

Annual Report 2016-17

Reaching new milestones



Clockwise from top: Dignitaries, PSFC board members and community leaders participate in a ribbon cutting for The Mountain Center in the spring; toddlers enjoy being out for a walk at our East Stroudsburg Center; and our school-age children learn business skills through a lemonade stand.

Our mission... To provide resources for the evolving needs of community children and families, in support of efforts to achieve their goals.

Serving Monroe County since 1965

From Our Executive Director, Tim Lee...

In July 2016, our team had a daunting task in front of us: to open a vacant, former school in Tobyhanna by September for our new program year and to develop an educational/community center in the coming months. We tackled various projects such as: cleaning carpets, painting walls, setting up classrooms, moving furniture, cleaning bathrooms and installing security measures. We also ran wire for the Internet and phone system, added a new water filtration system, repaired water pipes and replaced a boiler. Visitors would wonder if our timeline was realistic. But with the dedication of staff, the help of many community volunteers, long days of work and lots of sweat, our goal was accomplished. We opened The Mountain Center right on time, with Head Start preschoolers filling four full-day and four half-day classrooms. Our East Stroudsburg Center opened on schedule as well, with new staff added at both locations.



We welcomed our very first infants and toddlers a few weeks later when we began a brand new class at each center. And a school-age program for children from K–3rd grade was established at TMC to accommodate kids attending the nearby Clear Run Elementary.

Once the early learning side of our new building was in operation, community nonprofits began providing services in the adjoining space, starting with Feeding Families Ministry's food pantry in early September. Habitat for Humanity opened its office in early November, Read Across

Monroe established a library, and the office of State Rep. Maureen Madden started serving constituents in December. Women's Resources, WIC, AARP's Senior Community Service Employment Program, Crossroads Community Services and Big Brothers/Big Sisters also joined our family of agencies. A senior activity center run by the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging is one of our newest partners. We have hosted events like a Latin Festival and college workshops, and public fitness trails are planned. Our gym and multipurpose room are in high demand, for sports/activities from basketball to Zumba and kids' ballet. And more is on the horizon!

Just as our East Stroudsburg Center is located in a disadvantaged area of our county, The Mountain Center is located in the Coolbaugh Township community, which has been identified as the most underserved area of Monroe County. Besides meeting the needs of our families, we are definitely meeting greater needs within the broader community through both our locations. A quote comes to mind which seems particularly relevant to our program year: *"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."* Cesar Chavez, civil rights activist



The Mountain Center has been providing important public services, too, like being a polling place for the spring 2017 primary election.



People wait in line for Feeding Families' food pantry, which is open on Thursday and Friday afternoons at TMC.

Educational Achievements & Child Outcomes

...from Program Director Sandy Shay

Children were assessed using the Teaching Strategies GOLD during the period from October 17, 2016 to May 9, 2017. The data reflects the growth of 236 children — 80 three-year-olds and 156 four-year-olds. The six areas of development (and three sub-areas) are grounded in 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, the PA Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Growth was noted in all areas of development— meeting or exceeding expectations determined by GOLD Growth Reports and in the high range of the National Normative Samples of other preschoolers nationwide. As seen in the chart below, the most growth was in the areas of literacy, cognitive and social emotional. Least amount of growth was in the areas of math, physical skills and language, but they still met expectations for age level. Overall, there is a 91% growth range of children meeting or exceeding expectations. Although the results show growth, our program needs to pay attention to whether children are meeting the developmental expectations for their age level. This is especially important for four-year-olds who need to acquire the school readiness skills to be successful in kindergarten.

