Recently I was overseeing the Ready Freddy program in one of our York County School Districts when a parent came up to me to tell me how happy she was to be there and how thankful she was to be living in York County. I smiled and asked her if she could tell me more. After a 30 minute conversation about how she has never felt so at home anywhere and could not imagine raising her children anywhere else I gave her my card. I was amazed at her enthusiasm for her kids and our community. She called me the next morning to ask me what else was available for her children within the community.

I was profoundly proud to be able to explain to her all the different quality programs that are supporting young children right here in York County. Since that conversation her children have been enrolled in a United Way supported child care facility that was able to support her financial needs. Now, she’s received a promotion at her job since she has consistent quality care available.

Since starting in the role of FOCUS Director I have been humbled by the outpouring of community, business, and individual support for the FOCUS initiatives. I look forward to continuing to support early childhood stakeholders in our community as we advocate, in a collective voice, for quality opportunities for our youngest children.

Sincerely,

Sara Bradley,
FOCUS Director
In 2012 it became apparent that a new strategic plan was needed for the Focus On Our Future Program. Over seven months a team of York County early childhood stakeholders developed the revised direction for FOCUS.

FOCUS, formerly known as Focus On Our Future, was developed in 1994 in a collaborative effort between the United Way of York County, York County Community Foundation, Penn State York, and Child Care Consultants, Inc. Initially funded by grants from the Howard D. Heinz Endowments and Pew Charitable Trusts, FOCUS has grown into a program supported by businesses, foundations, community leaders, individuals, educational institutions, and state government. FOCUS wants all children to enter school ready to learn.

Through inclusion, collaboration, research, and integrity, FOCUS works to improve the lives of children in York County by supporting quality early childhood experiences.

As FOCUS continues to creatively move forward over the next three years with the new plan, strategic imperatives will be focused around accessible and affordable early childhood education for all, high quality programming, and demonstrating the value of high quality early childhood education.

FOCUS 2013 Strategic Planning Committee

Patrick Ball - President & CEO, CTY Consulting Group, LLC.
Harriet Darling, Ph.D. - Senior Instructor and Program Coordinator, Human Development and Family Studies, Penn State York
Jennifer Deardorff - Senior Program Director Youth & Family/Childcare, Hanover Area YMCA
Pamela Didusch - Stars Program Coordinator, South Central Regional Key
Brenda Gates, CHC - Facility Compliance & Privacy Officer, Memorial Hospital
Paula Gilbert - Director of Youth Services, York County Library System and Martin Library
Carrie Ann Frolio - Family First Health
Todd Kurl, RLH - Senior Project Landscape Architect, RGS Associates
Ellie Lamison - Manager, Workforce Development, York County Economic Alliance
Randi B. Payne, Ed.D. - Principal, Northeastern School District
Catherine Repman, M.Ed. - Executive Director, York Day Nursery
Barbara H. Snare - Principal, Central York School District
Carolyn E. Steinhauser - Consultant, York County Community Foundation
Lisa A. Woods, M.S., CHAM - Quality & Education Coordinator, WellSpan Health, Access Operations
Robert J Woods - Executive Director, United Way of York County
Sue Yohe, M.Ed. - Director, Early Head Start/Head Start of York County

THANK YOU!
FOCUS, 2013 Annual Report

Reach and Risk...Early Childhood Education in York County

Thank You To Our Sponsors...

Thank You... 

This year could not have happened as successfully, were it not for the time, energy, and resources of the York County Early Learning Investment Commission, businesses, service clubs, and individuals dedicated to the lifelong success of our youngest children.

**Early Learning Investment Commission Members:**
- Darrell Auterson, President & CEO, York County Economic Alliance
- Bruce Bartels, President, WellSpan Health
- J. Robert Baum, Chairman, Highmark, Inc.
- Peter Brubaker, President, Hammer Creek Enterprises, LLC
- Anthony Campisi, President & CEO, Glatfelter Insurance Group
- Tom Dempsey, Jr., Former President & CEO, Utz Quality Foods, Inc.
- Michael Smeltzer, Executive Director, Manufacturers' Association of South Central PA

**York County Children under five years old living in economically at-risk households:**
- 2009-2010: 54%
- 2010-2011: 57.80%
- 2011-2012: 56.50%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YORK COUNTY</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>York County Children receiving Child Care Works:</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County children enrolled in state funded Head Start:</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County three and four year olds being served by Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs:</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 3rd graders in York County school districts scoring below proficient on 2007 PSSA in reading:</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County Children being served in Keystone STARS programs:</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
<td>13.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County families participating in the Nurse Family Partnership program:</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County children from birth to five years old receiving Early Intervention services:</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank You To Our Sponsors...

