



Shaping the Future, Today!



CLC

Children's Learning Centers
of Fairfield County


2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Letters From Our CEO and Chair of the Board



Dear Friends, Since stepping into the role of CEO at Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County (CLC) last May, I have been welcomed into a community grounded in purpose and fueled by possibility. CLC's vision — shaping a just future through early childhood education — has never felt more vital. It is a privilege to lead an organization with more than 120 years of history, and to help chart its course for the next chapter.



This past year has been a time of transition and transformation. Together — with the dedication of an exceptional team, the guidance of our Board, and the trust of the families we serve — we have navigated change and emerged stronger. CLC is not only sustaining its legacy of high-quality early childhood education, but leading boldly into the future with innovation, compassion, and resilience.

Our work goes far beyond the classroom. At CLC, we nurture the whole child—supporting development through education, nutrition, health, and family engagement. This holistic approach doesn't just prepare children for kindergarten; it lays the foundation for lifelong success. The impact is clear: approximately one-third of Stamford Public Schools' kindergartners began their educational journey at CLC. This figure represents more than reach — it reflects the critical role CLC plays as a cornerstone of a strong and thriving Stamford, where early learning is a shared investment in the city's future.

This mission lives close to my heart. As a single mother and lifelong educator, I've experienced firsthand how early learning can shape a child's future and provide stability for families. That perspective fuels my commitment to ensuring that every child receives what they need — physically, emotionally, and academically — to thrive not only in preschool, but throughout their entire K–12 journey.

Looking ahead, I am filled with optimism. CLC is growing, evolving, and innovating to meet the changing needs of our community. Your support makes this progress possible. Together, we can continue to invest in our children, uplift families, and strengthen the future for all.

With deep gratitude,

Monica Maccera Filppu
Chief Executive Officer

Over the past year, I have had the great honor of serving as the Board Chair for Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County (CLC). Leading at the board level for an organization that has served this community for over a century is both a privilege and a profound responsibility. We are stewards of a remarkable legacy — and also architects of the next chapter.



None of this would be possible without leadership that is both visionary and grounded. We are incredibly fortunate to have Monica Maccera Filppu at the helm. Her unwavering commitment, deep compassion, and clarity of purpose have propelled CLC forward — especially in times of complexity. Together with an exceptional staff and an inspiring board, Monica ensures that CLC not only endures, but evolves.

As a Board, we see our role as stewards of CLC's mission and guardians of its future. That means ensuring long-term sustainability, championing access for all families, and investing in the people — our educators and leaders — who make this work possible.

Looking ahead, we know that the impact of early childhood education ripples far beyond the classroom. It affects workforce development, economic mobility, and the very fabric of our society. Your support makes this vision real.

Looking ahead, we know
that the impact of
early childhood education
ripples far beyond
the classroom.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership — and we invite you to stay engaged, amplify our mission, and help us continue shaping a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,

Noah Lapine
Chair, Board of Directors



Our Mission

CLC builds nurturing and innovative early childhood educational experiences for all children and their families.



Our Vision

Shaping a just future through early childhood education.



1/3

of each Stamford Public School's kindergarten class is a **CLC graduate**



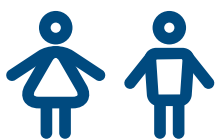
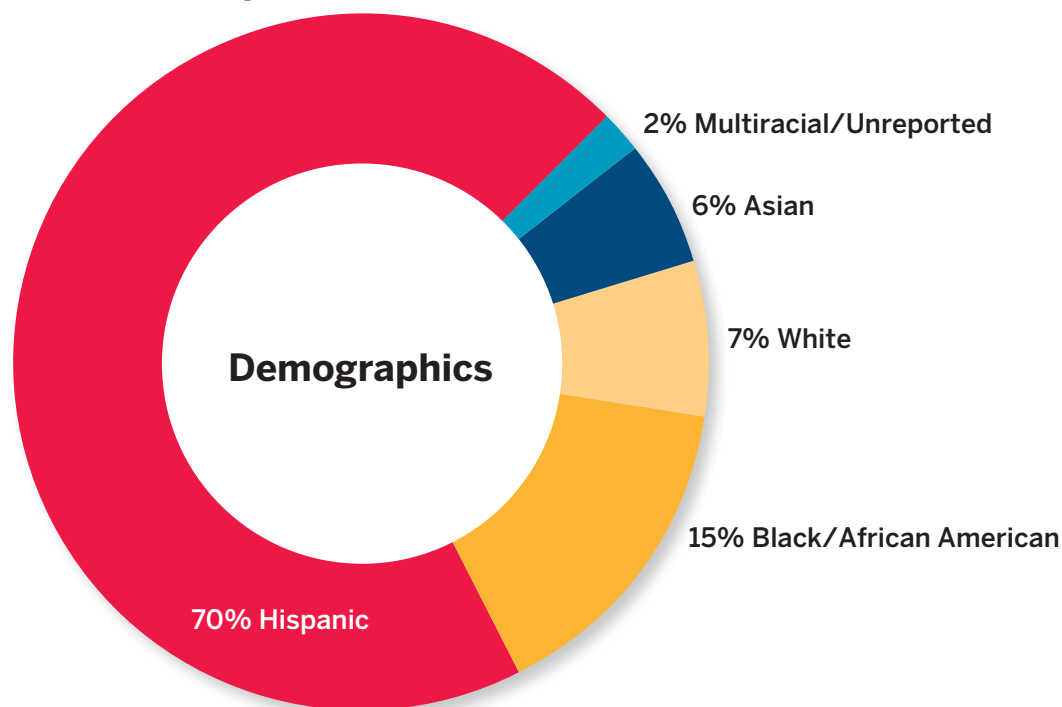
10%

