

Communities United, Inc.

Annual Report for Program Year

9/1/2009 to 8/31/2010

In providing services to children and their families, Communities United, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, gender, political belief, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Communities United Inc.
Annual Report
for Program Year September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010

Communities United Inc. (CUI) is a community based private nonprofit organization which operates high quality, early childhood education programs and provides comprehensive services to children and their families. CUI's **Creative Start Children's Centers** operate both half-day and full day child care programs for preschoolers and toddlers. All CUI programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Communities United, Inc. actively serves families living in the communities of Arlington, Belmont, Brookline, Burlington, Lexington, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley and Woburn. While CUI serves children from the full socio-economic spectrum, our focus is on identifying the most at-risk families and ensuring that their needs are met. Within our catchment area reside large populations of homeless families who are served both through our center based programs as well as off-site through our Early Head Start home visiting program.

Funding to support CUI's ongoing mission comes primarily from Federal and State sources. CUI was founded in 1970 as a Head Start grantee agency and funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services now accounts for over half of CUI's annual revenue. In 2000, CUI became an Early Head Start grantee, enabling us to provide center based and home based services to infants, toddlers and pregnant women. A small amount of Federal funding comes through the City of Waltham in the form of a HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) which supports bi-lingual staff at CUI's Waltham Creative Start Center.

In addition, funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is obtained through a variety of contracts and grants which provide child care subsidies as well as support for staff and other program expenses. Among the State grants CUI receives are the Coordinated Family & Community Engagement (CFCE) grant, a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) grant and a Program & Practitioner Support grant. To support our philosophy of economic integration, CUI also enrolls children from full tuition paying families which allows CUI classrooms to more closely reflect the enrollment of public school classrooms in the communities. Tuition fees account for approximately 7% of CUI's annual revenue.

As funding from federal, state and local agencies becomes less certain, it becomes increasingly challenging to meet steadily rising operational costs. CUI relies on donations from individuals and private foundations to meet specific needs as well as to help reduce the shortfall from other funding sources.

Head Start & Early Head Start Programs
CUI Annual Report for Program Year 9/1/09 to 8/31/10

Background:

This report is prepared to comply with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 (Head Start Act 644A (2): “each Head Start Agency shall make available to the public a report published at least once in each fiscal year that discloses the following information from the most recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent”:

(A) Total Public and Private Funds Received by Communities United, Inc.

1. Public Funds:

- a. Federal Head Start Grant = **\$2,630,486**
- b. Federal Head Start Grant Training & Technical Assistance = **\$26,694**
- c. Federal Early Head Start Grant = **\$446,329**
- d. Federal Early Head Start Grant Training & Technical Assistance = **\$10,775**
- e. USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program = **\$269,907**
- f. ARRA grant for 7-1-09 to 9-30-2010 = \$206,678

2. Private Funds (required to meet the 20% funding match):

- a. Non Federal Share of Head Start Grant = **\$644,295**
- b. Non Federal Share of Early Head Start Grant = **\$114,276**

(B) Overview of funding available for the 2008-2009 School Year

	Budget For HS-EHS Fiscal Year 2/1/09-1/31/10	
Category	Basic Head Start (BHS)	Early Head Start (EHS)
Personnel	\$1,783,222	\$355,402
Fringe Benefits	\$408,360	\$81,656
Travel	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$3,094	\$347
Supplies	\$49,415	\$5,354
Contractual	\$59,491	\$13,809
Other	\$353,598	\$536
Facilities/Construction	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,657,180	\$457,104

	Budget For HS-EHS Fiscal Year 2/1/10-1/31/11	
Category	Basic Head Start (BHS)	Early Head Start (EHS)
Personnel	\$1,775,073	\$359,724
Fringe Benefits	\$404,956	\$82,306
Travel	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$3,487	\$523
Supplies	\$28,919	\$2,315
Contractual	\$69,298	\$15,958
Other	\$406,120	\$1,577
Facilities/Construction	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,687,853	\$462,133

(C) Statistics on Total Children and Families Served, as well as Monthly Enrollment:

- Total # of HS-EHS children served throughout the program year in center-based programs: **477**
- Total # of EHS children and pregnant women served in locally designed option throughout the program year: **83**
- Total # of HS-EHS families served in center-based programs throughout the program year: **449**
- Total # of EHS families served in locally designed option throughout the program year: **77**
- Average monthly enrollment of Head Start
(as a percentage of funded enrollment): **100%**
- Average monthly enrollment of Early Head Start
(as a percentage of funded enrollment): **100%**
- Percentage of eligible children served in Head Start: **97%**
- Percentage of eligible children served in Early Head Start: **95%**

(D) Results of Most Recent Reviews:

Federal review by the Office of Head Start:

The most recent Federal on-site monitoring review was completed from May 17-22, 2009. There were no program deficiencies noted. Four minor non-compliance issues were addressed in a corrective action plan implemented immediately following the receipt of the results.

Independent Audit:

In addition to on-going, internal program monitoring and local self-assessment, Communities United Inc receives an annual independent audit, which was performed by the audit firm of Siegrist & Cree. The most recent audit, conducted in Spring 2010, was for the period ending January 31, 2010. The audit resulted in no material findings and is available for review at the Central Administrative offices of Communities United Inc as well as at the State Attorney General's Office.

