



Quarterly Report April 1, 2021

Rise Early Learning Center continues to receive expressions of encouragement, optimism, commitment and possibility, all of which lead the Board of Directors to simply and earnestly say ‘thank you’. We owe our early achievements to the hard work of an expanding pool of visionary contributors and accept your support as inspiration to make this vision a life-changing reality for families in our community. Thanks!!!

We’re pleased to share this quarterly update with you – whether you’ve been one of our generous financial supporters or are simply intrigued enough about what we’re up to that you’re taking time to read this report. Below are updates in three major areas that frame our work at this time.

Board of Directors:

From the initial group of three, our 10-seat board is now fully populated. We’ve been able to attract a synergistic mix of committed experts to help build our program. Their profiles are available at the Westwood website on this page <https://www.westwood.church/prayerofgoodcourage>. We’re fortunate to have a mix of backgrounds and perspectives that can contribute to the work ahead.

One subset of the board is starting work on our communication and technology platforms to ensure we can support our various stakeholders well in the future. Others are emphasizing the fundraising and financial matters that are essential to our success.

We’re most excited about the team that has begun very specific work around the philosophy behind our future curriculum. They are looking closely at how we provide a culturally sensitive and asset-based framework for our learners, acknowledging that this vision also requires us to think differently about staff development, compensation policies, and future integration with the St. Louis Park public school system. We’re fortunate to have the resources on our board to approach this work with expertise and sensitivity.

Partnerships:

As we look ahead, we have identified two very critical partnerships, both of which are progressing very nicely.

Common Bond Communities, our housing development partner without whom we would not have the facility to provide the care we imagine, has been working closely with their funding partners and hope to have financing arranged by mid-summer. They have also been refining their site plans and building layouts – preliminary versions of this can again be found on this webpage <https://www.westwood.church/prayerofgoodcourage>. Common Bond emphasizes housing stability for their resident families, and we see tremendous benefits for families who are able to both reside here at the Rise on 7 and participate in our program.

Way To Grow is a Minneapolis area non-profit that equips parents to help prepare school-ready children and we have begun to explore platforms for their parent educators to work with Rise Early families, whether in residence at the Rise on 7 or elsewhere in the community. We believe this linkage of parental support with high-quality affordable childcare will create a more significant experience for all of the participants – learners and their families, as well as our staff. We are pleased that the Executive Director of Way To Grow has joined our board and is bringing along a significant body of knowledge around both non-profit management and the specific programming that will elevate our program.

Fundraising:

To make these visions a reality, we are keenly aware of the need to find both up-front visionary funding as well as stable long-term sources. There are various long-term state and local funding programs we'll be exploring, but the most pressing need is bringing in approximately \$500,000 over the next 12-24 months to ramp up our program and address staff development needs. We're almost half-way there and are optimistic about our momentum.

Over the next 10-12 years, our long-term projections indicate an aggregate need for approximately \$3.0 million in support. We are thrilled to report that we already have gifts and commitments today that total nearly \$1.75 million. We've received gifts and/or commitments from a range of faith communities and private donors. Our work with the corporate and family foundation community is just getting started - but please reach out if you have any suggestions. We're always open to making new friends!

Our work is inspired by the interest of so many people who are committed to the innovative approach we hope to bring through our vision for high-quality affordable childcare. We have work to do and are blessed with a team of leaders committed to seeing it happen. Whether you're moved to provide financial support, prayer support or simply share the good news of the work that we are doing, know that you are a part of a community that believes in the capacity of ALL children and their families.