



# 2023 Annual Report

Changing lives through brain-centered programs & services since 1983

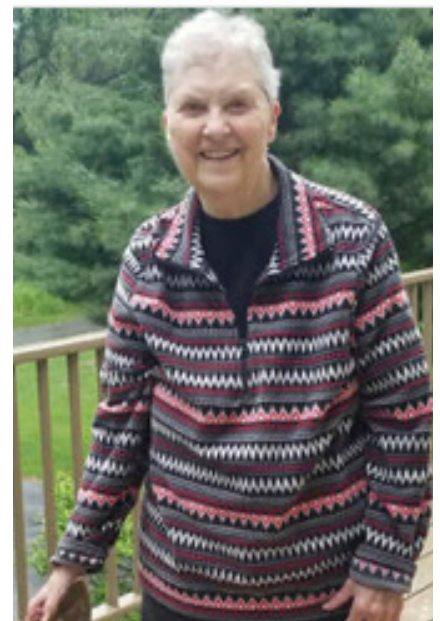
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## *This Annual report is dedicated to Jo Gascoigne*

We celebrate the life of our dear friend and colleague, Jo Gascoigne, who passed away on June 1, 2023 at the age of 91. She was a pioneer in the education field and a dedicated volunteer at A Chance To Grow.

Jo shared a founding principle of A Chance To Grow, that physical education is a key factor for children to reach their full potential. For 20 years, Jo generously volunteered her time and talents to A Chance To Grow. We honor her memory with every child we serve. Thank you, Jo!



# Get To Know A Chance To Grow

This year A Chance To Grow celebrated its 38th Anniversary! A Chance To Grow has been changing lives through brain-centered programs and services since 1986.

## OUR MISSION

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We are all born with innate abilities, but to varying degrees. Regardless of ability, everyone deserves the chance to grow to their highest potential. We strive to improve lives by maximizing brain and body function.

Our Mission is to promote the maximum development of the whole person through innovative, individualized, and comprehensive brain-centered programs and services.

## WHO WE SERVE

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A Chance To Grow serves a wide range of people facing a variety of challenges -- children with neurological issues such as ADHD/autism, youth injured by contact sports, people suffering from trauma, toddlers with adverse childhood experiences, grade school students struggling to learn. What do they all have in common? Their brain function has been compromised by illness, injury, trauma, or inadequate development. To varying degrees, the people we serve are struggling with communication, with academic work, with daily tasks, with emotional regulation. And their families struggle. Too often they have run the gamut of doctors, schools, therapists, and specialists, and still, they struggle. At A Chance To Grow they can find help.

## PROGRAMS WE PROVIDE

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We have developed a unique, comprehensive, and customizable array of clinical interventions aimed at helping those with impaired neurological function, regardless of its origin. We also have educational programs for children and we train teachers and child care providers on how to strengthen the neural pathways critical to a child's learning and development.

Our primary program areas are all rooted in the science of neurophysiological brain development. Our programs and services are offered in clinical, school, and home settings. We especially want our life-changing services available for those who need them most -- families with substantial barriers to getting the support they need, whether it be appropriate health care, education, high-quality child care, or other supports.



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Erica Dickerson has been with A Chance To Grow for the past 23 years, previously serving as Director of Clinical and Home-Based Services.



Dear Friends,

Innovation is in A Chance To Grow's DNA. If our founders had not searched for new ways to help brain-injured children, we would not be here. Seeking new approaches is integral to our strategic plan, because without doing so, we cannot meet our mission – To promote the maximum development of the whole child and adult through innovative, individualized and comprehensive brain-centered programs and services.

Two of our departments led the challenge to innovate this year:

Our Minnesota Learning Resource Center (MLRC) has been in the forefront of bringing brain-based educational interventions for years to teachers, through its Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (S.M.A.R.T.), first in K-3 and Pre-K classrooms. Four years ago, we developed a version for use by Family Child Care Providers to ensure that the littlest learners, especially in rural areas, are ready to learn. In its fourth year, the S.M.A.R.T. Steps project is growing in leaps and bounds. The MLRC has made invaluable partnerships with four of Minnesota's Initiative Foundations, allowing the program to expand well into the Northern, Northwest, Central and Southern areas of the state. To date, S.M.A.R.T. Steps is in 37 counties. We've trained more than 150 FCC's, ensuring that children in rural areas can get enhanced learning readiness. Says one provider, "It was the best thing I ever did, I feel I am really helping these kids!"

