

2019-2020

# Annual Report



**Hilltop**  
CHILDREN'S CENTER





An unusual year called for bold action and adjustment to our way of engaging with families and institute participants. With your support in 2020, Hilltop was able to respond quickly and effectively to provide academic and social-emotional support, as well as advocacy for childcare in our country. We fought to ensure families could return to work, children could participate in school, and educators remained employed. Together, we transformed classroom environments, enrolled underserved populations, and opened a second location, helping families in our neighborhoods with childcare needs.

Read on to see how you helped make these changes possible.

### **Explore the Report**

- Statement from Executive Director
- Exceptional Experiences
- Diverse Community
- Exceptional Educators
- Effective Organization
- Celebrating 50 years of Service
- Financial Report
- Donors & Sponsors

**Thank you for your support and dedication to early childhood learning and professional development!**

# Statement from the Executive Director

Together with our Board of Directors and the faculty of Hilltop Children's Center and Educators Institute, I am delighted to present our Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

It was an amazing, yet challenging year for our organization and for me as the new Executive Director. I began my role in November 2019, just five months before the pandemic impacted everything. Things started with a pre-existing 5-year strategic plan on the fifth year of completion. Immediately, I was tasked with finding innovative ways of achieving our committed goals while maintaining Hilltop's core values of Learning in Relationship, Emergent Curriculum, Leadership in Community, and Organizational Integrity. The strategic plan was developed around four key strategic objectives:

Exceptional Experiences  
Outstanding Educators

Diverse Community  
Effective Organization

This report provides a summary of our many accomplishments in each of these areas throughout this past year and our commitment to the children, families, and institute participants. We are proud to be offering opportunities to all children, regardless of income or socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, family structure, or prior educational experiences.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who support young children and the work of our organization. This truly is a community effort, and we are proud to stand alongside you in this work.

With gratitude,



Darline Guerrero, Executive Director

## Our Mission:

Hilltop is transforming early childhood education through play, collaboration, and reflection: in our classrooms with children, partnerships with families, and professional development with educators.

## Our Vision:

Hilltop honors and trusts children, engages families, and inspires educators to create a more just and joyful world.

## Our Values:

### *Learning in Relationship*

We seek and cultivate a wide breadth of thought and ideas as the foundation for meaningful connections with and intentional commitments to each other, which promotes social responsibility, interest in the unfamiliar, and respect for nature.

### *Emergent Curriculum*

We evoke new perspective by noticing, inquiring about, and reflecting on moments of curiosity or passion and make that discovery visible through documentation and expressive media.

### *Leadership in Community*

We foster courageous leadership and serve as a model of innovative, reflective early childhood education practices.

### *Organizational Integrity*

We commit to transparent and responsible organizational practices that uphold our mission, sustain Hilltop, and bring playful joy to our work.

# Exceptional Experiences

It was the goal of our organization to preserve and improve programs for children and families through innovative offerings, enduring family engagement, and inspiring environments. As you can imagine, maintaining the status quo during a pandemic was nearly impossible. COVID-19 changed the way we engaged socially, separated physically, and maintained safety.



A temporary 6-foot barrier was erected on playground to create two play areas. Additional outdoor experiences were added to daily routines.



Community art studio and big body spaces were converted into additional classrooms. Age range of children expanded to serve children 1 year through 12 years of age.



Families remained outside during drop-off and pick up times. Family engagement events and developmental conferences offered virtually.



Cleaning and sanitation practices increased. Health screening of children and faculty occurred daily.



Traditional 3 educator/mentor teaching teams paused due to limited group sizes. Classroom schedules reduced to 8-hour schedules, mimicking educator hours.

# Diverse Community

Our strategic plan includes ways to advance diversity, social justice, and partnership within and outside Hilltop. Our fundraising, grant writing, and acceptance of subsidies has increased our financial support allowing us to expand our access to families regardless of their ability to pay. In April 2020, Hilltop opened its doors to essential workers and health care providers in need of care. Since then, we have added additional slots to diversify our community by enrolling children on city and state subsidies, providing more internal scholarships, and increasing our employee childcare benefit.



