



2023 Annual Report



learning grove

Always Growing Together

To you, our most cherished friends and supporters, we are pleased to present this summary of what we accomplished together in 2023. Your support and confidence has helped shape the lives of **5,280 people across 11 counties in Northern Kentucky and Ohio.**

We were so fortunate to add Families**FORWARD** this year, an organization with over a century of impact. We are so proud of our shared vision of a world where all children and youth reach their full potential, and all families thrive. What guides us toward this vision is a concise impact strategy backed by our core values.

We gut-check every decision for alignment to this strategy. Our reach is vast, our scope is intentional, and our community of supporters (that's you!) is miraculous.

Throughout these pages you'll experience the special stories that captured our hearts and attention this past year.

Please accept our wholehearted thanks for the role you played in making these experiences possible.

Humbly,



Shannon Starkey-Taylor
Chief Executive Officer



Drew Tilow
Board President



Impact Strategy



MISSION

Learning Grove develops and supports innovative quality learning experiences that empower children, youth, and families across diverse communities.

VISION

We envision a world where all children and youth reach their full potential, and all families thrive.

CORE VALUES

Roll up your sleeves. We are driven by a shared purpose and a commitment to achieving our mission.

I've got your back. Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do, and working together brings out the best in all of us.

Crush it, humbly. We strive for excellence in everything we do. We encourage innovation, embrace change, and constantly seek new ways to make a meaningful impact.

Differences are gifts. We celebrate diversity. Everyone deserves to be heard, respected and included. Differences are our greatest strength.

Do the right thing, all the time. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and always strive to do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

COMMITMENT TO DE&I

At Learning Grove, we strive to be anti-racist in thought, deed, and action:

We stand against all policies, attitudes and behavior that are barriers to love for all people.

We humble ourselves when we acknowledge and correct our racism.

We value and accept our children, youth, families and staff as individuals. We celebrate our differences.

We embrace our ethical responsibility to advance equity and overcome racism.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Created with the understanding that 90% of brain development occurs by the age of 5, our “learning through play” constructivist curriculum, coupled with our warm and welcoming home-like environments, fosters curiosity, resilience, critical thinking and problem-solving. Our preschoolers enter kindergarten ready for success.

When Passion and Skills Match

Cameron knew he was cut out for a career with young children and started working in a local child care program. Nurturing came naturally to him, so he started taking classes in early childhood education at Cincinnati State.

To get his associate degree, Cameron would need to complete two practicum teaching experiences to gain the hands-on skills that are essential to teacher preparation. Cincinnati State and Learning Grove have teamed up to provide a venue for student teachers to gain valuable experience in a high-quality program. Cameron completed his practicums at Learning Grove’s William L. Mallory Sr. and Price Hill Early Learning Centers.

Cameron says, “I am deeply grateful for the valuable lessons and support that Learning Grove has provided, which have significantly enriched my educational journey.”

As he aligned his natural nurturing ability with his learning about quality environments and effective teaching, Cameron noticed differences between the center where he worked and Learning Grove. He liked the support and mentorship he received at Learning Grove and soon realized that he wanted to work in a high-quality program. Cameron inquired about working at Learning Grove and was hired to work at the William L. Mallory Sr. Early Learning Center.



William L. Mallory Sr. Center Director Nefertiri Gaskin reflects, "Cameron's passion was there and now his skills match. It's hard to find qualified teachers, so this teacher pipeline partnership is so valuable, and it's working!"

In spring of 2024, Cameron will graduate with an associate's degree in early childhood education from Cincinnati State, and he is still working in the infant classroom at Learning Grove's William L. Mallory Sr. Early Learning Center.



Early Childhood Education Outcomes



85% of children are on-track in social and emotional development



72% of children are on-track in cognitive and language development*



98% of families report their classroom teacher helps their child learn and grow

*Compared to Ohio's 35% and Kentucky's 46% state school readiness assessment scores

1,002 served

62% living in low income households

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Broader than our own classrooms and programs, we look to lift all children, youth, and families in our community. Our Family and Community Services team operates our external coaching, resource coordination, family outreach, and Early Head Start and Head Start services.

“You are like family to me.”

New mother Liz was first spotted seven years ago pushing a baby stroller in Price Hill. Learning Grove’s Early Childhood Resource Coordinator based at the Robert & Adele Schiff Early Learning Center stopped to meet Liz and her baby.

Over time, the coordinator paid frequent visits to the home, offering resources and help, and dropping off diapers provided by community partner Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank.

