



Downtown Ithaca Children's Center

Growing and Learning Together



Downtown Ithaca Children's Center 506 First Street Ithaca NY 14850 **T** (607) 272-7117
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2013 Board of Directors

Brenda K. Pepe: President
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Jay Giesy: Treasurer
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Lisa Bontempi
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Our Mission

The Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center provides a creative and culturally diverse environment that fosters the emotional, social, and intellectual development of children. We do so by incorporating the involvement of families, staff, and our community in all of our work.

The Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center serves children aged six weeks to twelve years old. It is also an Ithaca City School District Universal Pre-K provider.



Message from the Board

As members of the Board at the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center, it is always a great honor to issue our Annual Report. This year, however, we are especially proud to have the opportunity to address the Ithaca community and discuss the significant accomplishments of the Center over the past year and our continuing efforts to further improve all that the Center has to offer as we move forward.

Over the course of the past year, the Center has gone through a process of rebranding, transitioning from the Drop-In Children’s Center to the newly renamed Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center. As an organization, we take great pride in the history of the Center and the foundation that was laid over the decades leading up to this point. Our new name allows us to maintain a connection to this important legacy (even keeping the DICC as its acronym) while simultaneously emphasizing our efforts to serve and benefit the downtown Ithaca community of which we are a part.

However, it is important to emphasize that the previous year has not been simply about a change in the Center’s name, but also continuous efforts to improve our ability to serve the families in our community in whatever ways possible. The focus of our Center remains the children, and in an effort to further foster their development we have instituted a number of changes to strengthen their classroom experiences. We have maintained an emphasis on staff development and training while simultaneously allowing staff members the necessary freedom to craft schedules and activities best suited for the development of their students. Additionally, the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center continues to provide one of the area’s premier nutrition experiences, and the diversity found among our staff and our children continues to make the DICC a shining example for the broader Ithaca community.

We as a Board are committed to the continued vitality of the DICC and are grateful for the hard work and dedication demonstrated daily by the members of our staff. As we celebrate another successful year at the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center we say, “Thank you” to the community for your continued support and look forward to “Growing and Learning Together” and to many successful years to come!



A Note from the Executive Director, David Scovronick

2013 turned out to be one of the most exciting and meaningful years in our Center's history. The most noteworthy event was the changing of our name from the Drop In Children's Center to its new name – "The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center." This decision came about after a long period of review and revision to virtually all aspects of our operation. We hired the part time services of an early childhood program consultant to help train our teachers to be better equipped to work with challenging behaviors. We increased the number of hours and level of teacher training, reviewed and revised all of our forms and procedures, implemented a center-wide education-focused, age appropriate lesson plan process, increased the level of parent participation in each child's development plan, introduced teachers to the use of the Devereaux Early Childhood assessment tool, developed a behavior support plan for each child having difficulty, and began using the "Second Step" method to help teach our children empathy, impulse control, and anger management. We also established a partnership with the Sciencenter to develop a program to teach science to very young children. In the course of all these changes we realized that the old Drop In Center had, in effect, become an entirely new entity, and that the time had come to change our name and rebrand ourselves in the process.

While reviewing our goal of continually improving the quality of our program we also decided last year that the effectiveness our efforts could be greatly enhanced by installing video cameras in all of our classrooms, as well as in our play areas, both inside and outside. These cameras now provide us with the ability to view our teachers and children during the normal course of their daily activities and record selected sections for instructional purposes. They allow us to refine and improve the quality of our teaching methods. Video cameras in classrooms at child care facilities have, over the last few years, become standard for most licensed child care centers.

All of the work and improvements discussed above could not have taken place without the generous support of a variety of government agencies, foundations, and private donors who have supported us. In 2013 we received grants from the Tompkins County Health and Human Services Department, the United Way, the Park Foundation, The Legacy Foundation, the Community Foundation, Ithaca Downtown Business Women, Friends of the Library, and a host of private donors and family foundations. This support has been critical to our ability to keep providing our services to the community, and we simply would not be able to remain in operation without the generous assistance they provide.

In closing I'd like to thank all of staff, Board Members, donors and supporters who have helped make the Downtown Ithaca Children's Center a truly wonderful place for children.

**Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
August 10, 2013
Officially the “Downtown Ithaca Children Center”**



With the positive changes that were made over the last few years, we were happy to invite the public to join us for an official ribbon cutting ceremony. It was well attended, and we are grateful to all who believed in our mission and supported the growth of our 501C3 not for profit with generous donations of time and money. We look forward to many more years of serving our wonderful community!



What Makes the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center Different?

Our priority is to educate and support the whole child so s/he is better prepared for school, and for life, with curiosity, knowledge, social skills, independence, empathy, resilience, and respect. Our diverse environment, individualized curriculum, healthy vegetarian food, and Sciencenter partnership support these qualities.

