

Annual Report 2017-18

Improving Lives through Partnerships



Clockwise from top: A family registers at our annual Wellness/Health Fair sponsored by AmeriHealth Caritas, NE; a media event is held to announce the Pocono Pony Blue Route coming to The Mountain Center; Head Start children are artists as they paint a bench for a project with PNC's Grow Up Great and Heart to Art; and volunteers from Sanofi Pasteur help prepare garden beds for classes at TMC to grow vegetables during the summer.

Serving Monroe County since 1965

From Our Board President, Sharon Laverdure...

One of the highlights of the past year for me was when PSFC received a Spirit of Caring Award from the United Way of Monroe County. This honor recognized our agency's extraordinary dedication to give, advocate and volunteer. We are doing this in our community, in our classrooms, with our families, and at our East Stroudsburg and Mountain Centers. We are realizing our mission and our vision.

I am so proud of the important work we do and of our ongoing accomplishments. At last year's Annual Dinner at The Mountain Center, it was wonderful to see so many people come together to celebrate all we are achieving.



Tim Lee and Sharon Laverdure accept the Spirit of Caring Award during a United Way campaign appreciation event at Desaki in Swiftwater in April.

As a former educator, it is rewarding to hear how well our children are doing in their classes and how well prepared they are for kindergarten and beyond. We continue to receive "phenomenal" reviews when state or federal officials visit us for reaccreditation.

I thank the PSFC staff, my fellow board members, and all our partners in the county who help make such progress possible. We are excited about a ribbon cutting for our certified outdoor classroom at TMC this fall— which was made possible, in part, by donations from PPL Foundation and the Pocono Mountains Community Fundraiser and volunteers. I invite all of you to attend this event, as well as visit our centers/classrooms to see the successes we are realizing every day.

From Our Executive Director, Tim Lee...

It is hard to believe that we are will be beginning our 53rd year of service to the community and entering our third year at The Mountain Center. The Pocono Pony started bus service at TMC in January, WIC/MFHS joined our family of agencies there, and IU 20 began a class in the building in August. Improvements included new roofs at both centers and enhanced security measures at TMC.

We were awarded \$2,020,500 in community and economic development funds from the state in July, the most ever! The monies will let us expand our work with preschoolers, assist more families, offer more programs and hire additional staff. This is a win/win for the community. The funding will generate positive ripple effects in terms of economic development and overall quality of life.

At our in-service in May, our theme was staff recognition. We applauded the efforts of our team, from newcomers to those who have served with us for over 20 years. I am fortunate to work with so many talented, dedicated individuals who truly have a calling for what they do in the lives of our children. A small number of our staff went above and beyond when they stayed overnight during a March snowstorm at TMC. Even a WBRE reporter and videographer hunkered down and spent the night with us! I look forward to more adventures and milestones as we continue to make a positive difference in so many lives!



Pastor Taylor from Community Church receives the Champion for Children Award during last year's PSFC dinner.

Educational Achievements & Child Outcomes

...from Program Director Sandy Shay

Children were assessed using the Teaching Strategies GOLD during the period from October 15, 2017 to May 9, 2018. The data reflects the growth of 275 children — 28 infants and toddlers, 102 three-year-olds and 145 four-year-olds in Head Start/Pre-K Counts. 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. The most growth was in the areas of physical (89% increase) and social/emotional (36% increase). Least amount of growth was in the area of literacy (24% increase) but scores still met expectations for age level. The average totals for meeting or exceeding expectations were: 96% for infants, 88% for 3-year-olds, 85% for 4-year-olds, and 91% program-wide. Although the results show growth, our program needs to pay attention to whether children are meeting the developmental expectations for age level. This is especially important for 4-year-olds who need to acquire the school readiness skills to be successful in kindergarten.

