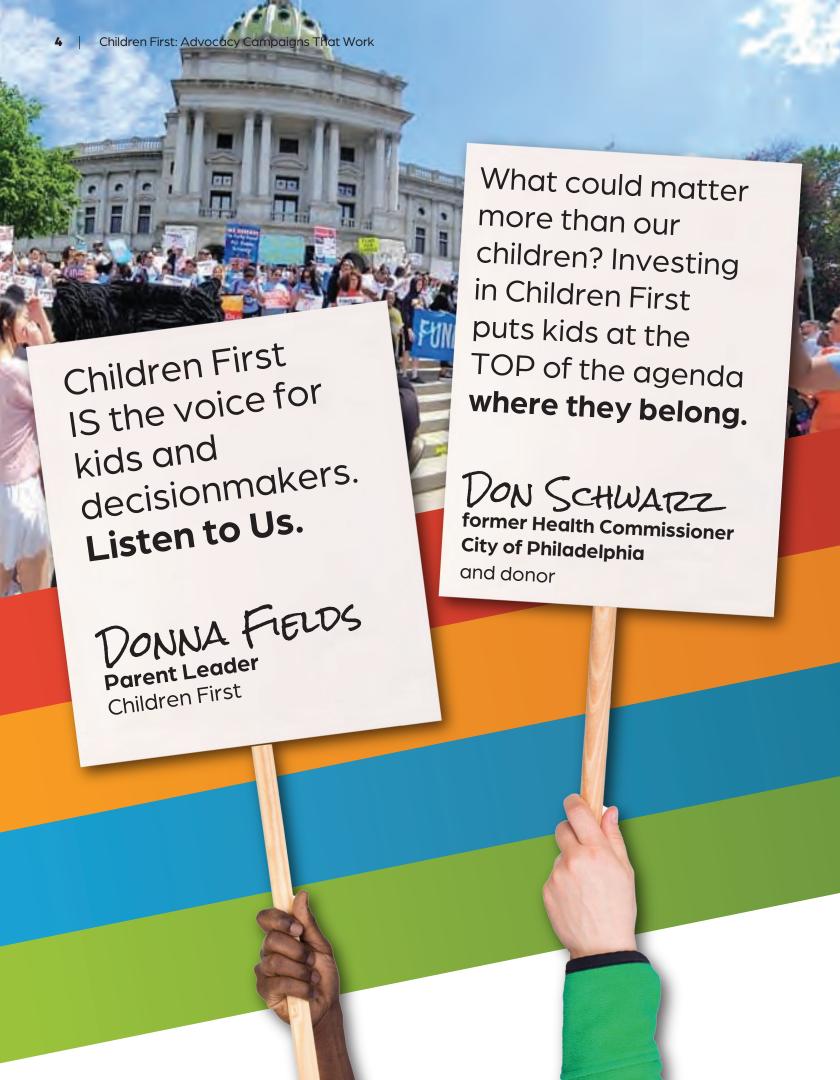
There's no disputing that the earliest years of life present the most promise for nurturing healthy, vibrant minds. That's why the state dollars for great pre-k programs that help 38,0000 children thrive are so important.