The name, “Drop-in Children’s Center,” wasn’t representative of the full spectrum of our offerings and benefits at this point. DICC is so much more than drop-in care for your child. We have grown into a comprehensive center for children, where we address every aspect of a child’s care and development. We’re very excited to move forward with our new brand of childcare!

We have a Center-wide, education-focused curriculum, using an age-appropriate lesson plan process so that every child learns, every day. Individual assessments are done for each child on an on-going basis, collecting progress updates, which are shared with families minimally, once a year, with daily check-ins, as well as a monthly newsletter that all parents receive, keeping communication regular.

We use the Second Step Program, which is a nationally recognized supplement to our curriculum, designed to teach skills in empathy, impulse control, and anger management. It includes positive language modeling and the use of puppets and role-playing to increase a child’s level of self-awareness.

The Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center also is staffed with teachers who are trained and skilled in identifying and developing specific ways to address the needs of children with challenging behaviors. A data collection system is set in motion, looking at the classroom environment, time of day for the behavior, and consistency between staff management, knowing that any of these can influence how successfully a child learns to handle their emotions. Parents become an integral part of the team as we look for ways to help each child handle themselves successfully. Because of this aspect of our program, there have been no expulsions from program for behavior concerns, which, even in a preschool setting, is not uncommon.

We have several staff who are from other cultures, who bring their diverse ways of “seeing” children to our program. Teamwork and flexibility allow our teachers to know each others’ classrooms, and be able to help cover when someone is either out due to illness, or leaves, as happens in any work environment. The staff members are compassionate, helpful, accepting, and care about the safety and cleanliness of our program. We take pride in having staff who have been with the program for up to 18 years.



Parent Success Story

“As the parents of two school aged children, my wife and I have remained focused on doing everything in our power to prepare them to lead happy and successful lives as they continue to grow and mature. We can say, without hesitation, that the decision to send them to the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center has proven to be one of the most important early steps in this process. Both children began attending the Center at a young age (one at 12 months and the other at 3 months), and their years at the Center were filled with a combination of joyous adventures and constant moments of learning. Their transition into the Ithaca school system has been fantastic. Both began their schooling with great skills in interacting with other children along with a love for learning that I have no doubt will serve them well for years to come. As parents we understand the importance of our continued interest in their development and growth at home and in school. However, we are convinced that the foundation laid by the great staff at the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center has truly been a blessing in the lives of our children. We are thankful for the head start that the Center has provided for us and look forward to witnessing similar positive experiences for families throughout the Ithaca community.”

W.H.. parent



**Whether it is lunch or fun at the Sciencenter,
our children find a safe and interesting
day with the Downtown Ithaca
Children’s Center!**

Our Community Partnerships

Downtown Ithaca Children's Center is extremely grateful for the generosity of its partners.

The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center has had a wonderful year, celebrating our re-branding, successful children's programs, and continued community awareness. We have served over 100 children during this fiscal year, which is only possible with the help of those in our community who advocate for quality child care that contributes to the success of the children we serve. The benefits extend into their next educational setting as well as impacting successful integration into the Greater Ithaca Community. Thank you for making 2013 a success!



**United Way
of Tompkins County**



Sciencenter



**Family Reading
Partnership**

2013 Grants Received

Tompkins County Health and Human Services	\$114,038.00
CACFP Food Program	\$41,738.00
United Way	\$19,572.00
Park Foundation	\$15,000.00
Legacy Foundation	\$2,024.00
Community Foundation	\$1,300.00
Friends of the Library	\$375.00
Ithaca Downtown Business Women	\$250.00

Our Heartfelt Thanks to Our Generous 2013 Donors

\$200-\$300

George and Virginia Field
Laurie Miller
Thomas Young & Paula Long
Tompkins Insurance Agencies
First Congregational Church
Byrnes Family fund (Tompkins Charitable Gift)
Cargill Inc.

\$100-\$199

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Tompkins Insurance Agencies Inc.
Rose Bethe
David Schwartz
Charlotte & Ronnie Coffman
Barry Adams
Ari Van Tienhoven
Raymond & Kathleen Schlather
Donald Farley
Alan Ledet
Joch & Kirby
Newfield Lions Club

All other donations from Friends of Downtown Ithaca Children's Center

Linda Trees Mack
Constance Graham
Joanne Sturgeon
Shirley Ladd & Charles Guttman
Sandy True
Katherine Anderson & Max Pensky
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Brenda Pepe
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Sue Hirschberger
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Purity Ice Cream
Hals Deli

