

In 2019, Peter approached Interfaith Neighbors with an idea: to bring quality, affordable childcare and education to the youngest minds of the community Interfaith Neighbors serves. He credits this idea largely to visiting Dallas, Texas and meeting Marian Wright Edelman, a civil rights and child rights activist who influenced Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“She said something that struck a chord in me: that by the time many children from underserved communities reach kindergarten, they’re already behind educationally, and by the time they reach third grade, teachers could already predict whether some students would graduate high school” Peter explained.

Edelman’s words made him realize how important early childhood education and development is to getting children on the right track for a successful life. And who better to embark on the journey than Interfaith Neighbors? Four years from Peter’s first suggestion, Interfaith Neighbors and the Dr. Lorenzo Harris Jr. ECLC are off to an amazing start.

Peter’s company, Jersey Mike’s Subs, is generously donating to numerous organizations across the nation, with national fundraising efforts raising astonishing dollar amounts for organizations such as Feeding America and the Special Olympics USA Games.

However, Peter continues to stress how important it is to give back to your local community and to start the work at home.

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“My hope is that this giving will spread. That people will hear about what we’re doing with the ECLC and that local businesses and others in the community will get involved and give back. This is how we can move forward and give the kids in our community the tools to have the brightest futures possible.” Interfaith Neighbors couldn’t have said it better, Peter!

Have You Considered a Qualified Charitable Distribution?

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) involves selling shares from a mutual fund or an IRA to donate the proceeds of sale to a qualified charity.

QCDs can be from your IRA once you are at least 70 1/2 or older.

Benefits of taking a QCD from your IRA:

- You may be able to avoid taxes on otherwise taxable distributions if drawing from IRA
- QCDs are not subject to federal income taxes
- Your annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) can be satisfied by donating to a charity

Consider asking your financial advisor about making a QCD to Interfaith Neighbors!



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Interfaith Neighbors

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

September 2024

Back to School Edition



Dr. Lorenzo Harris Jr. Early Childhood Learning Center

Interfaith Neighbors’ Early Childhood Learning Center [ECLC] embarks on its second year of providing quality, affordable childcare and education this September. With the children growing up and new families coming in, the ECLC enrollment will be increasing to 28 children in September and adding a new 4 years+ class. This expansion will bring the staff to 10 teachers and enable the school to serve 35 students in 2025.

Ashley Fabien, the ECLC Director, described the goal when first opening as, “bringing the village back to the families by identifying their needs and connecting them to resources to meet those needs.”

She smiled and exclaimed she thinks they’re succeeding, having already acquainted families with numerous community resources. Some of these include WIC, Childcare Resources of NJ, and the ECLC’s own Parenting Power which explores various parenting subjects and invites professionals to share their knowledge.

Representatives from Bank of America and

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Look how much they've grown!



Before

September 2023



After

August 2024

Hackensack Meridian Pediatrics have come to speak about family budgeting and child health.

Interfaith Neighbors' Community Food Connection has also partnered with the ECLC to bring a free Farmers Market to the school every Tuesday with local, healthy produce.

In the classroom, the teachers have a primary focus on language development and math. Ashley explained the children practice language verbally, use gestures, and sign language to further communication development. Each teacher is professionally trained in the Wilson's Foundations Program, which instructs how to properly communicate with children and teach them to read. The children explore math naturally through interaction and practice oral counting, spatial awareness, and measurement concepts during various activities. These fundamental language and math skills will help the ECLC kids to be right on track when they graduate and enroll in kindergarten, one of the predominant goals of the Center.

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However, these children have had no shortage of fun! Summer was filled with "sensory activities" of all kinds, including exploring the splash park, painting, sandbox play, and more! Walkable field trips to community events occur weekly, and allow the children to get outside and engage with the world.

With 10 new families entering the ECLC, the staff and Interfaith Neighbors are excited to expand on bringing the village back to the families and prepare these children for their bright futures!

Blossoming at the ECLC: Meet Kimberly

The Dr. Lorenzo Harris Jr. Early Childhood Learning Center was a breath of fresh air for Victoria Garcia-Lopez and her family. Victoria was looking for quality, affordable childcare for her daughter, Kimberly, so she could get back to work.

Kimberly started at the ECLC in September 2023 when she was just 9 months old.

"At first I felt sad dropping her off. It was my first time going back to work since I had her. But it soon became Kimberly's favorite part of the day" Victoria explained. Kimberly was not speaking when she started at the ECLC, but Victoria credits her strides in language to spending time learning with the teachers and communicating with the other children.

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Kimberly, 21 Months

The ECLC is conveniently located close to Victoria's job at a factory in Bradley Beach. Location and the flexible pick up hours, which give parents the opportunity to work additional hours, were two advantages of the ECLC that helped her and Kimberly's father, Gabino, decide to enroll their daughter.

But Victoria also stressed the school is a safe and comfortable environment for her daughter that's given her the confidence to open up.

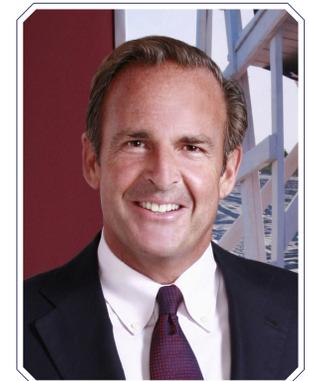
"Now when I pick her up, she doesn't want to leave! She loves learning and playing with the other children" Victoria described. "The ECLC is unique because the teachers are tailoring their education and care specifically for each child" she continued.

With the second ECLC school year starting, Kimberly and her parents are excited to embark on another year of learning, care, growing, and peace of mind.

Donor Spotlight: Peter Cancro

Founder and CEO, Jersey Mike's Subs

Peter Cancro was introduced to Interfaith Neighbors and Joe Marmora in 1992. Since then, he has been a strong supporter of Interfaith's mission to build healthier, more equitable communities.



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