

ALL HANDS ON DECK



ANNUAL REPORT FY22

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Dear Friends,

I write this note with a deep appreciation for all who made Fiscal Year 2022 so impactful at Ellis. Looking back on this year, a well-known quote from Charles Dickens comes to mind "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," as does the Chinese proverb, "In every crisis lies the seed of opportunity."

FY22 began with great anticipation for experiencing our first pandemic year with vaccines in circulation for most people. In September 2021, we enthusiastically opened our new site in Jamaica Plain (JP), a community in significant need of additional childcare, particularly for infants and toddlers. Within months our JP classrooms were full and our waitlist was growing.

Unfortunately, the aggressive onslaught of the Omicron variant in December of 2021 dominated daily life at Ellis, making typical operations arduous. The situation called for "all hands on deck," with every member of the Ellis team doing whatever was necessary to keep our classrooms open for families, and doing so happily. Despite the challenges, our students learned, grew, and enjoyed each day together.

We are proud and excited to share more details of this extraordinary year with you in our FY22 Annual report. Please continue reading to learn more and to meet some amazing Ellis families and volunteers.

As always, many thanks to our entire community including the Ellis team, our families, and the many supporters that make our work possible. As the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child," and you are Ellis's village.

With continued appreciation,

Lauren Cook

LAUREN COOK, Chief Executive Officer





What Sets ELLIS APART

- Ellis is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, putting it in the top 9% of early childhood programs nationally.
- Due to its high level of quality, Boston Public Schools (BPS) has elected to fund three Ellis preschool classrooms in connection with the BPS Universal Pre-K (UPK) and Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) programs.
- Ellis is beloved and has a waitlist of over 600 children due to our level of quality, rich diversity, and warm learning environment.

our MISSION

Ellis partners with families to provide high-quality early childhood education and school age programs 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF ELLIS'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS



COLEEN DOWNS DINNEENEllis Board Chair

It is with humility and pride that I reflect on our 2022 fiscal year, and what a year it was. Our community of educators, caregivers, children, and administrators remained challenged by the ongoing pandemic. Keeping programs open nearly every school day required everyone to be flexible, patient, and persistent.

We learned and grew, and during all of it, we opened a gorgeous new center in Jamaica Plain which allowed us to welcome 58 new young learners. I am so proud of what Ellis Early Learning was able to achieve.

None of this could have happened without our amazing supporters, from the \$25 first-time donors who read about our challenges in the Boston Globe or saw the January 2022 segment about Ellis on CBS national Evening News, to our consistent donors and volunteers who renewed or increased their support, and to our new major foundation and corporate funders who help in transformational ways.

Most importantly, we are grateful for the children and families who share so much of their days and lives with us. Children are the most special members of every family and of our community. When they thrive, our whole society can thrive, as well.

With gratitude for all you do to make Ellis the special place it is,

COLEEN DOWNS DINNEEN. Ellis Board Chair

Oh what a year with Omicron!

It's normal to reflect on a year thinking about its milestones. In our personal lives, we may think about big holidays, a new job, a special trip, or exciting moments in the lives of our children.

Pre-pandemic, Ellis tracked a fiscal year reflecting on a fun summer with field trips and lots of water play, the start of a new school year marked by a Back-to-School Ice Cream Social, children transitioning to Ellis for the first time as tiny infants, and those same babies learning to crawl and walk, and graduation for our preschoolers before their launch to kindergarten at local schools. And so many special moments in between.

When the Ellis leadership team reflects on Fiscal Year 21 (FY21), different markers come to mind. Yes, we joyfully recall the special experiences highlighted above, but we also reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Ellis. FY21 started with an extremely hopeful spirit. This was the year of our grand opening of Ellis's new center in Jamaica Plain. And boy, did we have a grand opening celebration planned! Pony rides, games, it was going to be epic! Then Delta hit. Delta was the first variant to make Ellis pause with concern. In retrospect, Delta was a small blip on the COVID variant screen.

Omicron marked a significant change in COVID's impact on Ellis. The variant was far more contagious, and therefore more difficult to mitigate its spread. Despite our heroic efforts, enough teachers contracted COVID that some

classrooms were forced to close from time to time. With no vaccines for young children, Ellis students and their family members were often testing positive, and COVID was to blame for many isolated holidays within our family community. We know our families suffered the effects of Omicron in their own ways.

