

2019  
2020



# Annual Report

Berkshire County Head Start  
Child Development Program, Inc.



Mission & Vision

Year in Review

Sponsors & Community

# Who We Are



## Our Mission

It is our goal to work with families and assist children to develop socially, cognitively, physically and emotionally while fostering a positive self-image and love for learning that will help them succeed in our program, in public school and later in life. We are dedicated to ensuring that all children and their families have an opportunity for a significant Head Start experience through support and partnership with community and staff, while emphasizing positive child outcomes through family participation.

## Our History

Berkshire County Head Start (BCHS) was established in 1976, it is a comprehensive early childhood program providing education, health, and special education services to children and their families. We service all of Berkshire County with sites in Great Barrington, Lee, Becket, Pittsfield, and North Adams. Our programs are all QRIS Level 3 on the state Quality Rating and Improvement Scale.

"I couldn't be more pleased and grateful. Christopher has done a complete turn around and grown, everyone has helped him so much, the communication I have with everyone is beyond all expectations. Thank you from the bottom of my heart..."  
-Parent of BCHS student

# PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

## *Senior Leadership*



Maggie Steele

Parent, Family, Community  
Engagement Manager



Doug Anzalone

Chief Financial Officer



Penny Evans

Compliance Manager



Brett Westbrook

Executive Director



Lorie Harrington

Health and Safety Manager



Donna Denning

Childcare Director

## *Policy Council*

KYLIE NESTLE, Policy Council Chair,  
Community Member, Mother of HS Graduate

KEN VAN BRAMER

Community Member, Father of HS Graduate

MELANIE MORAN

Community Member, Mother of HS Graduate

CHRISTINE STALEY

Mother of a Child in Meadow Lane 3

SHEENA STRONG

Community Member, Mother of HB Graduate

BETHANY MISHK

Mother of a Child in Meadow Lane 2

JASON REGALMANN,

Father of a Child in Meadow Lane

MELISSA DALEY

Mother of a Child in Meadow Lane 4

## *Board of Directors*

SUE DOUCETTE, President

RICHARD GRILLON, Vice President

DIANE JOHNSON, Secretary

AMANDA BLEIER, Treasurer

LORI KAYS, Community at Large

FRANCINE GERMAINE, Community at Large

DAN DILLON, Community at Large

KATHY MILLARD, Community at Large

CARRIE LOVE, Community at Large

ESTERVINA DAVIS, Community at Large

CASSANDRA PUGH, Community at Large

# A Message from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends of Berkshire County Head Start,

It has been a dynamic and successful year for Berkshire County Head Start (BCHS) with many significant accomplishments, opportunities and learning experiences. We built various new partnerships and worked to strengthen our existing partnerships in order to meet our mission to serve children and families. All in all, the year was full of unique and deep experiences in education and family engagement.

One major highlight from the 2019-2020 year includes our program transitioning to virtual learning and support for children through the COVID-19 pandemic. While as a whole our country endures the challenges that exist with living through a pandemic that caused families to isolate and our program to close, we are proud to say that we remained a stable support for our children and families. Our innovative staff found creative ways to provide learning and support to families. BCHS staff created online channels to read books to children, drop off learning materials to support learning, connected families to community resources and offered continuous supports throughout our 4 month closing. We were also able to provide each of our children with a book from the program to help them continue to feel connected to learning and know that our program is here for them.

In our tasks to reopen to welcome families back into the program under revised safety protocols, our staff worked diligently to restructure classrooms and create innovative learning activities to ensure that children continued to have access to quality programming. Staff worked tirelessly to make certain our program reopened under a detailed plan and that the tasks and expectations included in that plan were carefully implemented.

I am proud to share that our funding sources demonstrated great flexibility and additional funding opportunities to ensure that BCHS staff were paid throughout our closing period and that we had the supplies needed in order to reopen. Continuing to pay our staff to stay connected with families was a very important aspect of meeting our program's mission. Supporting our staff by continuing to pay them was a critical factor in mitigating the fiscal crisis associated with COVID-19. It also recognizes their valuable work, supports financial stability and ensures staff are available for assignment when services resume.

This year has truly demonstrated what a flexible, creative, smart and dedicated group of early childhood professionals makes up the team at Berkshire County Head Start. I could not be more proud to lead such a vibrant and resilient group of people working to fulfill the mission of our program.



