



Helping children build their futures

What do a veterinarian, fire fighter, police officer, chef, banker, and astronaut have in common? They were all once children wondering what they would grow up to be.

Children dressed as “future workers” were the welcoming committee at ECA's recent fundraising event, **Spark a Future: Invest in our Workforce**. More than 200 guests gathered at the Mirro Center to learn more about the importance of early childhood education, not only for children as they learn and grow, but also for our future economic development.

Thanks to our sponsors, supporters of Fund A Need, and guests who bid on fabulous experiences, ECA raised more than \$120,000. These funds support ECA's two Learning Centers and a broad range of programs serving families across northern Indiana, which directly impact employers. ECA's advocacy of quality child care and early education are influencers of economic growth and sustainability.

continued pg. 2



(Above) Donald, enrolled at ECA's Beacon Learning Center, enjoyed the role of firefighter for the fundraising event video.

(Right) Several children dressed as future professionals, welcomed guests at ECA's fundraiser, *Spark a Future: Invest in our Workforce*.

(Above right). Emcee Curtis Smith, Parkview Health, welcomes guests with ECA Board President Dena Jacquay, Parkview Health.

Spark (continued)

Developing our future workforce is an integral part of ECA's mission, Building Better Futures for Young Children. Learning begins at birth with 90% of brain growth occurring during the first five years of life. Every experience from day one helps build the foundation for a child's future success. Studies have shown that children that experience high quality early education lead more successful, more productive lives.

The significance of quality early childhood education is not limited to children's development; it also impacts their families' economic stability. Investments in our workforce are key to the community's economic strength...and it starts with quality early childhood education today.



(Above) Guests Ben Miles, Parkview Health with Corinna Ladd (center) PNC, and Brigitte Jennings.



(Left) Sandy and Tom Beaver won one of the Heads and Tails games.

(Right). CEO Madeleine Baker, center, visits with guests Nancy Lorraine, left, and Irene Walters.



Spark a Future Sponsors

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Corinna Ladd

In the last ten years, Early Childhood Alliance (ECA), with its dedicated and creative volunteers, has made a big leap in its effort to raise awareness and raise funds to support our programs. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our funders, investors, supporters, volunteers, including our Board of Directors, and certainly our repeated guests who have attended our fundraising event, which started with a thematic, four-course tea event and developed to where we are today, with a **"spark"** to focus attention on growing our future workforce. You have embraced our mission – building better futures for young children – and now you've come to understand how child care and early education greatly impact not only employers' bottom lines, but our overall economy.



Our theme for our fundraising event – **Spark a Future** – is designed not only to raise funds to sustain and elevate our programs and services within our northeast Indiana footprint, but also to bring awareness and attention to the economic impact of early education. An educated, skilled, and productive workforce is key to strong businesses and a strong economy. However, the barriers to employment for workers with children contribute to a decrease in the overall labor force participation rate. At the same time, young children are not getting the high quality early education they need to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow.

According to the recent report from the U.S. Chamber Foundation, American companies face a growing skills gap with six million unfilled jobs by 2020. Sixty percent of employers have openings that remain vacant for 12 weeks, on average, costing the economy more than \$160 billion annually. Parents who have access to high quality child care are more productive, and businesses that offer family-friendly policies are better able to attract and retain talent. For American business, high quality child care is a smart investment. It supports the workforce of today (parents), while helping lay the strong foundation necessary for success in the future workforce (children). Overall, high quality, affordable child care is critical to a healthy, prosperous economy.

Madeline Baker

Sidebar: On November 7, 2019, the Northeast Indiana Partnership will host the Early Learning Economic Summit. Plans are underway to live stream the event, outside of a two-hour driving distance. We hope that all regional businesses attend.

Vroom...Brain Building

You have what it takes to be a brain builder... providing learning experiences for your child.

Early Childhood Alliance has been selected as a Vroom ambassador by Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA). Vroom is an initiative that encourages parents and caregivers, including early care and education professionals, to boost children's early learning and development through tips and activities provided by CCAoA. Through technology, including an app and collaborations with other organizations, Vroom encourages families and caregivers to use routine interactions -- meal time, bedtime, grocery shopping, car rides -- to engage with children, strengthening their brain architecture.

