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NOTE: Special thanks to Melora Balson and Kate Kush for volunteering their time and talent for this project.



Where All Children

Thrive





What Sets Ellis Apart

- ★ Ellis is a local and national model for inclusive, equitable quality early education. Ellis stands out for being among the most socio-economically, racially and culturally diverse organizations serving the children of Boston.
- ★ Ellis is among only 6% of early childhood programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- ★ Due to its high level of quality, Boston Public Schools (BPS) has elected to fund four Ellis preschool classrooms in connection with 45 Universal Pre-K (UPK) programs.
- ★ Ellis is a proud partner of the New England Conservatory, which provides weekly developmentally appropriate music classes to all 22 of Ellis's classrooms, including infant classrooms.
- ★ Ellis has two STEM labs, designed to look like children's playhouses, in our South End campus.
- ★ Ellis is beloved and has a waitlist of over 1,200 children due to our level of quality, rich diversity, and warm learning environment.
- ★ Ellis staff reflect the children we serve, many of whom have been at Ellis for years.

welcome



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

Every day at Ellis is a symphony of sorts. Our learning and play areas hum with sounds of children singing, playing instruments, conducting experiments, running, laughing, and exploring. Sometimes, there are other sounds like crying or stomping feet. Young children have big feelings and when learning to manage and accept them – as with music, some discordance has value.

Reflecting on life with three children ages 4 and under, one family shared, “Our hands are full, and our hearts are full.” As we reflect on all we have achieved at Ellis this year with your support, that sentiment applies to Ellis as well.

FY24 was a year of program expansion including these new initiatives:

- ★ A weekly music program, thanks to the New England Conservatory, for all Ellis children.
- ★ A garden education program in which Ellis preschoolers and toddlers worked and harvested in our gardens.
- ★ Two STEM labs where our toddlers and preschoolers learned and made discoveries.
- ★ Expanded care for children experiencing homelessness thanks to a partnership with the City of Boston.
- ★ Increased training for our educators through free college classes through our partnerships with Neighborhood Villages, the City of Boston, the YMCA, and Bunker Hill Community College.

Families are the center of everything we do. We are grateful for their trust and are proud to provide them with robust support.

It is only through your generosity that we can make an Ellis education available to children without regard to their families’ means. Your investments in Ellis Early Learning are truly making the world a better place.

With profound gratitude,

Lauren Cook
CEO

Coleen Downs Dinneen
Board Chair

Frances Velazquez

Ellis Family Navigator Steers Help to Families in Need



In 2021, Ellis created – with the support of Neighborhood Villages – a new position, Family Navigator, to help families find critical missing resources, from diapers to food to help with rent payments. Frances Velazquez feels a deep personal commitment to its mission.

Two years ago, Frances had just gained custody of her infant grandson and enrolled him at Ellis. At the time she was a Ministry Social Worker at the Salvation Army, but she thought working at the same school as her grandson seemed like a good way to simplify a demanding life. Frances applied as a receptionist at Ellis, but was thrilled to hear she could be a good fit for the role of the Family Navigator. She didn't know anything about this position, but as Brenda Barreto, former Ellis Assistant Vice President of Programs & Family Engagement Coordinator told her, "You're a fighter, and this job is for you."

As Family Navigator, Frances became responsible for working with the public, handling government bureaucracy, and troubleshooting thorny problems. Within Ellis, she makes sure families know that she's there to help them. In sensitive and emotional situations, Frances must earn family members' trust so they are willing to turn to her.

Her secret to success? She's been there herself and knows what it takes to advocate for yourself and others. "Parents sometimes ask me how I know so much," Frances says. "I tell them I educated myself the hard way."

At a low point in her life, a neighbor helped Frances as she now helps others. Frances had lost her job, and quickly completed the paperwork to ensure that she would keep her housing voucher. She took the paperwork to the office in person, but was rudely brushed off and later told she'd missed the deadline. "I was walking home crying when my neighbor Miss Barber asked me what was wrong. When I told her, she offered to contact Felix Arroyo's office.

Frances learned a helping hand can make all the difference in the world. Thanks to Miss Barber and Felix Arroyo's office, Frances and her children stayed housed. "I learned to call your elected officials to get things done," Frances says. "They are for the people, and we are the people."

Even though Frances knows how to work the process to avoid eviction she doesn't always succeed. "There's a process, and I know the steps and rules, but if someone comes to me too late, I may not be able to help them. That happened not long ago, and I still feel overwhelmed that I failed to keep a family in its home."

But more often her results are heartwarming. In one instance, Frances spoke with a mother who was being abused, and whose husband told her she'd be deported if she reported him to the police. "I told her that's not true," Frances said. "I told her that I can't help until she takes the first step, but then I will be with her all the way." Frances was true to her word. The wife called 911 and had the husband arrested. Frances went to court with her and coached her through each step of putting her life back together. Now the wife has her driver's permit and is going to school.