higher attendance
in children who attended CLC
compared to those who did not
attend preschool*

*According to the Stamford Public Schools SY22-23 assessment.

CLC By the Numbers

CLC Serves a Diverse Population



800+

children and families
served each year



6

Stamford locations



500,000

meals and snacks
served annually
at no cost for families



9%

higher literacy scores
in children who attended CLC
compared to those who did not
attend preschool*



13%

higher math scores
in children who attended CLC
compared to those who did not
attend preschool*



Events That Brought Us Together

CLC's Golf Outing

Our 8th Annual Golf Outing, in May 2024, was held at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich. One of CLC's signature events, the golf outing was chaired by Bob Rahilly, a member of CLC's Leadership Council and a Partner at Day Pitney, LLP.

The sold-out golf outing raised over \$150,000.

Sponsors included:

Presenting Sponsor Day Pitney, LLP

Title Sponsors Emcor Group, Inc., Mavis Tires and Trane

Luncheon Sponsor USI Insurance Services

Breakfast Sponsor Trio Community Meals

Beverage Cart Sponsor EY Cadillac of Greenwich, who sponsored the hole-in-one contest

Media Sponsor Stamford Magazine/Moffly Media



New Playground at CLC William Pitt Transforms Playtime for Stamford's Youngest Learners

Last fall, we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for our new playground at CLC William Pitt, the largest of CLC's six early childhood education centers in Stamford. This event celebrated the creation of a new state-of-the-art playground that will serve more than 340 children, providing a safe, engaging, and developmentally enriching space for play and learning.

More than \$500,000 was raised from individual donors, foundations, and local and state public entities, including The Herbert and Nell Singer Foundation, the City of Stamford, and the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood ARA grant — who made this project possible.





“

I attended CLC over 20 years ago, and though I was very young at the time, the memories I have from those days still shine brightly in my heart. I was born and raised in Stamford, and CLC was truly a light in my life. It was more than just a program — it was a second home.

Some of my closest friendships were formed at CLC. One of my best friends today, someone I've known for over 20 years, first came into my life there. The relationships I built, the care I received, and the sense of belonging I felt helped shape the person I am today.

Now, I work as a Special Assistant to the Mayor in Economic Development, supporting our small business community. But I'll never forget where it all began. Programs like CLC are vital to our community. They give young children not just education and care — but a place to feel safe, valued, and inspired. A place to call home.

Geraldine Uribe
CLC Alum



Education

Shaping the Future, Today!

At CLC, we implement *The Creative Curriculum*®, a research-based, whole-child framework that nurtures children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development through play-based learning. Through hands-on, project-based studies on engaging, real-world topics — such as wheels, trees, and buildings — children experience learning that is both joyful and meaningful.

In partnership with Stamford Public Schools, we align curriculum units and professional development to ensure consistent, developmentally appropriate learning experiences across settings. This collaboration supports smoother transitions into kindergarten and promotes stronger outcomes for every child.

By integrating best practices, promoting academic readiness, and fostering social-emotional growth, CLC builds a powerful foundation for lifelong success. Our work also deepens family engagement and strengthens the broader Stamford community.