Our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center serves at-risk children ages 6 weeks to 5 whose development is threatened by numerous factors. To address the barriers to social-emotional growth, the Center has added the Conscious Discipline approach to its repertoire of trauma-informed curricula. This ground-breaking approach is designed specifically to provide children with the tools needed to feel safe, stay connected, and handle their feelings appropriately. Combined with our S.M.A.R.T. approach, and other resources recently adopted, Turnquist is on the cutting edge of early childhood care and education.

Two departments saw major changes in staff.

- Julie Neumann, the Director of Clinical Services, left us after 17 years. Michelle Koyama, the Assistant Director who has been here 11 years, has replaced her. During this change, the department implemented the Raintree System, a platform designed specifically for Occupational, Speech-Language therapists, and other practitioners, which will help us better manage and grow the department.
- Home-Based Services said goodbye to Edith Lockhart, who had been with ACTG for 18 years. Jordan Dockan, our new Director, joined ACTG in February 2023, coordinating a team of more than 150 PCAs serving 70 families.

This year, our wonderful community partners, the East Minneapolis Exchange Club, the Northeast Lions Club, and the Kiwanis Club, have provided tremendous support to ACTG as a whole, and Turnquist in particular. We could not be more grateful.

We are also thankful for the support this year received from the Otto Bremer Trust, the Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation, the Casey Albert T. O'Neil Foundation, the Northland Foundation, First Children's Finance, The Sauer Family Foundation, The Schulze Family Foundation, the Mardag Foundation, and last, but certainly not least, Sheet Metal Connectors for all of their support of our programs.

Change can be challenging, as it was at times in 2023, but as I look back over all we accomplished, I'm proud of our staff, our clients, and our families for working together to make this a great year!

Gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erica Dickerson".

# CLINICAL SERVICES

A Chance To Grow's Clinical Services emphasize a holistic, integrated approach that supports children and adults achieve independence, and develop social, and daily living skills.



## Occupational Therapy

### Speech-Language Therapy

**2,273** sessions

Supporting children and adults of all ages experiencing communication or speech challenges

**4,251** sessions

Empowering children to develop the skills they need to grow into healthy, independent adults

### Neuro Integrative Clinic

**687** sessions

Promoting brain growth and social, physical, and emotional development through purposeful movement

### Audiology Clinic

**92** evaluations

Providing diagnostic assessments of hearing and auditory processing skills for all ages, as well as interventions and referrals

### Vision Clinic & Therapy

**67** exams

Improving functional vision and visual processing skills, and providing vision exams, developmental visual testing, preventative eye care, and glasses prescriptions

### Brain Training

**346** sessions

Helping improve mental acuity through two non-invasive and holistic brain training programs: Neurofeedback and AVE

## WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE

- Our approach is built on movement-based brain science. We focus on the development of robust neural pathways that carry information from the senses -- vision, hearing, balance -- to the brain.
- We are able to help individuals with a wide range of neurological issues. While many organizations may focus on a single issue or challenge, we have adapted our approach to meet the needs of people with complex, sometimes overlapping issues. And we are able to provide coordinated care in ways others don't.
- We take a developmental approach. This holds that old issues and current challenges people face often originate when someone is unable to develop normally through a specific stage -- for any reason. This idea allows us to identify problems and address them in ways others cannot, because we look at the brain-body connection and systems, and how they impact overall development.

# SCHOOL SERVICES

A Chance To Grow's School Services include Contract School-Based Services as well as Third-Party Billing for Charter Schools throughout the state of Minnesota.

## Third-Party Billing

Since A Chance To Grow's Third-Party Billing initiative began in 2011, we have helped more than 50 charter schools across Minnesota generate over \$3,700,000 in federal funding for Special Education. With extensive knowledge of charter school finance, we work with schools to ensure proper reporting of expenditures at year's end. The funds schools receive from billing are essential, as they are used to support programs and services for students in Special Education.

Schools Supported: **47**  
Revenue generated: **\$533,584.50**



## Supporting Special Education Resources

The Special Education programs and services supported by Third-Party Billing funds often include Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Hearing Services, Nursing Services, Mental Health Services, Transportation, Assistive Technology Devices, and additional aides (PCA's) and accommodations. Ensuring access to these services in school is critical for students with diverse needs. It fosters an inclusive learning environment where each student can thrive academically, develop essential skills, and build confidence, ultimately laying the foundation for success in school and beyond.