As an ambassador, ECA is sharing vroom with its client families and providers. The app provides easy access to more than 1,000 easy activities to turn everyday moments into brain building experiences. Available in both Spanish and English, each tip includes the science behind the activity.



Daily tips, designed for specific age groups, are delivered to the electronic device being used, whether a phone or computer. Tips are categorized and can be delivered at a specific time of day. Users can keep track of favorite tips and even add photos to make scrapbook.

See for yourself how Vroom tips benefit your child. Visit ECA's website or check out **vroom.org**

Early Learning Summit

*For Economic Development:
Investing in Today's and Tomorrow's Workforce*

November 7, 2019 10 am - 3 pm
Purdue Fort Wayne - International Ballroom

Bringing together business/community leaders from across the region to:

- Learn how early childhood education impacts the current workforce
- Learn how it can help prepare your future workforce
- Learn about the economic impact on your bottom line
- Learn about actions your company can take to support your current and future workforce

Register: www.indianaeearlylearningsummit.org

Mission

To build better futures for young children by promoting and providing quality early education and services for families, early childhood professionals, and the community.

Early Childhood Alliance

www.ECAAlliance.org

Child Care Resource & Referral

260-745-2501/800-423-1498

Early Childhood Alliance is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and service provider.

Do you want to receive this newsletter electronically or at a different address? Contact us at stthomas@ECAAlliance.org or 260-745-2501/800-423-1498.



Building Better Futures for Children

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Join us at Flat Top Grill on Thursday, August 8, for a Dine & Donate Fundraising event. ECA receives 15% of sales that day. Be sure to tell your server that you are there supporting ECA.

Thank you!

Early Childhood Alliance appreciates these donations (November 2018 - June 2019)

- **Elkhart United Way** awarded a grant of \$18,000 for the CDA credential class.
- The Parents as Teachers program, Whitley County, was made possible in part from a \$2,500 grant from the **Community Foundation of Whitley County**.
- The **Community Foundation of Noble County** awarded a grant of \$6,395 for family engagement programs in Noble County.

- A grant of \$2,000 was awarded by the **Howard P. Arnold Foundation** for the Downtown Learning Center operations.
- The **Olive B. Cole Foundation** awarded a grant of \$10,000 for Family Engagement's Parents as Teachers program.
- The Family Engagement Birthing Center gift bag materials are funded by **Parkview Hospital's Community Health Improvement Program** with a grant of \$55,000.
- The **Journal Gazette Foundation** awarded ECA with an operating support grant of \$2,500.
- **Dekko Foundation** awarded a \$40,000 grant for the family engagement program for DeKalb, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Whitley Counties.
- The **Edward M. Wilson Foundation** awarded a grant of \$10,000 to help provide tuition assistance at the Downtown Learning Center.
- A grant of \$3,000 from the **Magee O'Connor Foundation** provides general operating support.
- The **Dr. Louis and Anne B. Schneider Foundation** awarded a grant of \$50,000 through the PNC Charitable Trusts Grant Review Committee in support of ECA's Learning Centers.
- The **Prophet Sisters Foundation** awarded a grant of \$5,000 for general operating support of ECA's Learning Centers.
- The **Christine L. Fisher Fund** awarded a grant of \$2,702 for sensory materials in the large motor rooms of the Learning Centers.

Thank you
for Building
Better Futures
for Children

As a non-profit agency, we depend on the contributions of individuals and organizations to continue services for children and families.

Donation options: ___ Donate on line at ECAAlliance.org/make-a-difference ___ Check enclosed (payable to ECA)
___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other \$ _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

How would you like your name(s) listed in the annual report? _____

For information on giving opportunities or planned giving, contact Monica Chamberlain at mchamberlain@ECAAlliance.org, 260-458-0125 / 800-423-1498, or visit <https://url.ecalliance.org/donate>