

Holy Cross Head Start, Inc.

Holy Cross Mission Statement: To provide comprehensive educational opportunities for eligible families and their children birth to five in collaboration with community partnerships in a safe, diverse environment.

Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. (HCHS) is a federally funded school readiness and family development program. Holy Cross Head Start has provided early, continuous and comprehensive childhood development and family services for over 53 years. Currently, Holy Cross Head Start offers developmentally appropriate Pre-Kindergarten programming for 500, three and four year-old children. Our program focuses on school readiness, literacy, math, and social skills, integrating children with disabilities throughout the program while assisting family members in meeting their needs and achieving their goals.

Our program offers comprehensive, holistic, and supportive services to an ethnically diverse population, creating programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive to our families. Holy Cross Head Start engages a large network of community collaborators who all share the same commitment to cultural and linguistic responsiveness and that offer health, mental health, disabilities, parenting, social services, and educational programs.



Enrollment

Holy Cross Head Start provides services for 500 children, ages 3-4 years old, and families in Erie County, New York in the following service areas:

Holy Cross Center 150 Maryland St. Buffalo, NY 14201 716-852-8373	Central Center 89 Military Rd. Buffalo, NY 14207 716-875-1506	Dewitt Center 368 Dewitt St. Buffalo, NY 14213 716-424-0571
North Buffalo Center 203 Sanders Rd. Buffalo, NY 14216 716-464-7771	Northwest Center 155 Lawn Ave. Buffalo, NY 14207 716-877-5022	Sheridan-Parkside Center 169 Sheridan Parkside Dr. Tonawanda, NY 14150 716-876-0100

During the 2022-2023 program year, Holy Cross Head Start served 438 children from within 410 families. The percentage of enrolled children deemed categorically eligible or eligible based on low income was 98%. The average monthly enrollment was 79.2%. Even though full enrollment was not mandated nationwide by the Office of Head Start, HCHS was close to reaching full enrollment. HCHS continued to strive for full enrollment during the program year, however, we still faced challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staffing shortages.

COVID-19

In the 2022-2023 program year, HCHS returned to providing children and families with in-person learning. Program staff worked carefully to ensure the safety of the children, families, and staff by engaging in safe practices such as wearing masks, increasing sanitation and cleaning practices, and limiting visitors in the building. In the event of program closures due to COVID-19, children were given at-home learning materials.

Collaborations

Holy Cross Head Start collaborates with the following community agencies to better assist families: Buffalo State College, D'Youville College, University Pediatric Dentistry, Catholic Charities WIC, Lead 716, Lead Prevention Program, Endeavor Health Services, Lion's Club, ECMC, Hearing and Speech of WNY, Buffalo Public School District and the Ken-Ton School District.

Preparing Children for Kindergarten

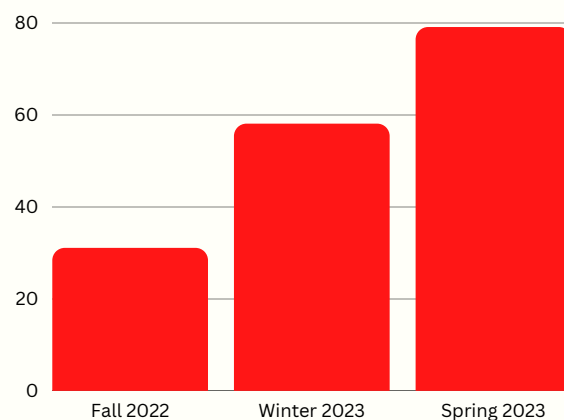
To help prepare children and families for Kindergarten and beyond, school readiness goals were created using learning objectives from the Creative Curriculum's Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool. Teaching Strategies GOLD is utilized not only as a framework to guide children's learning but is also the main database used to collect, analyze, and interpret assessment data.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is based on 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school readiness and goals that focus on the success of the five essential domains and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, State Early Learning Guidelines, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Teachers individualize and observe children daily, as well as collect portfolio samples. They also meet with families three times a year to discuss the samples and formulate goals for the children. The goals and observations drive the daily lesson plans.

Arts Education

This year, HCHS children participated in creative art experiences provided by local organizations. The CEPA Gallery taught children about photography and Dynamic Drums of WNY brought drums and other percussion instruments for the children to explore the various sounds and beats of the drums.



This graph shows that by the spring of 2023, 79% of children were meeting or exceeding widely held expectations. HCHS showed a 48% increase in assessment data from the fall of 2022 to the spring of 2023.

Charter School Fair

Throughout the school year HCHS Case Managers assist families with completing Kindergarten registration paperwork and determining which school is best for their needs.

HCHS held their annual Charter School fair this year to provide families with the resources needed to make informed decisions about Kindergarten. Thirteen local charter schools were on site at each of the six locations to talk to families about their schools and help families with the registration process. One hundred and twenty three families attended the fair.