## Contract School-Based Services

We contract our skilled Speech-Language and Occupational therapists, as well as our Optometrist and Audiologist to schools across the Twin Cities metro area and beyond. Our Contract School-Based Services support sensory processing needs, fine motor development, language skills, and much more for students with IEPs. We provide student-centered, academic-focused, and evidence-based therapies on-site by fully licensed and experienced clinicians.

Hours of OT & SLP: **6,031**  
Schools Receiving Services: **12**



# EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A Chance To Grow's Educational Services strive to promote academic readiness by addressing barriers to academic success.

## Turnquist Child Enrichment Center



Turnquist Child Enrichment Center is an NAEYC-accredited, Strong Beginnings site, and a 4-star Parent Aware Certified child care center for children ages six weeks to five years old. We emphasize cognitive and social-emotional development to help each child reach his or her full potential. Additionally, teen parents are provided with transportation services to help foster a stable home environment and serve as a stepping-stone on their path to self-sufficiency.

Children Served: **46**

Parents Served Under The Age of 24: **16**

**15,549 lbs.** of food provided to Turnquist Families

## Conscious Discipline Curriculum

Turnquist Child Enrichment Center focuses on social emotional learning with the help of the Conscious Discipline program. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive and trauma-informed social-emotional learning curriculum for teachers and families. The program provides ongoing learning opportunities to ensure safe schools and homes. In using Conscious Discipline, we commit to developing warm and caring environments for the youngest of learners.

## COMING IN 2024

To facilitate family engagement and community partnerships, Turnquist has partnered with Wanda Felder, an expert in Parent and Early Childhood Education at Minneapolis Public Schools, to host Parent Education Nights. Starting in 2024, Turnquist will be hosting Parent Education Nights Quarterly with new and interesting topics for discussion.



# EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Minnesota Learning Resource Center (MLRC) meets the mission of providing brain-centered training programs through workshops, and supporting educators in using a developmental approach with learners.



## Minnesota Learning Resource Center

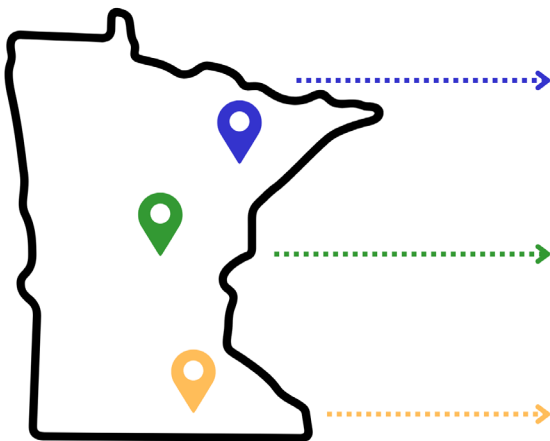
**146** Educators Trained in **4** States  
S.M.A.R.T. Workshops: **3** / Pre-K Workshops: **5**  
S.M.A.R.T. Steps: **52** Child Care Providers Trained  
S.M.A.R.T. Steps Mentoring Visits: **15**

Since the S.M.A.R.T. program was established in 1999, more than 8,000 educators have been trained in over 300 schools across the nation.

## S.M.A.R.T. Steps Sites in Minnesota

S.M.A.R.T. Steps was developed five years ago at the request of many home-based child care providers caring for very young children. S.M.A.R.T. Steps training prepares Family Child Care Providers with the knowledge and tools they need to better support the cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development of children, aged 0-5.

### 52 Providers trained within 3 Initiative Foundation Regions in Minnesota



#### The Northland Foundation Region

Counties: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, St. Louis

#### The Initiative Foundation Region

Counties: Chisago, Crow Wing, Morrison, Stearns, Todd, Wright

#### Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation Region

Counties: Blue Earth, Brown, Goodhue, Le Sueur, Olmstead, Rice, Martin, Steele, Watonwon, Winona



# HOME-BASED SERVICES

A Chance To Grow's Home-Based Services provide support to families who are caring for loved ones with a variety of physical, mental, behavioral and emotional needs.



## Personal Care Assistants

ACTG's Home-Based Services provide families with Personal Care Assistant (PCA) services for children and adults with a variety of physical, mental, behavioral and emotional needs. Our program pairs a client with a PCA of their choosing and, with our staff of Registered Nurses, creates a custom care plan tailored to the client's situation.