8%

Scholarships



1%

City/State Subsidies



12%

Employee Benefit



79%

Privately Paid

Hilltop's Educators Institute focused on healing, self-empowerment, and joy. Our training series was about transforming an educational system that still renders childcare as "2nd class citizens" and transforming/reimagining the educational experience to create new narratives on traditional, white-centered education. Although we thrive on relationships, reflective practice, and learning in community, like others, we embraced the world of Zoom and developed interactive online programming. This year, we also developed an internationally recognized podcast, "NapCast" which is hosted by two male educators of color working in early childhood education.



Community Interviews



Social Justice Podcasts



Virtual Trainings

# Outstanding Educators

The year 2019 was a milestone year for Hilltop as we maintained and hired exceptional educators. Pre-pandemic, over 65% of our staff had been at Hilltop for at least 5 years. Some even 10+ and one celebrating 25 years! Like many other businesses, COVID caused Hilltop to make difficult decisions about our employment options for our faculty. Throughout the early stages of the pandemic our enrollment decreased which impacted the number of educators we could employ. As we began to welcome back more families, faculty were given the option to return to the roles most in need. Not all chose to return, and so we welcomed many new educators to our organization. Saying good-bye to long-term members of our team came with grief, yet gratitude for the imprint they left in our community.

## Step Up Projects

Step Up is a tradition that started several years ago to enable staff to take initiative in building or modifying systems or enacting some positive change for the Hilltop community.

In 2019-2020 we had over 10 Step Up projects going, including:

- Library Love
- Food Committee
- Social Coordinators
- Field Trip Guide
- Provocation Binders
- Marker Recycling
- Bus Pass Research
- Staff/Buddy Partner System
- Documentation Club
- Inventory and Story Snapshots
- Conference Room Book Org

## External Professional Development

EPD is an opportunity for staff to attend a class, conference, workshop or visit a school to obtain additional skills/trainings not available at Hilltop.

In 2019-2020 we provided 12 opportunities, including:

- Gneufeld Institute
- NCCE Tech & Education Conference
- Mindfulness Courses
- Symposium on Young Citizens
- Day of Dialogue Event
- White Privilege Symposium
- Teacher Camp
- New Zealand Tour

Hilltop covers the expense of registration, materials, and travel.

## Communities of Practice

CofP is a program that started several years ago to enable staff to participate in presentations and publications for both the institute and the children's center.

In 2019-2020 we had several CofP projects available, including:

- Study Days
- In-Service
- Presentations for Events
- Coaching and Consulting
- Articles
- Blogs
- Podcast
- Ambassadors
- Observations

# Effective Organization

We constantly thrive to ensure the sustainability and stewardship of Hilltop's identity, operations, and resources. 2019-2020 was no different! Even when faced with the realization that our way of living needed to shift, Hilltop remains committed to finding creative ways of serving our community.



In April 2020, we opened our doors for emergency childcare for essential workers and low-income families.



Between April-June 2020, we provided academic and social-emotional online courses for families unable to attend our program in-person.



In July 2020, we welcomed ten new educators to our team that identify as people of color, growing our teaching team's diversity.