Donations for Annual Summer Fun Bash

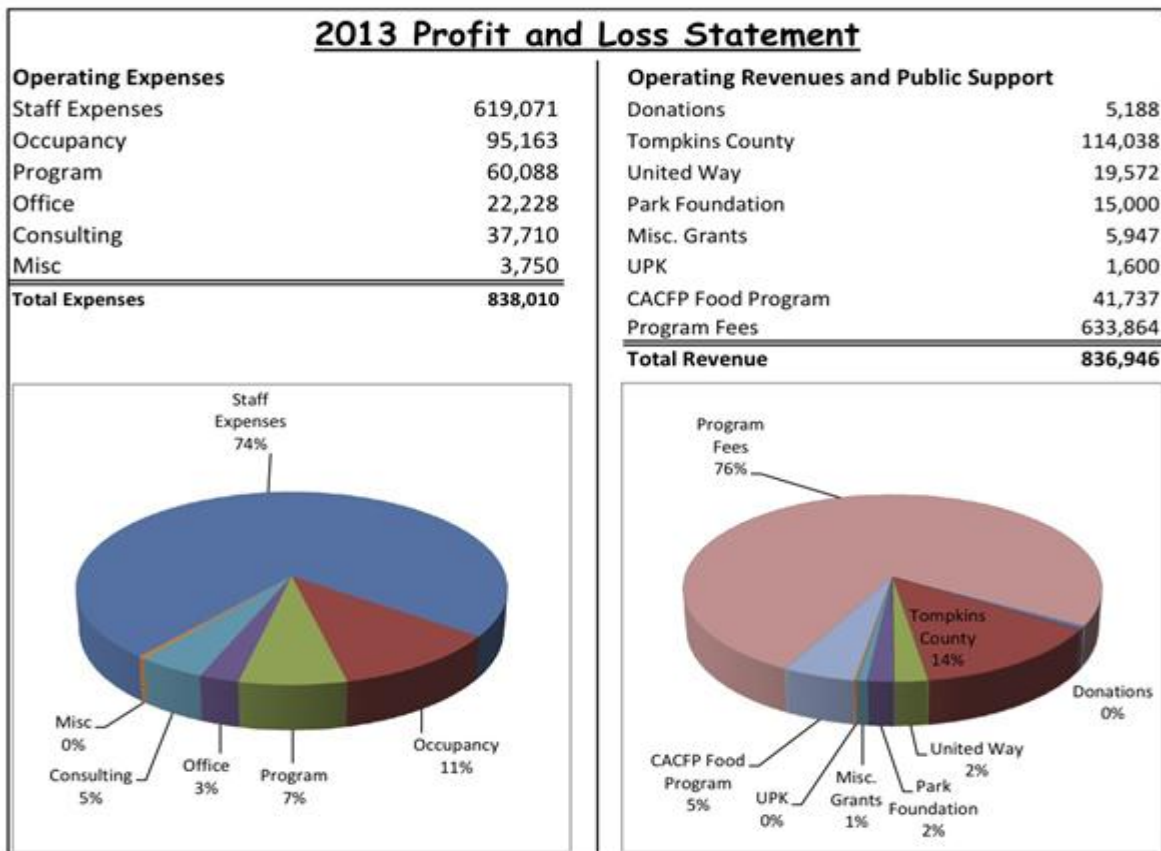
Wendy's: 250 toys for children's prizes
Auto Zone - Wash & wax bucket value \$31.95
Bed, Bath, & Beyond - gift card \$20
Cayuga Lake Cruises - gift card \$20
Diane's Automotive - 4 oil change gift certificates
Gimmie Coffee - gift card \$30
Green Star - beautiful food basket
Walmart - gift card \$25
Wegmans - gift card \$25
Maxie's Supper Club - gift certificate \$40
Papa John's - 5 gift certificates - 1 large cheese pizza
Patterson's Service Station - donated \$25
Pudgie's 25 free pizza coupons
The Shops at Ithaca Mall - Nice Gift Bag with posters etc
Hal's Deli - \$25 gift certificate
Wyllie's Dry Cleaning - \$25 gift certificate
Hampton Inn - Free night stay
Hanger Theater - 4 VIP ticket Vouchers for Kid Stuff Summer Plays
Holiday Inn - Free Night Stay
Kost Tire - 2 alignments - value & \$89.95 ea
Manos - gift certificate \$10
Ten Thousand Villages - beautiful candle and candle holder
Rasa Spa - 30 minute massage
Sciencenter - 1 family membership
Six Mile Creek Vineyard - 2 bottles of wine
Sumo's - gift card - \$15
Target - gift card - \$50

2013 Financial Report

ASSETS	Dec.31, 2013
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	\$53,753.03
Other Current Assets	\$55,445.59
Total Current Assets	\$109,198.62
Fixed Assets	\$796,937.16
TOTAL ASSETS	\$906,135.78

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	\$1,375.65
Other Current Liabilities	\$18,593.07
Total Current Liabilities	\$19,968.72
Long Term Liabilities	\$75,780.65
Total Liabilities	\$95,749.37
Equity	\$810,386.41
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$906,135.78





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Address Label