PCAs Provided: **118**  
Hours of Care: **114,891**  
Clients/Households Served: **80**



## Waiver Services

Home-Based Services offer two waiver programs, Respite Care and Homemaking, to homebound individuals. Respite Care gives families a break from taking care of child or adult family member with a disability. Homemaking helps individuals manage a variety of daily tasks to enhance their quality of life.

Respite Care Hours Provided: **1,560**  
Homemaking Hours Provided: **408**  
Nurse Visits: **638**  
Nurse Hours: **886**

*"This program is essential to my children and to my family. I don't know how we could survive without it."  
- Mother of Client / PCA Caregiver*

## COMING IN 2024

ACTG anticipates significant changes within the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program in Minnesota as the state transitions to Community First Services and Supports (CFSS). This transition will introduce new possibilities, such as allowing parents of minors to provide care services to their children and spouses to care for their partners within the program. While the exact launch date of these changes remains undisclosed, it is anticipated to launch in 2024 and we are actively preparing to adapt our services to meet the evolving needs of our community.



# Pulaski Gets S.M.A.R.T.!

Meet the Early Childhood Education Duo whose incredible efforts have resulted in district-wide implementation of A Chance To Grow's S.M.A.R.T. program!

Innovative and effective describe the brain-centered therapies A Chance To Grow began developing nearly 40 years ago. Our S.M.A.R.T. (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) program evolved when research started to document that, for many children, the first signs of neurodevelopmental issues surface as they start school. ACTG's Minnesota Learning Resource Center (MLRC) was formed to adapt our brain-stimulation programs for students who have trouble learning for any reason. Designed for easy integration into a school day, S.M.A.R.T. uses daily movement activities to strengthen neural pathways that are critical for learning.

What began as a K-3 program now has Pre-K and Family Child Care versions. Over the last 24 years, through 2023, A Chance To Grow has trained 8,010 teachers in the effective use of S.M.A.R.T. Pre-K and S.M.A.R.T. K-3, plus we have mentored teachers in 348 schools in Minnesota and a dozen other states.



Lannoye Elementary Student practicing colors with a S.M.A.R.T. Slap Track

Learn how the entire school district of Pulaski, Wisconsin, came to integrate S.M.A.R.T. into its programs:



Sara Nys and Amber Molle at the Minneapolis S.M.A.R.T. Workshop in June 2023

For the last 14 years, Amber Molle has joined Sara Nys's classroom every morning to help students improve their speech and language skills. Sara, a Special Education Teacher who works with 3-5 year olds, and Amber, a Speech-Language Therapist, are a dynamic duo in early childhood education at Lannoye Elementary in Pulaski. Their S.M.A.R.T. journey started some 14 years ago, and their dedication to the program has positively affected hundreds of children in their classroom and beyond.

It all began when Amber attended a mini S.M.A.R.T. training in Milwaukee, WI, and returned to school, inspired to try the program. As it turned out, Sara's classroom was a great fit to share S.M.A.R.T. activities with students.



**Rebounders help a child's body understand the orientation of body parts and movement**

Says Sara, "Since the children that come to my class are just beginning their educational journey, they are often lacking the skills they need in order to learn in the classroom environment."

Eager to learn more, Sara and Amber invested in the 4-hour drive to Minneapolis, MN, in October 2014 to take the three-day S.M.A.R.T. training. The pair garnered many insights that hit home and reminded them of their students. One in particular stood out: "We had previously thought that once children reach specific stages of development, that they can only move forward. We didn't fully realize how elastic the brain is, and for how long the brain is elastic. The coolest part was learning that students could go back, even all the way to reflexes to integrate those skills."

Amber explains, "We get kids that when they turn three, are really significantly delayed in language. Knowing that those students can go back and focus upon the key readiness skills that they need to be in place before developing language, was a huge discovery."

As a speech therapist, Amber values how the S.M.A.R.T. program encompasses the whole child. Amber works with children aged 3-5 years with and without special needs. "So many of the challenges that my speech and language delayed students face can be helped through movement," says Amber. All of the concepts covered by the program, such as prepositions, thematic vocab, readiness vocab, and directional words, help her students get far greater practice repetitions than with traditional methods. S.M.A.R.T. also helps her kiddos be more ready to learn in all aspects of their day, including therapy.