Area of Development	3 Year Olds	4 Year Olds	Program
Social/Emotional/Social Studies	89%	91%	92%
Physical/Fine Motor/Gross Motor	94%	92%	93%
Language	91%	91%	91%
Cognitive/Science/Technology/The Arts	94%	92%	93%
Literacy	88%	84%	86%
Mathematics	91%	86%	89%

These strong outcomes can be attributed in part to the support of the East Stroudsburg Area School District's KTO Grant. This initiative has provided new computer systems, scanners, interactive white boards, resources/classroom materials and training on how to integrate technology with the curriculum. Positive improvements to the supervision and coaching of teaching staff had a significant impact on quality teaching strategies, which also impacted the children's outcomes. The ongoing support and quality of our Child Well Being System also continued to have a positive effect. Other contributing factors were: staff training, feedback on CLASS instructional support strategies, providing more quality materials in the weaker domain areas, more visuals for classroom use, and individual support/guidance. A continued partnership with the Center for Developmental Disabilities, an agency assisting children with autism, also contributed to these favorable outcomes.

Note: The statistics include outcomes for over 30 children with IEPs, 14 children with behavior treatment plans, and 139 children being monitored for social emotional/behavioral concerns. Of those with IEPs, 5% have speech delays, 6% have developmental delays, 1% have PDD/autism, .5% has Spina Bifida, and 1% have a social/emotional diagnosis. Such special needs reflect additional challenges in developing children's skills to meet age-level expectations.



An overview of our agency and its services/programs

PSFC provides the highest-quality nationally and state-accredited Pre-Kindergarten readiness classrooms, as well as comprehensive family support services, for about 320 children from lower-income families. Instruction for children ages 3 to 5 years-old takes place at two large centers with 11 classes total and at four classrooms within the East Stroudsburg Area School District. Our vision is to be recognized as Monroe County's foremost educator and provider of child-focused services.

Some major achievements during 2016-17:

- *Our Middle Smithfield, Smithfield and Resica classrooms again achieved Keystone Star 4 status.*
- *A Ribbon Cutting and Open House took place at The Mountain Center in the spring.*
- *We built on the birth to grade 3 continuum with the addition of infant/toddler classrooms and a school-age program, with busing to and from Clear Run Elementary Center.*
- *Family engagement, communication, and community partnership efforts continued to increase.*
- *Additional staff were hired for classrooms, the kitchen, and administrative and maintenance areas.*

Ensuring the best **Preschool/Kindergarten Readiness Educational Program** is a major priority. Our classrooms are continually accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We also have consistently earned the designation of a Keystone STAR4 rating, the top level of state achievement. PSFC is the only local agency that maintains this status at multiple sites in our county.

The federal and state funded **Head Start** program has been administered in Monroe County by our agency since 1965. We provide an extensive array of family support services and school readiness programming for our community's most vulnerable children and families, to ensure the accomplishment of goals and educational success. **Healthy Start Screenings** are an integral part of our program, with each child receiving physical, vision, dental, hearing, speech, and developmental screenings.

Full-Day Child Care Classrooms provide a safe, high-quality nurturing/learning environment for children of working parents. These classes are available to the public on a non-discriminatory basis via subsidized care or self-pay.

Our **Child Well-Being System** has greatly enhanced the social/emotional health of our classrooms. This was developed during the past several years in response to the increased enrollment of children with challenging behaviors and families in crisis. Key components are: the expertise and guidance of highly-trained behavioral health personnel, an enhancement of curriculum to include a stronger social/emotional component, greater emphasis on teacher training, and a higher level of family involvement. PSFC classrooms have become models for demonstrating this successful approach.

Coordination of the **Local Education and Resource Network (LEARN)** in Monroe County has been PSFC's responsibility since 2012. This role involves providing information, sharing expertise, and coordinating efforts with all local childcare providers to raise awareness and the quality of early childhood education and care.



State Senator John Blake reads to Head Start preschoolers at TMC.



Our **Youth Mentoring Program** provides the opportunity for high school students interested in a career in early childhood education to spend time in our classrooms. These students receive hands-on guidance, knowledge and support from ECE degreed teachers.

The **Health Literacy Program**, funded through Lehigh Valley Hospital — Pocono, provides first-response training for parents. It features an easy-to-follow guide, a first-aid kit and instruction in the use of all tools. This training empowers parents to take control of their families' healthcare needs, and greatly reduces the need for emergency room or doctor visits, leading to fewer missed school and work days.