Frances makes sure families new to Ellis know she's there to help them, and that families in crisis are willing to let down their guard with her. She succeeds, and her phone is always ringing with someone reaching out for help.

Frances also knows from personal experience what Ellis offers its children. Her son and daughter attended Ellis twenty years ago. Her granddaughter London, an Ellis graduate, is now an honors scholarship student at a top private girls' school in Newton. Her grandson Ta'Kai is now two and in the Froggies classroom. "It amazes me what Ta'Kai knows and how he talks. Here at Ellis, kids learn at a very young age. For so many reasons I am passionate about working here."

**“Parents sometimes ask me how I know so much.
I tell them I educated myself the hard way.”**

–FRANCES VELAZQUEZ



Ellis Team

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 Cyrena Spafford, *Director of Infants and Toddlers at 58 Berkeley*
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 Aletyssandra Jesus *(10 years)*
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 Wilkania A. Mendez
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 Angelyse Mojica
 Shaquanna Moody
 Carishmar Moore *(5+ years)*
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 Elizabeth Muse
 Sharon Nixon
 Deanna Nunez
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 Andrea Osorio
 Exavier Perry
 Taina Lowens
 Pierre Louais
 Mayelin Pina
 Sandra Pinales

Jaraima Pineda Gutierrez
 Eunice Placencia
 Tasha Pleasant
 Tiaja Powell *(5 years)*
 Desiree Reed
 Althea Reynolds
 Mavis Riley
 Daniela Rivera
 Justice Robinson
 Ivone Rodrigues Dos Santos *(5+ years)*
 Cynthia Rosa
 Zenaida Ruiz
 Rosa Salguero Sosa
 Kiya Savannah *(10 years)*
 Catherine Scannell
 Candice Scott
 Jamalia Sheets *(5 years)*
 Sasha Sheets
 Mandira Shrestha
 Whitney Smith
 Rina Spring
 Lisa St. Hill *(15+ years)*
 Shirley Strickland
 Francis Sullivan
 Jessika Supreme
 Wubalech Taglo
 Villane Thermidor
 Dana Thompson
 Aniya Thompson
 Jaedyn Venus Mills
 Amanda Vickers
 Tannah Victor
 Yessica Villar De Solano
 Matthew Wallace
 Shamika White *(15 years)*
 Rashae Williams
 Rachael Willis *(5 years)*
 Shantel Woodard
 Lemlem Worke
 Maryan Yasin *(5+ years)*
 Konjit Yemaneabe
 Deanna Young

ADVOCACY:

Spotlight on Amy O'Leary



When Amy O'Leary graduated from college in 1993, she simply wanted a job where she could make a difference in the lives of young people. She had no idea that answering a classified ad for a teaching job at a school called Ellis Memorial & Eldredge House Inc. would begin a journey that would eventually lead her to become a nonprofit executive director and the leading Massachusetts advocate for children.

O'Leary worked at Ellis for a decade, eventually being promoted from classroom teacher to program director, until being inspired to work for a change on a more systemic level. In 2002, she joined the team at Strategies for Children, a Boston-based organization that works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children from birth to age five to access high-quality early education programs that prepare them for success in school and life. Now, more than two decades later, O'Leary serves as the organization's Executive Director, leading efforts to work with state legislators and agencies to advance policies that benefit children. Over the years, she has remained active at Ellis as a volunteer and Board member, using her passion and experience to lead key advocacy efforts and encourage community members to use their voices to speak up for Massachusetts children.

O'Leary has engaged Ellis staff members and families in advocacy efforts supporting initiatives ranging from scholarships for early childhood educators to attain higher education to operational grants for licensed childcare programs throughout the Commonwealth. While many people hear the word "advocacy" and solely envision lobbying or rallies, O'Leary emphasizes that advocacy can take many forms. "We talk a lot about removing this idea that the only way to be an advocate is to go to the steps of the State House with a megaphone. What can advocacy look like when integrated into real life?"

One form of advocacy key to Ellis's strategy is developing relationships with legislators, elected officials, and other key players. After the passage of state-funded universal school lunch in Massachusetts – an initiative that does not include private or early childhood education institutions – O'Leary recalls accompanying two legislators to Ellis on a site visit during which CEO Lauren Cook laid out the cost of providing each Ellis student with nutritious meals. One legislator responded, "But I thought all kids in Massachusetts got free school meals." Looking back on that visit, O'Leary reflects, "Every site visit is an opportunity to communicate and share information with people. Sometimes one small detail will click for someone. It's an opportunity to show real-life examples and to say, 'I know that you think that x policy is achieving y. But let me show you what it really looks like in practice.'"