Omicron put additional strain on the Ellis team and our families, and considerable patience, kindness, and understanding were required by everyone to manage each unpredictable day. It's during challenging times like these that Ellis's "superpower" comes to bear. The strength of Ellis's team members and their commitment to the Ellis mission is on full display. Ellis team members from every department do whatever they can to keep our classrooms open to support families. It wouldn't be uncommon to see the finance department working from reception desks, doubling as welcome ambassadors, and monitoring the front doors.

It's not surprising that, despite the obstacles, Ellis persisted, and our children thrived. Ellis proved once again it is resilient and strong in the face of adversity and can cultivate joy even through life's unexpected and difficult moments. Fortunately, the acute sting of Omicron didn't last forever. The warm weather came, and along with it, fewer cases and growing pride over what we accomplished together with Ellis's characteristic hopefulness and optimism.





The impact of Omicron on Ellis was featured in Episode 1 of Season 2 of the acclaimed podcast, No One is Coming to Save Us, produced by Neighborhood Villages and Lemonada Media. Our CEO and some of our families and teachers had the opportunity to reconnect with journalist host Gloria following our first interviews in Season 1. For those who haven't listened to the podcast, we highly recommend it for a deep dive into all aspects of the early childhood education and care landscape in the U.S.

ELLIS EARLY LEARNING

Opens in Jamaica Plain!

llis expanded its footprint
to serve children in Jamaica
Plain (JP) in September 2021.
The need for high-quality
early education seats in

Boston is high, and the need for racially and educationally equitable learning environments is even higher. Ellis helped fill this critical need by opening its new center, serving children from Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Roslindale, and Hyde Park. Not surprisingly, the center was completely full

within months of opening and also had a robust waitlist of families hoping to join the Ellis-JP community.

The new, completely renovated Ellis center at 555 Amory Street is 7,100 square feet and has six beautiful early childhood classrooms for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. It also has an indoor play space and an outdoor play yard.

Thanks to the support of generous corporations, foundations, and individuals,



YASKARA CRUZ, Ellis-JP Director, and LAUREN COOK

Ellis raised \$600,000 to make the expansion and renovation possible. If you haven't had an opportunity to visit, please do. Ellis-JP has already proved itself an asset to the neighborhood, and we'd love to show you why.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS OF Ellis Board of Directors 2022/2023



Sean Curran

Sean Curran is the Owner and Principal of Waterville Consulting, a public affairs and government relations firm based in Boston. Sean is an alumnus of Ellis Early Learning, having attended our preschool

program in the 1970s in its time known as Ellis Memorial. He served as Chairman of the Board for College Bound Dorchester and as the Chairman of the Deval Patrick Committee. Sean and his wife, Kelly, have three adult sons and live in Milton.



Debra McConnell

Debra McConnell is Senior Vice President of Global Communications of The TJX Companies. Her job involves communicating directly about TJX's financial matters, press releases and

creating presentations for audiences ranging from retail clerks to shareholders. Deb is on the Board of Directors for the Wellesley Community Children's Center, a non-profit, and lives in Wellesley with her husband, Oriol, and two children.



Jim Geraghty

Jim is a Managing Director at Morgan Stanley, working with ultra-high-networth clients and their families. He is involved with many organizations that benefit disadvantaged youth throughout

Massachusetts and beyond. Jim is Chairman of the Board for the Robert F. Kennedy Community Alliance, a member of the executive committee for the Boston Police Athletic League (PAL), and a member of the executive committee for Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell. Jim lives in Newburyport and has 4 adult children.



Amy O'Leary

Amy O'Leary is Executive Director of Strategies for Children, an advocacy and policy organization that works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children to access high-

quality early education programs. She serves as an adjunct faculty member at Wheelock College in Boston, at Cambridge College, and at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester. Amy began her career in early education at Ellis as a preschool teacher and served as an Ellis program director for nearly 10 years.



Erin Hotaling

Erin Hotaling is a Tax Partner at Deloitte. Erin is an alumna of Bentley University, where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and a Master's Degree in Taxation. She lives in North Andover with

her husband, Dean, and twin children.



Christopher Shumate

Christopher Shumate is Senior Counsel for the Global Retail Markets at Liberty Mutual. Chris is a former Ellis parent and had served on Ellis's Board of Trustees. He has been the National ERG Co-Chair leading employees

of African descent and allies. Chris has three young children and lives in Milton with his wife. Jana.

<u> Brenda Barreto</u>



It's no surprise why Brenda Barreto has been at Ellis for 22 years. Ellis has shaped Brenda's professional and personal life and has led her on a path of success that she never dreamed possible.