PSFC's **Emergency Assistance Program** provides vital food, clothing and fuel assistance to families in crisis. The goal is to offer some stability to families who are facing difficult financial choices due to unexpected loss or expense. The emergency help that PSFC offers can mean the ability to purchase medicine, groceries, gas for the work vehicle, or heating fuel/electricity for the home. This provides the support that a family needs.

Our **"Adopt a Family"** program ensures that many of our most vulnerable families are provided with a complete holiday celebration of food, clothing, toys and gifts for the holiday season. The employees of Sanofi Pasteur and Weiler Corporation — along with many other businesses, area churches, and individuals — provide all the holiday essentials and extras for about 70 families each year. We are also part of the Pocono Record's Toys for Joy effort.



PSFC is proud to be a state approved **Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship** agency, which

allows participation in the educational improvement tax credit (EITC) program. Corporations in PA are eligible to apply for these tax credits and pass them on to approved agencies. PSFC is fortunate to be a recipient of these funds, which provide Pre-K scholarships for low-income working families to enroll their children in our high-quality classrooms. Vigon International, Strunk-Albert Engineering, PPL, ESSA Bank and Trust, First Keystone Bank, First National Bank, PNC and People's Security Bank and Trust have participated with contributions.

Volunteers have many ways to give their time and talents to our agency. Help is always needed in our classrooms, kitchens, outdoor areas or administrative offices. Assisting with special events, festivals and community outreach are other opportunities. Volunteers range in age from students to senior citizens. The experience is very rewarding for everyone.

Business, Professional and Civic Partnerships are key to PSFC's success. Our agency is affiliated with various organizations and stakeholders, nationally, statewide and locally. These include: Kiwanis, AFP, MCAEYC, PA Head Start, Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce, Interagency Council of Monroe County, United Way of Monroe County, Monroe County United, and Monroe County Children's Roundtable.



Achievements in Early Childhood Quality Assurance, Accommodating Disabilities, and Transition to Kindergarten

Quality Assurance:

PA Department of Human Services licenses were again granted to the East Stroudsburg and Mountain Centers.

NAEYC Accreditation (good for five years) was again achieved by our East Stroudsburg Center. Accreditation for The Mountain Center is good through January 2018. Our scores on program standards are almost always perfect.

Keystone STARS –

The following classrooms again earned STAR 4 status, the highest ranking awarded by the PA Commonwealth:

Middle Smithfield, Resica and Smithfield

East Stroudsburg is up for renewal in fall of 2018 and The Mountain Center is up for renewal in January 2018.

Head Start Self Assessment – All service areas are in compliance.

Community Assessment— Continues to show the tremendous need in our county for the Head Start program and other human services.

Disabilities:

A total of 38 PSFC children have IEPs and received services for special needs as follows:

16 — developmental delays, 15 — speech, 3 — autism, 3 — social/emotional, 1 — Spina Bifida

Healthy Start developmental screenings were conducted for child care centers in Monroe County through partnership with Pocono Alliance. Through collaboration with IU 20, PSFC provided necessary services such as screenings, referrals and IEPs. And students from East Stroudsburg University periodically conducted hearing and speech screenings of our children.

Kindergarten Transition:

A total of 179 children were transitioned into neighboring school districts:

East Stroudsburg – 62 Stroudsburg – 33 Pocono Mountain – 80 Pleasant Valley – 4



This past year we have continued to expand our relationships with the Pocono Mountain and East Stroudsburg Area School Districts. For example, we participated with PMSD/Clear Run Elementary Center in the Governor's Institute P-3, Collaboration: Working Together for Student Success, in July 2017. We developed a joint project "to raise community awareness and empower families to utilize resources which will ultimately promote stability and school readiness." This venture will take place during the 2017-18 program year. Our agency has also participated in "Fly-In Early" story times/information sessions for preschoolers who will be "PMSD Cardinals" when they officially enter kindergarten at Swiftwater Elementary Center.

