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# 2015

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## Strategic Plan

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Mothers' Club  
Family Learning Center

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# PARTICIPANTS

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## Plan developed by 2014-2015 Board of Directors

Fran Scoble, *President*  
Judy Brown, *Vice President*  
Gretchen Reed, *Treasurer*  
Kelly McCord, *Secretary*  
Peggy Adams  
Renu Bhat-Hansen  
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## Plan approved by 2015-2016 Board of Directors

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Amy Duncan, *Vice President*  
Jean Milbrandt, *Treasurer*  
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Elizabeth Woo

## Key Staff

Hector LaFarga, Jr., *Executive Director*  
Silvana Casalegno, *Program Director*  
Julie Espinoza, *Education Director*  
Mara Leong-Nichols, *Development Director*

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# BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

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As we enter our 55th year, **Mothers' Club Family Learning Center** continues to be uniquely positioned to provide the services our community needs most. Our city of **Pasadena** is home to one of the biggest wealth disparities in the state of California. The population of **Northwest Pasadena**, the area we predominantly serve, suffers from high levels of poverty, low educational attainment, and limited English language skills. In Northwest Pasadena, 22% of families with children under 5 years old live below the federal poverty level; 33% of adults do not have high school diplomas and 22% have less than a 9th grade education; and 58% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Research tells us that these three factors are strongly associated with school readiness and children's long-term outcomes.

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center was **founded in 1961** by Mara Moser, a woman of deep commitment to social justice and economic equity, who reached out to a few of the loneliest and most overwhelmed mothers in the community. Since then, our programs have evolved significantly as we have developed a unique **two-generation learning model** built on the guiding principle that in order for significant, long-term change to occur within a family, you must reach both parent and child and educate them together because the most critical time to reach a family is when children are proven to be most vulnerable and impressionable, between birth and five years-old. We continue to reach out to the most isolated and at-risk families in our community by providing parenting/adult education, social support, and early childhood education to their young children. In 2007, we completed a capital campaign to purchase and renovate our permanent facility in Northwest Pasadena.

In 2009, we created our previous **Strategic Plan** and have since accomplished many of the goals we had established. We have strengthened programs, expanded services, and further developed our two-generation learning model. Over the past two years, we have increased the number of clients served each day from 166 to 218. As we move into the next phase of our organizational development, we have evaluated the opportunities and challenges of the current environment and outlined a strategic vision for the coming years.

A well-formulated Strategic Plan inspires people to give, join, and serve. It is a critical tool for maintaining stability and strategic direction and is an important external tool for attracting funding and volunteer leadership. It ensures that all constituents of Mothers' Club Family Learning Center are in alignment.

As a result of the strategic planning process, Mothers' Club Family Learning Center has emerged with a shared strategic vision that focuses on the following overarching goals:

- Ensure sustainability of the organization both financially and programmatically.
- Strengthen our two-generation learning programs.
- Maximize the number of families served.
- Raise the public profile of our organization and two-generation learning both locally and nationally.

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# MISSION

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To prepare families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life through two-generation learning programs.

# VISION

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Families will work together and be active and contributing members of their local community and of the larger society.

Parents will be welcomed into our community as partners and life-long learners and be supported as their child's primary and most influential teacher.

All children will be nurtured and educated to enter kindergarten ready and able to learn.



# VALUES

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## **Two-Generation Learning:**

We provide a high-quality learning environment for low-income, often isolated parents and their children through early childhood education, parenting education, and adult literacy education.

## **Empowerment:**

We support our families in making positive changes in their lives, ensuring that they have a voice in building their communities.

## **Respect:**

We value each individual and his or her cultural background and commit to inclusive and respectful processes that are grounded in active listening and trust.

## **Welcoming Environment:**

We provide a safe, nurturing, educational environment that encourages friendship and a sense of community in an atmosphere of joy and fun.

## **Quality:**

We provide a high-quality educational experience for adults and children consistent with best practices and learning research for maximum positive impact.



## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will strengthen and build on existing two-generation learning programs and services.



## RATIONALE

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center has the opportunity to impact more families and meet the growing needs of the community.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Build on existing programs to maximize the use of our resources.
- Broaden collaborative partnerships to increase services for families.
- Strengthen families through a holistic family-centered approach.
- Sustain connections with families and build loyalty with our alumni.
- Utilize multiple sources of data to assess effectiveness of programs and inform decision making.
- Exemplify best practices in two-generation learning and be responsive to the needs of the community.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Research and understand what additional services are needed.
2. Develop alumni outreach plan.
3. Design a formal alumni program and services.
4. Execute longitudinal study.
5. Develop short- and long-term programs for the evenings and weekends.
6. Develop collaborations to support evening and weekend programs.
7. Develop and implement parenting workshops to be offered to the community at-large.
8. Expand the fathers' support group and develop a series of workshops.

# FINANCE

## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will maintain financial structures that ensure organizational stability, support the fulfillment and expansion of the program and mission, maintain facilities, and meet the needs of families, children, and staff.



