



strength · caring  
respect · integrity  
commitment  
to excellence

# { Letters from our Leadership }



It is customary in an annual letter to look back over the past year and we should as we think of all the hard work and dedication that went into a successful 20th year. VISIONS remains strong financially and its staff has worked diligently to serve families in the West End. We owe the teachers and executive staff our gratitude as we do our faithful supporters, friends, and mission partners. Our agency continues to be a light in Cincinnati where, unfortunately, others have struggled and their much needed services have been severely cut back.

But, I think many of us are tired of looking back. It is time to look forward. We at VISIONS, like everyone else, have had to retool, re-educate, and commit to a plan of action that will put our clients and agency on the road to recovery. We are not unique in our efforts as every person and business has had to do the same. But, we will strive to be unique in our success especially as resources for the community we serve have diminished. It is in this spirit that the Board of VISIONS has committed to the following goals:

1. To raise the standard of our care for infants and Moms.
2. To seek and encourage new Mothers to use our services.
3. To raise our awareness in the community through marketing and board development.

You will hear more specifics of our action plans and goals as we meet through the year. Right now it is important that everyone at VISIONS; clients, workers, supporters, friends, and board members know that we are committed to an upward path. A path that seeks to embrace a broader community of those in need, one that seeks to celebrate the uniqueness of a child's life and the amazing vitality it holds, one that urges friends and supporters to commit to families in Cincinnati that are in many ways forgotten, and one where decline or reversal cannot happen.

The past is gone. Our eyes must be ahead to the goals of renewal and concrete change. To set the example we seek to follow I would like to close with a story told from our religious heritage at VISIONS: There was once a small group of people asked to make a significant change. "Can we really accomplish what you say?" one asked in a Moment of uncertainty. "Surely, you must have disciples in other nations to help. There are only eleven of us now, and you say everything rests on us. You must have additional strategies and alternative means." There was a Moment of prolonged silence as each person silently thought the same thing. Each was unsure of their possibility for success, and perhaps hoped that their burden would be lifted by some secret plan.

It was then that He said, "There is no other plan. Go, therefore..."

Russell Schnurr  
President Board of Trustees



VISIONS celebrated 20 years of encouraging, caring, educating and loving! One of our Moms from the early years summed up what we strive to do every day. "VISIONS has helped me grow and develop into a woman. They provided so much stability, a support system and networking opportunities. The women of VISIONS mentored me, helped me become a better parent and a better person. Due to their support and care I developed achievable goals in my personal and professional life."

The years have brought many reasons to celebrate: Moms graduating from high school and college, completing continuing education programs, earning GED's and obtaining employment. Some families have made great strides on their journey to self-sufficiency. Many children have transitioned to kindergarten with new skills and are excited about learning. Children have achieved developmental milestones, positive social behaviors and were on track with health check-ups and immunizations.

The years have also brought issues that reflect the stark reality of poverty. The current economy has been devastating to many of our families. They have lost jobs and income. In some instances, Mothers have dropped out of school because they are unable to manage the stress of school and the reality of providing basic needs for their families. We have more children with challenging behaviors with Mothers who are depressed and unable to nurture them. The need for mental health services is greater than ever. We have held the hands of families who have lost family members most often to senseless violence.

We have had success in our accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We have maintained a star rating with Step Up to Quality. We were the recipients of the 2008 Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics.

2010 was a tumultuous year. We experienced a decrease in our enrollment with the elimination of State funded Head Start. Funding has been stretched thin due to a decrease in some sources and the elimination of others.

However, we look forward to the next 20 years with a renewed vigor. We have restructured our parent program, increased our outreach efforts and utilized outside experts to help us evaluate our programs. Our goal is to make VISIONS the place where Mothers are supported in their efforts to become better individuals and more nurturing parents. We need to be the best in early childhood education so our children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

It is no easy task. Our journey is difficult. We thank you, our friends and donors, for helping and supporting us. Together we can make a difference for our families.

Marcia H. Simmons  
Executive Director

# { About Visions }

VISIONS Community Services (VCS) is a non-profit organization established in 1981. Located in the West End of Cincinnati, VISIONS serves young parents and their children from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. VISIONS provides a unique blend of services to parents and children. We assist teen and young parents to obtain their high school diploma, GED, pursue post secondary education, and obtain and maintain meaningful employment. Our early childhood education program provides a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment while preparing children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. It has achieved quality ratings from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Ohio's Step Up to Quality program. Our philosophy is that education is the most effective way to escape poverty.

## **Mission Statement**

VISIONS Community Services is a community-based organization committed to breaking the cycle of poverty by providing human services that strengthen families and promote self-sufficiency. Our interactions with the families we serve, our volunteers, funders and community partners will reflect our core values of caring, respect, integrity and a commitment to excellence in all we do.