“We’ve worked so hard to earn her trust,” reflects April Mueller, Director of Family Outreach. “It takes time and patience.”

Through Learning Grove’s partnership with the Community Learning Center Institute (CLCI), Liz was supported to enroll her children at Oyler School. Several years later, when Liz’s home was condemned, she and her two children went to live in the woods. The team at Learning Grove stepped in right away to help Liz secure housing.



Family photo provided by Liz

With few life skills equipping her for this situation, Liz needed help with the complicated paperwork for the rental interview. With Learning Grove's steady support, Liz secured a stable housing arrangement. Liz shares that the Learning Grove Early Childhood Resource Coordinator (ECRC) "helped me get a house and she has changed my life."

"She helps me and the family with everything anytime I ask her. She never says no, she figures out something to help me. You guys have become like family to me. Thank you so much."



Photo provided by Liz

Family and Community Services Outcomes

596
served

88% living in low
income
households



46% of families participated in at least one engagement and education opportunity, in partnership with Community Learning Center Institute partner schools



51% of children were connected to a quality early childhood education program and/or Learning Grove's Learning Together mobile classroom

Dear friends of Learning Grove,

In January of 2023, Families**FORWARD** joined Learning Grove, enhancing an already strong portfolio of programs serving school-aged youth. This merger leverages our complementary strengths and programs to achieve even greater impact together. I am so proud of what we have accomplished and that the Families**FORWARD** legacy is going strong.

It means so much to me personally to lead Families**FORWARD** into its next chapter of growth and to do so side-by-side with the dedicated team at Learning Grove.



There are several bright spots from this past year that were made possible by this partnership:

- Expanded resource coordination from four school sites to six.
- Awarded two new competitive 21st Century Learning Center grants from the Ohio Department of Education that total \$1.7 million over 5 years.
- Expanded Learning Grove's NaviGo program to Withrow University High School, with the help of a new \$145,000 grant from Hamilton County.



- In addition to serving as Executive Director of Families**FORWARD**, I have taken on the role of Vice President of School-Age Services at Learning Grove to continue to bring our best strengths forward to serve more youth.

I especially want to thank the Families**FORWARD** board and donors for your vision and support. It is my honor to continue to lead this work on behalf of our 879 students and their families, and our over 50 community partners.

With gratitude,

H. Michelle Toney

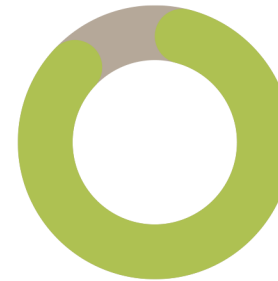
Michelle Toney



Families**FORWARD** Outcomes



86% of Families**FORWARD** seniors have college/university or post-secondary career training plans after graduation



91% of youth demonstrated social and emotional skills necessary for success



96% of parents reported that Families**FORWARD** was "very important" or "important" to their family

879
served

99.8% living in low
income households

SCHOOL AGE SERVICES

Our school age enrichment programs are convenient, quality-oriented, and affordable. The learning and fun continue in out-of-school time with friends in a familiar place, on-site at our partnering schools. In addition to providing a safe and welcoming experience, there is active learning to promote social emotional skills, recreational reading, health/fitness and more.

Who are the real STARS? Our staff!

Learning Grove's 10 before- and after-school programs in Kentucky are involved in a two-year process to reach 4 STARS, a high-quality designation awarded by the state. The focus on quality is a win-win: children benefit from the very best learning experiences and staff participate in the robust training and support needed to understand and feel confident in their roles.

"We do a lot of work together on our systems so that staff are involved and understand what we're trying to achieve," says Beth Wiseman, Director of School Age Services. "Our team appreciates the level of input they have into what we're doing." The collaborative process is working! Four sites achieved 4 STARS in 2023, three sites have achieved 4 STARS so far in 2024, and two will complete the process by November of 2024.

Kentucky School Age Services Outcomes



374
served

9

6% living in low
income
households



72% of families
reported increased
awareness of the
social-emotional
competencies



95% of children
are on-track in
social and
emotional
development

NAVIGO COLLEGE & CAREER PREP SERVICES

NaviGo, Learning Grove's college and career service, is one-of-a-kind, exposing hundreds of local students each session to a potential college or career path and offering real-world workplace experiences with our region's top employers.

NaviGo connects students with coaches and businesses to provide first-hand work-based learning experiences, coaching, training, proven tools, and proprietary curriculum.