**Walking on the balance beam encourages balance and body awareness**



**Tactile discs help children strengthen balance**

## Pulaski Gets S.M.A.R.T. (cont.)

Every Pulaski Elementary School has tactile trackers and cross-patterning opportunities on the walls, pads for balance practice, and other S.M.A.R.T. activities placed throughout the school.

As a result, the S.M.A.R.T. Team in Pulaski grows every school year. They train teachers, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Language Therapists, School Psychologists, program support professionals, paraprofessionals, and new staff during teacher orientation week. Paraprofessionals receive additional training, learning specific concerns to look out for when students perform S.M.A.R.T. activities and what cues and modifications to make. The team at Lannoye apply what they have learned and implement the S.M.A.R.T. program where students need daily support the most, right inside the classroom.



S.M.A.R.T. activities lend themselves to fun themes that kids love!

Sara says the positive impact of S.M.A.R.T. has been astounding: "When our students get to first, second, third grade, their teachers can tell which students have gone through the program. Even early childhood kids as they go into Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, the teachers can always tell those that have had S.M.A.R.T. in early childhood, because their ready-to-learn skills are more intact than some of the students going straight to kindergarten."



Reflex-focused S.M.A.R.T. activities support integration of retained reflexes

But they don't stop there. They ensure that parents are highly involved in their children's S.M.A.R.T. learning. Sara and Amber send students home with educational information about the program and they host parent nights, where parents can try S.M.A.R.T. activities with their children.

Amber shares why the S.M.A.R.T. program is such an essential part of teaching for her: *"I'm not just teaching language. The students that come to me, and all kids that come to us, have far greater needs than just one thing. S.M.A.R.T. hits on that holistic element. Social skills of learning, how to wait in line, let your friend go first, how to partner with a friend for an activity. It's not just motor, it's not just vision, it's not just auditory, it's not just repetitive concepts, it's holistic development."*

# 2023 Special Highlights

2023 was a big year for A Chance To Grow! Take a look at some highlights that took place over the year.

## The Race For The Children

Our 32nd Annual Race For The Children Fundraiser was a big success thanks our wonderful community! We thank those who supported, for helping us raise the funds that help us make the greatest impact possible.



## Minnesota Autism Conference

A Chance To Grow was a proud sponsor of the 2023 Minnesota State Autism Conference. We were thrilled to attend this great event, which hosted speakers and breakout sessions for attendees to connect, collaborate, educate, and advocate for the Autism Community.



## The Garden Of Hope

In July of 2023, A Chance To Grow announced its new Monthly Donor Initiative. Those who join the Garden Of Hope provide A Chance To Grow with the consistent funding needed to help more of those who need support.



## Holiday Festivities

This winter our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center hosted a holiday party for their students and parents. We provided families 2,773 pounds of fresh produce and non-perishable items in our free pantry for making holiday meals. Families were also able to get a wide array of essential care items and home goods, and child received presents! This event was made possible in collaboration with A Chance To Grow staff, Sheet Metal Connectors, the Northeast Lions Club, Second Harvest Heartland, Toys For Tots, and individual donors. To everyone who contributed, thank you for coming together as a community to support your neighbors.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Below you will find A Chance To Grow's 2023 Financial Statement, including revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities.

## Operations

Revenues	2023	2022
Contributions	105,688	140,652
Foundations	116,367	112,000
Program Service Revenues	5,241,121	5,189,587
Special Events	23,937	29,125
Rent & Other Income	813,620	971,750
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>6,300,732</b>	<b>6,443,114</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	4,897,816	5,373,526
Administrative Services	878,335	123,346
Fundraising	177,945	193,033
Building Operations	460,925	486,027
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>6,415,021</b>	<b>6,175,931</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(114,289)</b>	<b>267,183</b>

## Assets

Current Assets	2023	2022
Cash & Investments	1,360,224	1,661,220
Receivables	533,702	447,374
Inventories & Prepaid Expenses	157,113	240,068
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>2,051,039</b>	<b>2,348,662</b>

## Long-Term Assets

Net Land, Buildings, Equipment	2,434,681	2,395,882
Other Assets	15,855	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,501,575</b>	<b>4,744,544</b>