*Brett Westbrook*

# A Message from Board President, Sue Doucette

What a year it has been!

As President of the Board of Directors at Berkshire County Head Start, I will say this has been a most unusual year. We started the year as we have many other years. We held our Annual Board Meeting in February with staff, parents and governing board members in the conference room at Meadow Lane. During the first 3 months of the year we worked collaboratively on a new 5-year Strategic Plan, and made great progress. Then, the world changed.

The arrival of Covid-19 changed so very many things. Some for the worse, others have yet to be determined. One thing I will say about BCHS, is that we are a resilient and determined group of caring individuals. I have not seen enthusiasm for our mission diminished; rather I have seen dedication and creativity increased in each of the staff members I have had the privilege of dealing with throughout this pandemic.

In addition to dealing with the new way of operating a quality early childhood program (following new EEC and CDC guidelines), our fantastic staff have managed to complete revisions to a new site, consolidate and split the previous site into 2 new locations and MOVE all of the components; they have totally revised their methods of teaching and STILL keep smiling and caring for each other and the families we serve.

We are continually reminded that it does, indeed, take a village to raise children. I am honored to be a part of the BCHS 'village', a truly remarkable group of people. Please continue to look out for and care for each other, keep sharing your knowledge and joy, and stay safe.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Berkshire County Head Start, THANK YOU!  
Each and every one of you makes a difference.

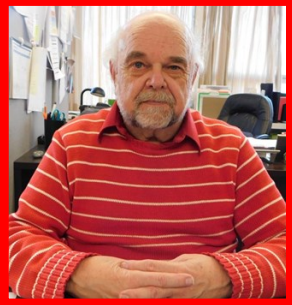
Best wishes for a calmer new year ahead.

*Sue Doucette*



# Meet a few of our staff members...

“Having the children’s faces light up when I enter the classroom and being able to make a positive difference in the lives of the children and their families is a most rewarding feeling. In addition, I deeply value the privilege of working with a most dedicated group of professionals in the field who strive daily to promote the growth and development of the children and families that we serve.”



**Richard Leja**  
Education Supervisor

“To be a teacher was my dream, when I was in elementary school. I was a literature teacher in high school before I came to the USA. I never thought of becoming an early childhood teacher. After working with preschoolers, I have learned that it is more fun and more valuable in shaping the lives of children. Every day I learn new things and ideas as I teach them. I love to see how much empathy they have for each other.”

“I love seeing the children grow and listening to the stories. I love the people I work with. Head Start has helped me be a stronger person with a purpose.”



**Sakine Gumus Yildiz**  
Teacher



**Gloria Senecal**  
Bus Monitor

“You know you love your job when you look forward to going to work. Being greeted with hugs and smiles from the children and the opportunity to watch them grow, melts ones heart and keeps me young.”



**Sandy Monteleone**  
Family Advocate

# YEAR IN REVIEW

June  
2019

Received a  
\$100,000  
durable goods  
grant



September  
2019

New  
crosswalk for  
access to  
Deming Park

Became a  
United Way  
Partner



December  
2020

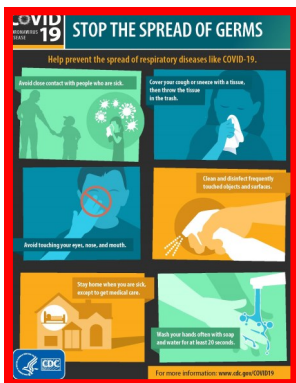
New sign for  
Meadow Lane  
Site

New website  
was debuted



March  
2020

Switch to remote  
learning format

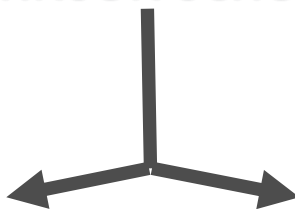


# YEAR IN REVIEW



*We moved our Johnson site! Thank you North Adams Public Schools and City of North Adams for opening your doors for over 20 years to help ensure that all children and their families have an opportunity for a significant Head Start experience!*

## JOHNSON SCHOOL



**Brayton Elementary**  
20 Barbour St.  
North Adams, Ma 01247

**North County**  
535 Curran Highway  
North Adams, Ma 01247

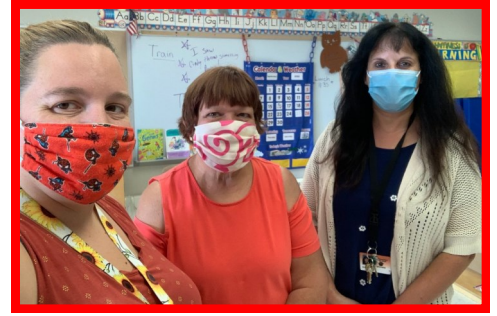


Thank you to our staff who worked hard to get these sites up and running and thank you to Brayton Elementary and United Cerebral Palsy for opening your spaces to us!