Alexis molds her future with NaviGo

Alexis was a high school student at the Grant County Career & Technology Center. She worked on and drove derby cars and enjoyed working with her hands but didn't yet have a concrete pathway into college or the skilled trades workforce. Her school was connected to NaviGo, Learning Grove's college and career readiness service that helps high school students and their families make informed decisions about their futures.

Lorraine, NaviGo's College & Career Connector, makes it her business to know about all training and employment opportunities in high-demand industry sectors like manufacturing.

She recalls a particular employer dilemma: Ken Schutzman, Financial Controller with Steinkamp Molding, was looking for hard-working young adults for their paid apprenticeship program, but he just didn't have the time or connections to find the right person.



Lorraine worked closely with Ken and NaviGo's school partners to find a candidate, which as it turns out, was Alexis. Lorraine helped Alexis prepare for the interview, which she aced! Alexis has now been employed with Steinkamp Molding for almost two years, has almost completed her apprenticeship (which includes industry-related classes at Gateway Community & Technical College) and they are very happy with her work.

Ken says, "Working with NaviGo to find Alexis was so beneficial to our company and we are already working with Lorraine to identify the next candidates for our 2024 apprenticeship."

NaviGo Outcomes



251 local
business partners
engaged



28,000
YouScience
aptitude
assessments
administered



1,860 work-
based learning
opportunities
offered



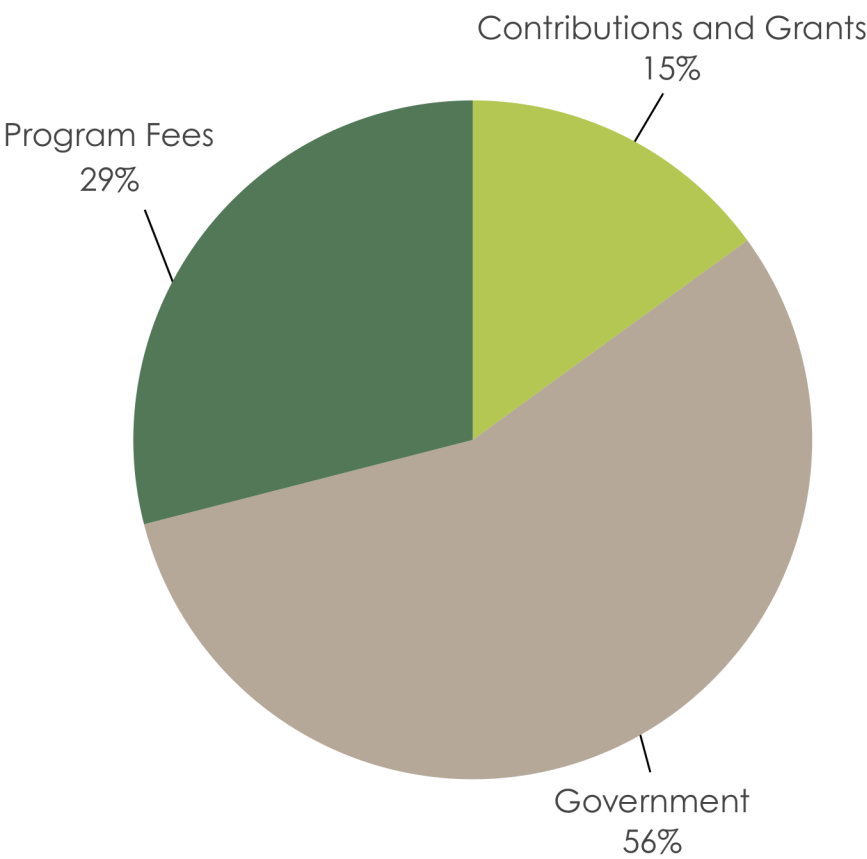
42,500 dual
high school –
college credits
earned