HCHS helped 192 children to transition to Kindergarten. Sixty seven children planned to attend a charter school for Kindergarten, while the remaining children planned to attend public or private schools.

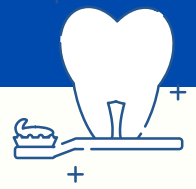
Student Support Services

Holy Cross Head Start works closely with families to provide resources for parents who have concerns about their child's development. In order to meet the needs of each child, curriculum and instruction are individualized and classroom accommodations are made to support students within our program. Parents who have educational concerns for their children are provided with information regarding referrals, evaluations and services that are accessible through their local school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). We collaborate with school districts and evaluating agencies to assist in the CPSE process to ensure that students who qualify receive appropriate services and support. We also support families through the transition to school age special education programs and services. HCHS assisted 47 families through the CPSE process to determine if their child was eligible for services. Of that number, 31 children qualified for services. A total of 116 children were identified as a preschooler with a disability during the 2022-2023 program year.

Holy Cross Head Start advocates for families of students who are experiencing trauma, mental health issues or behavioral challenges. We assess students' social and emotional development using the Ages and Stages: Social and Emotional Questionnaire. Staff work together with the Mental Health and Disabilities Services Coordinator and families to provide support through classroom accommodations, and if warranted, a referral for additional services is made to address concerns. We collaborate with local counseling agencies such as Gateway-Longview and Endeavor Health Services to provide counseling for students and families who qualify. HCHS assisted 18 families in obtaining counseling services for their child.

A key strength of our program is that we support the development of strong social-emotional skills in our students throughout the school day. Second Step Early Learning Curriculum, a social-emotional skills curriculum, is implemented daily in all of our classrooms. Our education staff has participated in multiple trainings on the topic of positive behavior strategies (PBS) including trainings in Modules 1 and 2 of the Pyramid Model Program for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. Activities, strategies and materials from the Pyramid Model are utilized in every classroom.





A Healthy Start

During the 2022-2023 program year:

100% of enrolled children completed all required 45 day screenings, which include hearing, vision, developmental, speech and social-emotional screenings.

100% of enrolled children had health insurance and a medical home.

100% of enrolled children received physical exams.

98% of enrolled children received dental exams.

For those without dental homes, HCHS collaborated with The Smile Team to provide on site dental screenings to children. The University at Buffalo School of Dentistry provided dental screenings and Liberty Dental provided dental screenings and fluoride treatment to the children during the school year.

Nutrition

All children that attend Holy Cross Head Start receive 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs while in program. All meals follow the nutrition guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are low in sugar and high in vitamins. Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to participate in menu planning and can review and make suggestions to the meals that are served to their children. Nutrition staff collaborate with teaching staff to teach and model healthy eating activities in the classroom.

During the 2022-2023 program year, Holy Cross Head Start served:

Breakfast - 48,794

Lunch - 50,057

Snack - 47,929



The Health Service Advisory Committee meets quarterly throughout the school year to discuss health and nutrition issues relevant to the community and the families enrolled at HCHS. The committee is comprised of health professionals within the community, HCHS staff and parents. The information shared among members helps to drive decision making within the program and also provides the program with valuable resources.

Overview of Head Start Spending & Expenditures

Fiscal Year March 1, 2022-February 28, 2023

REVENUE		
	HCHS Grant	5,033,656
	Head Start T&TA	6,807
	In-Kind Revenue	525,251
	Grants from Governmental Agencies (*CACFP & UPK)	818,439
	Other Income	7,350
<i>Total Revenue</i>		6,391,503
EXPENSES		
	Personnel Costs	3,236,339
	Fringe Benefits	1,105,678
	Travel	2,316
	Equipment	
	Supplies	827,292
	Contractual	90,730
	Construction	0
	Other	1,148,404
<i>Total Expenses</i>		6,410,759

*CACFP – Child and Adult Care Food Program
UPK – Universal Pre-K

An annual audit is conducted on compliance for each major program and on Internal Control over Compliance required by the Uniform Guidance each year. Our Fiscal Year 2023 audit is still in progress, however, according to the audit conducted by independent auditors Szymkowiak & Associates, the agency complied in all material respects with the types of compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended February 28, 2022. Please note the variance between the total revenue and total expenses is related to the difference in the timing of expenditures and revenue recognition of a grant with different cut off dates.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors works closely with the Executive Director, Mr. Cortland Purks, to oversee the program. The Board is made up of people from various professional and community backgrounds. The Board meets quarterly each year and participates in the annual Self-Assessment, Community Assessment, Strategic Planning and Federal Review for the agency.