(E) Enrolled Children Who Received Medical and Dental Exams

Funding	% received medical exams	% received dental exams	% received oral health screening as part of well-baby exam
Basic Head Start (BHS)	96%	91%	N/A
Early Head Start (EHS)	96%	74% *	91%

** EHS covers children ages 0-3 and pediatric dental exams generally are conducted on children ages 3 and older which accounts for this low percentage. Pediatricians do a dental/oral health screening as part of well-baby exams.*

(F) Parent Engagement Activities

CUI is committed to engaging parents and families in all aspects of the agency and provides a wide variety of ways for parents to be involved. These include:

- Volunteer activities in such areas as Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC), classroom helper, kitchen helper, bus monitor and more.
- Two home visits and two teacher/parent conferences to enable staff to acquire a better understanding of each child's abilities and experiences, to share progress with parents, and to share activities, ideas, and materials to assist parents in their role as their child's primary teacher.
- Guidance on community services to promote awareness and utilization of available resources, including the receipt of an extensive Community Resource Guide.
- Monthly parent trainings on topics such as Health & Safety, Family Literacy, Parenting, Transitions, Nutrition & Dental, Stress Management and Advocacy.
- Center and agency wide family events to promote diversity and enrichment in the many cultures and ethnicities represented in our communities.
- Science and literacy events to introduce activities that can be done in the home, including take home activity kits.
- Access to substitute teacher training to become familiar with child development, appropriate practices with young children, and the opportunity to work as a substitute teacher in CUI programs which may lead to permanent employment.
- Development of a parent driven family partnership agreement which allows the parent to identify goals which may lead to self-enrichment, gainful employment or greater understanding of their role as a parent and their child's primary teacher.
- Leadership development opportunities, through Parent Committee meetings, Policy Council meetings, legislative breakfasts and advocacy activities at the local and state level.

(G) CUI's Works to Ensure that Children are Ready for Kindergarten

Preparation for kindergarten begins at the initial home visit which takes place before the child begins attending a CUI program. Through interview and documentation, CUI staff obtains information about the child's developmental progress and the parent's goals for the child entering the school year. This conversation continues at registration and orientation as the child begins attending the program. The teaching staff completes an initial preschool assessment, which is the teacher's assessment of the child in 5 areas:

- Social-Emotional Development,
- Language and Literacy,
- Math,
- Creativity and
- Physical Development

Information obtained through parent interview and this initial assessment allows the teaching staff to individualize curriculum to meet the child's needs and the parent's goals for the child.

Throughout the year, the teaching staff record observations of the child's progress in the following areas:

- Social/Emotional,
- Approaches to Learning,
- Language, Literacy,
- Math,
- Science,
- Creative Arts, and
- Physical Health

These observations assist the teaching staff in completing outcomes in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Again, these outcomes allow the teaching staff to track the child's progress and to continue to individualize curriculum to meet that child's ongoing needs. Parents receive feedback about their child's progress formally at two parent conferences, and informally throughout the year.

CUI utilizes a Transition to Kindergarten checklist which assists the teaching staff in helping both the child and the parent make a smooth transition to kindergarten. Teaching and social service staff help the parent determine which kindergarten program the child will be attending and the social service staff obtain key information such as documentation needed by the parent for enrollment, registration dates and visiting dates. This information is shared with the parent and assistance is provided by CUI staff to help the parent obtain all the documents required for kindergarten enrollment. CUI invites kindergarten teachers, assistant principals and principals to attend CUI sponsored workshops or parent committee meetings, which allow parents to learn more about the kindergarten program and to ask question in a smaller, more intimate setting. CUI staff encourages parents to attend any transitional or kindergarten workshops held at their child's prospective school and will attend workshops to support parents, if necessary.

The teaching staff will conduct classroom activities designed to familiarize the child with kindergarten. Teachers integrate the topic of kindergarten into curriculum through relevant books and materials. Each child transitioning to kindergarten receives a transition book bag that contains a book about kindergarten, writing instruments, and packets of information for the parents, including at home activities to do during the summer to help the child prepare for kindergarten.

(H) Services to Homeless Families

As part of CUI's Early Head Start grant, the agency also focuses on the needs of homeless families residing within our catchment area. During this program year, CUI served pregnant women, newborns, infants, and toddlers living at the transitional homeless shelter at a local hotel and other Waltham shelters. Services included parent-child playgroups facilitated by CUI staff, in concert with Early Intervention staff, as well as weekly home visits. Toddler and preschool children from the transitional homeless shelter and from other local domestic violence and substance abuse shelters were also served in CUI's center-based programs.

Appendix 1

Facilities

Communities United currently operates six early childhood centers, shown below.

Arlington Creative Start
300 Massachusetts Ave
Arlington, MA 02474
(781) 648-0515
Fax: (781) 648-2746

Waltham Creative Start
80 Hall Street
Waltham, MA 02453
(781) 647-0542
Fax: (781) 894-4783

Newton Creative Start
573-B Washington Street
Newton, MA 02458
(617) 527-6689
Fax: (617) 581-6781

Waltham Creative Start
@ South School
510 Moody Street
Waltham, MA 02453
(781) 314-5531
Fax: (781) 894-4783

Watertown Creative Start
26 Chestnut Street
Watertown, MA 02472
(617) 926-1082
Fax: (617) 926-9771

Woburn Creative Start
470 Wildwood Avenue
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 932-9578
Fax: (781) 938-0811

CUI also operates two other facilities at which it conducts a variety of activities to meet the agency's mission:

Central Administration:
573-B Washington Street
Second Floor
Newton, MA 02458
(617) 581-6780
Fax: (617) 581-6781

Training & Community Outreach:
Warren House
1600 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02465
(617) 527-9210
Fax: (617) 964-4560

Appendix 2

Community Resources

Information about CUI and all of its programs is available on our website at:

www.communitiesunitedinc.org

Additionally, CUI provides an extensive range of information to assist families in addressing basic as well as emergency needs like education, housing, health, etc. This information is available in community-specific resource guides that can be downloaded from our website: www.communitiesunitedinc.org . A hard copy can be requested by contacting CUI's Central Administrative Office at 617-581-6780.