WECA’s T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program makes higher education a reality for thousands of child care staff who otherwise couldn’t afford it. T.E.A.C.H. scholars pursue credentials in specialized areas of early education, including program administration, family child care, infant toddler, leadership, and more. Associate and Bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education are made possible through the generous cost-sharing of T.E.A.C.H.

To acknowledge the value education and staff retention bring to the field of early childhood, the REWARD program awards bonuses to teachers who’ve reached specific educational benchmarks.

WECA is the only statewide sponsor of the child care food program funded by USDA. WECA staff bring nutrition education to family child care providers who, when following the meal guidelines, receive partial reimbursement for the costs of food they serve. Children are well-nourished and ready to learn. The child care workforce in turn stays current with healthy nutritional practices including garden-fresh sources of food.

As a partner in Wisconsin’s comprehensive statewide YoungStar program, WECA provides services that grow child care quality. In 2015 YoungStar technical assistance, formal rating, training, professional development counseling and micro-grants were central to our work. Together with Milwaukee Succeeds, WECA staff worked closely with child care programs in urban Milwaukee to raise their YoungsStar rating from 2-stars to 3-stars.

In 2015, WECA’s Conference and Training work encompassed community-based trainings, a statewide conference and educational outreach to tribal and rural child care providers. In the Membership arena, WECA expanded its outreach and support of local affiliates and grew its digital presence in publications and social media.

The national release of “The Raising of America” (a film by California Newsreel) gave new visibility to issues of child care quality in the U.S. and the difficulties families confront when seeking quality care for their children. School readiness, economic development and population health are all affected by the state of child care. Together with eight partner organizations, WECA convened...
a viewing and community conversation with stakeholders from corrections, K-12 education, pediatrics, population health and social work.

WECA continues to speak out for a strong early education system in Wisconsin and professional supports for the teachers performing this vital work. Our leadership communicates regularly with legislators in both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature. For incoming legislators, WECA is becoming a go-to source for information on early education. On the federal level, WECA’s Executive Director serves on Congressman Mark Pocan’s K-12 and Early Education Advisory Committee and represents Wisconsin at the NAEYC Public Policy Forum in Washington D.C.

WECA contributes to a strong Wisconsin presence with the Alliance for Early Success – a national group that fosters policy change within states to ensure that at-risk infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families are better prepared for success in school through third grade and into adulthood. In 2015, the Alliance funded a collaboration between WECA and the Committee for Economic Development to tell the story of “Jack” – a child who gets quality early care and education. Using Wisconsin-specific data and interactive graphics, viewers see the tangible financial benefits over time from investing in quality early care at both an individual as well as aggregate level.
Letter from Ruth Schmidt, Executive Director

“Forward” is a great call to action. It is also the Wisconsin state motto - symbolized in the gold, Athena-like statue that stands atop the Capitol dome, right arm extended out.

As I reflect on 2015, I ask how WECA advanced the well-being of young children in child care – and the adults who teach them – a workforce 30,000 strong. How did we improve and change for the better what young children and their teachers experience?

We moved forward when we implemented a program in urban Milwaukee to improve the YoungStar rating of nine child care centers. In Milwaukee, less than 12% of children in families receiving child care subsidies from the state are in highly-rated centers. Milwaukee Succeeds is working to double the number of children in high-quality childcare. WECA provided technical consultation and facilitated applications to the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program. Consequently, leaders in the nine centers are completing their credits in higher education and improving how their programs operate in the process.

We moved forward when we found new ways to communicate how investing in early childhood education is smart for Wisconsin. WECA created “The Story of Jack” – a print and digital piece that explicitly demonstrates the economic costs and benefits of investing early. Getting a wider range of stakeholders to care about early childhood education is central to WECA’s advocacy.

We moved forward by leading a collaboration of college and university faculty and administrators to smooth the process of credit transfer between 2-year and 4-year schools. A statewide “articulation summit” was convened last May, followed by the awarding of 10 grants to support the work of developing agreements and promoting innovations between institutions of higher education.

We moved forward by sharing new research from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). At WECA’s annual conference, Dr. Marjorie Kostelnik, member of the NAS Committee on the Science of Children, led a discussion on “Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8” – a report issued in April, 2015 that explores the implications of the science of child development for the professionals who work with young children.

We moved forward by enhancing the Educational Opportunities Grant program of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families by pairing it with WECA’s Professional Development Counseling service and T.E.A.C.H. scholarships as well. Support for school success went beyond the free tuition offered through the grant program.
Then suddenly, we stopped to reflect on the life and legacy of a beloved colleague – Mary Babula – who died unexpectedly in December. Mary was one of WECA’s earliest leaders starting 40 years ago. Because of her efforts, WECA transitioned from a stand-alone organization to an affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She dedicated her life to changing the world for children and those who care for them, and she never stopped. She was the Association’s first employee, our long-time director of membership and an ambassador and advocate for all things early childhood in Wisconsin. She worked relentlessly to raise the level of respect, support, and compensation of the early childhood education workforce.

WECA will be honoring her legacy in the years to come.