# Health and Safety

**Our approach** is holistic, and addresses the mental, emotional and physical health, including the dental, vision, hearing and nutritional needs of the child. Our health supervisor, onsite RN and registered dietitian work with community doctors, health services and parents to ensure optimal health.



**Our objective** is to ensure that through collaboration and teamwork with families, staff, and health professionals, all child health and development concerns are identified and children are linked to an ongoing source of continuous, accessible care to meet their basic health needs.



**Our commitment** to health and safety ensures that children and families have the supports and services necessary to achieve health and wellness. Wellness helps to ensure school readiness and success for families and children well beyond the preschool years. If children are healthy and well, they are better able to learn.

As of the end of February **45%** of children had completed their dental and physical exams.



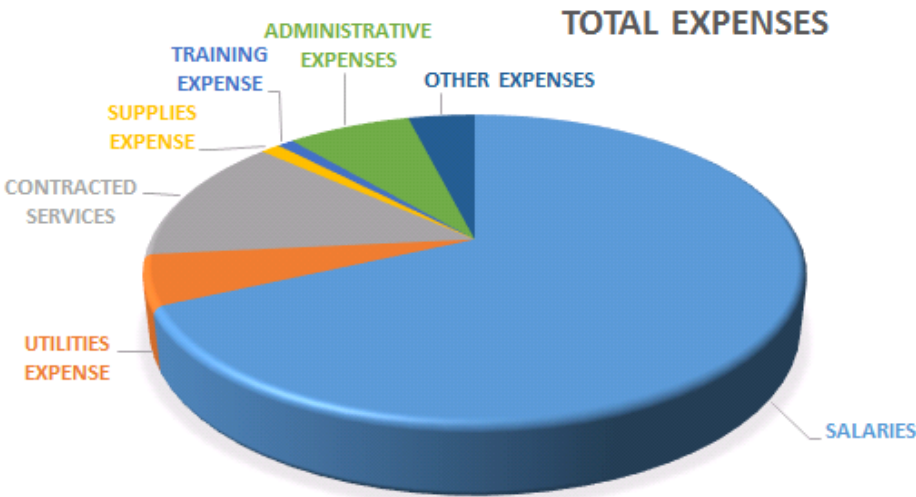
Over **300** children screened for hearing and vision.

As a result, **9** children received eye glasses.



# FINANCIALS

	FEDERAL	STATE	TOTAL
SALARIES	\$ 1,530,426.00	\$ 1,353,714.00	\$ 2,884,140.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$ 403,616.00	\$ 338,412.00	\$ 742,028.00
UTILITIES EXPENSE	\$ 137,210.00	\$ 87,109.00	\$ 224,319.00
CONTRACTED SERVICES	\$ 314,631.00	\$ 246,144.00	\$ 560,775.00
SUPPLIES EXPENSE	\$ 25,758.00	\$ 22,594.00	\$ 48,352.00
TRAINING EXPENSE	\$ 34,151.00	\$ 6,295.00	\$ 40,446.00
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$ 159,291.00	\$ 149,438.00	\$ 308,729.00
OTHER EXPENSES	\$ 105,373.00	\$ 61,094.00	\$ 166,467.00
Total Expense	\$ 2,710,456.00	\$ 2,264,800.00	\$ 4,975,256.00



**Thank you to our supporters:**  
 Crane Co.  
 Berkshire Bank  
 Berkshire United Way  
 Greylock Federal Credit Union

**In Kind Donations:**  
 In Kind Rent/Utilities: \$727,239  
 In Kind Volunteers: \$27,499

# PARENT, FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Head Start team strives to engage families in the program and promote school readiness.

Below is a time line of how we were able to connect with our families this year.

Research shows that children whose parents are involved in their education do better in school.