O'Leary acknowledges her early experience at Ellis helped shape her views as she ascended through her career, and says being a preschool director turned lobbyist allows her to provide a unique perspective. "Bringing my lived experience, as somebody who ran an early childhood program for ten years, has influenced my perspective every step of the way. I'm able to think about the policies being developed and the impact they'll have on early childhood educators and families. Having firsthand experience is key to understanding what good policy looks like."

As she looks to the future, O'Leary is optimistic. "It's very rare to find a direct service organization that has the capacity or the leadership to think about advocacy. But at Ellis, we've had the opportunity to think about staff expertise, to work with families, and to leverage Board experience and relationships. Ellis has a seat at a lot of different tables and has been able to benefit from thinking about both policymaking and implementation, and it's exciting to think about what will come next."

"At Ellis, we have the opportunity to think about staff expertise, to work with families, and to leverage Board experience and relationships."

–AMY O'LEARY

FAMILY PROFILE:

Saran Sheriff

Mom of Four Ellis Children

Saran Sheriff has the distinction of being the mother of four Ellis children. She is enthusiastic about her experience. “Oh, I love Ellis! They are always there for my children and me. The support team and the communication are wonderful.”

Saran’s daughter Jarai Bah, now seven years old, came to Ellis at age four. Jarai has now graduated and is a student at Josiah Quincy. “Ellis prepared Jarai well,” Saran says. She is focused and able to engage with other people.”

Although Jarai spent a couple of years on the Ellis waiting list, Saran’s son had an easier entry, because Ellis works hard to accommodate siblings of current students. Mohamed Bah, now three years old, started in the infant room when he was three months old.

The convenience that Ellis offered was an immeasurable benefit in Saran’s busy life. With both children in one place, she knew and loved, Saran was able to return to her job at Elder Protective Services. She was confident her two children were well cared for as she handled a heavy and often stressful caseload. And because the day-to-day logistics of dropping off and picking up were streamlined, it was easier to juggle parenting and work.

When Saran became pregnant with twins, Ellis jumped into action and helped in ways Saran didn’t expect, or even think to ask for. “When you want to return to work, we’re ready,” Ellis assured her. Both girls, Saran Bah and Fatima Bah, started in the Grasshoppers infant room at three months. Once again, the daily logistics were simplified – one room, one set of teachers, but on top of that, the twins were together and able to bond as sisters throughout the day.

Saran is deeply grateful for other kinds of practical help that Ellis offered. “With twins, you need two of everything!” she says. Ellis proactively offered supplies and clothing, giving help that relieved one kind of stress that might have overwhelmed a busy family.

Meanwhile, Saran had started to worry that Mohamed was almost three but hardly speaking at home. Just as she was preparing to ask about early intervention opportunities, a teacher told her that he talks all the time to a close friend in class. That little anecdote was such a relief and now, Saran says, Mohamed doesn’t stop talking!

Saran is so happy and grateful for the support Ellis offers her and her family. In fact, she has only one complaint, “I wish Ellis still had their afterschool program,” she says. “Then Jarai could be back at Ellis for a while longer!”

“Ellis is always there for my children and me. The support team and the communication are wonderful.”

–SARAN SHERIFF



FAMILY PROFILE:

The Glenns

A JP Family Woven into the Ellis Community



When Johanna and Chris Glenn walked past Ellis's Jamaica Plain location on one of their daily strolls with their then-toddler son, Connor, they wondered if it was too good to be true. "We had really wanted to find good center-based care for Connor as we were coming out of the pandemic," recalls Johanna, a Senior Director at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "We walked by and wondered if it would be a good fit because great childcare down the street from our house was our dream. Once we went online and read about Ellis's

history and values, we just hoped there would be a spot for us there." As luck would have it, they had stumbled upon Ellis just as the Jamaica Plain location was opening, and Connor quickly grew to consider Ellis a second home, with his younger brother August joining him two years later.

Connor began his preschool career in the Oak Room, a cheerful space with large windows overlooking a high school football field. From the start, the entire Glenn family felt welcome at Ellis,

“The Ellis staff has so much experience working with children in many different family structures and different circumstances.”

—JOHANNA AND CHRIS GLENN

in large part due to the close relationships teachers forge with students. Connor’s first teacher, Ms. Shantell, created a warm environment for toddlers to learn and play, and the entire family was thrilled when she remained with his class when he moved up to another classroom. Teachers throughout the school made an effort to bond with the children both in and out of the classroom. Johanna recalls that one day when she was late for pickup, she arrived to find the boys joking and playing with a teacher while playing an educational math game. “It was just for a few minutes while they were waiting to be picked up, but it was a nice moment where they weren’t worrying about where mama and dada were, and they were clearly practicing an educational skill. There are so many little moments like that at Ellis.”

In addition to the classroom curriculum, the Glenns have especially valued Ellis’s emphasis on social-emotional learning. Chris, a Senior IT Strategy Advisor at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, reflects, “The way I see Connor interact with his good friends from school is so reflective of how Ellis helps give them conflict resolution and other social-emotional skills. They have this whole emotional language that, in particular, you hear people say boys often don’t get in school. Ellis has set him up for so much long-term emotional success.”