2,429
served

35% living in
low income
households

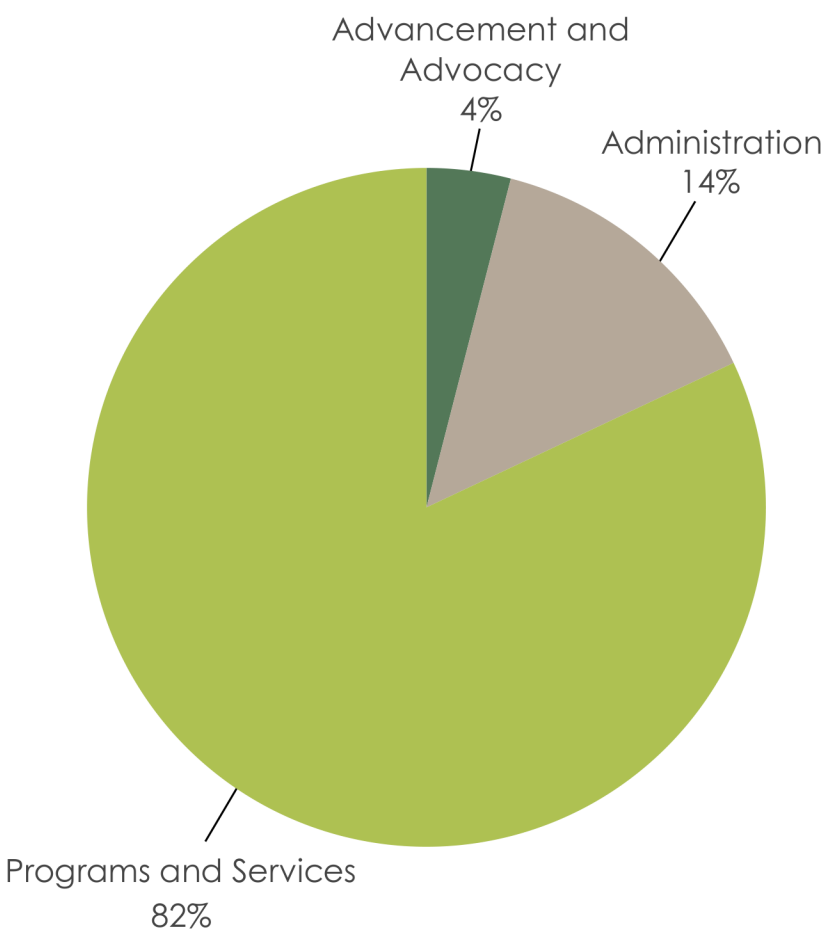
2023 FINANCIAL INFORMATION*

REVENUE



TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE:
\$17,748,098

EXPENSE



TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE:
\$17,605,398

NET ASSETS: \$5,137,083

*Unaudited financials

2023 PROGRAM MAP

NaviGo College & Career Prep Services

Beechwood Middle & High School
Bellevue Middle & High School
Boone County High School
Bracken County High School
Campbell County High School
Carroll County High School
Conner High School
Dayton Middle & High School
Dixie Heights High School
Fleming County High School
Gallatin County High School
Grant County High School & Career & Technical Center
Greenup County High School
Highlands High School
Holmes High School
Holy Cross High School
Ignite Institute
iLEAD Academy
Larry A. Ryle High School
Lewis County High School
Lloyd Memorial High School
Ludlow Middle & High School
Newport Middle & High School
Newport Central Catholic
Notre Dame Academy
Owen Co. High School
Pendleton Co. High School
Randall K. Cooper High School
Scott High School
Simon Kenton High School
Southgate Middle School
St. Henry
Walton Verona High School
Williamstown High School
Withrow University High School