Becoming an effective advocate for children requires becoming involved in their education and their lives. And being involved in children's lives is what it takes to be a great and successful parent!

The partnership with parents is fundamental to providing quality early childhood services.

## March 2020

We began offering our services virtually. Continuing parent and family engagement was essential to the quality of our early care and education.

During this time Family Advocates and Home Visitors maintained contact with all **308** families and were able to help by providing child care, conducting home visits, offering family support services, or intervening early when a child has special needs.

## July 2020

We were able to open our doors to **140** children. Strict COVID regulations made it essential to continue with virtual services to engage families.



**Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Programs (CFCE) are locally based programs serving families with children birth through school age. This grant is supported by funds provided by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.**

CFCE Provided **36** Zoom Interactive Playgroups from March to June.

**974** Families participated in these groups representing **1160** children.

**82%** of families reported that participation in Pittsfield CFCE parent/family education opportunities increased their knowledge of child development.

**78%** of families reported that they read to their children more as a result of participation in Pittsfield CFCE parent/family education opportunities.



# KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. Berkshire County Head Start teachers were able to connect virtually and/or safe distancing and plan activities based on talking with their families throughout this year to help maintain and increase our children's Kindergarten Readiness.

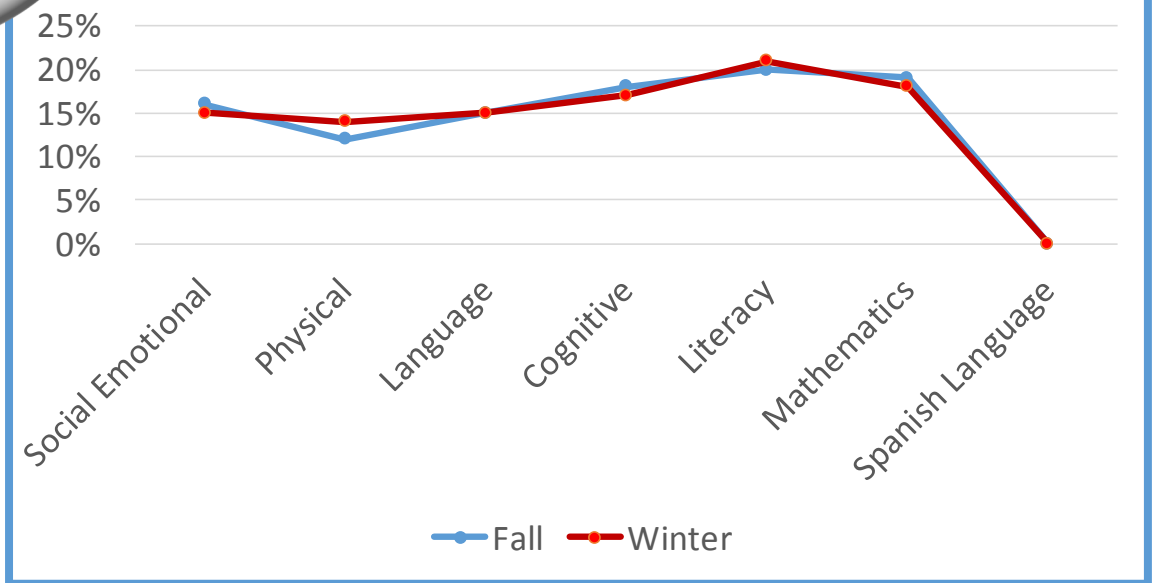
We started our first ever virtual classrooms. More than **30** families will access our curriculum, and our comprehensive services via Facebook, Ignite by Hatch, and Class Dojo.

Teachers connected with families weekly during COVID closure using ClassDojo, YouTube videos, mailed activities, phone calls, and email.

Our classrooms remain inviting and welcoming while also maintaining strict guidelines to keep children and families safe.

"This school really treats these children, and I'm speaking as a whole....not just mine, as more than just students and I've been a witness to that since the day I took our tour and decided to enroll them."  
-Parent of BCHS student

Kindergarten Readiness Goals



	Social Emotional	Physical	Language	Cognitive	Literacy	Mathematics	Spanish Language
Fall	16%	12%	15%	18%	20%	19%	0%
Winter	15%	14%	15%	17%	21%	18%	0%

\*Percentages are reflective of COVID 19 closure.





BERKSHIRE COUNTY HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, INC.