WE ARE

Letter from Ruth Schmidt, 
Executive Director

In the coming pages you will meet Jessica, Stella, Betty Anne, Andrea & Gerineldo, and Rachel... the WE in WECA. Through them you will learn much about who WE are and what WE do. What is pressing and compelling in the world of early childhood care and education is also what WE know.

WE know that in the first three years of life, a child's brain is forming 1 million new neural connections every second. WOW! That is a lot of connections. Nurturing adult relationships are critical during this time of rapid brain development. Early childhood educators are brain architects!

WE know that by age 5, children essentially master the sound system and grammar of their language and acquire a vocabulary of thousands of words. Talking, singing, and reading to babies and toddlers and preschoolers is invaluable to their language development. Early childhood educators are linguists!

WE know that the emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community. Early childhood educators build successful communities!

WE know Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman has found a 13% Return on Investment for comprehensive, high-quality, birth-to-five early education. Early childhood educators strengthen our economy!

BUT...
WE also know that in Wisconsin the median wage for an early childhood educator with an associate degree is $10 per hour. Almost 4 out of 10 in this workforce leave their classroom every year and over 35% rely one or more public assistance programs.

This knowledge is demanding of public policy and public investments that address the needs of our young children, their families, and the early education workforce. It is with urgency that we invite you to become part of who WE are, stay current with what WE know, advocate for what WE need!

DONATE – Visit wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate and help WECA provide services outlined in this report to the over 22,000 early childhood educators, like Betty Anne and Stella, in our state.

ADVOCATE – raise your voice with ours, with Andrea’s and Gerineldo’s, to call for sound policies and investments that support a strong system of early care and education for all Wisconsin’s young children. Join our Forward for Kids advocacy list at wisconsinearlychildhood.org/advocacy.

CONNECT – keep in touch with us throughout the year and learn more about what early educators like Rachel and Jessica are up to. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood and follow us on twitter @EarlyEdMatters.
Two years of reading, studying, learning, researching and writing papers, because of the full support of the T.E.A.C.H. Program, I graduated this past December 2017, with an Associates Degree in Early Childhood. Without the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship program, I would not have my degree right now.

I am so grateful to have been able to be a part of the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship program. I would encourage anyone who is in the ECE field to connect with a T.E.A.C.H. Counselor and to talk about a plan towards continuing their education.

-Jessica Endsley, Teacher at Little Red Preschool, Middleton, WI
REWARD is a stipend program that provides salary supplements to eligible child care professionals to encourage them to stay in the field. Eligibility is determined by level of education and years of work in the field.

In 2017:

1,393 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® bonuses awarded totaling $296,361.

Bonuses during this time period were awarded in two-parts:

- contract completion
- six months into commitment period.

Average single bonus payment was $212.75 (approximately $425.50 annually).

1,876 Individuals received 2293 REWARD stipends. Average stipend was $550 for those on 1-year agreements and $270 for those on 6-month agreements.

984 Early childhood programs employed REWARD recipients.

“Yo trato de ser agradecida, por todo lo que sucede alrededor mio, en especial cuando REWARD y WECA apoyan y motivan a los profesores y profesoras de Wisconsin, que continuen capacitandose y haciendo un impacto positivo en la vida de cada nino que tenemos en el salon.”

-Stella Bernal Fernandez, Teacher at Little Explorers, Madison, WI

English Translation: “I try to be grateful for everything around me, especially for REWARD and WECA for supporting Wisconsin’s teachers and motivating them to further their training and to keep making a positive impact on every child in the classroom.”
I appreciate all the work WECA does to support and supplement my business. As self-employed business owners, we know the trust parents put in us. Like a skilled contractor building a house that is to stand 70, 80, even 90 years, we know that the foundation and structure of the home is NOT the place to go cheap and easy. Our children are creating their own foundations and structures and we owe it to them to give them good ‘supplies’ so they can have a solid start in life. WECA secures funding to supplement our food program as well as advocating for healthy changes that can help us all live stronger and more vibrant lives.

-Betty-Anne White, Owner of Agape Family Services, Sheboygan, WI
“This was the first time I brought my staff to the WECA Conference. I feel it is imperative that center owners bring their staff as well so they can earn their continuing education hours, but also funnel more valuable ideas into their business and into their classrooms. We look forward to seeing everyone in 2018!”

-Rachel Noble, MSM, Owner/ Administrative Director of A Joyful Noise Childcare Center, LLC, Milwaukee, WI
In 2017, WECA engaged the early childhood workforce and other allies in the following initiatives:

» **Power to the Profession** – a national collaboration, led by NAEYC, to define the early childhood profession by establishing a shared framework for career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards and compensation that unifies the entire profession.

» **Moving the Needle on Compensation** – an eight-state initiative supported by the national T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Center to raise the awareness of early childhood workforce compensation issues.

» **Early Childhood Coaching and Mentoring Project** – funded through Milwaukee Succeeds, a project that supports implementation of best practices in Milwaukee.

» **Active Early** – Training to improve childhood physical activity.

» **Healthy Bites** – Training to improve childhood nutrition.

New individuals joined Forward for Kids, WECA’s advocacy network now 1,465 strong.

Individuals participated in a postcard campaign calling for a greater investment in the early childhood workforce in the state budget; hundreds of others sent e-mails, made phone calls, or spoke to legislators directly.

WE ARE advocates for change.

WE ARE leaders creating a brighter future for our children and our profession.