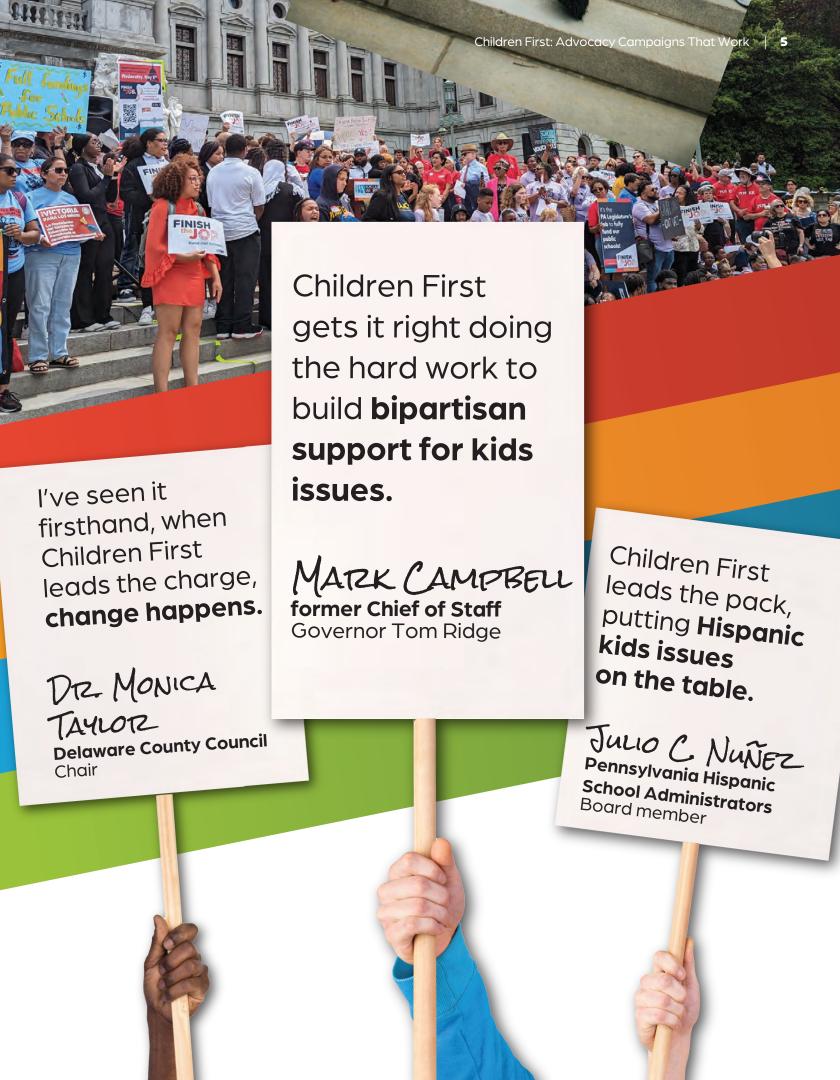
We would have preferred to push, this year, for more funds to meet the needs of the 40% of children still unserved by pre-k. Yet lawmaker interest in pre-k has waned since the pandemic and cuts to pre-k were in the offing.

Together with early learning advocates from across the state, we sounded the alarm and in just three months organized thousands of parents and early learning program staff to send letters, attend public events, and remind their state lawmakers of the benefits of pre-k.

Our advocacy was the reason that state lawmakers shifted from a position of likely cutting pre-k to a \$15 million increase.

> Our experience teaches us that sometimes the best offensive is a strong defense.





# MOVING BOLD IDEAS FORWARD

# The COVID pandemic uncovered the depths of despair among youth, and it also made things worse.

In fact, 40% of children presenting in an emergency room for attempted suicide had never seen a mental health professional before trying to take their own life. And the pleas for help from caregivers and youth who've knocked on the doors of mental health care systems only to have them slammed in their faces convinced us to act. We learned from caregivers, youth, and mental health practitioners the root causes of lack of access to care and crafted with them an ambitious mental health policy agenda to solve the problem.

The results of our exhaustive research and our ambitious policy agenda are encapsulated in two groundbreaking reports, *Optimizing Medicaid to Improve Child and Youth Mental Health in PA* and *State Examples of Medicaid Optimization for Child and Youth Mental Health in Alignment with Recommendations for PA*. Our insightful research is rallying lawmakers, practitioners, public officials, and caregivers to focus on solutions and remove barriers to mental health services. The hunger for information, conversations, and the focus on actionable, bold, systemic policy change is galvanizing Pennsylvanians in every corner of the state. In just a few short months since the reports have been released, already thousands of Pennsylvanians have read them, attended convenings to discuss them, and enthusiastically shared with their networks.



#### WINNING IN THE MARGINS

10 imes we've spoken out

73
coalition members

209
legislative contacts

When children are sent to live in an institution because of neglect, abuse, or behavioral issues, they face grave risks of further physical and mental abuse.

That's why we never stop advocating to end the institutionalizing of children. But until we build the will for that policy, we must remain steadfast in making sure every possible layer of protection is in place for these children.