Accessible Programs for All Families

CLC offers free Early Head Start and Head Start programs for income-eligible families in Stamford, Darien, and Greenwich. Extended hours are available for a nominal fee. In addition, we provide state-subsidized preschool programs with a sliding fee scale set by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), ensuring access to high-quality early education for all.



Empowering Educators: CLC's Career Ladder Program

With the generous support of the **Synchrony Foundation**, CLC's Career Ladder Program continues to play a pivotal role in advancing the professional growth of our educators while strengthening the quality of care and education we provide to families.

This initiative is vital to CLC's ability to meet state and federal licensure requirements, which are essential for maintaining government funding and addressing a critical gap in affordable childcare.

Thanks to Synchrony's funding, **33 women** have been empowered to pursue higher education and credentialing opportunities that enhance their skills, support their continued employment, and increase their earning power. These achievements are not only life-changing for the participants — they also enrich the learning experiences of the children in our programs.

Program highlights:

- 1 teacher earned a **Bachelor of Science Degree**
- 7 teachers are actively pursuing a **Bachelor of Science Degree**
- 1 teacher is working toward an **Associate in Science Degree**
- 4 teachers earned a new **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential**
- 8 teachers renewed their **CDA**
- 6 teachers are working to renew their **CDA**
- 6 teachers are newly enrolled in a **CDA program**

We are deeply grateful to the Synchrony Foundation for its commitment to creating pathways for success and strengthening the early childhood workforce. **This important work continues, and we invite others to join us in supporting the growth and success of CLC's early childhood educators.**



Family Services

Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities

CLC provides holistic support for students and families through admissions, social work, nutrition, health services, basic needs assistance, and mental health resources. Our Family Services Team offers wrap-around care, linking children with developmental or behavioral needs to appropriate community services. We also empower parents to advocate for their children and connect families with resources such as food, emergency support, and English Language Learner (ELL) classes.

Mental Health Partnership

CLC has a robust partnership with the Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut (CGC) to promote infant and early childhood mental health. Research underscores the value of early intervention, and together we offer a range of services to children and families, including:

- Classroom-focused mental health consultation, which includes observation and collaborative reflective consultation sessions with teachers

- On-site child, family, dyadic (child-caregiver), and group counseling during the school day with CGC clinicians
- Parent guidance sessions (in person, by phone, or virtual)
- Streamlined access to clinic-based therapy and CGC's range of programs

CGC clinicians also provide child-focused mental health consultation to all CLC preschool classrooms, offering tailored strategies to support each child's unique social, emotional, mental health, and developmental needs. Each preschool-based CGC Clinician is formally trained in at least one early childhood indicated, evidence-based trauma intervention model.

This impactful collaboration is funded by federal grants, a SAMHSA infant and early childhood mental health grant and private philanthropy. Together, we help remove barriers to care and support children's development at home and at school.



14% 
of children have **Individualized
Education Plans** or Individualized
Family Service Plans for special needs



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500,000

meals and snacks
served annually
at no cost for families



Health Services

Supporting Student Well-Being

Our health services play a vital role in ensuring our children are safe, supported, and ready to learn. Whether it's a scraped knee that needs gentle care or a thoughtful conversation with a parent about managing a medical condition at home, our nurses are there — bringing compassion and expertise to every interaction. They track immunizations and provide essential care when illness or injury occurs during the school day. Their presence is a constant source of reassurance for students and families alike.



Nutrition

Healthy Starts

We provide free daily breakfast, lunch, and snacks to all CLC children, adhering to the highest federal and state regulations. Our team works closely with families to accommodate a variety of cultural and dietary restrictions so every child has the nutrition they need to learn and thrive. Our staff nutritionist also provides assessments, allergy monitoring, and nutrition counseling to families.

Providing these healthy meals costs CLC nearly \$1 Million each year. That's a significant but necessary investment. Research shows that free school meals help young children with improved brain function and learning, reduce food insecurity at home, and help build strong growing minds and bodies.



No child can learn on an empty stomach. Every day, our Nutrition team steps up with one goal in mind: to ensure that every child is not only fed, but truly nourished. What makes our work so important is the way we collaborate with medical professionals, staff, and parents to create a personalized, child-centered nutrition plan. We're here to listen, adapt, and make eating fun — whether through interactive nutrition workshops or shared meals.