## RATIONALE

In the past five years, the organization has successfully moved through a leadership transition, expanded programs, and increased income from grants and voluntary gifts, making this an opportune time to consolidate those achievements and build a stable financial base for the foreseeable future.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Develop the financial capacity to expand programs when appropriate, repair and upgrade facilities as needed, and amply fund competitive compensation and benefits, including a retirement plan for employees.
- Increase annual funding so that any loss of current funding does not result in a program cut.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Support Executive Director in developing data-driven financial models of both current programs and potential program expansions to ensure good decision-making.
2. Regularly assess the risk to the organization should federal, state, or foundation grants decrease or change their focus.
3. Manage expenses for efficient use of resources.
4. Increase funding for upkeep and improvement of facilities, while regularly assessing the condition and long-term suitability of the center.
5. Ensure competitive salary and benefits, including a retirement program for employees.
6. Regularly assess risks and risk management strategies.
7. Manage long-term investments, balancing risk, liquidity, and the goal of capital growth.

# DEVELOPMENT

## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will design and implement a robust development plan that supports and sustains program aspirations and maximizes the number of families served.



## RATIONALE

In order to achieve the vision for growth and sustainability, the organization must make it a priority to create a long-range development strategy with multiple components.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Fundraise in accordance with annual budgetary needs.
- Develop strategy for long-term sustainability.
- Raise community awareness.
- Institutionalize relationships with major individual donors.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Host small gatherings with individual donors and Board members to facilitate relationship continuity amidst Board member turnover.
2. Organize events to attract young professionals and young families as volunteers and donors.
3. Work with Nominating and Governance Committee to identify potential corporate relationships and Board membership.
4. Update and maintain existing donor database to personalize interaction with individual donors.
5. Evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of the Community Advisors.
6. Continue to develop and expand relationships with social and local media resources.
7. Hold the Fall Food and Wine Festival and Power of Two dinner and evaluate both annually.

# GOVERNANCE

## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will maintain and enhance the strength of the Board of Directors by recruiting and supporting highly qualified and diverse Board members.



## RATIONALE

Long-term vitality and sustainability requires a strong Board that consistently renews and reinvigorates itself as a strategic body.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Recruit a highly qualified and diverse Board committed to the organization's mission and philosophy, actively supportive of the long-term goals, and with leadership skills to ensure the organization's long-term sustainability.
- Create a plan to ensure smooth leadership succession.
- Evaluate committee structures for maximum effectiveness.
- Evaluate the by-laws to ensure compliance with nonprofit regulations and best practices for governance.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Engage the Board in recruiting Board members who meet the criteria of the annually determined needs of the Board.
2. Carry out regular succession plan for Board leadership positions.
3. Review and assess the charge for committees and job descriptions for committee chairs.
4. Conduct annual Board assessments; make recommendations to Executive Committee to improve Board and Board member experiences.

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will create and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to raise the organization's profile both locally and nationally as a high-quality two-generation learning center that delivers excellent programs to underserved families and children in a caring environment.



## RATIONALE

Implementing a professional marketing and communications program will bring the level of recognition and reputation of our organization in line with the level of excellence in our two-generation learning programs.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Increase awareness and strengthen our image in the community.
- Brand the organization as the premier early childhood education center in the community.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Charge an ad hoc task force to assess the effectiveness of the current historic name of the organization as it defines its contemporary identity.
2. Engage a marketing/communications professional to assist staff and the Board with a carefully crafted, consistent message that will clearly define our two-generation learning programs and purpose.
3. Survey key supporters, stakeholders, and community constituencies to sharpen internal awareness of their perceptions.
4. Evaluate and expand our presence in social media.

# COMMUNITY & CIVIC INFLUENCE

## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will build on heightened public awareness of the crucial importance of two-generation learning and extend our reach beyond traditional networks and strategies for making our services known in the community.



## RATIONALE

New research, news articles, and increased funding have combined to raise public awareness of “Zero to Five” education and the impact it can have throughout the lives of children. Mothers' Club Family Learning Center has a unique opportunity to raise our profile as early childhood education advocates and providers.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Leverage political relationships to increase visibility and influence.
- Be an advocate for two-generation learning locally, statewide, and nationally.
- Execute and leverage data from the longitudinal study for increased support and awareness.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Seek opportunities for the Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and lead staff to speak to community audiences and the media about the unique values of two-generation learning.
2. Seek opportunities to advocate for state and federal investments in early childhood education.

# HUMAN RESOURCES

## GOAL

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center will invest in its employees by providing ongoing professional development to ensure quality service delivery, and a high level of job satisfaction.



## RATIONALE

Professional support and training will substantially contribute to employee retention resulting in an adaptive and responsive organization.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Sustain high levels of performance through high standards, professional development, mentoring, and annual performance reviews.
- Sustain high levels of employee job satisfaction through compliance with workplace standards, generous praise for jobs well done, fair compensation, and a welcoming workplace.

## PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

1. Ensure that compensation remains competitive through annual analysis of comparable nonprofit organizations.
2. Analyze existing professional development activities to identify areas for improvement and expansion as an added benefit to employees.
3. Analyze existing staffing structure and identify areas for increased efficiencies.
4. Enhance existing employee recognition program.
5. Implement a 403b retirement plan.



# Mothers' Club

## Family Learning Center

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