Family/Health/Nutrition Highlights

- A new Summer Food initiative was launched at TMC, serving breakfast and lunch to community children. This was funded through the Child and Adult Care Food Program and will be an annual program.
- Family Engagement efforts continued to increase, through initiatives like Job Club, Money Club, Citizen CPR, and workshops like college planning.
- A Health Fair/Wellness Day was held at The Mountain Center for the first time in August, in addition to one already held in East Stroudsburg. AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast again was the event sponsor.
- Mobile Dentist Days took place twice a year at both centers.
- Staff took part in required trainings: CPR/first aid, fire safety and child abuse/mandated reporter.
- The annual Family Fun Day was held at Dansbury Park in September. Pumpkin painting, cupcake decorating, a moon bounce, face painting, contests and prizes were part of the festivities.
- A dietician from Kinsley's Shop-Rite did "Taste the Rainbow" sessions with preschoolers to teach them about eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Pocono Mt. West High School again sponsored a Day of Literacy for PSFC children, this time at TMC.

Community Partners/Stakeholders

The following businesses, organizations and individuals have played a key role in our achievements during the past year. Their generosity and contributions — whether time, talent, enthusiasm, resources/facilities, and/or treasures — are very much appreciated!

AllOne Foundation All our volunteers and donors AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast
Angel's Closet Anthony's Coats CareerLink CCIS
Children's Team of Monroe & Pike Counties Colonial IU 20
Community Church Coolbaugh Township Supervisors David W. Coulter Photography
Eastern Monroe Public Library East Stroudsburg Area School District
ESSA Bank & Trust East Stroudsburg University
Everyone involved in special events like our Family Fun Day and Health Fairs
Everyone who supported our Golf Tournament with the Optimist Club
Everyone who supports our mission First Keystone Community Bank
Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce Great Wolf Lodge Hughes Foundation
Interagency Council Journal of the Pocono Plateau Kalahari Resorts
Key Club at East Stroudsburg High School South Kinsley's Shop-Rite
Kiwanis Club of the Poconos—Daybreak Lehigh Valley Hospital — Pocono
Mattioli Foundation MCAEYC Monroe County Bar Association
Monroe County Commissioners Monroe County Public Assistance Office
Mother Nature's Way Landscaping & Excavating (Tim Schnaitman)
Northampton Community College Old Navy Our partner agencies at The Mountain Center
People's Security Bank and Trust PNC Bank Pocono Alliance
Pocono Arts Council Pocono Dental Associates Pocono Mountain Arts Council
Pocono Mountain Public Library Pocono Mountain School District
Pocono 96.7 Pocono Record PPL Quilts for Kids
RE/MAX Property Specialists of Pocono Lake Riley & Company, Inc.
RSVP of Monroe County SAAC Committee at ESU
Sanofi Pasteur Sherman Theater Shop-Rite of Stroudsburg
State Reps. Rosemary Brown, Maureen Madden and Jack Rader
State Senators John Blake and Mario Scavello Strunk-Albert Engineering
Student Council at Pocono Mt. West High School
United Way of Monroe County Vigon International Weiler Corp.
Women's Resources of Monroe County 93.5 WSBG Zion United Church of Christ



We celebrated 10 years of collecting school supplies at Stuff the Bus with 93.5SBG at Staples in August.



Community agencies/resources were part of our Wellness Day/Health Fair at both our centers.



Children in our Smithfield classroom were superheroes for the day during a special family event.



STEM projects like this cool tinkering station were an important part of our preschoolers' curriculum during the program year.

PSFC Board of Directors 2016-17

President— Sharon Laverdure, retired superintendent, East Stroudsburg Area School District

Vice President— David Strunk, Strunk-Albert Engineering

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Carol Owens, Riley and Company, Inc.

Patrina Smith, Fitzmaurice Community Services and parent rep to the board

Victoria Strunk, Amori and Associates, LLC



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