In 2017, WECA engaged the early childhood workforce and other allies in the following initiatives:
WE ARE board members, chapter leaders, staff, and donors-change makers!

2017 Board of Directors:

**Sue Schimke, President**  
Little Turtles’ Playhouse Cooperative  
Beloit, WI

**Abby Abrisham**  
Careplus Child Care, Inc. & Fitchburg  
Careplus Preschool  
Fitchburg, WI

**Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MSLIS, MD**  
University of Wisconsin  
School of Medicine and Public Health  
Madison, WI

**Robin Fox, PhD, Vice President**  
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Whitewater, WI

**Rafat Arain**  
Crescent Learning Center  
Milwaukee, WI

**Henry Wilde**  
Acelero Learning  
Cudahy, WI

**Luke Chirhart, Secretary**  
Amazon Web Services  
Libertyville, IL

**Corrine Hendrickson**  
Corrine’s Little Explorers  
New Glarus, WI

Chapter Leaders:

*The Chapter Leaders serve as support for WECA’s local chapters across the state, planning events and providing resources to WECA members.*

**Beyond Dane:**  
Heidi Heller, President  
Jenee Jerome, Vice-President  
Amanda Ehlert, Treasurer  
M.C. Green, Secretary

**Fox Valley:**  
Amy Nogar, President and Vice President  
Deanna Pupp, Secretary  
Sally Beining, Treasurer

**Greater Milwaukee Chapter:**  
Michelle Sorce, President  
Catherine Roach, Treasurer  
Jennifer Fremgen, Secretary

**Great Rivers Chapter:**  
Kim Gorka, Vice President  
Jenny Ahlert, Secretary  
Kim Amundson, Treasurer

**Kenosha and Racine Early Educators (KARE) Chapter:**  
April Orth, Treasurer

**Rock County:**  
Michelle Weirich, Treasurer  
Sue Schimke, Board Member
2017 Donors

Individual Gifts
Chelsea Aeschbach
Sam Breidenbach
Mary Beth Boettcher
Heather Butler
Wade Carlson
Luke Chirhart
Brent Davies
Nar Doumbya
Sheryl Dwinell
David Edie
Robin Fox
Abby Funseth
Jolene Giese
Laura Graves
Melissa Grazioso
Peggy Haack
Mike Hablewitz
David Hauptman
Corrine Hendrickson
Jennifer Hilgendorf
Chris Holmes
Alain Hung
Nancy J. Jones
Margi Jones
David Johnsen
Connie Johnson
Brandy Lea
Pat LeMire
Joey Luckow
Susan Madian
Matthew Margolis
Jeneen Marshall
Mary Mastaglio
Kelly Matthews
Valerie McClain
Jane McCrea
Linda McCutchin
Oma Vic McMurray
Dipesh Navsaria
Dorothea Neitert
Caroline Oldershaw
Dominic Oldershaw
Mary Oldershaw
Robert Oldershaw
Lisa Olson
Jeanette Paulson
Wayne and Nancy Paulson
David Pellas
Riley Pink
Andrew Powers
Sandra Quam
John and Librada Quinn
Alyssa Ravenelle
Ingrid Rothe
Bonita Schey
Hildegard Schmidt
Ruth Schmidt and Kevin Zamzow
Amy Schuster
Roy and Iris Schuster
Jason Stephens
Brad Stieber
Kenneth Taylor
Ann Terrell
Scott Theado
Marly Thao
Linda Tuchman-Ginsberg
Andrew Wallman
Nancy Webb
Kelly Woger
Daithi Wolfe
Erika Young
Casey Zwettler

Other Donations
Collaborating Partners:
Northeast, Milwaukee, Southern and Southeast Regions
First Business Bank®
Integral Building Systems
Kaplan Early Learning Company
M3 Insurance
Organic Valley
ProAssurance
Tim Rikkers and CRESA
SMS Foundation
Turke & Strauss LLP
UW Hospitals and Clinics
Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau, Inc.
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction-Office of Early Learning
Viroqua Area Foundation
**WECA Financials**

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<tr>
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<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Program</td>
<td>$4,173,961</td>
<td>$4,730,381</td>
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<tr>
<td>YoungStar</td>
<td>$42,051</td>
<td>$3,216,135</td>
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<td>T.E.A.C.H. &amp; REWARD</td>
<td>$3,794,382</td>
<td>$5,992,969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race to the Top</td>
<td>$1,554,116</td>
<td>$2,346,857</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Contracts</td>
<td>$549,696</td>
<td>$204,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
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<td>Annual Conference</td>
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<td>Training Events</td>
<td>$10,197</td>
<td>$18,098</td>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<td>$10,861</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$18,836</td>
<td>$22,855</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,295,551</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,674,937</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>$7,663,267</td>
<td>$12,697,901</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$2,422,242</td>
<td>$3,629,195</td>
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<td>Indirect Administration</td>
<td>$253,423</td>
<td>$291,766</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,338,932</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,618,862</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>($43,381)</td>
<td>$56,075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WE ARE seeking allies!

Join us to inspire teaching excellence for all young children in Wisconsin!

1. **Donate**: Visit [wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate](http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate) and give a gift in honor of a special early childhood teacher or program.

2. **Advocate**: Join WECA's Forward For Kids list to receive updates and action alerts on key early childhood education issues. To join, visit [wisconsinearlychildhood.org/advocacy](http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/advocacy).

3. **Connect**: Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. Share your thoughts and join the conversation.