School Age Services & FamiliesFORWARD

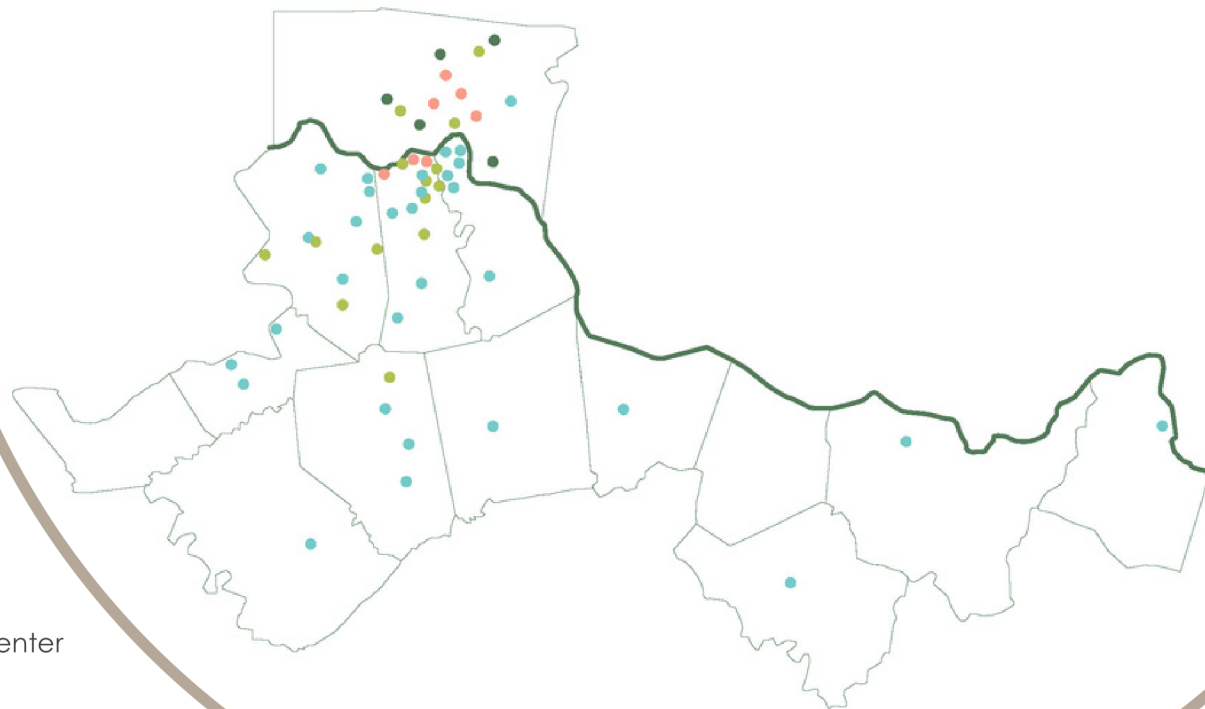
Blessed Sacrament Elementary
Beechwood Elementary
Bond Hill Academy
Carson School
Crittenden – Mt. Zion Elementary
Erpenbeck Elementary
Hays-Porter School
Kelly Elementary
Longbranch Elementary
Mary A. Goetz Elementary
New Haven Elementary
St. Pius X Elementary
St. Agnes
Withrow University High School

Family and Community Services

Academy of Multilingual Immersion Studies
Bond Hill Academy
Carson School
College Hill Fundamental Academy
Hays-Porter School
Mt. Washington School
Oyler School
Price Hill
Robert & Adele Schiff I
Robert & Adele Schiff II
Roberts Academy
Withrow University High School

Early Childhood Education

Altamont
CityLink
East Walnut Hills
Erlanger Elsmere
Future Environments
William L. Mallory Sr.
Price Hill
RiverCenter
River Ridge Elementary
Robert & Adele Schiff I
Robert & Adele Schiff II



Leadership is in our roots

Named to Cincinnati Enquirer's Top Workplaces list two years running, Learning Grove prioritizes investment in our top asset- our people. It's the form of recognition we cherish most.

Alongside that listing, we're proud to share ways our team's leadership was celebrated in the community in 2023:

- Learning Grove: Dr. O'dell M. Owens Community Hero Award from CET
- Families**FORWARD**: lead agency during the Cincinnati Public Schools State of the School address
- Erlanger-Elsmere Early Learning Center: Family-Friendly Certification by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
- Families**FORWARD** Executive Director Michelle Toney: speaker at Summer and Afterschool Conference
- Lead Teacher Xiara Quinn: student representative on the National Association for the Education of Young Children Governing Board
- Education Specialist Delorise Pennington: 2023 Cincinnati Preschool Promise All-Star Coach
- Vice President of Family & Community Services Deanna Lane: 2023 Cincinnati Business Courier CLIMB Award
- Vice President of Advocacy Mike Hammons: 2023 Greater Cincinnati Foundation Devou Cup Award
- Chief Program Officer Patti Gleason: August 2023 Notable in Movers & Makers Magazine

We are also inspired by, and grateful for, the continued leadership of our 2023 Board of Directors.

Drew Tilow, President
Marcia Sherman, Vice President
Carolyn Krisko, Treasurer
Tyran Stallings, Secretary
Becky Kosina, Member-at-Large
Katriece Barrett, Member-at-Large
Lori Zombek, Member-at-Large

Alison Zimmerman
Amy Cheney
Ashleigh DuBois
Bob Keppler
Dan Driscoll
Davette Shorter
Josh Ruth
Justin Knappick
Karen Floyd

Karen Hurley
Laura Guggenheim
Manny Hernandez
Michael Huwel
Mindy Kershner
Raymon Gaddis
Sally Moomaw
Steve Tracy
Tiffany Shiver



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