We’re well into 2016 – and yes, moving forward. We are connecting more providers to our core programs. In the first quarter, WECA will be releasing its comprehensive early childhood workforce study and using the findings to drive needed policy changes. The 2016 General Election will provide more opportunity for advocacy and holding elected officials accountable for matching words of support for early childhood with actions that advance positive change for children and families in Wisconsin and beyond.
LEADING CHILD CARE QUALITY FORWARD THROUGH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

WECA operates several programs that together, grow the quality of child care in Wisconsin. As quality grows, over 250,000 young children get the social, emotional and intellectual foundations they need to succeed in all later life experiences.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN program, provides comprehensive scholarships to support credit-based higher education for early childhood teachers, directors and family child care providers who work in regulated settings. In 2015, we awarded 1,243 scholarships - the most in any single year since the program started 16 years ago. T.E.A.C.H. continues to lead statewide projects that improve the process by which child care providers advance their education. We are proud to be making progress towards stronger coursework pathways by fostering collaboration between the UW System campuses, Wisconsin’s private colleges, tribal colleges and the Wisconsin Technical College System. Strengthening credit for prior learning has been a focus in 2015; child care teachers and providers are discovering that they can make their experience count towards a degree by documenting their learning and work experience.

In Wisconsin, child care teachers leave their positions at a rate of 21%* which is almost three times higher than the state average of 8.1% for all industries.** Wages are a primary driver of turnover. The median annual pay for child care teachers is $19,510*** which is below the federal poverty level for a family of three. REWARD encourages retention by providing salary stipends to teachers who have advanced their education. Stipends help bridge the gap between what teachers are paid and the value of their skills. In 2015, $1,134,350 in stipends were awarded to 2,058 child care teachers.

* Workforce Study prepared by WECA in partnership with the Public Policy Forum (2010) Child Care Professionals in 2010: The view from Wisconsin.
**U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (2008)

WECA is a partner in YoungStar – a program that creates better early care and learning opportunities for young children. Through YoungStar, child care providers across Wisconsin have taken strides to further their staff’s education, implement stronger business practices, and provide children healthier, more effective learning environments. As part of the YoungStar Consortium, WECA provides professional development counseling, technical assistance, training, program ratings and micro-grants across Wisconsin. In 2015, we awarded 2,430 micro-grants to child care programs statewide, provided technical consulting to 538 Milwaukee-area programs, completed technical ratings on 339 programs and formal ratings on 297 programs. We also worked with 2,538 programs on their professional development.

The percent of children served by 3- to 5-Star rated programs increased from 47% to 72% from July 2012 to July 2015, an impressive gain of 25 percentage points of children in higher-quality settings.*

WECA provides hundreds of opportunities for early childhood professionals to learn new skills. The 2015 Annual Conference in the Wisconsin Dells offered over 70 workshops on a range of topics for over 525 attendees. WECA staff bring expertise through training across the state.

WECA again coordinated a “sold out” Pathways to Quality Conference in Milwaukee which hosted workshops for 520 child care professionals wanting to grow their program’s quality and increase their star rating in YoungStar.

As the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), WECA is the largest professional association in Wisconsin for the early learning workforce. In 2015, more than 1,500 WECA members received benefits, including discounts to conferences, professional resources and local networking and mentoring through WECA’s affiliate groups.

As the Wisconsin NAEYC affiliate, we engage in broad research, communications and advocacy to strengthen the support for investing in quality early learning for all children. With members in virtually all 72 counties, our 10 local affiliates provide dynamic professional networks to early childhood educators – convening trainings, regional bus tours, professional recognition events and local advocacy actions.

Over 140 WECA trainings in community settings and on-site in child care programs helped Wisconsin’s early learning workforce gain new knowledge and apply proven practices. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, business practices, micro-grants, professional development, and the Pyramid Model of children’s social-emotional development are popular and much-needed training topics. Throughout 2015, WECA offered webinars - a popular training platform for child care professionals who are eager to learn, but short on time and funding for face-to-face training.
In honor of Mary Babula: Individual gifts