## **Key Strategies**

1. Provide nationally accredited childcare services for children 6 weeks – 5 years that address the educational physical and behavioral needs of children, enabling them to enter kindergarten ready to learn.
2. Work closely with parents and provide family support services, crisis intervention, and education/support groups that help them achieve their goals.
3. Collaborate with other groups who have a vested interest in the community, including social service agencies, community leaders, and public safety and school officials, to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of our efforts and to identify and meet emerging needs.

To learn more about us call (513) 651-2229 or visit our website at [www.visionscs.org](http://www.visionscs.org)



## **Volunteer Opportunities**

- Mentor, tutor or share a special talent
- Read to children
- Organize a book, diaper or clothing drive
- Organize and chaperone a field trip
- Serve on a Board Committee

For more information, contact Robinn Jones-Leonard or Denise Steward at 651-2229.

Don Klekamp reading to children at VISIONS.

# Raising of the Green

Raising of the Green was held on March 13, 2010. The committee was chaired by Roseann Hayes who was ably assisted by Maureen Babbitt, Kevin Clark, Pat Culley, Patrick Fischer, Sharon Nuckols and Eunice Timoney-Ravenna. Susan Johnson, auctioneer, did a fantastic job encouraging the guests and helping to raise funds for VISIONS.

The Honorary Chairs were Don and Marianne Klekamp. They were presented with the “Charity in Action” award. This is the first year that the award was presented. It reflects VISIONS ongoing commitment to families in need as well as our roots in the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor. Their charisma, mission and vision are the roots of VISIONS Community Services.

Recipients of this award should exemplify the values of VISIONS Community Services and their Dominican roots by serving their communities and those in need, believing in the uniqueness and dignity of each person, and living out strong family values. It recognizes people who have worked to create a better community and have a vision for the future. It was an honor to present the award to Marianne & Donald Klekamp for their charity that has inspired us. Together they have created a VISION of a better community.

**Presenting Sponsor**



**Event Sponsors**

- Western & Southern Financial Fund
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- Fifth Third Bancorp
- PNC Bank
- Cincinnati Bell
- Horan Associates
- Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
- Don and Marianne Klekamp Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation



- 1: The Honorable Patrick Fischer, Marcia Simmons, Marianne & Don Klekamp
- 2. Pat Culley and Roseann Hayes
- 3. Sister Kathleen Hebbeler, Sister Barbara Wheeler, Sister Monica McGloin
- 4. Tina & Gary Volz, Tom with Linda Mueller

# { 2010 at a Glance }

112 Families served

100% of families live at or below 150% Federal poverty level.

100% of the children we serve live with a single parent.

159 children participated in nationally accredited child care and early childhood education programs.

21 children, ages 6-12, participated in safe, enriching summer activities.

110 Mothers and 8 Fathers participated in parent program.

25,892 nutritionally balanced meals were served for breakfast and lunch.

12,591 nutritionally appropriate mid-afternoon snacks were served.

5 group meetings were held at Aiken High School for parenting teens

11 preschool children received assistance in making a smooth transition from early education to kindergarten for a successful future in school.

7 students from Aiken High School participated in group meetings designed to empower participants to make healthy choices and remain in school and pursue post-high school education.

50 parent education programs, meetings and workshops were held to provide information and share new ideas and perspectives to assist with personal development and parenting issues. Program participation requires attendance at a minimum one per month.

34% of enrolled children remained for 1 year; 64% children who were enrolled remained for 6 months.

All children are assessed at enrollment to determine if age-appropriate milestones have been met. Individualized lesson plans are created as a result.



Marianne Klekamp with VISIONS' children.

100% of children have current medical screenings.

100% of children have up to date immunizations.

100% of children received screening to identify health concerns such as speech, hearing, or vision impairments. 100% of children with identified delays were linked with treatment services.

100% children's physical development is assessed to be age-appropriate (fine and gross motor skills) or demonstrate attainment of fine and gross motor goals identified in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 12 months.

92% children's cognitive and language development is assessed to be age-appropriate or demonstrate attainment of cognitive and language goals identified in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 12 months.

90% of children are regularly read to at home.

72% of children enrolled for 6 months and 100% of children enrolled for 1 year had social/emotional development assessed to be age-appropriate or demonstrate attainment of social/emotional goals identified in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 12 months.

185 parent(s) referrals were made for education, housing, health care services, mental health services, job training and employment.

100% of parent(s) are actively involved in their child's learning.

660 newsletters were distributed to parents of enrolled children to provide support and information to improve quality of their families' lives.

430 credit hours of classes, workshops and seminars were attended by VCS staff providing additional knowledge, new techniques and support to maintain and enhance quality early education, making life better for the children in their care.



# { Spotlights on Special People }

## **Barbara McElroy Scholarship Recipients**

This scholarship fund was established by the family in memory of Barbara. She was a Trustee in the 1990's. In addition to serving in that capacity Barbara tutored some of our teen Moms to assist them in passing state proficiency exams. Through her efforts several Moms were able to graduate from high school. The scholarship fund is specifically for those Moms who have graduated and are enrolled in post high school education. Barbara's spirit of care and concern for these young women continues today.