Brenda arrived in Boston from Puerto Rico in 2000 with two young children, no English, and nowhere to live. Just one music course away from her Bachelor's degree at home, Brenda left a house and a well-paying job for a new start in her personal life.

"I lived in a shelter when I arrived in Boston, and after a while, I was discouraged and ready to go back home," Brenda says. But her former boss talked her out of that. He said he'd hire her back, but he encouraged her to stay. "You're a winner," he told Brenda. "Everything you do from here is about winning."

In the shelter, Brenda connected with a social worker who guided her path, helped her get English instruction, and put her into a program, Project 90, designed to help people integrate into society. Project 90 placed Brenda at Ellis in an internship.

"I couldn't speak well, but I was very observant," Brenda says. "I paid close attention to detail and was fast and efficient." She also loved the children, and the parents saw how their children bonded with Brenda. Brenda now says, "I didn't choose Ellis. In a mysterious way, Ellis chose me and has supported me every step of the way."

Her job at Ellis got Brenda out of the shelter and onto her career path, but tragedy struck in 2009 when her apartment burned down, and she lost everything. With a husband, two children, and a new baby, Brenda struggled to find a new apartment. Leo Delaney, the previous Ellis CEO, gave her as much time as she needed. "I can't believe how Ellis gave me so much flexible time and continued to pay me," Brenda marvels. Parents and staff also helped by donating the furniture, housewares, and clothing her family needed to make a new start.

Ellis supported Brenda because Ellis and Brenda were an ideal match. She had studied early childhood education in Puerto Rico,



Brenda and her husband, Andre, in front of their new house

and preschool was her passion. "I love seeing all the changes at this age," she says, "where children are building their character and identity and creating who they are going to be in the future."

And so, over the years, Brenda held most teaching roles as her career developed, and she became Assistant Vice President of Programs in 2020. Brenda thrives on change and on the Ellis mission to innovate and improve. "Every year, every child, every family is different," Brenda says. She adds, "I thrive on change, and it's uplifting to experience the improvements we've made."

Now Ellis has helped make possible another dream: Brenda and her husband have bought a house in Taunton. Brenda credits Lauren Cook, the Ellis CEO. "Lauren is always fighting for teachers' salaries and bonuses. She knows we don't get the pay the job deserves, but my new salary made it possible for me to buy my dream house."

Lauren credits Brenda. "Brenda represents the best of Ellis. Her commitment to our mission and dedication to our families, always unwavering, has reached new depths with her considerable daily commute from Taunton. Brenda uplifts everyone around her and makes Ellis even better. There's nothing not to love about Brenda."

For her part, Brenda looks back over her decades at Ellis and says, "My commitment and appreciation are so deep. I need to give back a little of what I've been receiving for years."







Ellis Provided a Family Lifeline Nelson Family



Ellis was more than a childcare center for Jill Nelson's children, Eli and Ella – it brought joy, gave support, and provided a sense of belonging and a happy routine in a tumultuous time.

Jill had been a full-time, at-home mom until domestic violence turned her world upside down. The Department of Children and Families

(DCF) stepped in to help. "DCF set me up with Ellis and got me the help I needed to raise my kids," Jill says.

Jill worried that Eli (age 3) and Ella (14 months) would have trouble adapting to a group setting after being home with her. But they loved Ellis from the start. "Every day, they came home with so much to say. And the teachers were so loving that it felt more like a family than a school," Jill says.

Ellis also supported Jill. From her first tour, Jill felt welcomed, respected, and supported. "Ellis has a total commitment to treating everyone the same. I don't think I came across as someone in a fragile moment, and I never felt different or awkward talking with other families."

Jill grew up in an affluent suburb of Chicago. "I didn't encounter diversity until college, and I'm so glad that my kids had this experience early in life," she says. Now back in Chicago near family and friends, Jill, Eli, and Ella miss Ellis so much. "We talk about Ellis all the time. Leaving Ellis was the hardest part of our move!"

Ellis Was Worth the Wait Forbes Family

For Ally Forbes, getting her son London into Ellis was a two-year wait but well worth her patience. "Ellis is so great that families don't leave unless they have to," Ally says. But once London started at age four, Ally had an easier time with her next two kids. Logan started at 11 months and Paris at three and a half months.



Ally values the commitment of everyone at Ellis to put the kids first. "For me, the hands-on is special. Everyone is in the classroom taking care of the kids. When needed, staff people leave their offices to take care of babies." This commitment has earned Ally's trust. "I never have any worries when I drop off my kids because I know everyone will always do what needs to be done," she says.