This emphasis on social-emotional learning also includes ensuring that both parents and students have the tools to cope with difficult circumstances. The Glenns recall wondering how to explain to their son that one of his classmates would be leaving his foster home to return to his family of origin, and would thus be leaving the school. “We had never helped our child through a situation like this before. Ellis has such a diverse student body in many ways, and the staff there have so much experience working with children in many different family structures and different circumstances. The teachers were able to ground

their explanation in language the kids could understand, which ultimately made things easier for us as parents and also for the family of the little boy who was moving on.”

The Glenns have grown to appreciate the activities Ellis offers, which for their sons have included bike riding and music classes, as well as frequent walks around the neighborhood and trips to the playground. Both boys’ favorite activity, however, is gardening – an unusual activity for an urban early childhood learning center. Every day during pickup, August asks to walk around the garden – often needing one of his parents to remind him he can’t pick the vegetables right now. And when Connor was asked on his last day at Ellis what he’d miss most when he moved on to a new school, he immediately said, “Gardening!” These activities aren’t just for fun but are closely tied to the students’ curriculum as well. Johanna notes that Connor was recently explaining to her the difference between a chrysalis and a cocoon, a distinction he learned from his classroom butterfly at Ellis.

The community at Ellis has been essential for the Glenn family outside the school as well. Chris and Johanna fondly recall their first outing as a family of four shortly after August’s birth, when Ellis organized a group to attend the Jamaica Plain “Wake Up the Earth” Festival, and how excited Connor was to see his teachers at an out-of-school event. “Our very best parent friends are parents we met through Ellis,” Chris comments. And as Connor transitioned to a Boston Public School this fall, he’s kept in touch with his Ellis friends.

As they reflect on their Ellis experience, Chris and Johanna note, “We feel so privileged to have Ellis as our kids’ first school. They’ve learned so much. They have warm, loving teachers – both boys have such good relationships with their teachers. They’re safe, they’re being looked after. It feels like a community – a really, really great community.”

PROGRAMS:

ELLIS LAUNCHES NEW STEM LABS



In light of Ellis's commitment to remaining at the forefront of early childhood education, we were excited to officially open two STEM Exploration Labs – one for toddlers and one for preschoolers – in September 2023. We marked the occasion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by elected officials and early childhood education experts, including Commissioner Amy Kershaw, State Representative Denise Garlick; State Representative Aaron Michlewitz; Kristin McSwain, Director of Boston's Office of Early Childhood; and Paula Gaviria Villarreal, Boston Program Director for the Office of Early Childhood.

Thanks to a small group of individual donors and Boston Public Schools, Ellis was able to build the STEM labs, both of which are housed in our South End Centers. The labs are designed to look like children's playhouses, emphasizing they are spaces for curiosity, creative learning, and fun. Each lab is home to a variety of age-appropriate equipment designed to encourage young children to ask questions and think critically about the world around them. Students play with a magnet wall to discover how paths can be created and redirected; experiment with a wind tunnel to learn about the relationship that wind and direction share; and use wooden blocks to program simple sequences for KIBO, a hands-on, screen-free coding robot that enables them to learn the basics of coding while having fun.

The STEM labs' curricula have been thoughtfully designed to ensure students have the opportunity to build foundational understandings of scientific concepts in a creative and engaging way. Ellis teachers prepared for the labs' opening by training at Boston's Museum of Science, where they learned teaching methods and discovered resources to help them integrate the labs' tools into their regular lessons. Throughout the year, a professional STEM facilitator guides small groups of students in developmentally appropriate, curated activities. Students use the labs to explore topics relevant to their other lessons, such as how their bodies move in the spaces around them and how objects in nature like leaves and pinecones change throughout the year.

An enhanced STEM program lets our students
develop their natural curiosity.



The STEM labs are already becoming valuable learning spaces for Ellis students, many of whom live in difficult economic situations and/or are members of linguistic and ethnic minority groups – groups that often experience STEM opportunity gaps. We are thrilled about the opening of these new spaces and the implementation of an enhanced STEM program lets our students develop their natural curiosity, build a key foundation for kindergarten, and become active participants in their learning journey.

PROGRAMS:

Music Education Strikes a Chord at Ellis!



Ellis launched its first music program last year, thanks to a grant and a partnership with the New England Conservatory (NEC). NEC, one of the top professional music schools in the world, has a Preparatory Division committed to bringing music education to young children who represent as broad a community as possible.

When NEC Preparatory received a large anonymous grant to grow an early childhood initiative, Ellis was eager and poised to benefit from this wonderful and unexpected opportunity. Having partnered with city and state governments to promote early childhood education, Ellis became one of two organizations (with ABCD Head Start) recommended by Mayor Wu's office to participate in a three-year pilot.

