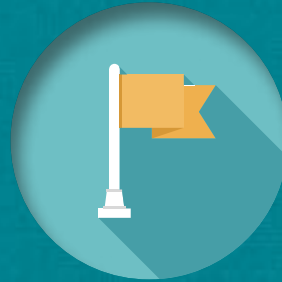


POWERPLAY:

The New Rules of the Game of Life



ANNUAL REPORT FY '13

Kids Co.'s mission is to provide and advocate for quality childcare that enriches and nurtures all children, supporting their success in school and in life.

WE ARE KIDS CO.





Susan R. Brown,
Kids Co. President and CEO

FISCAL YEAR 2013

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We have all heard the tongue-in-cheek admonishment, “Why, when I was young I had to walk 10 miles to school in the snow—up hill! Both ways!” Colorful hyperbole aside, what strikes us now as mildly amusing at one point was not all that uncommon.

There are endless versions of “When I was young...” some subtle, some not, all aimed at the young in hope of getting them to see just how good they have it. I wonder, however, if these teasing aspersions that cast young people as not measuring up are all that fair.

In the two and a half decades Kids Co. has been in operation we have cared for the children of three demographic groups, Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials, and during these years the rules of the game of life (and childcare) have shifted quite dramatically. One of the most significant shifts is that young people can no longer assume they will fare better than their parents financially. In fact, the evidence is to the contrary.

Unlike those who went before them, Millennial parents, those born between 1981-2001, face societal pressures no previous American parents had to endure. They are comparatively poorer, grappling with more complex relationships of race and multiracial identity, and are saddled with childcare costs that easily exceed \$10,000 a year—a figure that does not include infant care, which is stratospheric!

The Center of Nutrition Policy and Promotion, USDA recently took a look at overall costs of raising children, comparing 1960 to 2012 in 2012 dollars and found a baseline increase of \$45,000. The piece of the pie accounting for childcare and education increased dramatically from 2% of a family’s budget in 1960 to 18% in 2012!

We have watched the impact of this at Kids Co. and developed a quality of organizational resiliency that enabled us to sustain stability in the midst of these huge societal shifts.

In this annual report, we offer you three terrific Kids Co. stories of people in our community applying their gifts and talents in ways that reveal the potency of high quality childcare during this time. You will read about the highly-esteemed LaFawnda Williams and how moving as much as she did as a kid prepared her to be a shining star in the field of childcare. The riveting Martinez family’s story is also here, showing the importance of the unshakeable childcare partner in the life of a family determined to succeed in spite of daunting obstacles. Finally, Patrick Russell and Amanda Sherry share their Waffle Stomper story of how a film camp designed to develop creative capacities in kids evolved into a camp that also helps children learn how to handle conflict effectively and without losing pals!

Each one of these stories reflects the importance and potency of childcare in contemporary American culture by subtly reflecting some of the societal complexities our young families face. Fostering vital connections, offering families partnership, and coaching kids in ways to process conflict that inspires growth and peace are taking center stage at Kids Co. We are living the change we want to see.

We are Kids Co.

Susan R. Brown, Kids Co. President and CEO



ACTION

To watch one of the FY'13 Waffle Stomper Films, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGRCbGxt4kw&feature=youtu.be



Creative Engagement



Waffle Stompers and the Power of Creative Engagement

“I like sharing my stuff with the kids,” is how this interview began, and by “stuff,” Patrick Russell, the program manager at Kids Co. at Queen Anne, means his creative interests. So when he and Amanda Sherry, the program manager at Kids Co. on Mercer Island and his partner in the Waffle Stomper summer camp series, began designing a two-week summer film camp, they were all over it.

It was a perfect blend of their talents and interests. Patrick is a working artist and Amanda is a specialist in School-Age Youth Program Quality Assessment (SAYPQA), a method that enhances positive and supportive experiences for kids in youth programming.

The two were certain they had a winner on their hands.

The first summer they offered it, in 2011, everything was new—including the *Waffle Stomper Summer Camp series designed for 3rd to 5th graders*. Enrollment didn't land quite where they wanted it. However, they saw an upside to having fewer kids: it would make it easier for them to try new ideas.