Challenges like language barriers, cultural differences, and special dietary requests come up, but nothing stands in the way of our commitment to providing meals that are not only nutritious but also inclusive. We thrive on supporting families, offering expert guidance in food safety, lactation counseling, and personalized consultations. And we're always just a call away, ensuring every family feels seen and heard. For us, food isn't just about filling bellies — it's about fueling young minds, fostering growth, and building lifelong healthy habits. This is why we love what we do — it's about shaping the future, today!

Victoria Pittman
CLC's Nutrition Manager



31

organizations CLC partners with
to provide comprehensive support
for children and families



Beyond the Classroom

Learning Through Experience

At CLC William Pitt, we are proud to offer a unique set of studios that enrich our students' learning experiences in ways only we can. Our Sensory, STEAM, Kitchen, and Music & Library Studios each provide dynamic, hands-on environments designed to support the whole child. The Sensory Studio offers a calming refuge for emotional regulation and self discovery; the STEAM studio inspires innovation and

nurtures curiosity, critical thinking and collaboration; the Kitchen Studio promotes practical life skills, teamwork, and healthy habits; and the Music & Library Studio nurtures language, creativity, and a love of rhythm and reading. These specially designed spaces empower our students to explore, create, and grow in a setting built just for them.



I can't fully express how much CLC has meant to our family. Our connection with this preschool began 15 years ago with my oldest daughter, who loved it so much she returned as a staff member as a teen. That lasting love and trust brought us back with our daughter, Elsa.

Thanks to CLC's support, my husband and I were able to return to work. They gave us stability — and gave our daughter a second home. She loves it so much, she doesn't want to leave, even on weekends. That speaks volumes — she's found a family here, a place where she feels safe, loved, and inspired.

Laura
CLC Parent

Celebrating Our Shared Commitment to Shaping the Future

We extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated donors who made a difference in the lives of children and families through their generosity during the 2024 fiscal year. Whether through annual gifts, corporate sponsorships, special events, or grants, every contribution plays a vital role in strengthening our programs and expanding opportunities for the children we serve. It is through their kindness and commitment that we continue to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success.

\$100,000+

Pitney Bowes, Inc.
The Grossman Family Foundation
The Tudor Foundation, Inc.

\$50,000 – \$99,000

City of Stamford
The Ruth W. Brown Foundation
Synchrony Foundation
The Rudolph J. and Daphne A. Munzer Family Foundation
The Vranos Family Foundation
The William H. Pitt Foundation

\$25,000 – \$49,000

Day Pitney LLP
Franklin Templeton
William R. Knobloch*
Emily Kroenlein and Rob Schlein*
Noah and Holly Lapine*

\$10,000 – \$24,000

Anonymous
Scott Beach
Fred Christensen
Stephen Corman*
Christine D'Annibale
Emcor Group Inc.
First County Bank Foundation
Anthony Guzzi
Mavis Tire Supply, LLC
Ellen and Joel Mellis
Robert Miller
New Canaan Community Foundation
Jane Norgren*
The Community Fund of Darien
The Goodnow Fund
TRIO Community Meals
United Way of Coastal & Western Connecticut, Inc.
USI Insurance Services, LLC
Joan Weisman
Anne Wichman*

\$5,000 \$9,999

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Donors marked with an asterisk () gave through a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), a flexible, tax-efficient way to set aside charitable contributions, receive an immediate tax benefit, and recommend grants over time to support causes they care about. This year, CLC gratefully received \$172,348 through DAF contributions.

+Donors marked with a plus sign (+) made recurring gifts by giving on a monthly or quarterly basis.

NOTE: This list was prepared with great care to ensure the accuracy of contributor information. Should any errors or omissions be found, please contact us so that we may extend our apologies and make corrections in the future.

Honoring Loved Ones, Inspiring Futures

Each year, many generous donors choose to make gifts in honor or memory of loved ones, or special individuals who have made a lasting impact on their lives. These heartfelt contributions not only pay tribute to those who have shaped our community but also help build a brighter future for the children we serve. We are deeply grateful for these meaningful gifts, which create a legacy of learning, growth, and opportunity for generations to come.