This exceptional pilot is led by Vanessa Trien, an expert in early childhood education with a focus on music. Vanessa is a local celebrity whose concerts sell out at the Coolidge Corner Theater and whose albums have won four Family Choice awards for best family music. Ellis CEO Lauren Cook knew Vanessa from her music programs at the Children Museum. When NEC got funding to do something big, Lauren encouraged Vanessa to apply for the new Director of Early Childhood Education position. Vanessa jumped at the chance and has helped bring this exciting opportunity to life.

Vanessa introduced two NEC teachers to Ellis, Phil Berman and Tatsiana Silchukova. Mr. Phil, as the children call him, has become a celebrity at Ellis, beloved by the children for his songs,

“Babies and children see adults modeling the joys of music, and are eager to join in.”

–VANESSA TRIEN

movement games, and instruments to explore. Last year, Ms. Tatsiana brought classical music listening games drawing on her opera background.

“Lauren made it so easy to launch this pilot program,” Vanessa says. “Ellis is well organized and quick to offer the resources we need to work out our ideas. And every teacher is so enthusiastic and receptive!”

The pilot includes professional development training for all teachers, aiming to foster ideas for including music in daily classroom activities. The goal is to engage classroom teachers with the program, so they model its goals and find new ways to include music in their classrooms. Mr. Phil has bonded closely with the teachers and administrators, making this learning experience positive for everyone.

Year 1, which ran for 31 weeks from October 2023 to June 2024, was a true success that touched every Ellis child. Vanessa brought on Mr. Phil and Ms. Tatsiana to offer 30 minutes of music education each week in every classroom, with activities carefully geared to age-appropriate learning. For the youngest infants, listening and touching are key activities. From older infants to pre-K, children love chanting without words, singing scales from low notes to high, mimicking changing rhythms, and practicing the four kinds of human voices: whispering, speaking, shouting, and singing.

Older children learn to match words and music and engage in music as a group activity. They enjoy acting out stories with musical instruments, playing dance games with sudden calls to freeze, and singing seasonal songs. Children have great fun while they’re also learning about musical patterns, rests, changing rhythms, and the different sounds of major and minor keys and of different instruments.



“Babies and children see adults modeling the joys of music, and are eager to join in,” Vanessa says. “The activities may seem like pure fun, but they teach the rhythms of language and help with language acquisition.” On a social level, children learn to share group activities, move safely among others, and self-regulate.

For parents who want even more music in their children’s lives, NEC offers outside music classes for children of all ages, with ample scholarship opportunities for those who need it. There are a few Ellis students participating at the moment, and the hope is to encourage more. These classes are geared towards young students just starting on their musical journey, letting them explore the joys of music and the instruments they might like to study.

“Music benefits the whole child,” Vanessa says. “As we share the joys of music-making with Ellis’s young learners and spark their early musical curiosity, they are growing emotionally and cognitively and having a whole lot of fun while doing it! Both Ellis and NEC want to make these enriching opportunities available to more and more children.”

EVENT:

The Ellis Baking Challenge with Joanne Chang

On June 9th, Ellis was abuzz with excitement as more than 75 attendees gathered for the Ellis Baking Challenge with Joanne Chang, Flour Bakery + Café and Myers + Chang's esteemed founder.

The event showcased 9 contestants, including three entries from children. Adult participants submitted videos explaining their baking choices and their support for Ellis. As Joanne sampled each dessert, the bakers shared their inspiration and techniques. "Every baker did an outstanding job!" Joanne remarked. She added, "It's truly wonderful to see children embracing baking from such a young age."

Joanne evaluated the six adult entries, praising each dessert's strengths while offering thoughtful and constructive feedback. "Remember, personal preference always plays a role. You may love something more than I do, and that's perfectly okay," she advised.

Jaye Smith won for her artisanal scones, earning comments from Joanne such as, "This is something we'd be proud to serve at Flour." Jaye, a dedicated Ellis volunteer and donor, said that the baking challenge blended two of her passions. "I've always worked in early childhood education, and Ellis is a truly magical place.

Baking is magical too – it's about transforming simple ingredients into something great."

The Ellis Baking Challenge came about by happy coincidence when CEO Lauren Cook recognized Joanne Chang on the street, introduced herself, and expressed her admiration for Flour. Joanne revealed that her retirement dream was to "hold babies." "You can do that, we will wait for you!" Lauren exclaimed, and Joanne soon visited Ellis. This encounter led to an immediate connection and the inspiration for the Baking Challenge.

In addition to fostering community spirit, attracting new friends, and providing endless fun, the challenge also raised over \$20,000 for Ellis's meal program. This essential program delivers two nutritious meals and snacks daily to over 300 children. We sincerely thank our sponsors – Flour Bakery + Café, Brookline Bank, Olivia's Organics, Spindrift, and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay – for their generous financial support. We also appreciate the host committee members for their invaluable contributions, from securing sponsors to creating goody bags for all. Ellis is profoundly grateful to Joanne for generously dedicating her time to judge our contestants in the Ellis Baking Challenge.