That first year Patrick's program strategy was to have his team of kids concentrate on making one feature film (*Godzilla vs. Pink Pony*); while Amanda chose to have her kids make a series of film shorts. Beyond this, everything else between the two teams (i.e., Queen Anne and Mercer Island) was the same. Each team of kids was given an impressive list of responsibilities to oversee. They developed storylines, managed budgets for purchasing costumes and props, and participated in the acting, filming, and editing of each film. It was a saturating experience for the kids—and they absolutely loved it.

It was the kind of response that childcare pros like Amanda and Patrick hope for. Their fun experiment had paid off! So, they made a few tweaks to the curriculum and forged ahead into year two with a goal of doubling enrollment.

And double it, they did.

However, working with a larger group of kids would give rise to an interesting new and unforeseen challenge. “Year two was harder because more kids meant more creative differences,” shared Amanda. What energizes these two program managers is the process of helping children get their creative ideas out of their heads and into physical form, but creative ideas tend to have high personal ownership and the children in film camp work in teams. Conflicts in artistic vision between kids started naturally bubbling up, giving this dynamic duo an ideal opportunity to help kids learn how to navigate conflict without losing pals.

For the kids, their films were a super big deal and much was riding on their outcome. Amanda and Patrick were committed to helping them manifest these artistic passions with the caveat that the kids would learn to work together. It would not always be easy, but in the end they were successful.

This sweet achievement was apparent at their last day celebration, which thanks to Patrick's big coup, was held at SIFF (Seattle International Film Festival) Theater at Seattle Center. SIFF pulled out the red carpet and served popcorn before the theater went dark and the films premiered.

It was a magical event. Parents, principals, and friends filled the theater. Amanda's kids premiered a cliff hanging zombie film and Patrick's kids a bunch of highly memorable shorts. Every premiere was applauded with gusto and each young filmmaker received a certificate.

Heading into year three, Patrick and Amanda's Waffle Stomper film chops are expertly honed and they will be testing more good ideas. **“This year we will be heightening the focus on team work to help kids manage creative differences with more ease,”** noted Patrick. He then leaned forward, his eyes twinkling with glee, **“We'll also be handing out little Oscars!”**

Day in and day out, Amanda and Patrick and their Kids Co. colleagues show us the centrality of creativity in high quality childcare programming. What we hope children will take-away from film camp is that creativity is not only artistic, it is also relational.



Amanda Sherry and Patrick Russell



FINISH

...it's all about connection for LaFawnda. No child, in LaFawnda's mind, should ever be pushed to the side.



START



LaFawnda Williams and the Power of Connection

Two things one immediately notices about LaFawnda Williams: 1. her eyes are engaged when she smiles (what scientists call a “true” smile) and 2. she actively listens more than she speaks. When the two combine—a norm for LaFawnda—it’s easy to see why children and parents adore her. Who wouldn’t adore someone so naturally given to gentle smiles and listening ears?

The underlying secret of her quiet charm is simply this: LaFawnda delights in others. She will tell you that it is the connection with others that appeals to her so, something she describes as a passion, and that it is her passion for the power of connection that drew her into the field of childcare and also what keeps her here.

It is interesting to consider how her journey through life may have developed her innate passion for relationship and community-building that made her the gifted childcare professional she is today. A daughter of a close-knit military family, LaFawnda grew up successively in Florida, New Mexico, South Carolina, Alaska, Texas, and then back to Alaska as the Air Force transferred her father around the country. Moving as often as she did, LaFawnda learned how to establish relationships of trust and friendship with new school chums quickly. Part of what made her so successful at this is LaFawnda is a keen observer of human behavior. Even as a young person, she was not one to rush in and make a loud splash. Quite the contrary, she built lasting friendships through attentive listening and thoughtful noting of the things that made other kids tick.

No great surprise, this is precisely how she interacts with the children at her two Kids Co. centers now—listening, affirming, and smiling at them in her exquisitely disarming way that puts them at ease while engendering the trust of their parents. It’s a winning demeanor that strengthens bonds and connections for everyone.

Clearly LaFawnda is a natural childcare pro, but she also possesses the academic chops required for the highly regulated field of licensed childcare. Her educational background began at Seattle Pacific University, which she attended for two years before transferring to the University of Alaska, Anchorage, where she graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. Her first position upon graduation, with Campfire U.S.A. as a member of the frontline childcare team, launched her career, and over the course of five years, Campfire promoted her three times, eventually awarding her the plum job of director.