PNC Grow Up Great, Rehmyer Trust, York County Community Foundation, York Area Association for the Education of Young Children, Kiwanis Club of Dillsburg, York Water Company, Pete and Meg Brubaker, Jeff and Ginger Finlayson

*York Water Company C.O.O., J.T. Hand, presents a check to Sara Bradley for EITC Scholarships*
**Earned Income Tax Credit Program**

In order to support families with the high cost traditionally associated with quality child care and preschool programs, the United Way of York County has become a Pre-K scholarship organization and is accepting contributions from businesses which will specifically go towards scholarships for pre-kindergarten students into high quality programs. The United Way has partnered with early learning centers in York County which are eligible to accept the scholarship dollars (see the list of approved centers below). For further information and to find out if your family qualifies for assistance in providing high quality opportunities for your child, please contact Sara Bradley, FOCUS Director at (717) 771-3808.

**Approved Early Learning Centers**

The following early learning centers are eligible to accept the scholarship dollars:

- TLC Montessori; Dallastown Area School District
- Tracie England; Dallastown Area School District
- Crispus Attucks Early Learning Center; York City School District
- Brenda F. Clinton; Eastern School District
- Bethany Christian Learning Center; York Suburban School District
- KinderCare # 301025; York Suburban School District
- Jennifer H. Doll; York Suburban School District
- The Early Learning Center; Central York School District
- Stillmeadow Nazarene Child Care Center; Central York School District
- Delta Christian Academy and Child Development Center; South Eastern School District
- Kidsville Junction and Preschool; South Eastern School District
- Otterbein Early Education Center; Northeastern School District
- Kids First Daycare, West York School District
- Creative Kids Daycare, Dover Area School District

**What makes the United Way Pre-K Scholarship Organization unique?**

The United Way has made a commitment to reinvest the 20% allowable administrative costs into education and advancement of teachers through higher education systems located in York County. This means that 100% of your charitable tax donation to the United Way of York County’s EITC program will directly benefit educational advancements.

**Bridge Scholarship Program**

**What It Is and Why It’s Needed**

In the 2011-12 Pennsylvania State Budget, a critical tuition assistance program known as TEACH (Teacher Education and Compensation Help) was eliminated, which resulted in approximately 100 early childhood professionals unable to continue with their higher education courses in York County. The budget cuts brought the number of centers achieving high quality status to a standstill, while creating a loss of quality educators working within the early childhood field. To help answer this need, York’s Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC) and the United Way of York County have established the Bridge Scholarship Program to provide tuition assistance and additional resources to early childhood professionals.

Working directly with the PA Key Tuition Reimbursement Voucher, the intent is to once again make education available and affordable for early childhood professionals. The Bridge Scholarship will work with the PA Key Tuition Reimbursement Voucher at Pennsylvania State University York Campus, York College of Pennsylvania, and Harrisburg Area Community College to put early childhood education professionals back on track towards achieving their higher education goals.

Funds donated into the Bridge Scholarship Program will be held in trust by the United Way of York County in a separate account. Early childhood educators may apply for the funds to help offset expenses not covered by the PA Key Tuition Reimbursement Voucher. Resources will be used to fund the child development associate, school age credential, directors credential, associate’s degree, and bachelor’s degree at the above-mentioned institutions.
“Ready Freddy” Kindergarten Preparation

FOCUS, an early childhood initiative of the United Way of York County, works to ensure that all children who enter school are ready to learn. It does this through supporting the York County community’s early learning centers, family providers, school districts, and stakeholders, in providing quality early childhood experiences for all children. This collaboration has resulted in the development of county-wide resources, shared curriculum and professional development sessions. One of the collaborative programs, is the Ready Freddy Program. The United Way has successfully been running the Ready Freddy Program in York County since 2009. Parental response to the program is overwhelmingly positive and the program has been delivered in the majority of school districts in York County. Specifically the program has been implemented in the York City, Northeastern, Southeastern, Southwestern, Hanover, York Suburban, West York, Dover, Eastern, Spring Grove, Northern and Red Lion school districts as well as York Academy.