"I've always worked in early childhood education, and Ellis is a truly magical place. Baking is magical too – it's about transforming simple ingredients into something great."
–JAYE SMITH



CELEBRATING
ELLIS
AND
THE STRENGTH OF FAMILIES





On November 2nd, 2023, over 350 guests gathered for the highly anticipated *Celebrating Ellis and the Strength of Families* benefit. Attendees included our esteemed honorees, the Board of Directors and Trustees, supportive corporate partners, Ellis's parents and educators, and others who cherish Ellis. This year's annual fundraising gathering once again offered a mix of music, gourmet buffet stations, a signature cocktail, and numerous opportunities for attendees to form connections across Ellis's community.

Bringing everyone together highlighted the community's shared mission of providing affordable and exceptional early education. Our event co-chairs, Sean Curran and Jerome Smith, set the stage for the evening, and CEO Lauren Cook extended heartfelt gratitude to everyone for celebrating Ellis. These speakers shared remarkable insights into Ellis's commitment to serving diverse children and families while upholding principles of excellence, accessibility, and equity.

We were profoundly grateful to honor two champions of early childhood education. The Ellis Shero Award was presented to Nancy Huntington Stager, President and CEO of the Eastern Bank Foundation, whose generous support has been instrumental in achieving our goals, including our expansion into Jamaica Plain in 2021 and assistance with funding for classroom materials. The Ellis Hero

Award was bestowed upon Representative Aaron Michlewitz, who served as Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee and proposed significant funding increases to raise early educator salaries in FY23 and FY24. Ellis is deeply grateful to Nancy and Aaron for their unwavering support and commitment to its mission.

Tiffany Sheets, Ellis's Assistant Vice President of Programs, shared her story as both a devoted Ellis employee of over 20 years and a proud Ellis parent. Her reflections on Ellis's profound impact, seen through her roles as teacher, director, assistant vice president, and parent, underscored Ellis's transformative effects on the lives of the children served.

The largest fundraising event of the year, this night is crucial in allowing Ellis to continuously provide new resources and opportunities for children and families. With the generous support of our corporate sponsors and guests and the encouragement of the auctioneer, Boys and Girls Club CEO Robert Lewis Jr., Ellis raised over \$630,000. Ellis is immensely grateful for this support, which enables it to continue its mission of delivering high-quality, accessible, and equitably distributed early education.

350+ GUESTS

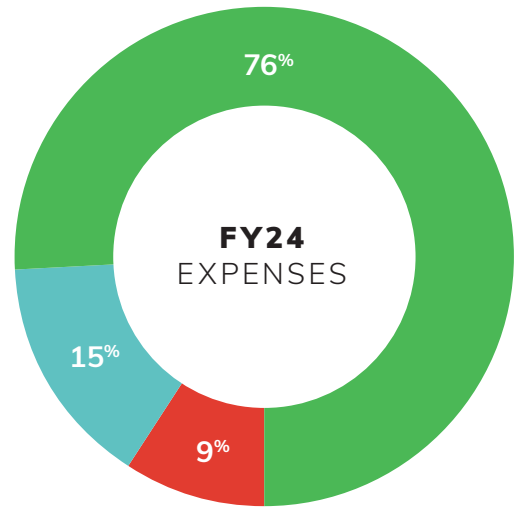
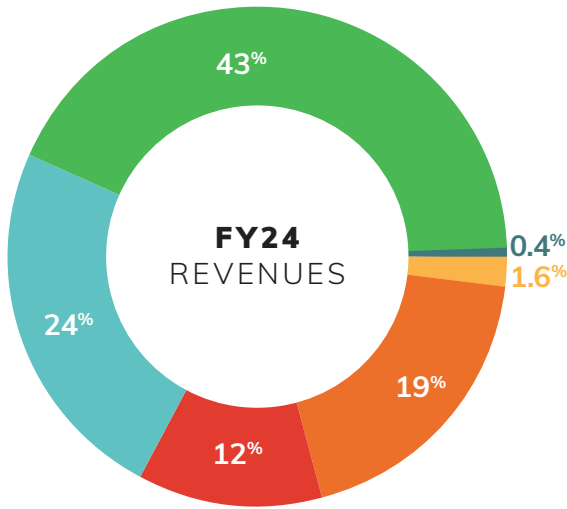
\$630K+ RAISED

OUR Donors



FINANCIALS:

Ellis in Numbers



- GOVERNMENT CHILDCARE REIMBURSEMENTS
- TUITION
- GOVERNMENT GRANTS
- PHILANTHROPY
- INVESTMENT INCOME
- OTHER INCOME

- PROGRAM
- GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE
- FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