Thanks to our persistence, lawmakers are increasingly aware that locking up children causes them long-term harm and can make communities less safe because so many children leave institutions worse off than when they went in.

In response to our steady push to protect these children, Pennsylvania House lawmakers passed a bill to create a state level advocate charged with responding to pleas for personal protection from children when they are institutionalized. The House also rallied behind the bill that makes it illegal to chain or shackle children or put them in long-term solitary confinement. These terrific signs of incremental progress set up for making real change.

## MOTIVATING & MOBILIZING

Our advocacy is custom-tailored to promptly respond to the urgent needs of children.



We listen to caregivers and youth who tell us the struggles they face and the solutions they know can make a difference.

We don't just hear what parents and youth have to say; we invest in them. We help them learn the ropes of advocacy and support them as they design their own advocacy campaigns. From school funding to better early developmental support to safer communities and a full suite of mental health services, caregivers and youth keep us focused on what matters most. Together, with us, parents are the catalysts for the change children need.

We build a team of advocates ready to win.





#### BROADENING THE MESSAGE

We were founded in 1980 to respond to the abuse and threat that Black children faced from then–Mayor Frank Rizzo.

With more than four decades of experience challenging inequality, we know that only by addressing centuries of laws and policies that institutionalize racial inequality can we mend the harms of the past and spur progress for children.

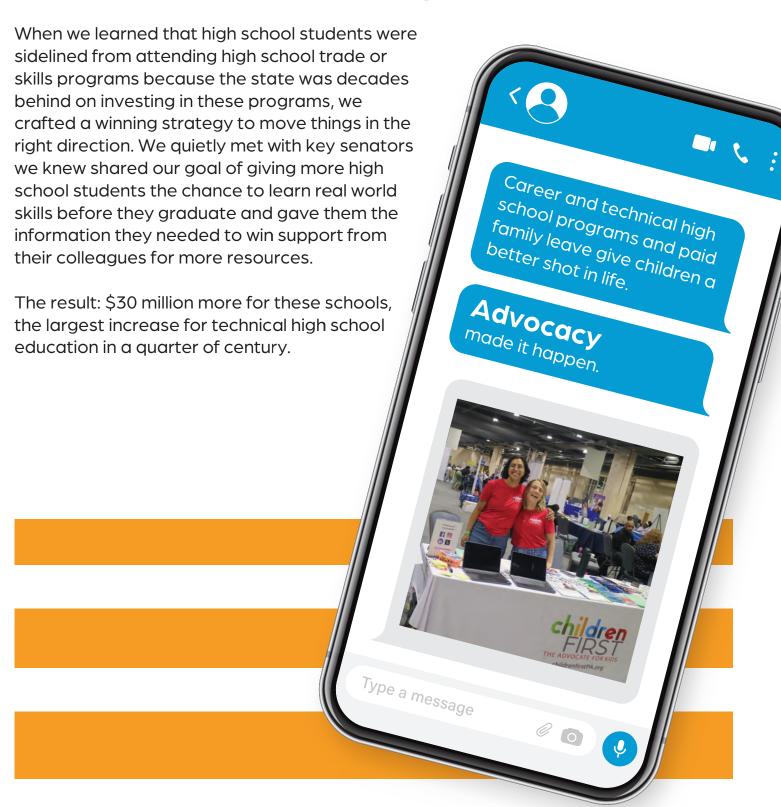
Our Racial Equity Early Childhood Education Provider Council delved into the early learning gaps between children of color and their white counterparts. Together, we're demanding action to solve these disparities.

To end the practices that result in far too many Black and Hispanic children being expelled from early learning and child care programs, together with parents we are making headway to create new requirements that support stronger early intervention and child development supports so that all children thrive in these programs.



#### WORKING THE INSIDE GAME

#### **Career Related Learning Wins**



#### **Paid Family Leave Measure Advances**

We used that same political prowess to persuade lawmakers to vote for the Family Care Act, a bill that provides paid family and medical leave for working parents. Without fanfare, we connected lawmakers to businesses eager to see their employees have this benefit and to young parents hoping to stay in Pennsylvania, have children and remain employed. One by one, we build a coalition of Republicans and Democrats who voted yes on Paid Leave making Pennsylvania the first state where a Republican–controlled committee passed Paid Leave readying it for a vote on the Senate floor.