The program is led by an early childhood educator and a kindergarten teacher. The parents and children spend part of the time together on activities and listening to a story. Then the parents spend time away from the children with the kindergarten teacher discussing the theme and learning ways to support their child’s development and readiness for kindergarten. The children work with the early childhood educator on educational activities and learning to get along with their peers. For example, the session on literacy emphasizes that helping children prepare for reading and writing involves more than teaching them the alphabet. Children need a good vocabulary and lots of exposure to the world around them and how things work.

Parents learn about the range of skills that help children learn to read and write and awareness about how to build a foundation for reading and writing in multiple ways. One of the activities for the session is that children tell stories to their parents. The parents practice using open ended questions to draw out more details. The kindergarten and early childhood teachers model this technique. At the end of each session, the teachers read a book to the families and the families are given a copy of the book to take home.

The Ready Freddy curriculum was developed by Kevin Smith-Lystico at the Office of Child Development at the University of Pittsburgh. The following themes were addressed:

- Children’s Strengths and Needs
- Setting and Achieving Goals
- Literacy Skills
- Numeracy Skills
- Social-emotional Skills
- Helping Your Child Learn

A child needs to be “on-track” in all of these areas in order to be successful in kindergarten. Unfortunately, not all families have the skills and/or resources to help their child succeed. Kindergarten teachers reported that many children across York County enter school without experiences with books and reading. Others are not exposed to simple math concepts. Far too many do not have the social skills required to appropriately participate in a classroom setting. These children not at risk of being left behind, they are starting school behind and they rarely catch up.
100 Book Challenge

Supported by PNC, the Early Literacy 100 Book Challenge had an extremely successful year and was able to expand to serve the YMCA in Hanover. The pre-literacy program encourages families to read to their children every day, which research tells us is the best way to prepare them for success in school. The programs that participated include the Crispus Attucks Early Learning Center, Even Start, Hanover Area YMCA, York Day Nursery, YMCA of York, and York YWCA.

The York Revolution also partnered with the United Way to provide an Early Literacy 100 Book Challenge Game Day and special incentives that have allowed children to start the Revolution baseball games by yelling “play ball” at the beginning of the game.

Love2Learn

FOCUS’s Love 2 Learn event sponsored the York Area Association for the Education of Young Children was held again this February at the West Manchester Mall. Nine early learning centers, 21 community stakeholders, and over 500 people came together to celebrate and engage with York County’s youngest children.

Each early childhood program showcased a learning center that accentuates why their programs are highly ranked in the state of Pennsylvania. Families were encouraged to interact together through art, science, math, blocks, and literacy. Center directors, teachers and community stakeholders were there to support engaging play and bring to life why these aspects of play are critically important to healthy growth and development.

Week of the Young Child (WOYC)

FOCUS is proud to have sponsored the York Area Association for the Education of Young Children’s (YAAEYC) Week of the Young Child Recognition Banquet. Approximately 250 people were there to celebrate the impact of high quality early childhood education on the children and families in York and Adams counties.

The Week of the Young Child focuses public attention on the needs of young children and their families. The event also recognizes the early childhood education programs and services that meet those needs. This year parents nominated 73 teachers for the Outstanding Provider Award which recognizes an individual teacher’s hard work and dedication to their child. FOCUS also awarded 3 teachers awards after a competitive grant process to implement special programs within their classroom or center.
Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania’s program to promote continuous quality improvement in early childhood education centers. STAR level corresponds to the staff employed by the center, the environment of the center and the way the facility is operated.