Gifts in Memory

In memory of Tony Blecher

Mr. and Mrs. Joel Mellis

In memory of Lisa Ann Chambers

General Reinsurance Corporation (GenRe)
Darcy Fragomeli

In memory of Mike Harris

Sally Harris

Gifts in Honor

In honor of Margo Amgott

Mr. Peter Allen

In honor of Bobbi Eggers

Jane Condon

In honor of Emily Goldschmid

Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Leslie Goldschmid

In honor of Kate Hallissey

Jennifer Hallissey

In honor of Ellen and Joel Mellis

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Blecher

In honor of Ellen Mellis

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Ellis

In honor of Jane Norgren

Mrs. Audrey Solnit

In honor of Merzi Reino and Mary Catherine Herbert

Sheryl Young

In Memory

Honoring a Legacy of Generosity

At CLC, we are deeply grateful for the philanthropic vision and generosity of individuals whose leadership has helped shape and sustain our work. We honor the memory of two such individuals whose legacies continue.

In Memory of Mike Harris, The Ruth Brown Foundation

Under the thoughtful leadership of Mike Harris, The Ruth Brown Foundation became one of our most steadfast and generous partners. With a shared and deeply held belief in the transformative power of early childhood education, Mike approached philanthropy with kindness, thoughtfulness, and humility. Together, Mike and his wife Sally led the Foundation in providing crucial support for both general operations and programmatic innovation, enabling us to meet the evolving needs of our community and deepen our impact. Mike's legacy lives on through the lives he touched and the continued generosity and commitment of the Foundation.

In Memory of Ned Goodnow, The Goodnow Fund

Ned Goodnow, a generous and visionary philanthropist, established and led The Goodnow Fund, which has been a steady and appreciated partner for CLC over many years. Through essential general operating grants, the Fund has provided us with the flexibility needed to adapt and sustain the programs that are vital to the children and families we serve. His enduring influence is reflected in the Fund's ongoing commitment to strengthening communities.

We are honored to be among the organizations supported by these remarkable individuals, and we remain deeply thankful for the continued partnership of The Ruth Brown Foundation and The Goodnow Fund.



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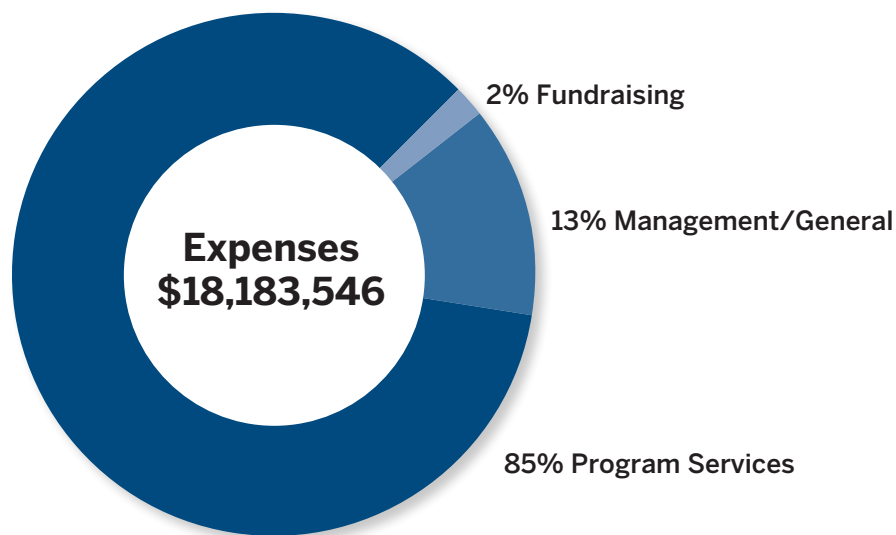
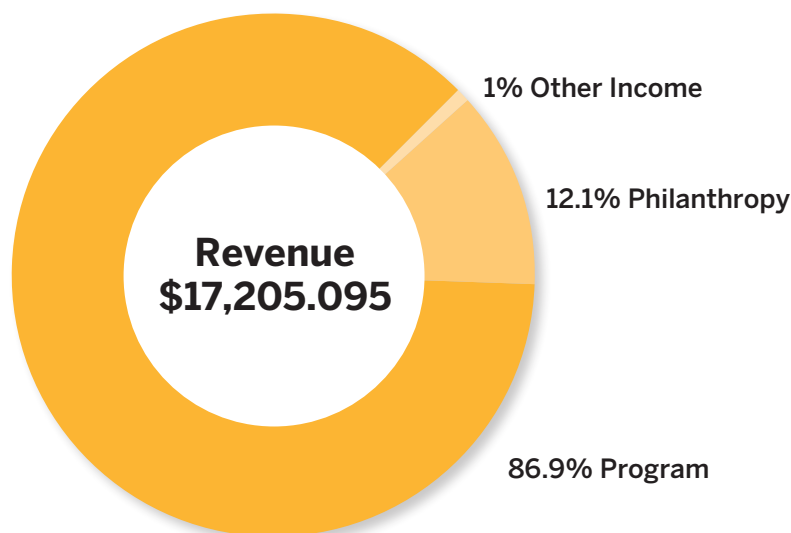
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Community Rep

Lists are as of March 2025



Financial Report



FY 24 expenses exceeded revenue due to a reduction in public funding post-pandemic.