This work is not over. Our expertise in the inside game makes it possible for us to enact great laws that change the lives of children for the better.

Understanding the landscape in Harrisburg and maintaining relationships that keep us at the table when policies that impact children are being crafted is what we do. This work takes time and real connections. Staying true to our mission allows Children First to invest the time to advance policies and elevate the issues at the right moment to change outcomes.



### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	As of May 31, 2024
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,645,253
Pledges and Other Receivables	2,634,855
Investments	1,759,151
Furniture, Equipment, Leases Net	164,942
Other Assets	13,712
Total Assets	7,217,913

LIABILITIES	As of May 31, 2024
Accounts Payable Accrued Expenses	247,131
Fiscal sponsorships	36,593
Accrued Leases	187,016
Total Liabilities	470,740

NET ASSETS	As of May 31, 2024
Without Donor Restrictions	2,938,806
With Donor Restrictions	3,808,367
Total Net Assets	6,747,173

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** 

7,217,913



#### SOURCES

Foundations and Corporations

\$3,501,040

Individual

\$466,496

Government

\$652,590

**Special Events** 

\$224,837

Contracts

\$267,418

United Way of Greater Philadelphia

\$127,235

Other

Total

\$5,481,867

#### **USES**

AS OF MAY 31, 2024

**Accrued Leases** 

\$4,498,602

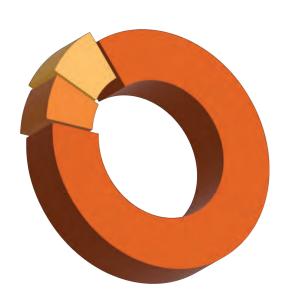
Fiscal Sponsorships

\$342,359

**Program Services** 

**Total Net Assets** 

\$5,252,867



#### 2023-2024

**CITIZEN LEADERS** Anonymous Carolyn & Tim Adams Judy Adamson & Fred Jackes Lindsay & Sam Albright Majid & Mary Alsayegh Saumya Ayyagari Rebecca Bien Sheldon & Jill Bonovitz David Camp & Gwen Borowsky Renee Cardwell Hughes Vinh Chau & Jude Bornstein-Chau Katherine Christiano Jolley Christman Albert Chu Michael Churchill & Tasha Stonorov David & Rhonda Cohen Donna Cooper & Arthur Meckler Jim & Jan Creedon Harriet Dichter & John Schapiro Claude Dickerson Elise Drake Caroline Estey King Helen Evelev William Ewina Larry & Deidre Farmbry Phil Fitzgerald Richard & Susan Frazier Marsha & Jeff Gerdes Amy Ginensky & Andrew Rogoff Barbara & Stephen Gold Jane Goldblum Mary L. Goldman Ira Goldstein Mark & Judi Goldstein Carole Haas Gravagno Rosemarie & Anne Greco Morrissey David & Jacqui Griffith Janet Haas David Hackett Beverly Hahn Rosemarie Halt Valerie Hamilton John Hanger Linda Hansell Donna Hunt Hallam Hurt Mary Hurtig Kenneth Jarin & Robin Weissman Philip Jaurigue

Victor Keen & Jeanne Ruddy

**Chrissy Kind** Kenneth & Eve Klothen Charisse Lillie Elaine Lindy John McFadden & Lisa Kabnick Nancy Lucas Ed Mahlman & Moya Kinnealey Carla Manley-Russock James Martin Daniel Marut Diego Matamoros Maureen Matamoros Sara Nerken Ruth Nerken Kathleen Noonan & Jonathan Lipson Lisa Panepinto Susan & Curt Parnes Jeffrey Pasek & Kathy Hirsh Pasek Carol Pate & John Melvin Kate Philips Heidi Ramirez Brian, Soozung & Robert Rankin Michael Rashid Gov. Edward G. Rendell Sara Reszutek Estelle Richman Ann Rosewater & Robert Kronley ShaVon Savage Catherine & James Schunder **Donald Schwarz** Patty & Stephen Segal Frances Sheehan & Ricardo Gelman Judith Silver & Donald Stevens Sandi Slap Ralph & Cookie Smith Darren Smith & Jamie Ware Tracey & Shanin Specter H. Lynn Starr **Ebony Staton Frances Stier** Lynne & Bert Strieb **Javier Suarez** John & Jane Summers John J. Taylor, Jr. Renee Turchi Teresa Ward-Maupin Liz Werthan & Bob Brand Patricia West & Tom Vernon David & Betsy Wice Reagan Willard Dr. Cleon & Tasha Williams

