

# FEBRUARY 2022 RISE EARLY LEARNING CENTER NEWSLETTER

## AND WE'RE OFF!

In January, CommonBond Communities received the news that the Rise on 7 affordable housing project has received its state funding. These are the key funds needed for CommonBond to move ahead in beginning construction of the complex that will contain 120 units of affordable housing and the new Rise Early Learning Center. We anticipate construction will commence in early July of this year and the projected opening date for Rise Early is in the fall of 2023. With this schedule now set, Rise Early Learning Center moves into the next phase of preparation for this innovative dream to become a reality!

In addition to this news, we are excited to share all that has been accomplished in 2021 as we have waited with anticipation for this news. In the next articles you'll learn about the architectural plans for the center, the Theory of Change, and the great progress that has been made in developing new partners to support this innovative endeavor.

### **Rise Early Learning Center Architectural plans**

At the August 2021 meeting, the Rise Early Learning board unanimously approved the contract with Cunningham Architecture to develop the new center's architectural plans. A subcommittee of the board met with the architectural team to share our values and vision and to dream about what might be possible. We are delighted with the results that we received in October and will soon be finalizing those plans in conjunction with the CommonBond team as final construction drawings are prepared. Click [here](#) to see the preliminary plans.

We hope to incorporate several unique features to enhance the experience for both the families we serve and also our staff. Visual and tactile elements for the children will be complemented by ergonomic features for our staff. Watch future newsletters for more detailed discussion of the design.

### **Theory of Change**

In September, Rise Early began working with Child Trends, a nonprofit research center that conducts research on children, children's families, child well-being, and factors affecting children's lives. Our initial task was to develop our "Theory of Change." Essentially, this is a description and diagram of how we believe this innovative initiative will be transformative in the lives of those that we serve. To review the Theory of Change model, click [here](#). We anticipate this will be a living document and the board has committed to reviewing this regularly to ensure we stay true to our mission but also embrace opportunities for improvement.

While the center of the document speaks specifically to the vision and direction of Rise Early Learning Center, it also includes our partners at CommonBond Communities (<https://commonbond.org/>) who will be providing stable housing, and Way to Grow (<https://waytogrow.org/>) who will be providing wrap-around services to the families we serve in the Rise Early Learning Center and beyond. The collaboration of all three partners is crucial to achieving our vision and we will continue to document this partnership in future agreements.

### **Fundraising Update**

We continue to be grateful for the response that we have received from individuals, foundations, and faith communities. As of the end of 2021, Rise Early Learning Center has received over \$500,000 in receipts or commitments. In addition, we are grateful to Westwood Lutheran Church

for the \$1 million, two-year appeal that will be launched in late April 2022 in addition to the \$420,000 pledged from 2020 to 2031 (\$35,000 a year for 12 years).

We continue to refine our ten-year operating projections, hopeful that state and federal funding sources continue to expand access to childcare for families in need, and mindful of the importance of providing livable wages for our staff. With the gifts and commitments already in hand, we currently find ourselves approximately 50% funded – a notable success for an initiative like this, given where we are in the timeline of our project.

For more information on our programs or how to make additional contributions, please visit our webpage [www.riseearlylearningcenter.org](http://www.riseearlylearningcenter.org).

To all who have shown interest, provided support, or simply offered prayers, we are grateful for your on-going commitment to Rise Early and the families we will serve.

On behalf of the board and the community, Thank You!