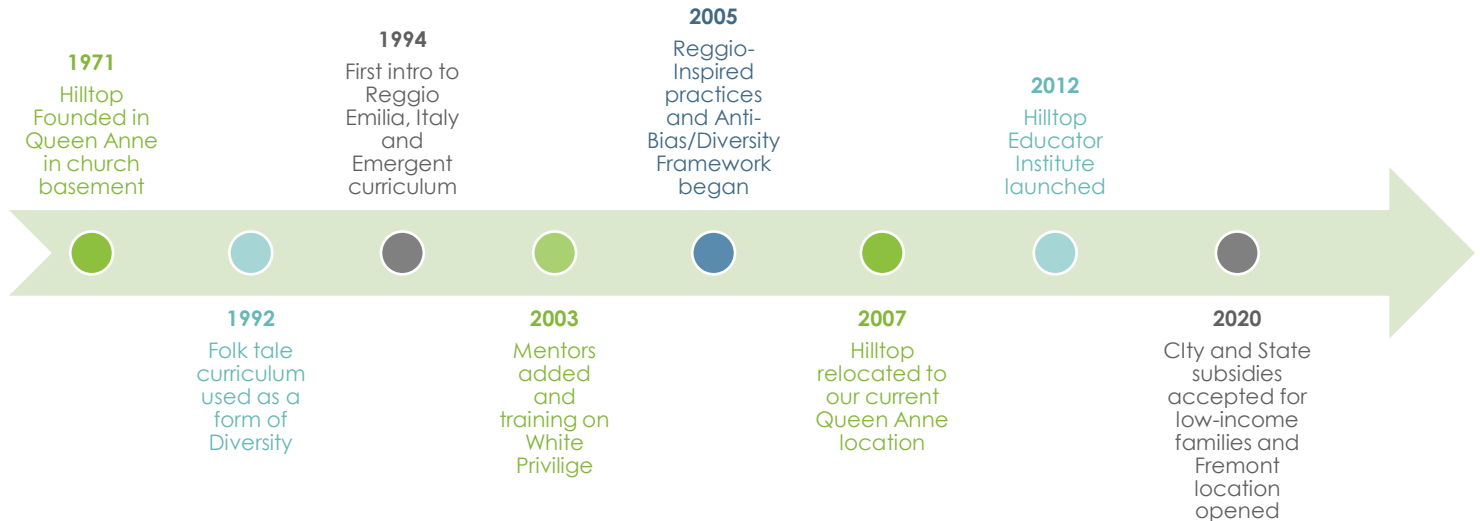


Between April-August 2020, we provided over \$57,000 in uncompensated care or free emergency care to families in need.



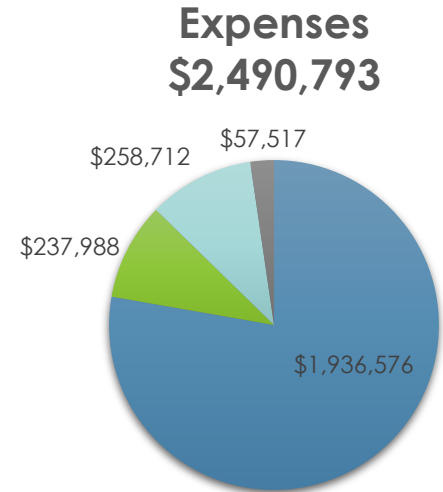
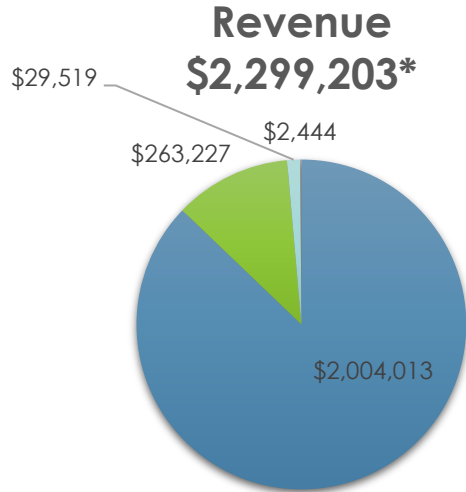
# Celebrating 50 Years of Service

In 2021, Hilltop Children's Center and Educator Institute celebrates a half-century of service and early childhood leadership! We hope that you — our alumni and friends — reflect on our shared legacy and feel the same pride and excitement that our current faculty and families have as they partner together in Building on the Wonders of Childhood.





# Financial Report



- Program Tuition
- Donations and Contributions
- Institute Revenue
- Other Revenue

- Salaries and Wages
- Program Expenses
- Occupancy Expenses
- Uncompensated Care

\*Hilltop received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan in 2020 not reflected in 2019-2020 financials

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We want to say 'thank you' to you and the Hilltop team for all the courage, resilience, and energy you bring to your work every day in caring for our children and the other families at Hilltop. This has been an extremely difficult year. Without your dedication, time, love, and commitment to this work, we would not have been able to return to work. We know our children are safe, happy, and in a protective early learning environment during this time of uncertainty. Thank you!

- A Hilltop Parent

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