Esmeralda Alvarez
Crystel Anders
Margaret & William Andersen
Linda Balisle
Rose Bayuk
Carmella Beattie
Kate Benkert
Rebecca Breda
Paul Buckalew
Luke Chirhart
James Clay
Kathryn Colwell
Sachi Cullen
Deborah Daniel
Gayle Daugherty
David Dees
Simone DeVore
Geraldine DiLisi
Laura Dresser
Candace Duerst
Maggie Duggan
Karen Ebert
Julie Eckenwalder
Dave and Diane Edie
Lynn Edlefson
Will Fellows & Bronze Quinton
Autumn Gehri
Jill Haglund
Geralyn Hawkins
Cathryn Hendon
Jennifer Hilgendorf
Karen Hoffman
Carrie Holden
Kelly Hook
Dave and Jean Johnsen
Debra Johnson
Jane Johnston
Emily and Linda Jones Finn
Margi Jones
Rita Kehl
Melissa Keyes and Ingrid Rothe
Maureen Kind
Karen King
Claire Kircher
Cheryl Koerwitz
Julie Kubsch
Audrey Lazanas
Marly Lee
Susan Madian
Jane Mastaglio
Denise Matyka
Cheryl McCollum
Jean McCormick
Kath McGurk
Oma Vic McMurray
Ann McNeary
Tina & Tron Melzl
Monica Merry Mason
Kelly Matthews
Crestalee Meyer
Mariah Miller
Sharon Milleville
Nancy & Richard Mueller
Andrea Murray
Jennifer Logan Nadolski
Teresa Nuttelman
Caroline Oldershaw
Jeanette Paulson
Wayne & Nancy Paulson
Deborah Percival
Mary Peters
Carol Philips
Pam Polenz
Cindy Poole
Leah Purcell
John Quinn
Susan Raedeke
Rick and Randy Reisdorf
Cheryl Robinson
Melissa Rosenkranz & Eric Sherman
Laura Saterfeld
Debb Schaubs
Bonita Schey
Hildegard Schmitt
Rita Schmidt
Ruth Schmidt
Lynn Schmitt
Lissa Schwantes
Jeanne Sears
Diana G. Smith
Scott Spiezle
Barbara Stader & Gary Gurian
Aurelia Strupp
Anne Thompson
Terrie Thompson
Kimberly Tice
Linda Ginsberg Tuchman
Shari Vinluan

In honor of Mary Babula: Organization gifts

Delaware Valley AEYC
First Business Bank
St. Croix Valley ECA
Supporting Families Together
Association
Verona Family Child Care Association
Wisconsin Child Care Administrators
Association

Gifts from Individuals

Cynthia Andre
Mary Babula
Kimberly Banks-Bredeson
Patrick Becker
Jessica Benson-Donald
Adele Blawat
Rebecca Bush
Robert Bullet
Nancy Campshire
Wade Carlson
Cynthia Clausen
Kelly Dederich
Thomas Dehlinger
Susan Devenero
Raefal Diaz
Tracy Drexler
Candace Duerst
Dave Edie
Lewis Friedland
Brian George
Melissa Grazioso
Peggy Haack
Mike Hablewitz
John Hadley
Mary Hall
Heather Halvorson
Stephanie Harrison
Scott Haumerson
Carrie Holden
Jennifer Hughley
Jacob Immel
In honor of Pam Tester
Carol Anderson

Gifts from Organizations
The Douglas Stewart Company
The Gordon Flesch Company
Promega Corporation
Raven Software
Wegner CPAs

Conference Sponsors
Discount School Supply
First Business Bank
Kaplan Early Learning Company
M3 Insurance
School Specialty, Inc.
UW Health and Unity Health Insurance
Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau

In-Kind Support
American Academy of Pediatrics, Wisconsin Chapter
American Family Children’s Hospital
Barefoot Books
Lakeshore Learning Materials
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN
University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Wisconsin Division for Early Childhood
Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association
Wisconsin Public Health Association

THREE WAYS TO INVEST
Engage with us to inspire teaching excellence for all young children in Wisconsin

1. Donate: Visit 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.

3. Connect: Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. Share your thoughts and join the conversation. FACEBOOK: facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood TWITTER: @EarlyEdMatters

In honor of Valerie Buechel
David Buechel
## OUR FINANCIALS

### Consolidated Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Program</td>
<td>$5,002,686</td>
<td>$5,178,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YoungStar</td>
<td>$4,239,410</td>
<td>$3,767,915</td>
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<tr>
<td>T.E.A.C.H. &amp; REWARD</td>
<td>$4,674,172</td>
<td>$4,547,510</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race to the Top</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>$604,425</td>
<td>$361,146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Contracts</td>
<td>$400,292</td>
<td>$149,184</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$24,633</td>
<td>$16,263</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>$39,774</td>
<td>$39,417</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Conference</td>
<td>$85,186</td>
<td>$91,948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Events</td>
<td>$23,390</td>
<td>$28,766</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>$14,916</td>
<td>$14,148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$16,234</td>
<td>$21,420</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,020,693</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,355,054</strong></td>
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### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct: Operations</td>
<td>$11,941,523</td>
<td>$11,808,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct: Personnel</td>
<td>$3,717,831</td>
<td>$3,159,523</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect: Administration</td>
<td>$309,295</td>
<td>$373,728</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,968,649</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,341,308</strong></td>
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</table>

### Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</td>
<td>$52,044</td>
<td>$13,746</td>
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### Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>$220,718</td>
<td>$206,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, End of Year</td>
<td>$272,762</td>
<td>$202,718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sue Schimke, President
Kidspace Learning Center
Beloit, WI

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Lakeshore Learning Materials
Libertyville, IL

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Acelero Learning
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AFFILIATE LEADERSHIP GROUP AND MEMBER ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Member Advisory Council identifies services and benefits to support members in the delivery of quality early childhood experiences and advises WECA on their implementation. The Affiliate Leadership Group serves as support for WECA’s local affiliates across the state, planning events and providing resources to WECA members.

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