### **Santanya**

In 2010 two Moms were awarded \$1000 scholarships from this fund. Santanya is majoring in liberal arts at Chatfield College where she is currently in her third semester. Although she is a busy Mom of three boys, she has maintained a 3.3 GPA. "I want to finish my education to show my children education is very important. It can take you a long way in life and willingness to learn can provide you with many open doors."

### **LaKeisha**

LaKeisha is majoring in psychology at Cincinnati State Community and Technical College and is working part-time at University Hospital in Environmental Services. She is maintaining a 3.0 GPA. She plans to enroll at the University of Cincinnati after completing her associate degree to pursue her bachelor's degree in Psychology. "I want to take my career to the highest point because not only will I benefit from my achievements, but my children will and so will the many children I plan on helping in the future."



Left: Santanya and son, Savion. Middle: Marcia Simmons with Mike Welch, Ashley Ramous and Donna Eby from Sanger & Eby. Rodnesha with Robinn Jones Leonard.

## Other Accomplishments

### Danikka

- Graduate with LPN from Scarlet Oaks
- Received license
- Employed with Mercy Franciscan Westpark Nursing Homes

### Dominique

- May 2010 NKU graduate – Bachelor's Integrative Studies, Minor in Math
- Working part-time in service industry
- Seeking full time career position

### Rodnesda

- Graduated from Health Care Alternative – CNA – February 2010
- Graduated from Kaplan College – Medical Assistant, June 2009
- Employed with Cardinal Health Care Solutions

### Natasha

- Completed course work for her high school diploma

### Trinisha

- Successfully passed the test for her GED

### Nicole

- Completed the Council on Aging Home Care Assistant training program, employed, enrolled at Chatfield College

## Teachers

The VISIONS' philosophy of the importance of education extends to our teachers. This year three teachers are enrolled in college pursuing bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education. Continuing education hours completed by staff members help them provide a challenging environment for our children.

## Mentors

The second year of our mentoring program has been successful. Six female attorneys are matched with six Moms. They meet regularly to discuss family and personal issues,

difficulties as well as successes. The mentors are advisors, friends, tutors and coach. The mentors bring invaluable experience and our Moms share incredible everyday experiences. Together they are tackling problems and setting goals. Dreams for the future become reality.

## Volunteers

We were blessed with many volunteers who gave countless hands on hours to our Moms, our children and to enhance the physical environment of VISIONS. The projects and volunteers were:

- **Reading with Children:** Children's Hospital, USI Insurance, 5/3 Bank, General Revenue Corporation, United Way
- **Play Dates:** GE Aviation, Mike Albert Leasing, P&G, PNC Bank, Ethicon-Endo Surgery, Remke Markets
- **Presentations to Parent Groups:** US Bank, WINGS (Women Invested in the Next Generation)
- **Spruce Up:** Go Cincinnati from Crossroads Church

## Sanger & Eby

The inaugural Community Service award was presented to Sanger & Eby at our Celebration Dinner in June. The award was in recognition for all the work this company does to improve the lives of people in the greater Cincinnati community. They have donated countless hours and incredible expertise to VISIONS as well as to many other non-profit agencies.

The dinner also celebrated 20 years of service to the community by VISIONS. Children transitioning to kindergarten were honored and presented with new back packs. These were provided by WINGS (Women Invested in the Next Generation). Special recognition was given to Moms who had achieved educational milestones.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Russell Schnurr, *President*  
*Fifth Third Securities, Inc.*

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*Vice President*  
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## Staff

Marcia H. Simmons  
*Executive Director*

Denise L. Steward  
*Director of Early Childhood Program*

Robinn Jones-Leonard  
*Director of Outreach / Parent Programs*

Georgetta Johnson  
*Executive Administrative Assistant*

# Results from Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2010

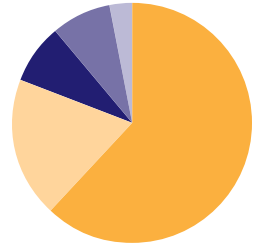
## Net Assets

**Net Assets: \$635,255**

## Sources of Funds

**Total Revenue: \$1,061,977**

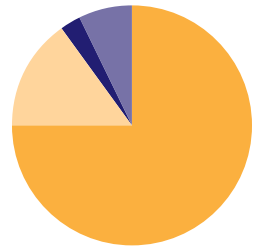
- Government 62%
- Foundations 19%
- Private Sources 8%
- Special Events 8%
- Other Income 3%



## Use of Funds

**Total Expenditures: \$1,180,510**

- Early Childhood Education 75%
- Family Development 15%
- Administrative 3%
- Fundraising 7%



A volunteer with one of the VISIONS babies.

# { Partners }

## Funding Partners



CATHOLICS UNITED  
FOR THE POOR



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**Ohio** | Department of  
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Barbara Ellen McElroy  
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Education of Young Children



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