Area of Development (% Meeting/Exceeding Expectations)	Infants/ Toddlers	3-Year-Olds	4-Year-Olds
Social/Emotional/Social Studies	95%	92%	79%
Physical/Fine Motor/Gross Motor	100%	98%	87%
Language	94%	87%	90%
Cognitive/Science/Technology/The Arts	95%	85%	85%
Literacy	95%	74%	84%
Mathematics	94%	91%	82%

In fall 2017, the number of three and four-year-olds who met or exceeded expectations for their age level was 60%. In the spring, this figure increased to 91% of the children. Domains of strength program-wide were as follows (based on objectives that were met or exceeded):

Physical/fine motor/gross motor— 95%
 Language— 95% Math— 89%
 Social/Emotional— 89%

Note: The statistics include outcomes for 39 pre-school children with IEPs, 14 children with behavior treatment plans, and 108 children being monitored for social emotional/behavioral concerns. Of those with IEPs, 7% have speech delays, 6% have developmental delays, 12% have cognitive delays, and 2% 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-K readiness classrooms, as well as comprehensive family support services, primarily for children from lower-income families. This past year, we served 325 children, ranging in age from babies to sixth graders. Instruction for children ages 3 to 5 years-old takes place at two large centers with 10 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. Our mission is to provide resources for the evolving needs of community children and families, in support of efforts to achieve their goals.

Some major achievements during 2017-18:

- *A total of \$1,247,000 was awarded through the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program and \$773,500 was approved in PA Pre-K Counts funds from the state.*
- *Our centers/classrooms again achieved Keystone STAR 4 status and NAEYC reaccreditation. Our scores in program standards were at 100 percent or higher.*
- *We continued to build on the birth to grade 3 continuum with the growth of our infant/toddler classrooms and our school-age program at TMC.*
- *Our summer camp served more youth, with participants from kindergarten through sixth grade.*
- *Family engagement, communication, and community partnership efforts continued to increase.*
- *Additional staff were hired for classrooms, the kitchens, and administrative and maintenance areas.*

Ensuring the best **Preschool/Kindergarten Readiness Educational Program** is a major priority. We are the only local agency that maintains Keystone STAR 4 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/families, to ensure the accomplishment of goals and educational success. **Healthy Start Screenings** are integral, with each child receiving physical, vision, dental, hearing, speech, and developmental screenings.

Full-Day Child Care Classes provide a safe, high-quality nurturing/learning environment for children of working parents. 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. It 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/guidance of highly-trained behavioral health personnel, an enhancement of curriculum to include a stronger social/emotional component, more teacher training, and a greater level of family involvement. Our classes have become models for demonstrating this 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.



Water Day was a fun highlight of our summer camp!



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. (One of our infant/toddler teachers, Ms. Brianna, went through this learning initiative.)

The **Health Literacy Program**, funded through Lehigh Valley Hospital — Pocono, provides first-response training for parents, including CPR instruction. 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 celebration of food, clothing, toys and gifts for the holiday season. The employees of Sanofi Pasteur and Weiler Corporation — along with many other businesses, banks, 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 Organization**, 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 high-quality classrooms like ours. PPL Corporation, Vigon International, Strunk-Albert Engineering, ESSA Bank and Trust, First Keystone Community Bank, PNC, First National Bank, 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, Rotary, 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:

Licenses from the PA Department of Human Services were again granted to our centers. NAEYC Accreditation was again achieved by our East Stroudsburg Center (good through December 2022) and The Mountain Center (good through January 2023). Our scores on program standards are always excellent. 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 Center is up for renewal in fall of 2018 and TMC is up for renewal at the end of 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, especially in the East Stroudsburg and Coolbaugh Township areas.

Disabilities:

Nearly 40 PSFC children have IEPs and received services for special needs as follows:
15— developmental delays, 18 — speech, 2 — autism, 4 — 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. Students from East Stroudsburg University periodically conducted hearing and speech screenings of our children.

Kindergarten Transition:

A total of 152 children were transitioned into neighboring school districts:
East Stroudsburg – 58 Stroudsburg – 25 Pocono Mountain – 67 Pleasant Valley – 2

School District Collaborations—

Our relationships with the Monroe County school districts grow stronger each year. Here are some highlights:

Pocono Mountain School District – Our efforts continued with the Governor’s Institute P-3 Initiative, “Working Together for Student Success. We had a successful joint venture in the fall with an event at Clear Run Elementary Center: “Who are the People in Your Neighborhood?” The purpose was to raise awareness of the local resources available which promote school readiness and stability for families. It was a great community outreach effort for our location at TMC. Building tours were given to families and school district personnel to see what services are provided so close to home. On-site kindergarten registration at TMC assisted in getting 99% of our transitioning families registered for kindergarten at PMSD prior to scheduled orientations. Our parents had an opportunity to visit kindergarten classrooms with their child and observe a class in session at Clear Run Elementary. Afterwards, they gathered in the auditorium to hear a story, “These Rocks Count,” read by the author Alison Formento, and an autographed copy of the book was distributed to all children. We also participated in the “Fly in Early” event held at Swiftwater Elementary in collaboration with IU 20 and Mental Health/Developmental Services. This program helped identify young children’s needs prior to entering school and becoming a PMSD Cardinal.