REVENUE

	AS OF JUNE 30, 2024	% OF TOTAL REVENUE
Government childcare reimbursements	4,650,218	43%
Tuition	2,609,721	24%
Philanthropy	2,128,905	19%
Government grants	1,303,659	12%
Investment income	180,118	1.6%
Other income	45,328	0.4%
Total	10,917,949	

EXPENSES

	AS OF JUNE 30, 2024	% OF TOTAL EXPENSES
Program	7,532,372	76%
Salaries*	5,527,537	
Meal program	369,742	
Other program expenses**	1,635,093	
General and administrative	1,472,728	15%
Fundraising and development	844,704	9%
Total	9,849,804	

NET ASSETS

	AS OF JUNE 30, 2024
Net assets at the beginning of fiscal Year	11,981,200
Net assets at the end of fiscal Year	13,049,375

*Includes all personnel cost (salaries, benefits, and payroll taxes) for educators and program leadership.

**Other program expenses include classroom supplies, occupancy, repairs and maintenance, professional development, cleaning, etc.



The Power of Giving

The Ellis Early Learning Model

Ellis Early Learning provides exceptional early education with an emphasis on racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity. Ellis's model adheres to high accreditation standards and delivers proven outcomes, but almost 20% of our operating annual budget must be raised through philanthropy.

What is Annual Giving?

Annual Giving is financial support provided year after year that Ellis can rely on to continue to pursue our mission. One of the easiest ways to get involved and support Ellis's mission is through annual giving. Annual giving is a simple and direct way to support all aspects of Ellis's operating expenses, including providing nutritious food for the children, paying teachers' salaries, and maintaining our three centers.

Why Contribute?

Donating to Ellis enables us to create a more equitable future for our children and teachers. Annual giving funds are used to provide outstanding Ellis services and programs to the children of Boston.



Partners in Our Work

Corporations and Foundations

SUPERHERO \$100,000+

Anonymous Family Foundation
The Baupost Group

CHAMPION \$50,000+

Liberty Mutual Foundation
Natixis Investment Managers
The TJX Companies, Inc.
United Way of Massachusetts Bay
Wellington Management

ADVOCATE \$25,000+

Cabot Family Charitable Trust
Cummings Foundation
Highland Street Foundation
Kirkland & Ellis
National Grid
PNC Bank

SUPPORTER \$10,000+

Brookline Bank
Eastern Bank Foundation
Kimco Realty
New England Patriots Foundation
PURE Insurance
Ropes & Gray

FRIEND \$5,000+

Bain Capital
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
EY-Parthenon
Foundation M
Hingham Institution for Savings
Needham Bank
New Boston Ventures
PwC
Related Beal
Social Equity Access Fund
The Hamilton Company

NEIGHBOR \$1,000+

Aberdeen Standard Investments
Cabot Risk Strategies, LLC
EMC2 Landscaping, LLC
Intercontinental Real Estate Corporation
Irenaeus Foundation

Public Funding

Boston Public Schools

City of Boston Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Massachusetts Department of Children and Families



Ellis Early Learning Fund FY24

JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2024

The Ellis Early Learning Fund is an annual program of inviting and recognizing charitable support at leadership levels.

CHAMPION \$50,000+

Coleen and Ted Dinneen
Cathy E. Minehan

SUPPORTER \$10,000+

Reuben and Christine Ackerman
Alison and Chip Batchelder
Heather Blier and Mark DeMichaelis
Rachael Bradley
Chuck Carignan and Michael Cerruti
Arthur and Lennie Carver
Jim Geraghty
David and Wendy Giunta
Erin and Dean Hotaling
Barbara and Amos Hostetter
Stephen and Jill Karp
Kate and Tom Kush
Abigail Paul and Daniel Lynch
Carreau and Jonathan Ryder
Etta and Mark Rosen
Will and Erin Tetler
Lauren and Christopher Toth

FRIEND \$5,000+

Jim Alexander and Tom Stocker
Elizabeth Bernardi and Shane Dunn
Kathy Betts and Chip Lewis
Timothy and Bridget Carpenter
Sean and Kelly Curran
Tom and Shari Dicker
Fernando and Charlene Domenech
Molly and Colin Gorman
Beth Edwards Harris
Christine and David Letts
Mary Mitchell and Joe Aiello
Kate and Max Pinto
Lisa Sunwoo and Andrew Schneller
Kristen and Derek Vicino

