



# THE BUMBLEBEE

The latest buzz from Growing Futures Early Education Center



## JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

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## WE ARE OFFICIALLY NAEYC ACCREDITED!



We have really BIG NEWS to share! Growing Futures is proud to announce that we have earned National NAEYC ACCREDITATION by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children.

NAEYC Accreditation is a rigorous and transformative quality-improvement system that uses a set of 10 research-based standards to collaborate with early education programs to recognize and drive quality-improvement in high-quality early learning environments.

"We are proud to have earned the mark of quality from NAEYC, and to be recognized for our commitment to reaching the highest professional standards," said Larry Lewis, Executive Director of Growing Futures.

To earn NAEYC Accreditation, Growing Futures went through an extensive self-study and quality-improvement process, followed by an on-site visit by NAEYC Assessors to verify and ensure that the program met each of the ten program standards, and hundreds of corresponding individual criteria.

NAEYC-accredited programs are always prepared for unannounced quality-assurance visits during their accreditation term, which lasts for five years. In the 30 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. More than 6,000 programs are currently accredited by NAEYC—less than 10 percent of all child care centers, preschools, and kindergartens nationally achieve this recognition.

"NAEYC-Accredited programs have committed to a process that takes time, energy and dedication to complete" states Alissa Mwenelupembe, Senior Director Early Learning Program Accreditation. "Growing Futures Early Education Center has demonstrated their commitment to young children and their families."



## Our Visit from Rep. Sharice Davids

In the early morning hours of March 8, Kansas Rep. Sharice Davids took a tour of Growing Futures and read the book, "Kindness is my Superpower" by Alicia Ortego to students enrolled at Growing Futures.

While she was waiting for the children to come join her in the school's small gymnasium for story time, Davids spent time reflecting on the importance of Growing Futures and the Head Start program.

"My mom went back to work like six weeks after having me. Being a single parent, it is places like these she sent me during that time," Davids said. "It is literally the way so many people are able to do their jobs."

## Open Enrollment

Enrolled families also have access to a variety of comprehensive support services, including health and nutrition services, onsite play therapy, parent education, mental health, medical and dental health, family support, social services and engagement opportunities. Our education programs are: Early Head Start Home-Based Early Head Start Center-Based Head Start Extended Day Head Start Wrap-Around Care These programs focus on developing a child's academic readiness with an emphasis on social and emotional development. In addition, we use the following teaching curriculums: Parents-As-Teachers HighScope's Tender Care and Early Learning HighScope Preschool Second Steps Conscious Discipline Early Childhood Hands On Science (ECHOS) While we have grown since our establishment in 1965 from serving 17 children to 223, we continue to offer a nurturing and warm environment that feels like family; a place where children can develop a lifelong passion for learning. If interested in learning more about enrollment, visit our [growingfutureseec.org](http://growingfutureseec.org) website and click on the "enrollment" tab.



## Volunteer Spotlight

This month's volunteer spotlight is on PNC! Volunteers from PNC hosted a hand-printing art project that will later be placed on permanent display on a wall at the Kauffman Center of Performing Arts. They have invited Growing Futures families who participated in this project to attend a Future Stages Festival on June 12. In addition, PNC hosted a virtual safari for our children and donated several iPads!





## Staff Professional Development Day

We had a great Professional Development Day with our team on May 27. Our field trip included a stop at Gould Evans Architect Firm, Earlystart, and the Blue Valley Hilltop Learning Center. Special thanks to the following businesses who helped make our day extra special: Agenda: USA, Best Regards Bakery & Popculture Gourmet Popcorn & Ice Cream.

Staff toured different early education centers and learned about different ways to utilize space and environments. Staff also heard from Kristy Baughman from United Community Services of Johnson County, as she discussed Health Equity in Johnson County and barriers that our families face. It was an educational experience for all.

## Harvesting Hope 2022

As the days get shorter and the leaves start to change, Growing Futures will invite our community to come together and celebrate on Friday, October 7 from 4-8pm at Strang Hall's outdoor space in Downtown Overland Park. Our Harvesting Hope fundraiser will be a festive fall-themed experience that benefits the vulnerable children and families living in our community.

We will begin with live music from Flashback and a Sip & Shop Harvest Market comprised of over 20 diverse and local vendors. After shopping, guests will enjoy a delicious dinner from Strang Hall's scratch kitchen. Each guest will receive a meal voucher and drink tickets that can be redeemed at their outdoor bar. Tickets sell for \$75/each.

We will host a silent auction, a photo booth, pie roulette and our popular wine toss game. Growing Futures will conduct a short program that speaks to our rich history, programs offered and why the demand for our services continues to grow in Johnson County. Then, our attention will be redirected to our keynote speaker. Reach out to Jessica Hoffman if you are interested in a sponsorship at [jhoffman@growingfuturessec.org](mailto:jhoffman@growingfuturessec.org).



## Current Needs

This month, the organization could really use the community's support with the following:

- Diapers: Sizes 6 & 7
- Sensitive Diaper Wipes
- Diaper Cream
- Babyganics Sunscreen
- Pants & Shorts: Sizes 2-5T
- Painter's Tape
- Puffy Paint