East Stroudsburg Area School District – The district continued to provide much needed classroom space in the East Stroudsburg area at Middle Smithfield, Smithfield Elementary and Resica Elementary schools. Our families participated in the Teach Me to Read at Home workshops in the fall. We also participated in the Kindergarten Registration Fair held at East Stroudsburg High School South in February, assisting our families in making appointments for registration and gaining information about kindergarten. We were involved in a gathering to meet the new director of education for elementary grades, and to discuss collaboration partnership and continued work in transition activities. An information-sharing session was held to learn about the social services staff at the district and to gain knowledge of each other’s work in supporting families. In the spring, our teachers provided activities connected to various story books for Literacy Night at Resica Elementary. And in the summer, children and families participated in the Quick Start program to strengthen kindergarten readiness skills.



Literacy Night at Resica Elementary

Community Partners/Stakeholders

The following businesses, organizations and individuals have played a key role in our achievements during the past year and more. 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 events like our Annual Dinner, Family Fun Day, and Health Fairs
 Everyone who supported our Golf Tournament with the Optimist Club
 Everyone who supports our mission/vision 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
 Morgan Stanley Mother Nature's Way Landscaping & Excavating
 Northampton Community College Our partner agencies at The Mountain Center
 People's Security Bank and Trust PNC Bank Pocono Alliance
 Pocono Dental Associates Pocono Mountain Arts Council
 Pocono Mountain Public Library Pocono Mountain School District
 Pocono 96.7 Pocono Record PPL Corporation/Foundation
 Quilts for Kids RE/MAX Property Specialists of Pocono Lake Riley & Company, Inc.
 RSVP of Monroe County SAAC Committee at ESU Saint Luke's
 Sanofi Pasteur 93.5SBG Sherman Theater Shop-Rite of Stroudsburg
 Staples 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 Wayne Bank Weiler Corporation
 Women's Resources of Monroe County Zion United Church of Christ*



We have collected school supplies for 11 years during Stuff the Bus with 93.5SBG at Staples every August.



Our children have enjoyed attending fun and educational programs at Pocono Mt. Public Library in Tobyhanna.

Family, Health & Nutrition Highlights

- A free summer meal program took place at the Mountain Center for the second year, serving breakfast and lunch to hundreds of area youth, age 18 and under.
- Coats/jackets were distributed to some of our children and other youngsters in need at a special event at TMC that was coordinated by Blue Ridge Communications and United Way of Monroe County.
- Family and Parent Engagement efforts increased, through initiatives like Job Club, Money Club, Citizen CPR, college planning workshops, ESL classes and “Coffee, Tea & Confidence” for women starting a business.
- Mobile Dentist Days took place twice a year at both centers.
- Health Fairs/Wellness Days took place in August at the East Stroudsburg and Mountain Centers and were sponsored by AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast.
- PSFC staff participated in required trainings such as fire safety, CPR/first aid, and child abuse/mandated reporter.
- The annual Family Fun Day took place again at Dansbury Park in East Stroudsburg.
- Books continued to be distributed to our children (and area kids) through Read Across Monroe’s library at TMC, via United Way’s Day of Action, and through other donations from the community.
- Coats for our children were again collected at a coat-raiser held by Anthony’s Coats at Rudy’s in East Stroudsburg.
- A vegetable garden was planted by our preschoolers and school-age students at TMC, with some of the produce enjoyed as part of their lunches.



PSFC Board of Directors 2017-18

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

Vice President— David Strunk, Strunk-Albert Engineering

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Stephen Cunningham, Lehigh Valley Hospital— Pocono/Lehigh Valley Health Network

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Carol Owens, Riley and Company, Inc.

Patrina Smith, parent representative on the board

Victoria Strunk, Amori and Associates, LLC

We are a 4 Star Facility!



Pocono Services for Families and Children

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