Mrs. Maria Cruz-Torres, *President*

Ms. Ada Collado, *Vice President*

Ms. Davida Black-Heubach, *Secretary*

Ms. Nelly Perez Garcia, *Treasurer*

Mr. Daniel Figueroa

Mrs. Delilah Ventura

Mr. Carmen Gentile

Ms. Nan Gallivan

Ms. Fatima Sharif

Ms. Maria Aguero de Manunta

Mr. Michael Muscarella

Ms. Nadira Durant Morales, *Policy Council Chairpeson*

Policy Council

The Policy Council is comprised of parents of enrolled children from each center. They meet monthly and are responsible for supporting program operations, including, but not limited to, recruitment, selection, enrollment, applications for funding, budget planning, program personnel policies and bylaws for the operation of the Policy Council. The Policy Council is also responsible for participating in the annual Self-Assessment and using the yearly program data to drive decision making for the program.



Professional Development

Holy Cross Head Start had the opportunity to send staff members to the annual National Head Start Conference in Phoenix, Arizona in May. Miss Barbara and Miss Jasmine proudly represented the agency and brought back valuable resources to use in their daily work.

Leadership Team

Cortland Purks

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Dewitt Center Director

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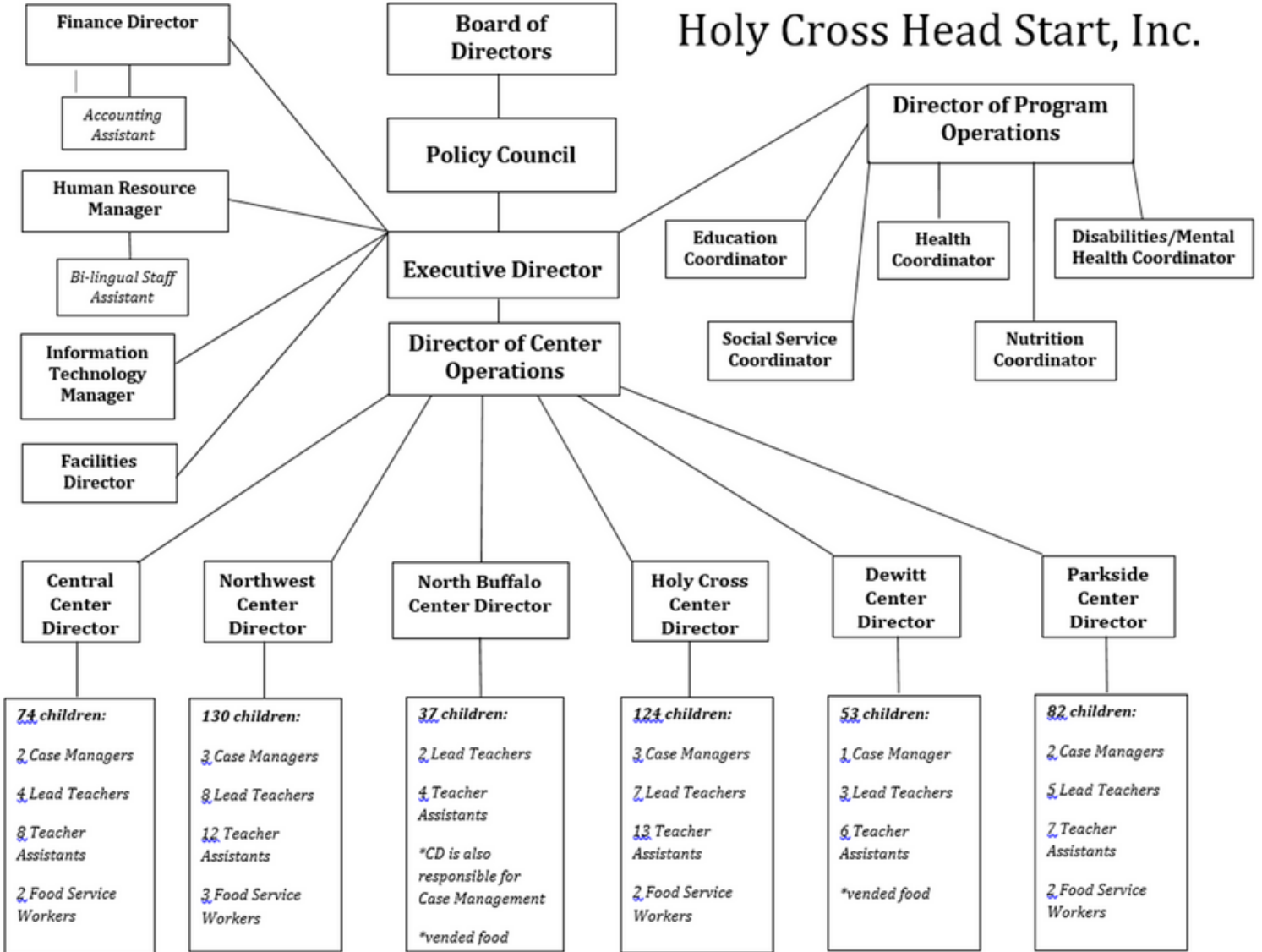
Jennifer Falletta

Central Center Director

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Positions listed as of September 2022

Organizational Chart



Organizational Chart as of July 2023

Contact Info:

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