**Brendan Williams** 

Wendy Wolf Flora Wolf & Laslo Boyd

#### 2023-2024 **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS**

Anonymous Pauline Abernathy Ben Adams Michael Aladich Casey Alrich Marnie Anderson Stefanie & Andrew Arbutina Steven Asbell Carolyn & Arthur Asbury Christine Bachrach Jacqueline Baker Jayme Banks Melvina Banti Maureen Barden **Dennis Barnebey** Katherine & Paul Barnes Harry & Joann Beam Daniel Beck Michael & Irene Beer Sakeenah Benjamin Millie Berg Judy Bernbaum Julie Berson **Justina Bigelow** Stephanie Blake Jenny Bogoni Marcy Boroff Barbara Boroff George & Rebecca Bostick Thomas Brown **Marion Brown** Judy Buchanan & Jim Parker Donna Bullock **Brenna Burcher** David Bushnell Carla Campbell **Evan Cantiello Abby Caspar** Dionne Chambers Gladys Chen Joel & Joan Chinitz Katie Chisholm Peg Church Eric Cohen

**Chanel Conigan** 

**Anne Connelly** Ellen & Tom Conroy Kimberly Conte Zoraida Cordero Susan Cousounis Barbara Craig **David Cramer Shannon Cronin Bernard Dagenais** Jo Ann DAgostino Nabila Dahodwala Patricia Davis Brooklyn & Rutger de Graaff Tad & M. Candace Decker Joel Deitz Susan DeJarnatt Kristianna Del Grande Connie & Terry Dellmuth Joan Denenberg

**Kevin Foster** Michele Frank Nikki Franke Steven Fynes Azalia G. Alan Gardner Valerie Gay Nancy Geryk **Antoinette Ghartey** Laura Gibson Terry Gillen **Ahaviah Glaser** Eva Gold **Sharon Gornstein** Kathy Gosliner George Gould Elaine Griffin Mary Lou & Irwin Gross Naomi Gubernick

Eric & Kia Hubacher David Hyman Sara Jann Kia Jeudy Cory Johnson April Jones Loree D. Jones-Brown Aldustus & Keisha Jordan DawnLynne Kacer Jessica Kapadia Anita Kaplan Linda Katz Kenneth Kay Shelly Kessler Susan & Robert Kettell Sherilynn Kimble Deborah Klehr Nancy Kleinberg Charlie & Susan Koerwer

"As a founding member and corporate and individual supporter, I am so proud of the work Children First has done over the last 45 years. I know my support is used strategically and effectively to further improve the lives of kids in our region."

**Richard Frazier** 

Steven Deshields **Engelbert Diaz** Sharon Dietrich Julie Drendall Sydney Etheredge Elizabeth Fabens Cindy Farlino Evan Fieldston Janet Fllante Leigh Filipoini S. David Fineman Norma Finkelstein Tracey Finley Joanne Fischer Carol Fixman & Stephen Kobrin Hillary Fletcher Ruth Naomi Floyd Jamie Forlenza

William & Debbie Haggett **Ehmonie Hainey** Lyle Hall Rosanne Hansel Shakira Hanslev Ellerson Kashmiera Harris Damita Harvey Tamia Harvey-Martin Jean Haskell Jessie Heckman Violet Henighan Joseph Henry Patricia Higgins Julia Hinckley Wilbur Hobbs Jr. Eric Hoffman Christian Holland Shirlee Howe