Ally also values her kids' attachments with their favorite teachers, and wondered how they'd adapt when moving to new classrooms with new teachers. "I didn't need to worry," Ally says. "All the teachers are amazing, and the kids quickly find new favorite teachers."

Ally's children have also formed lasting friendships. Logan and Milo have been best friends from the start, and Paris and Parker since they met in the infant room. These pairs of friends are making their way through Ellis together.

Ellis supports Ally too. She has a network of parents who stay in touch, pass on anecdotes about each other's kids, and plan play dates. "Ellis is a great family-like organization for all of us," Ally says.

THE END OF AN ERA

June 2022 marked a significant milestone in Ellis's history. After thoughtful and thorough consideration and analysis, the Ellis Board of Directors made the difficult decision to close its School Age Program.

Inspired to serve the South End's children who needed additional support, our founder, Ida B. Eldredge opened Ellis in 1885. Ellis has honored her legacy through over a century of comprehensive programming for children during after-school hours and school and summer vacations.

Beloved by countless families over the years and led by terrific youth development workers, Ellis is proud of the impact its School Age Program has made.

The Ellis family support team worked closely with each of our 25 School Age Program families to ensure they were able to identify and access alternative care options that met their needs. Fortunately, nearly all of Boston Public Schools provide after-school programming, and our South End and surrounding community is rich with additional resources.

Several factors led to Ellis's decision to focus its mission on early childhood education, the most



Some of our School Age Program friends pose on their last day at Ellis, flanked by longtime staff member and School Age Program fixture, Maurice Hallett, standing at left.

prominent being a steady decline in the demand for afterschool programs outside school buildings, and a dramatic and steadily increasing need for high-quality early childhood education in the city.

Ellis is proud to build on our history of serving Boston's children by providing the very best early childhood education with a focus on equity and diversity in all forms, and reflects gratefully on serving generations of school age friends.

Beloved by countless families over the years and led by terrific youth development workers

Partners in OUR WORK

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATIONS

\$100.000+

The Baupost Group Charitable Fund Wellington Management Foundation

PNC Bank The T1X Foundation, Inc. United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

Natixis Investment Managers

\$25,000+

Franklin Square House Foundation Liberty Mutual Foundation McCall & Almy PwC

\$10.000+

Aberdeen Standard Investments Dean Foundation for Little Children Foundation M Kimco Realty Kirkland & Ellis LLP PURE Insurance Foundation

\$5.000+

Bain Capital Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Brookline Bank

Bushrod H. Campbell and

Adah F. Hall Charity Fund

Delta Dental

Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation

Gibson Sotheby's International Realty

Hingham Institution for Savings

Mass General Brigham

New Boston Ventures

Olivia's Organics

Ropes & Gray LLC

Social Equity Access Fund

Stewart Title Guaranty Company

\$1.000+

Amica Companies Foundation ART Engineering Corporation Bluestone Bank Mansfield Division Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation CareQuest Cruz Development **DHK Architects** Highland Street Foundation Paradigm Properties LLC

The Mount Vernon Company, Inc. Trinity Financial

Tull Charitable Foundation

The Hamilton Company

PUBLIC FUNDING

Boston Public Schools

State Street Corporation

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

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

SUPPORTER \$10,000+

Reuben and Christine Ackerman Kathy Betts and Chip Lewis Coleen and Ted Dinneen Suzanne Dwyer David and Wendy Giunta Molly and Colin Gorman Elizabeth Hurley Judith and John Remondi Mark and Etta Rosen Kim Sinatra Beverly Daniel Tatum and Travis Tatum Will and Erin Tetler

FRIEND \$5,000+

1im Alexander and Tom Stocker Warren and Renee Besser loe and Nancy Craven Thomas and Shari Dicker Kristen and Benjamin Farmer Catherine and Keith Farrow Martin Hall and Sarita Uribe Daryl Hanna and Shannon **Řeilly Hanna** Larry and Dianne Hughes Kate and Tom Kush Christine and David Letts Tom and Donna May Carreau and Jonathan Ryder