NEIGHBOR \$1,000+

Naomi Aberly and Larry Lebowitz
Benedicta Acosta
Bill and Carolyn Aliski
Anonymous
Julie and Michael Arnheiter
Alison Berg
Jon Bernstein
Warren and Renee Besser
Kenneth Birely
Michael Caljouw
Emilia Cannella
Carol and Bill Caporizzo
David Chavolla
Renee and Scott Connelly
Steven Cohen
Lauren and Andrew Cook
Margret Cooke and David Crowley
Kristina and Evan Davis
Morgan and David DesPrez
Meghan and Peter Dichiaro
Amy Donovan
Tracy Duffy
Suzanne Dwyer
James Ellis
Jesse Elton
Catherine and Keith Farrow
Kevin Finney
Susan Furtado
Maribeth Gainard
Paula and Gary Ganzi
Daniel and Jill Garrison
Stacy and Brad Greene
Stephanie and Paul Giardina
Jean Gulliver and Matt Weiss
Donna Housman
Bradley Hubbard
Emily and Tim Hughes
Daphne Hsu and Jeff Rosen
Marilyn Rosh
Gregory Kanarian and Julina Rundberg
Patricia and Matthew Keenan
Kathleen Kelly
Emily and Brian Kolle
Lisa and Roger Krakoff

Ben Krass and Mary Holper
Quentin and Stephanie Kruel
Joseph Labresh
Garrett and Erin Larivee
Sarah and Brad Lassey
Peter and Janet Lebovitz
Shenkiat Lim and Cynthia Schoettler
Meredith and Scott Lipnick
Stephanie Lucas
Ian and Teri Macduff
Jaime Marshall
Mary Ann and Peter Mattoon
Elizabeth and Keith Morgan
Debra McConnell and Oriol Monfort
Michael and Kara McDonald
Elizabeth Mendelsohn and Eugene Mann
Jill Migliori
Nicole and Bryan Morrell
Larry and Pamela Moulter
Amy O'Leary
Cathy and Dan Phillips
Steven Pomper and Blair Hews
Norin and Fahim Razzaque
Judith and John Remondi
Gena Rhee
Jennifer Round
Stephen Sadoski
John Sanford
Emilie and John Schleer
John Sgroi
Christopher and Jana Shumate
Beatriz Pina Smith
Jaye and Darin Smith
Nancy Huntington Stager and Jim Stager
Charles Stefanini
Brian and Lindsey Swett
Julia Tarnell
Bill and Susie Taylor
Karen Tucker and Jerry Avorn
Clayton and Linda Turnbull
Marta and Luc van Dam
Jayme Van Oot and Luke Morse
Kris and John VanOpdorp
Mariann and Andrew Youniss
Catherine Wallace
Erika Wilkinson and Andrew Lynch
Michael Worhach

“Lend A Hand to Ellis” Family Campaign

2023-2024

The Ellis Family Campaign is an important fundraising campaign to engage our families and create a culture of giving back to Ellis.

Margo and Michael Ballou
Win Bear
Campbell and Michael Brofft
Jacqueline and Leo Buckley
Anna Bullard and Tim Hanson
Keri Charles
Lisa Collins and Peter Loukas
Barbara Cronin and James Scott
Morgan and David DesPrez
Maritza Ebling and Matt Hillard
Kelly and Zach Husid
Lauren Edmundson and Brendan Fogarty
Arellys and Jair Furtado
Masika Gadson
Sisay Gidey Mebratu and Feven Desalegn Dibau
Taylah Guilty and Johnny Ortiz
Kristen and Casey Hingtgen
Lexi and Jeremiah Johnson
Katheryn and Andrew Kalinowski
Gregory Kanarian and Julina Rundberg
Michelle Laboy and Joshua Fiedler

Rebekah and Joe Lahout
Anais and Antoine Lambert
Evelyn Lambert
Emma Lasch and Connor Stark
Sarah and Brad Lassey
Jessica Lauerhass and Tim O'Brien
Lesley and Ben Levitt
Meredith and Scott Lipnick
Steffan Lonergan
Sophia and Cameron McCully
Melanie and Michael McDermott
Elizabeth Mendelsohn and Eugene Mann
Nicole and Bryan Morrell
Libby and Brandon Nelson
Sarah and John Phillips
Kate and Max Pinto
Carol and Casey Popkins
Carreau and Jonathan Ryder
Cara Safon and Bobby Rosen
Kelly and Shane Sandoval
Sabrina Santos and Rares Scorena

Meredid Santiago and Oswaldo Zabalu
Lina Sladkeviciute and Michael Scolamiero
Ashley Storms and Joao Santos
Colleen Sullivan and Leah Soumerai
Lindsey and Brian Swett
Lauren and Christopher Toth
Jayme Van Oot and Luke Morse
Frances Velazquez
Jeanne Yeh and David Ganzi
Catherine and Campbell Wallace
Sadie Wieschhoff



ELLIS Mission

Ellis partners with families to provide high-quality early childhood education in a warm, nurturing environment. A recognized leader in our field, we support children across the socio-economic spectrum, treasure diversity in all forms, and celebrate the joy of childhood.

ELLIS Vision

Every child thrives, and every educator flourishes in an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

ELLIS EARLY
LEARNING

58 BERKELEY STREET, BOSTON, MA 02116

(617) 695-9307 • www.EllisEarlyLearning.org