I first came to CLC not as a teacher, but as a parent looking for support. I joined the Parenting Journey group, which met every Tuesday, and it truly changed my life. It was a space where parents — many of us with children at CLC — came together to share our stories, struggles, and hopes. I started to feel more confident, more seen, and more understood. They encouraged me to look into job opportunities at CLC, and I decided to try. I started as a substitute teacher...and I fell in love with it.

Today, I'm proud to say I work at CLC. Being here — first as a parent and now as a teacher — has been one of the most transformative experiences of my life. I've learned to be more open, more present, and more connected. CLC isn't just a great preschool with caring staff — it's a community that sees your potential, even when you don't yet see it yourself.

Triniti Pennock
CLC Teacher and Parent

Corporate & Community Partners

CLC is deeply grateful for the steadfast support of our Corporate & Community Partners, whose generosity ensures that every graduating preschooler begins kindergarten equipped and empowered. Through their contributions, nearly 400 backpacks — filled with essential school supplies — are lovingly prepared by dedicated volunteers each year. These backpacks do more than carry notebooks and crayons—they carry the promise of confidence, readiness, and relief for families facing the financial pressures of back-to-school season. Together, we're laying the foundation for bright futures and strong starts.

A special thank you to our 2024 Corporate & Community Partners — **Synchrony**, **Pitney Bowes**, **Odyssey Group**, **Alera Group**, **King School**, and **Edgehill Community** — for making this meaningful initiative possible. Your commitment is helping our youngest learners step into their next chapter with confidence and pride.



Volunteers

A Vital Part of CLC's Success

CLC is fortunate to have the support of volunteers who bring their time, enthusiasm, and care to our programs throughout the year. Whether sharing stories, supporting classroom activities, or assisting behind the scenes, our volunteers help create a welcoming and enriching environment for our children and staff.

This past year, volunteers from schools, community groups, and local businesses contributed in meaningful ways—encouraging joyful learning moments and reinforcing the importance of community connection in early childhood education.

We're pleased to recognize the following groups for their generous contributions in 2024:

- Edgehill Community
- Synchrony
- King School
- Odyssey Group
- Pitney Bowes
- Regency Centers
- The Rotary Club of Stamford
- The Youth Community Fund of Darien
- Darien Girl Scouts Troops 50186 & 50629

**The Rotary Club of Stamford
has donated 300-400 winter coats
to CLC children every year
since 2018!**





“

***CLC represents the future.
The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow.
Giving to CLC helps us be part of that future.***

Joel Mellis

Ways to Make an Impact

There are many ways to support CLC and help provide children with a strong foundation for lifelong success. Whether you give monthly, donate appreciated securities, or leave a lasting legacy, your generosity ensures we can continue delivering high-quality early childhood education and critical support services.



Give Monthly

Recurring gifts provide CLC with steady, reliable funding, allowing us to budget efficiently and invest in student enrichment, professional development, and more.



Donate Appreciated Securities

Maximize your impact and receive tax benefits by making gifts with appreciated stocks, mutual funds, or bonds.



Donor-Advised Fund Recommendations

Recommend a distribution from your donor-advised fund and enjoy the flexibility to decide how much and how often you support CLC.



Give in Tribute

Honor or remember a loved one with a special gift. CLC also offers naming opportunities for those looking to create a lasting tribute.



Employee Giving & Matching Gifts

Many companies match employee donations, doubling or even tripling your impact. Check with your HR department to see if your employer participates.



Leave a Legacy

Consider including CLC in your estate plans to make a lasting difference for future generations. Speak with your estate planning professional about adding CLC to your will.

How to Get Involved

We welcome individuals and organizations to join us in making a difference.

Volunteer Opportunities

Ellen Christian-Reid

Donor Engagement Manager

203.653.1370

Corporate Partnerships and Volunteerism

Jennifer Hallissey

Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations

203.653.1327



If you would like to discuss any of these ideas or have any questions, please reach out to our development team at development@clcstamford.org or **203.653.1370**.

Scan to Give

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