



ADVANCING ECONOMIC EQUITY & MOBILITY

Eastern Bank Foundation Convenes Early Childhood Development Leaders for Community Advocacy Awards & Roundtable



NATE PHOTOGRAPHY

Pictured: 1st Row L-to-R : Sandra McCroom, President & CEO, CSR; Nöelle Pina, Chief of Staff, CCCC; Aditi Subramaniam, Associate Director of Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health, MSPCC; Amy O'Leary, Executive Director, Strategies for Children; Nancy Huntington Stager, President & CEO, Eastern Bank Foundation; Kate Barrand, President & CEO, Horizons for Homeless Children; Sue Covitz, Executive Director, Families First; Jeri Robinson, Advisor, Boston Children's Museum & Chair, Boston School Committee; Bob Rivers, CEO & Chair, Eastern Bank; Margaret McDonald, CEO, Clarendon Early Education Services 2nd Row L-to-R: Quincy Miller, Vice Chair & President, Eastern Bank; Tom Weber, Fellow, Eastern Bank Foundation; Lauren Birchfield Kennedy, Co-President & Chief Strategy Officer, Neighborhood Villages; Sarah Siegel Muncey, Co-President & Chief Innovator Officer, Neighborhood Villages; Michael LaChance, CEO, YMCA of Greater Nashua; Turahn Dorsey, Chief Impact Officer, Eastern Bank Foundation; Maria Gonzalez Moeller, CEO, The Community Group; Magda Rodriguez, Sr. Director National Strategy, Families First; Jennifer Templeman, President & Chief Operating Officer, JumpStart; Thomas "Doc" Daugherty, Director of Volunteer Engagement, Eastern Bank Foundation Not Pictured: Crystal Rountree, CEO Jumpstart

Eastern Bank Foundation (EBF) recently hosted its annual Community Advocacy Awards which select and spotlight nonprofit leaders and organizations focusing on the most critical needs of our communities. Consistent with EBF's long-standing philanthropic strategy and efforts to enrich early childhood development, and as a core part of its work to advance Economic Inclusion and Mobility, this year's award focused on early childhood education and care. The event, taking place during the 30th anniversary year of the Foundation, brought together honorees from around the region for celebration and a roundtable.

Leading the dynamic discussion was Eastern Bank CEO and Chair of the Board Bob Rivers and President and CEO of Eastern Bank Foundation, Nancy Huntington Stager. The roundtable covered many aspects of the early childhood development (ECD) ecosystem focusing on its role as critical infrastructure to support the healthy development of children, economic mobility for families, strong communities, and statewide economic and workforce competitiveness –especially in our region's historically underserved communities.

We celebrate these innovative, caring child- and family-centered champions and their teams for the exceptional work they do.

KATE BARRAND, President & CEO, Horizons for Homeless Children

"High quality early education is fundamental to leveling the playing field in our country."

Horizons for Homeless Children (Horizons) is on a mission to end family homelessness, an especially stressful and traumatic situation when children are involved. Horizons works to improve the lives of young homeless children in Massachusetts and to help their families succeed by providing high-quality early education, opportunities for play, and comprehensive family support services. One of their flagship programs installs child-friendly rooms in family homeless shelters across Massachusetts, providing a safe and caring space for children to connect, play and grow.

LAUREN BIRCHFIELD KENNEDY, Co-President & **SARAH SIEGEL MUNCEY**, Co-President, Neighborhood Villages

"An accessible, inclusive childcare system is entirely possible, and we have no time to wait - let's together develop innovative solutions for the challenges that children, parents and educators face."

Neighborhood Villages' work centers around one central idea: the current state of childcare isn't working for anyone – families, providers or educators. We've

forced parents to cover the full cost of care, resulting in many families struggling to find appropriate and affordable solutions so they can work, which in turn, denies children equal access to early education and limits family income. Neighborhood Villages works to re-imagine access to childcare as a critical driver of employment opportunity, financial security and economic mobility, setting every child and family up to thrive.

SUE COVITZ, Executive Director & **MAGDA RODRIGUEZ**, Senior Director of National Strategy, Families First

"Although being a parent or a guardian is one of the most influential roles a person can have in a child's life, it is one of the least supported and recognized in our society. We believe all parents have the power to shape their children's future and make their communities even stronger."

For more than 30 years, Families First has collaborated with parents to amplify their power as they navigate the diverse challenges of raising children. Their signature programs not only support and educate parents, but also build important infrastructure so parents can take what they know and have learned, and work directly with their communities to positively affect change with other children and families. Transformative change is possible when parents are engaged family and community leaders.

MIKE LACHANCE, CEO, YMCA of Greater Nashua

"It is paramount to nurture every child's cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth – especially in the first six years of life – to help them build a healthy and thriving future."

A regional leader in early education, youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the YMCA of Greater Nashua has been a lasting and positive fixture in Southern New Hampshire for decades. The Y believes providing trusted, accessible daycare and early education opportunities for young children is foundational for all children, helping build confident, healthy, successful families. The Y also provides a safe, caring space from infancy to adulthood – feeding mind and body.