Carrie Kohs Leo Korein Nina Korsh Elizabeth Kozart Myra Kranzel Alex Kratchman Julie Krug Andrea Krull Muriel Kudera Chau Wing Lam Brian Lang Sandra Lang Nancy Lanham Mary Laver Lynette Lazarus Doris Leisch Meghan Lenahan Alex Levin

Alan Liebowitz Theodore Lieverman Martha Lindsay Marion Littman Dan Livney Patricia Loeb Holly Logan Beth Logue Sim Loh Gail Lopez-Henriquez **Robert Ludwig** Karyn Lynch JLy Lyons Susan Mackinney Jonathan Macqueen Howard & Cirel Magen Jack Malinowski David Mandell Elizabeth Manlove Joshua Markel Phyllis Mason **David Matthews** Barbara Mattleman Kathryn Maza Courtney Kimberly McCaffrey Colleen McCauley & Paul Dziewisz Selena McFalls Maura McInerney Patricia McLaughlin Kvle McMillen Felicia McNeill **Bob McWilliams** Marybeth Medernach Sylvia Metzler James & Sandra Meyer Trey Miller Doriane Miller Andrea Moselle Soneyet Muhammad Dan Muroff John & Eleanor Myers Michael Nardone & Francesa Chapman Katherine Nash **Emmanuel Navarro** Jewel Nelson Saxon Nelson Aleshia Nicole Bruce Nkala Mary Nolan AJ Nordan Alexandra O'Connor Harriet Okatch

Lauren OLeary Loretta Ottinger Erin Owen Hedra Packman Michele Palamountain Dan Paolini Rosa Parks-Green Alexis Parks Kareem Patterson Katie Pearse Anjanette Perry Rashanda Perryman Joe Pilling **Ceciry Pimentel** Ralph & Cheryl Pinkus Rebecca Prince Ann Pron Roselyn Purnell Michael Ranck Stephanie Ravett Inella Ray **Donyale Reavis** Ulises Reyes-Kaura Paul Richards Hershel & Elizabeth Richman Len Rieser John & Ann Riggan Dana Riker Jackson **Susan Robbins** Lynne Roberts Wendy-Anne Roberts-Johnson Delanie Robertson **Ashley Rosario** Jacob Rosch John Rosecky Gerry Rothschild Phyllis Rubin Jon Sagle Kimberly Sampson Nicholas Sanders Marlena Santoyo **Fatimah Saunders** Robert & Judith Schachner Linda Katz Schleifer Ruby & Bob Schmidt Staci Scott Tyrone Scott Susan & Sol Shapiro Tiffany Sharpe-Solomon Kate Shaw Samuel Silver Sam Silver

Brooke Silvers Cohen Nicole Sing Tomea Sippio-Smith B. David Smith Jean Smith Nicole Smith Carol Smythe Joy Soto LaTi Spence **Aaron Spence** James & Lisa Steiker **Mary Strasser** Adelaide Sugarman Fatima Sultan Judy Sussholtz David Sweet Deon Taylor Letty Thall Greg & Elise Thomas Susan Thompson Agnes & Michael Tinker Jensen Toussaint **Margret Trotzky** Hin Wing Tse Walter Tsou Carol Tyler Irv & Pat Urevick-Ackelsberg Alice & Robert Vernon Brian Volz Gwynne Vu Gretchen Elise Walker Arleen Walker **Peter Warrington** Elliot Weinbaum **Debra Weiner** Deb Weinstein Marlene Weinstein Christopher Welsh M.L. Wernecke Ken Wesler **Dwayne Wharton** Mazz Whitaker Paul Whitson Julia Wilder **Scott Wilds** Sherita Williams Sarah Winters **Carol Wong Amos Wright** Mary Beth Yarish Robyn Younger Gerald Zahorchak

#### 2023-2024 BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS

American Friends Service
Committee
AmeriHealth Caritas
Black Child Development Institute
Brightside Academy, Inc
Brinker, Simpson & Company
Children's Hospital of
Philadelphia
Clear Point Communications
Comcast NBC Universal
Community Behavioral Health
Cozen O'Connor
Creedon Management
Associates