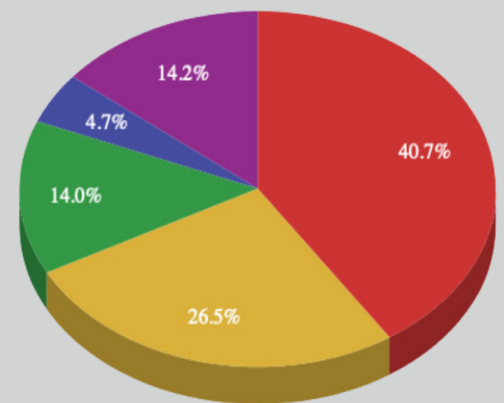
## Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities	2023	2022
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	189,149	172,200
Accounts Payable	40,719	50,485
Accrued Expenses	311,474	285,682
Deferred Revenues	96,138	85,093
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>637,480</b>	<b>593,460</b>
Long-Term Debt	424,477	597,177
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,061,957</b>	<b>1,190,637</b>

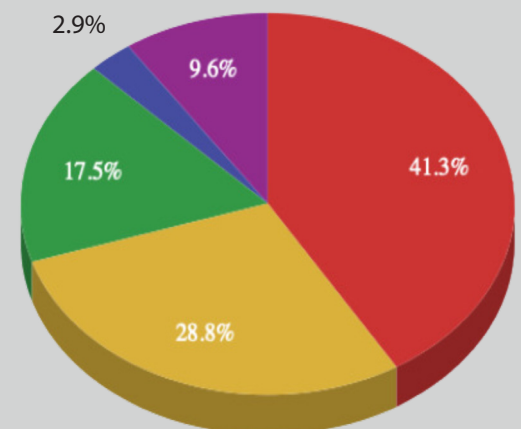
## Net Assets

Unrestricted Net Assets	3,354,618	3,513,907
Restricted Net Assets	85,000	40,000
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>4,501,575</b>	<b>4,744,544</b>

## 2023 Revenues = \$6,300,732



## 2023 Expenses = \$6,415,021



# SUPPORTERS

Our sincerest thank you to all the individuals and organizations who supported A Chance To Grow in 2023. We are very grateful for friends like you.

## Foundations

The Fred C. & Katherine B. Andersen Foundation  
The Initiative Foundation  
The Mardag Foundation  
The Northland Foundation  
The Otto Bremer Trust  
The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation  
The Sauer Family Foundation  
The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
First Children's Finance

## Community Partners

Lions Club of Northeast  
NE Minneapolis Kiwanis Club  
East Minneapolis Exchange Club  
Minnesota Visiting Nurse Association  
Second Harvest Heartland  
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

## Government

Hennepin County  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Minnesota Department of Human Services

## Board of Directors

Fred Ojile, Chair - Attorney, Messinger & Ojile, PPLP  
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John Kretsch - Advocate, Business Professional  
Julia Sawyer - Autism Advocate, Business Professional  
Nancy Farnham, Secretary - Advocate, Fundraiser

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## Corporate Supporters

8 Corners Coffee  
American National Bank  
Ames Construction Charitable Foundation  
Bakken Museum  
Beiswenger's Hardware  
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Café Latte  
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Emily's Grill and Deli  
Guzior Armbrrecht Maher  
Holy Land  
Matchbox Coffee  
Market Barbeque  
Marina Grill and Deli  
Minnesota Twins  
Minnesota Vikings  
Mother Earth Gardens  
National Camera Exchange  
Northeast Bank  
NE Tattoo & Fade Away  
One Digital  
Pillar Forum Coffee  
Punch Pizza  
Roseline's Place  
Roots Roasting  
Sheet Metal Connectors  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul --- Twin Cities  
Spring Street Tavern  
St. Paul Saints  
Total Wine & More  
Turbo Tim's Anything Automotive  
Uproaster Coffee

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Paul Conroy  
Rhonda Kuehl  
Sandy Manns  
Steve Paprocki  
Teresa Lawson  
Thomas & Cheryl Sauter  
Vicky Stein

# SUPPORT A CHANCE TO GROW

Your gift will ensure that children get interventions that build foundational capacities, safe supportive child care, and services designed to improve learning readiness.

## To become a monthly donor

Join *The Garden of Hope* at [www.actg.org/gardenofhope](http://www.actg.org/gardenofhope)

## To make a one-time donation

visit [www.actg.org/donate](http://www.actg.org/donate) or scan the QR code below.

**ANY AMOUNT YOU GIVE WILL HAVE A HUGE  
IMPACT ON A CHILD'S LIFE.**

Scan  
to  
Give!



Learn more at  
**ACTG.org/donate!**

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