

## Cathryn A. Riley Innovation for Quality Prize Awardees

### Background

The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. established a special fund in 1998 to honor Cathryn A. Riley and all her contributions to the field of early care and education. Cate was a program coordinator at the Council. She was also involved with the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, now known as the Early Care and Learning Council. Cate also served on the New York State Department of Education Committee for Teacher Certification, the Board of the Westchester Association for the Education of Young Children and the Advisory Board of Westchester Community College. Previously the Fund made grants to further program development, community partnerships, leadership activities and independent research. In its re-launch in 2016, the Fund began to support the Cathryn A. Riley Innovation for Quality Prize to encourage innovations linked to improvements in early care and education quality. Now in its sixth year, the Council received more applications than ever before and increased the number of awardees. We thank all the applicants for their determination to do more for the children and families they serve, and we congratulate all the recipients.

### 2016 Awards

- **The Adirondack Community Action Program** to create a video to educate their rural community about the importance of quality in child care in collaboration with their local PBS station and the placement of lawn signs “Quality Child Care Being Offered Here” at child care programs.
- **The Capital District Child Care Council** to support the use of video and social media to promote their professional development and referral services and for their new Farm to Preschool Farm Stands, which connects young children and their parents to healthy fresh local produce.
- **The Child Care Council, Inc. (of Rochester)** to build a comprehensive suite of services and a successful outreach and marketing plan for Spanish-speaking providers with the leadership of staff member Hector Santiago.
- **The Early Care and Learning Council** to create and develop the Quality Investments for Kids (QIK) initiative, in partnership with participating child care resource and referral member programs and agencies. QIK “seeks to expand the market for Quality”, by educating families, providers, employers and communities that substantial investments of all types are necessary for our children and communities to thrive.

### 2017 Awards

- **It Takes a Village to Educate a Child** for “Cooperative Play Skills with Lego Robotics” to promote social-emotional learning in a school age program that integrates special needs with typically developing children. In addition to exposing children to STEM, the small group exercises help children build and maintain friendships, reducing social isolation.
- **Little Angels Child Development** to fund “From Seeds to Sharing” for the establishment of a community garden that will ultimately generate fresh produce for a local homeless shelter.
- **Child Care Solutions** to fund part of the initiative “*Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing*” for Legally-Exempt Child Care providers. The short-term goal of the project is to increase the time that Legally Exempt care givers spend talking, reading, singing, and playing with the children in their care. The long-term goal is to improve the early learning and developmental outcomes of low-income children in Legally Exempt child care to increase their kindergarten readiness.
- **Little House Day Care** to establish a support group for family and group family providers with interactive trainings to improve the quality of child care.

## 2018 Awards

- **The Country Children's Center** to create an outdoor nature classroom for preschool age children in collaboration with Nature Explore, a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. The goal is to help children become connected with nature so that it becomes an important part of their experience in their early years.
- **Little Leaf on Andrus on Hudson** to support "Flowers for the Grands" where preschool children will grow, arrange and share flowers with the seniors in their shared building. The children will use mathematical and observational skills, creativity, and have opportunities for social / emotional growth.
- **Little House Day Care** to build free libraries and install them outside family child care programs.

## 2019 Awards

- **Briarcliff Nursery School** for the "BNS Share, Learn and Grown Library", a space within the center for teachers and parents to find books and resources to support children's social-emotional development. They will also create "take home" bags for parents to encourage non-tech family time.
- **The Country Children's Center** to establish an "Afterschool Makers Club" in a school-based afterschool program to encourage student-driven learning that promotes open-ended experimentation, collaboration, and problem-solving.
- **The Early Childhood Center at the Memorial Methodist United Church** to build self-esteem in children who struggle in a group setting using the Pyramid Model and Mindfulness techniques in the "Incorporating Strategies to increase Social-Emotional and Adaptive Skills in Preschool Children Exhibiting Executive Functioning Deficit" project.
- **Mindful Tots Nursery** to expose children living in an urban setting to nature through creation of an outdoor mud kitchen and vegetable garden. In the "Learning Through Nature" project, the children will not only experience a greater connection to nature, they will also learn about good nutrition and environmental sustainability.
- **Weekday Nursery School** in a collaboration with Iona College to create fine motor centers in their preschool classrooms. In this "Fine Motor Center Collaboration" project, the children will strengthen fine motor and visual motor skills needed for kindergarten and graduate students in occupational therapy will gain hands-on experience in an early childhood setting.

**The awards were not offered in 2020.**

## 2021 Awards

- **Hope Child Care** in Rye Brook to remake an outdoor space for infants and toddlers so they can enjoy nature, water and other natural materials while exploring their own curiosity
- **Caring Tree Childcare Center** in Mount Vernon to establish their "Into the Future 2.0" program to reduce the digital divide for after school children and their parents through a space for parents and children together
- **Rye YMCA** in Rye to expand their child care and after school programs, enabling them to serve a total of 183 children at both sites
- **Mt Kisco Child Care Center** in Mt Kisco for materials in a new outdoor learning area for neurotypical preschoolers and those with special needs in collaboration with Westchester ARC's Children's School for Early Development

## 2022 Awards

- **Amani Public Charter School** for a Scholar Sensory Awareness Room, a calm and peaceful space to help students relax and manage their stress. The room may be used for multiple purposes such as meditation, yoga, massages via a massage chair, etc.
- **Country Childrens Center** for a new School Age 3D Printing Discovery Club which will bring children and teachers together to experience the evolving world of additive manipulation and computational literacy, not only enhancing the quality of the afterschool experience but also advancing the children's creativity and imagination.
- **Endicotts Kids Zone** to expand their outdoor learning space with new equipment, toys, materials and a gardening experience, so the children will increase their exploration and enjoyment of the outdoors and learn more about healthy nutrition.
- **First Stage Day Care** for the installation of new playground equipment, so the children will increase their enjoyment of the outdoors as a place for physical, social, emotional and cognitive learning.
- **Jump for Joy Day Care** for a new "We Are the World" project to expose the children to new cultures - their celebrations, foods, dress, language and more, thus building their own understanding of and appreciation of differences.
- **RABY Stem Childcare** for their "Lil Olympics", where children, staff and parents come together to learn and practice yoga, stretching, gross motor activities and better nutrition, culminating in a special community event.
- **RYE YMCA** for their expansion of an afterschool program at an elementary school that will offer STEM, recreation, arts and crafts and more for a lively learning experience for their children.
- **Y-COP of Mount Vernon** for new materials and supplies for a summer camp experience for younger, previously unserved children via the Hummingbirds Group.
- **Yosaya's Day Care** for art supplies and equipment to offer children new learning experiences that also foster closer connections between program and families.