Delaware Valley Reg. Eco. Dev. Auth. Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, IIC. Fox Rothschild LLP **GSL** Public Strategies Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller **Health Partners Plans Holman Enterprises** Independence Blue Cross Foundation Independence Foundation Independent Order of Odd Fellows #37 Kate & Co. Keystone Family Health Plan

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers Philadelphia Flyers **PK Financial Group PNC Project HOME** Public Health Management Corp. Reinvestment Fund S. Fineman, Krekstein & Harris, P.C. S.R. Wojdak & Associates, LP Sabre Systems, Inc. Saul Ewing LLP Schweiger Dermatology Group TD Bank Temple University Health System United Way of Greater Phil. and S. N.J. Vanguard

"I am inspired by the dedication of this organization to make a lasting difference, and as a donor, I believe in the transformative power of supporting an organization that actively works to create a brighter, more equitable future for our children. Together, we can ensure that the next generation grows up in a world where their potential is nurtured and their well-being is prioritized."

**Perryman Construction** 

Staci Scott

#### 2023-2024 FOUNDATIONS

AMJ Foundation
Allen Hilles Fund
Bellweather Education Partners,
Inc.
CHG Charitable Trust
Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback
Foundation

Delaware County Interactive Gaming Revenue Authority Dolfinger–McMahon Foundation Elevate 215

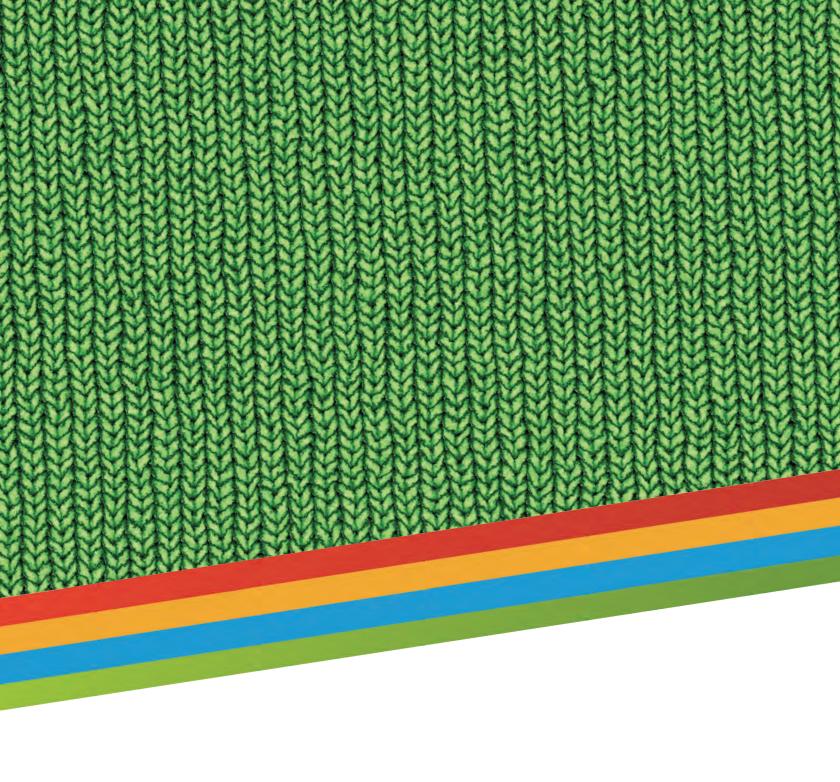
Elizabeth B. and Arthur E. Roswell
Foundation

Families for Equitable School Funding

Green Family Foundation Independence Foundation **Ivywood Foundation** Leo Model Foundation Marrazzo Family Foundation Nararo Foundation **Neubauer Family Foundation** Pennsylvania Department of Health Philadelphia Foundation Philadelphia Health Partnership Pincus Family Foundation Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation Robert Wood Johnson Foundation **SpringPoint Partners** 

The Delaware County Medical Society Public Health Fund, Inc. The Foundation for Delaware County The Huron Foundation The Grace S. and W. Linton **Nelson Foundation** United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey US Department of Education, EIR Program van Ameringen Foundation Vanguard Strong Start for Kids Program Voices for Healthy Kids W.K. Kellogg Foundation

William Penn Foundation



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