Kristen and Derek Vicino

NEIGHBOR \$1,000+ Naomi Aberly and Larry Lebowitz Benedicta Acosta Ann Beach and Peter McManus Heather Blier Graham Brewster Chip and Janine Broadhurst Brenna Callahan Lvnda Cove Lauren and Andrew Cook Abhijeet Dalvi Meghan and Peter Dichiara Fernando and Charlene Domenech Amy Donovan James Doyle Beth Edwards Harris lames Ellis Susan Furtado Daniel and Iill Garrison Mark and Natalie Gauthier Paula Gilligan Chuck and Leslie Gordon Stacy and Brad Greene Gail Hanson and Richard Graebner **Emily and Tim Hughes** Donna Housman Peter Hurtgen

Thomas lovce

Stephen and Jill Karp

Patricia and Matthew Keenan Emily and Brian Kolle

Ben Krass and Mary Holper

Margit Liander and Jose Luengo

Shenkiat Lim and Cynthia Schoettler

Michael Kearney

Joseph Labresh

Elizabeth and Keith Morgan Maureen O'Neill Abby Paul and Dan Lynch Morgen Peck and Morgan Lackenbauer Kathryn and Max Pinto Steven Pomper and Blair Hewes Norin and Fahim Razzaque Karen Price Gena Rhee Marilvn Rosh Kristen Sands and Michael Capasso John Sanford Laura and Tom Schumacher William Slimbaugh Molly and Noah Stapleton John Jr. and Emilie Schleer R. Michael and Susan Scott Chris and Jana Shumate Beatriz Pina Smith Charles Stefanini Lisa Sunwoo and Andrew Schneller Brian and Lindsey Swett Bill and Susie Taylor Karen Tucker and Jerry Avorn Marta and Luc van Dam David Waldman and Marian Leitner Susannah and Andrew Wardly Erika Wilkinson and Andrew Lynch

Cynthia Lyons

Liana Magner

Jaime Marshall

Mark Mason

Judith Moore

Ian and Teri Macduff

George Marootian

Christopher Moore

BALANCE SHEET: JUNE 30, 2022

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,385,104
Restricted cash – Endowment	\$ 181,043
Accounts and pledges receivable	\$ 1,322,046
Prepaid expenses	\$ 31,619
Property and equipment - net	\$ 10,724,572

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 14,644,384

LIABILITIES

Notes payable, current portion	\$	54,756
Accounts payable	\$	86,785
Accrued expenses	\$	98,483
Deposits	\$	56,152
Long Term Debt	\$	4,036,321
TOTAL LIABILITIES	Ś	4.332.497

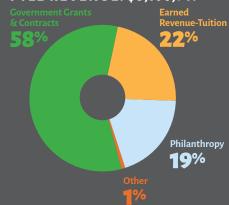
4,332,497

NET ASSETS

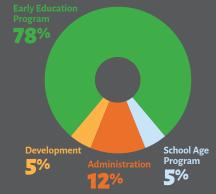
Without donor restrictions	\$ 9,705,844
With donor restrictions	\$ 606,043
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 10,311,887

TOTAL LIABILITIES, NET ASSETS \$ 14,644,384

FY22 REVENUE: \$8,106,749



FY22 EXPENSES: \$6,010,483



Our Team

AS OF JUNE 30, 2022

BOARD OF DIRECTOR

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Fernando Domenech, Jr., Vice C
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Carreau Ryder
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Brenda Barreto (20+ years)

Lauren Cook Yaskara Cruz Patricia D. Keenan Claire McNally Thomas Monks (20+ years) Tiffany Sheets (15+ years) Aiyauna Terry (15+ years) Liz Torres

ELLISTEA

Alexandria Anderson Amanda Beland Bohan Cao Louisa Campbell Shanisha Carr (5+ years) Cherish Casey Jeannie Chalek (10+ years) Jendriana Concepcion Eglise Corchado Rosa Cruz (5+ years) Jennifer Dasilva (10+ years) Surgebis Diaz (20+ years) Monica Dinis Juleann Diniz Gomes Colleen Donovan (5+ years) Natalie Dumart Shanika Edouard (5+ years) Tahnesha Ellis Sheila Foster Ladez Francis Aisha Gomes Nyna Gray-Hicks Loretta Greenaway Bercem Gulen Maurice Hallett (15+ years) Molly Herbert Georgia Hinds Tashalee Jackson (5+ years) Maysie-Sophie Jean-Louis Anna Leigh Jenkins Alevitssandra Jesus (5+ years) Aletssandra Jesus (5+ years) Yufang Jiang Gladys Jimenez Barboza Natalia Katz Carol Kitenge Nicole Krol

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Deborah Martins





ELL SEARLY LEARNING

Stephanie Li

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