**STAR Level 1**
- Department of Public Welfare certificate of compliance
- “Getting to Know You” meeting or document offered to new parents
- Plan in place to increase Professional Development (PD) in early childhood care and education
- Parent handbook offered
- Site-safety and environmental checklist maintaining quality standards
- Plan in place to address safety and environmental needs
- Staff/parent communication
- Regular staff meetings

**STAR Level 2**
All criteria of Star Level 1 in addition to:
- Specific education requirements are met
- Increased PD hours
- One Pediatric First Aid certified staff per class
- Curriculum incorporates PA Early Learning Standards
- Operating budget in place
- At least one benefit offered to staff
- Personnel policy manual offered
- Monthly staff meetings
- Daily communications with parents
- Child observation shared with parents within 45 days of enrollment
- Self-assessment of program according to Environmental Rating Scale (ERS)

**STAR Level 3**
All criteria of Star Levels 1 & 2 in addition to:
- Director obtained PA Director Credentials
- All staff certified in Pediatric First Aid
- Increased compensation and at least 3 benefits offered to staff
- Teachers are observed and receive written evaluations
- Child observation shared with parents at least three times a year
- Individual plans made for children
- ERS assessment completed by a professional, indicating a minimal quality score

**STAR Level 4**
All criteria of Star Levels 1, 2, & 3 in addition to:
- Assessment tools aligned with PA Early Learning Standards
- Increased compensation and at least 4 benefits offered to staff
- Business plan, strategic plan and financial review by a CPA are in place
- ERS assessment completed by a professional, indicating a high quality score

**Star 3 & 4 Centers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Town</th>
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<tr>
<td>Christ Church Child Care Center</td>
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<td>Otterbein Early Education Center</td>
<td>Mt Wolf</td>
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<td>Otterbein Early Education Center - SACC</td>
<td>Mt. Wolf</td>
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<td>Stillmeadow Nazarene Child Care Center</td>
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<td>Crispus Attucks Early Learning Center PKC</td>
<td>York</td>
<td>STAR 4-A</td>
<td>The Early Learning Center</td>
<td>York</td>
<td>STAR 4</td>
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<td>Delta Christian Academy &amp; CDC</td>
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<td>TLC Montessori</td>
<td>York</td>
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<td>Valley View Elementary</td>
<td>York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Shepherd Day Care</td>
<td>Glen Rock</td>
<td>STAR 4</td>
<td>York Day Nursery, Inc. PKC</td>
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<td>Hanover Area YMCA Child Care LC</td>
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<td>STAR 4-A</td>
<td>York Jewish Community Center PKC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids First Daycare, Inc.</td>
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<td>STAR 3</td>
<td>Yorkshire Elementary</td>
<td>York</td>
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<td>Kidsville Junction Childcare &amp; Preschool</td>
<td>Stewartstown</td>
<td>STARS 3</td>
<td>YWCA of Hanover Day Care</td>
<td>Hanover</td>
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<td>Kindercare Learning Center (1283)</td>
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<td>YWCA of York Day Care Center PKC</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Creation Station Child Care Center</td>
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<td>STAR 3</td>
<td>YWCA Spring Ford Middle School</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>STAR 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Partners

Better Kid Care  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of York & Adams Counties  
Bricks 4 Kids  
Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute  
Child Care Consultants, Inc.  
Community Progress Council  
Early Childhood Education Programs  
Early Intervention  
EvenStart  
Family Child Resources  
Family First Health  
Fight Crime: Invest In Kids  
Hanover Hospital Family Child Home Program  
Harrisburg Area Community College  
Head Start of York County  
Healthy York County Coalition  
Kiwanis Club of Dillsburg  
Keystone STARS  
Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12  
Martin Library  
Members 1st Federal Credit Union  
Memorial Hospital  
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

FOCUS, 2013 Annual Report

Nurse Family Partnership  
PA Key  
PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning  
Penn State York  
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts  
PNC Grow Up Great  
RAYAC  
Ryan Bridge “The Bug Man”  
South Central Reading Council  
Safe Kids  
WellSpan Health  
York Area Association for the Education of Young Children (YAAEYC)  
York City Bureau of Health  
York City Police Department  
York College of Pennsylvania  
York County Children, Youth and Families  
York County Community Foundation  
York County Home-Based Providers Network  
York County Safe Kids  
York County School Districts  
York County Truancy Prevention Initiative  
York Revolution