

Riverfront's mission is supported through the donation of money, time and service. The contributions from businesses, donors, grants, partners, sponsors and volunteers are critical to our success. Together you contributed **\$210,972.45** to support children and families!
THANK YOU!

2024 BOARD LIST

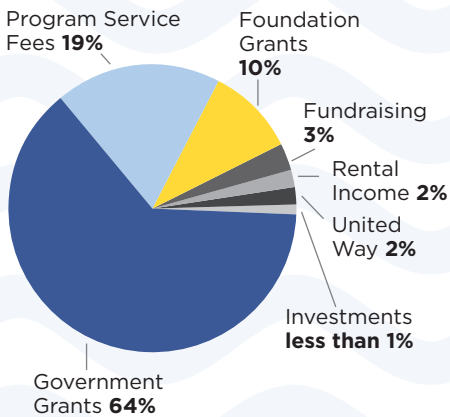
- Robert Boris, *President*
- Pantea Umrysz, *Treasurer*
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- Stacey Burt
- Wendy Connal
- Gwen Depot
- Brittany Dishon
- Margarida Martins-Querido
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- Lara Orkney
- David Rose
- Pratima Shah
- Lavanya Shubhakar
- Senator Heather Somers
- Davon Williams

2024 GRANTS and MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

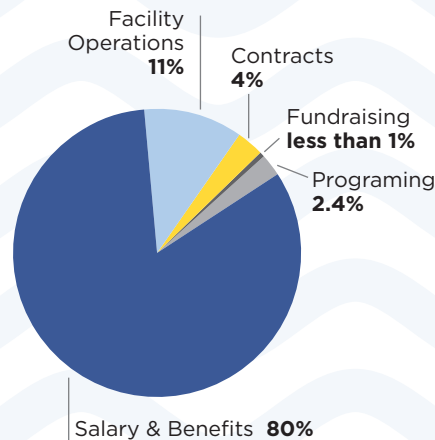
Acme Wire Products	\$500.00
Nan H. Altmayer Trust	\$5,000.00
Anonymous Donor	\$10,000.00
Bodenwein Public Benevolent Fund	\$1,600.00
Bowe Enterprise LLC	\$1,770.57
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut	\$2,000.00
Charter Oak Credit Union	\$2,500.00
Chelsea Groton Bank	\$500.00
Chelsea Groton Foundation	\$5,100.00
City of Groton	\$2,435.00
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	\$22,500.00
Dime Bank Foundation	\$3,500.00
Dominion Energy Foundation	\$2,500.00
Eastern CT Association of Realtors	\$500.00
Edward & Mary Lord Foundation	\$30,000.00
Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce	\$6,000.00
Mystic Congregational Church	\$1,175.00
Mystic Garden Club	\$2,300.00
Mystic Rotary	\$2,000.00
Mystic Woman's Club	\$1,000.00
National Board Program Award	\$1,000.00
Noank Baptist Church	\$2,300.00
Nordson Corporation	\$15,000.00
Anderson Pafford Foundation	\$5,000.00
Frank Loomis Palmer Fund	\$40,000.00
Nancy Peterson Fund	\$1,006.88
The Brownington Foundation	\$5,000.00
David Schulz & Karen Stone	\$2,500.00
United Way of SECT	\$35,785.00
Walmart	\$1,000.00

TOTAL RECEIVED IN 2024 \$210,972.45

INCOME



EXPENSE



The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc.
476 Thames Street, Groton, CT 0634



THE RIVERFRONT CHILDREN'S CENTER

Annual Report 2024

High Quality Early Childhood Education in a Caring Community

Letter from Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As I look back on 2024, I am struck by how much Riverfront Children's Center has grown, both inside our classrooms and beyond our walls. Every year, we deepen our commitment to ensuring that every child in our community has access to high-quality early education and care. This year, our focus was clear: invest in people, strengthen programs, and expand possibilities.

Our teachers continue to be the heart of Riverfront. Their expertise, compassion, and resilience give children the strong foundation they deserve. In 2024, we launched Teaching Strategies, a modern curriculum and assessment platform that empowers educators to tailor learning for each child. Combined with our Sparkler app, this system helps families stay connected to their children's progress and strengthens the bridge between home and school.

We also gave our building and grounds some well-earned care. With support from the City of Groton and the Mystic Garden Club, our new façade and native garden have transformed the center into a more welcoming and sustainable

space. Inside, Karen's Closet is now a bright, fully stocked market providing over 32,000 pounds of fresh food to families, proof that our mission extends far beyond the classroom.

Looking ahead, we are embracing a future defined by equity, sustainability, and opportunity. Partnering with Social Impact Partners, our Board and staff have charted a course that will strengthen financial stability, increase teacher pay, and prepare our campus for long-term growth. We believe that investing in our educators is the most direct path to improving outcomes for children, and we're encouraged by the promise of increased state reimbursement rates on the horizon.

As always, our purpose remains unchanged: to nurture young children and their families through high-quality, accessible education and care.

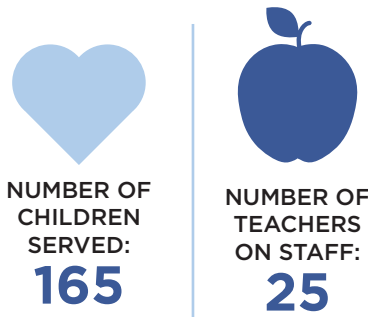
Your support makes this work possible, and your belief in Riverfront's mission fuels everything we do.