Her Campfire years were powerfully formative, especially in the area of learning how to create welcoming and integrated childcare environments for children with special needs, the kind of environments that promote connection. It was an area that had special significance for LaFawnda who is dyslexic. She tapped into the wisdom she had gained through her own disability and began exploring how to help children develop comfort and ease with their own disabilities and with the disabilities of others. It is clear in speaking with her that this work was—and is—deeply satisfying, because it connects kids traditionally cut-off to the larger community.

Again, it’s all about connection for LaFawnda. No child, in LaFawnda’s mind, should ever be pushed to the side.

In August 2009, LaFawnda headed back to Seattle, a city she fell in love with while attending Seattle Pacific University. Lucky for Kids Co. she did, because she was able to accept an assistant manager position at Kids Co. at Graham Hill in April 2010. Six months later, true to LaFawnda form, she was promoted to the program manager position of the new Kids Co. at McDonald center. One year later, she snagged the management of a second Kids Co. center, this one at Kids Co. at Lincoln.

She is a most deceptive dynamo, gracious at every turn, exuding kindness with a complete lack of guile. Asked what she looks for when hiring staff, her answer was quick: “I look for people who want to be here.”

In other words, she is looking for pros who cherish connection.



LaFawnda Williams

The Martinez Family and the Power of Partnership



Everyone experiences years that test them.

For Sebastiana and Celso Martinez and their three little boys, Celso (jr.), Aldo, and Osvaldo, 2011 was such a year. The testing began in March when a case of mistaken identity landed Sebastiana in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Tacoma. She was not the person ICE sought, but like the person they wanted, she too was in the United States illegally. At the time, Celso (jr.) was 6-years-old and the twins, Aldo and Osvaldo, were only one, all three born in Seattle. Should she be deported, the boys would lose their mother.

After a week, Sebastiana was released, but the question of her immigration status remained hanging and would not be settled for a year. During this time, she made four appearances in Immigration Court, three of which she faced without representation, because she could not afford a lawyer. Only her social worker came to support her. **“You have to think positive,”** Sebastiana recalls her social worker telling her, and remain positive in spite of everything is precisely what firm-minded Sebastiana did.

A key part of remaining positive was a decision to volunteer at Denise Louie Education Center where her twins were enrolled. The entire year she would volunteer at the center during the day and work nights to earn money. By the end of the grueling year, she had letters of recommendation to offer the court and enough cash saved up to hire an attorney. Sebastiana’s determination and tenacity panned out: the court awarded her a Green Card.

Overcoming this obstacle, however, was only the first stage of Sebastiana and Celso’s plan.

“I have a lot of goals to do,” shared Sebastiana. “I want to study and learn how I can help people.” These words could as easily have been uttered by Celso and the boys as by Sebastiana, because every member of the Martinez family has sights set on creating a successful life. In this work, Kids Co. is their valuable partner.

Sebastiana and Celso heard about Kids Co. from a tutor in their apartment building. It was late spring 2012, and with Sebastiana’s immigration status settled, the family was ready to seek full-time employment and go to school. Their only hurdle—and it was not a small one—was the cost of childcare. She came to Kids Co. at South Shore to see what options might be available and learned about the Kids Co. Scholarship Fund. They applied, and received scholarships for the boys. The parents would pay an equitable co-pay and Kids Co. would cover the rest.

The help enabled them to initiate the next stage of their plan, which is changing their lives for the better. Now, Sebastiana drops the boys off at Kids Co. before heading off to English as a Second Language (ESL) school. She gets out of class at 11:30 a.m., heads home to make dinner for Celso and the boys, and then goes to work at Jack in the Box, where she puts in a full eight hour shift. Five days a week, Celso stocks shelves from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. at a local Grocery Outlet and takes the ESL classes the store offers after getting off work. At the end of the day, he picks up the boys at Kids Co.

Families like these are not looking for a handout; they are looking for a partner to help them create solid, positive futures that benefit us all.

To many, the schedule they keep is brutal, but to them, it is a path to a powerful future. Their boys share their vision and are knocking the ball out of the park at school. Celso (jr.)’s favorite course of study is writing, Aldo is a fan of math, and Osvaldo, the shyest of the three, claims reading as his grand interest.