SANDRA M. MCCROOM, President & CEO, Children's Services of Roxbury

"We must pour into our children hope, confidence, opportunities for positive exposure and the belief that they are worthy to create a good life. A life that they, not systemic racism, define."

Children's Services of Roxbury (CSR) is celebrating 50 years of providing peace of mind for children and families through high-quality, affordable childcare programs. This includes numerous, crucial wraparound services aimed at breaking the cycle of systemic racism for future generations, and empowering families and young adults on their journeys from poverty to stability and wealth-building. CSR is one of the state's largest Black-run nonprofit organizations and is led by a Board and staff representing the diverse communities it serves.

MARGARET MCDONALD, CEO, Clarendon Early Education Services, Inc.

"The heroines and heroes of our licensed Family Childcare programs who open their doors every day to serve families and children are making vital contributions to the field of early education and care."

Clarendon Early Education Services, Inc. has been supporting the growth of childcare opportunities for children, families and providers for the past 45 years – having a profound impact on the health, wellness and education of thousands of children in the greater areas of Lowell, Lawrence, Lynn, Springfield and Boston. Clarendon's commitment to children and families is to provide high quality, safe, nurturing, culturally sensitive care environments that offer children learning experiences where they can explore their interests and strengths and build a strong foundation for a positive future.

MARIA GONZALEZ MOELLER, CEO, The Community Group

"High quality, accessible and affordable early childhood development impacts the stability and financial health of our families, our communities and our economy – it also helps sustain our invaluable early childhood development workforce."

The Community Group had humble beginnings as the Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, a preschool with an enrollment of 20 children. Over the last 50 years, the organization has grown into a multi-faceted agency providing high-quality education and development programs for very young children. It also delivers training and professional development for educators, runs the Community Day Charter Public School, and offers resources that help families access the essential care they need to build happy and healthy lives.

AMY O'LEARY, Executive Director, Strategies for Children

"I have witnessed incredible personal and professional transformations in early educators as they come to recognize and claim the power they have as advocates and experts."

Strategies for Children advocates on a broad scale to ensure Massachusetts and its community members invest the resources needed for all young children to access high-quality early education and care programs. Their signature advocacy initiatives, which include The 9:30 Call, The Early Childhood Agenda and the Advocacy Network, convene thousands of individuals and organizations with a vested interest in ECD to connect, share and develop action steps to build programs and access that prepare children and their families for success in school and life.

NOËLLE PINA, Chief of Staff, Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce

"Today, some areas of the Cape are childcare deserts, and we need to change that through investment and collaboration across businesses, families, early childhood development professionals and public policy makers."

The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce includes over 1,000 employer and 15,000 employee members and advances ECD "over the bridge" as a leader in the Common Start Coalition, by establishing an Early Education & Childcare Taskforce – including business leaders, childcare providers and early education employees; and in creating a Childcare Grant program that helps new care centers open their doors. They also advocate for more ECD public investment resulting in an extra \$1.6 million being allocated to Chatham, Dennis, Harwich, Truro and Wellfleet for early education in 2023.

GERALDINE "JERI" ROBINSON, Advisor, Boston Children's Museum & Chair, Boston School Committee

"Having a fierce dedication to the children of Boston means ensuring every child has the access and opportunity to enjoy rich, early, hands-on learning. It is not only a good thing to do, but also the right of every child and every family."

Boston Children's Museum engages children and families in joyful discovery experiences that instill an appreciation of our world, develop foundational skills and spark a lifelong learning. Jeri's mission of driving equity and excellence in early education, family engagement and community service has been steadfast during her decades at the Museum. Her participation in up to 50 boards, and role as the Chair of the Boston School Committee has made a lasting impact on many children in our community. With the PlaySpace exhibit at the Museum, she developed one of the first prototypes for early learning family spaces, which has been replicated across the globe.

CRYSTAL ROUNTREE, Chief Executive Officer, Jumpstart

"High quality, equitable early education and Pre-K can put children ahead in reading and narrow literacy gaps."

In 2023, Jumpstart served 13,035 children from under-resourced communities across 14 states, including Massachusetts, giving them the individualized attention and "jumpstart" they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The results are clear: children who participate in the Jumpstart program make 1.5x greater gains in important literacy skills as compared with children who did not participate, and 91% of children made language and literacy gains as measured by a teacher observation tool.

ADITI SUBRAMANIAM, Associate Director of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

"We are inextricably connected with one another. This work is about addressing root causes of inequity to create just environments that foster and promote healing for children and families."

Since 1878, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) has been on the forefront of innovative services and passionate advocacy to protect and promote the rights and well-being of children and families. MSPCC's work also focuses on mitigating the effects of trauma – including behavioral health needs – employing two-generational approaches to improve outcomes for both children and parents. They also work with the MassAIMH to enhance, diversify and support the infant and early childhood mental health workforce.

About Eastern Bank Foundation

To achieve a just, equitable and inclusive society we believe individuals, families and communities who have been historically and systematically excluded from America's prosperity need access to the resources and opportunities that can help them thrive. We invest in community-led organizations to promote structural change that builds economic inclusion, mobility and social justice. For more information, please visit www.easternbank.com/foundation.