With gratitude,
Jennith Smith
Executive Director

MISSION: Nurturing young children and their families through high-quality, accessible education and care

VISION: We envision a community where all children are safe, receiving the highest quality education, and all families are self-sufficient and succeed.

2024 KEY STATISTICS:



FIGHTING FOR EQUITY AND AFFORDABILITY:

2024 saw unprecedented interest in early childhood education (ECE) and care from local, state, and federal governments. As the weaknesses in the system were exposed during COVID restrictions, working families and their employers demanded systemic change so that working parents could reliably contribute to the economy. While pursuing solutions, Riverfront contributed to statewide momentum for ECE funding by sharing family stories, staff perspectives, and real data that highlighted the local impact of underinvestment and the transformative power of equitable funding. We are proud to have participated in this historic movement for accessible, affordable, and reliable ECE and care, and look forward to a strong future for ECE in Connecticut.

INVESTING IN OPTIMAL OUTCOMES:

Early Childhood Education is widely acknowledged as the foundation of lifelong learning. Studies have shown that children's brains double in size between birth and age three, and stimulating experiences lead to smoother transitions to elementary education and beyond. Recognizing the importance of a strong ECE program, Riverfront invested in a modern online teaching system called Teaching Strategies, which integrates curriculum, child assessment, teacher development, family engagement, and reporting into a single platform. Teaching Strategies, along with Sparkler, our online parent engagement app launched in 2023, have transformed how we track student outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

“Teaching Strategies was huge and allowed us to prioritize professional development. We equipped our educators with the tools and data to individualize learning, strengthen classroom quality, and align more intentionally with CT Early Learning and Development Standards.”

-JENNIFER SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TRANSFORMING APPEARANCES:

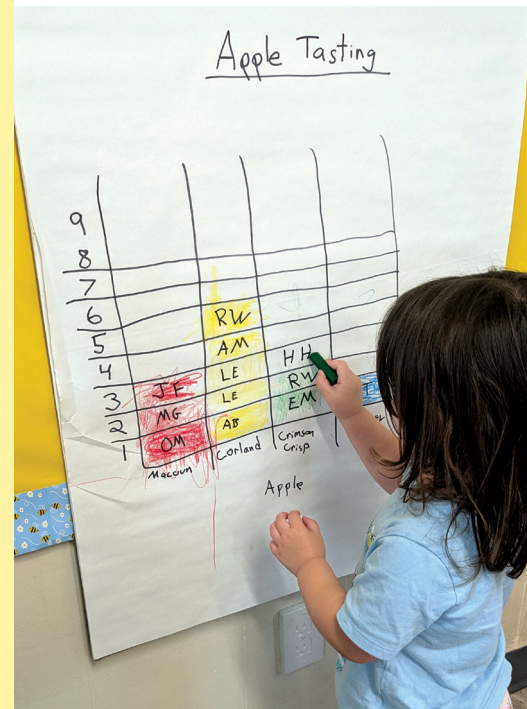
Our center's facade received some TLC in 2024 with the installation of a native garden and a striking new sign. The evergreens, blueberries, and inkberries sponsored by the Mystic Garden Club provide shelter and food for wildlife and require little to no maintenance. Groton City appreciates the sustainable plant life that helps our neighborhood withstand storms and harsh weather. Our eye-catching new sign was funded mainly by the Minor Façade Improvement Grant from the City of Groton. We were excited to be selected as a recipient and are very happy with the colorful update to our facility. Community organizations and local government are valued partners, and we thank them for their support and vision.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE:

Working with Social Impact Partners, Riverfront's Board of Directors and staff identified key goals, or pillars, as our programs continue to grow to meet



community needs. Aiming for high-quality results, we seek to enhance staff professionalism and satisfaction, ensure sustainable financial health, and maximize facility use. Wise investments in professional development and support for our teachers are the most effective ways to improve children's outcomes. Our dedication to our educators is unmatched, and with upcoming increases in state reimbursement rates planned for 2027, paying teachers a rate comparable to elementary school educators



is a real possibility. Long-range planning has also begun for our campus at 476 Thames St. After initial engineering assessments are complete, the Facilities Committee will determine a master plan to improve classroom spaces and optimize teacher-to-student ratios, creating a stronger program for all.



KAREN'S CLOSET 2.0:

Our on-site food pantry, Karen's Closet, named after Karen Hakenjos, a beloved teacher at Riverfront, has entered a new phase of service. What was once a dark closet with an aging refrigerator/freezer and a folding table has become a clean, bright, and functional mini-market bursting with fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen meat, plenty of dairy, and staples to fill our families' cupboards. Through a Connecticut Department of Agriculture grant, CT Grown for CT Kids, we were able to purchase a commercial glass-front double refrigerator and a matching single freezer that

allowed us to elevate the stock and store it safely for longer. Partnering with local farms, Riverfront distributed Connecticut-grown produce, cider, maple syrup, dairy, and meats to fortify children's diets and increase consumption of fresh food. This grant, in addition to support from the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut's Gemma A. Moran Food Bank in New London, and private donations, allowed us to distribute more than 32,000 pounds of food to our families in need.



FOLLOW US ON: **PHONE:** 860-445-8151 riverfrontchildren.org