“It’s a little hard now, but in the future better,” Sebastiana reflected. This is the kind of exemplary family the Kids Co. Scholarship Fund supports. Families like these are not looking for a handout; they are looking for a partner to help them create solid, positive futures that benefit us all.

Kids Co. is that partner.



The Martinez Family

THANK
YOU

A heartfelt thanks to the people, businesses, foundations, and organizations listed below whose support helped fulfill Kids Co.'s mission and work with children in FY'13 (9/1/2012 to 8/31/2013)

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SeeYourImpact.org
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City Hardware & General Store
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Costco Wholesale - 4th Ave S
Costco Wholesale - Aurora
Costco Wholesale - Issaquah
Costco Wholesale - Kirkland
Costco Wholesale - Lynnwood
Lowe's Hardware - Rainier
Metropolitan Market - Uptown
Metropolitan Market - Kirkland
Metropolitan Market - Sandpoint
Robin Schneider-Bundy and John Bundy
Target
Maria L. Thompson
Woodland Park Zoo

A stylized logo with the word "Thank" in a large, elegant, cursive script font, and the word "YOU" in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font below it. The "YOU" is in a light blue color, while "Thank" is in a darker blue.

ASSETS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

August 31,	2013
Current Assets:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$821,958
Accounts Receivable, Net	56,607
Prepaid Expenses	61,253
Total Current Assets	939,818
Property and Equipment, Net	162,491
	\$1,102,309

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

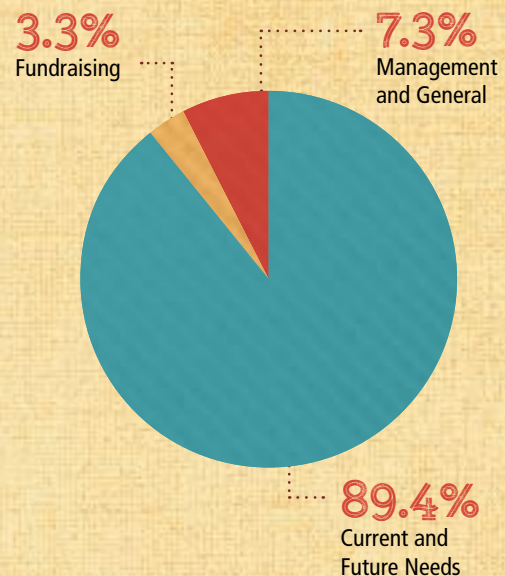
Current Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	\$221,521
Refundable Deposits	59,600
Unearned Program Fees	54,307
Total Current Liabilities	335,428
Capital Lease Obligations	38,135
Total Liabilities	373,563
Unrestricted Net Assets	728,746
	\$1,102,309

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

August 31,	2013
Revenue and Support:	
Program Service Fees	\$3,370,462
Grants and Contributions	81,866
Miscellaneous Revenue	4,135
Investment Income	600
Total Revenue and Support	3,457,063
Expenses:	
Program Services	2,956,165
Management and General	240,640
Fundraising	109,797
Total Expenses	3,306,602
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	150,461
Unrestricted Net Assets, Beginning of Year	578,285
Unrestricted Net Assets, End of Year	\$728,746



Allocation of Funds Received for Fiscal Year 2013





COME PLAY WITH US!

Like Kids Co. on Facebook (search on Kids Co. Seattle).



Kids Co. 11 Center Locations

- Ballard
- Capitol Hill/Eastlake
- Green Lake
- Mercer Island (2)
- Mount Baker
- Queen Anne (2)
- Rainier Beach
- Seward Park
- Wallingford

Kids Co.

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INSPIRE WONDER!



The Independent Charities Seal of Excellence is awarded to the members of Independent Charities of America and Local Independent Charities of America that have, upon rigorous independent review, been able to certify, document, and demonstrate on an annual basis that they meet the highest standards of public accountability, program effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. These standards include those required by the US Government for inclusion in the Combined Federal Campaign, probably the most exclusive fund drive in the world. Of the 1,000,000 charities operating in the United States today, it is estimated that fewer than 50,000, or 5 percent, meet or exceed these standards, and, of those, fewer than 2,000 have been awarded this Seal. **Kids Co. is one.**