

# Welcome to Learning Grove

Nuturing Lifelong Success



learning grove

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## We grow together

The roots of success thrive in an environment of trust and support.

We cultivate success by growing knowledge, capabilities, and confidence to allow children and families to flourish, now and into the future.

Together, we transform lives and help build brighter futures.

Together, we nurture lifelong success.

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www.learning-grove.org



# learning grove

Fall Newsletter | 2020 Edition



Dear Friends,

The pandemic has uncovered just how vital early childhood education and care is to the community and the economy; it's something you and I have known all along. We know education and care is essential for parents to support their families, and more importantly, it lays the foundation for all future learning. This is all the more important for low-income families and families of color that lack resources.

### While our physical doors closed, you enabled vital work to continue.

Critical care was provided to essential workers through two pandemic sites; while for others the pandemic melted away children's schedules and structure when early learning centers remained closed. Parents juggled the duties of work and childcare as well as struggled to make ends meet after unemployment. Support networks drastically shrunk, while responsibilities continued to grow.

While students mourned the loss of missed experiences and social connection, we transitioned to virtual and socially distanced learning.

Through it all, children, students, and families remained connected to vital resources and services.

### You have made all the difference.

You ensured that children maintained a connection between the classroom and home through virtual classrooms, personalized videos and educational resources. Teachers and parents teamed up to implement individualized learning for their children at home. Families facing economic hardship received essential food, hygiene items, and other support services.

Students received the tools and support to make sense of the pandemic and create a clear plan of action; empowering their decisions and helping them feel more confident about the future.

We nurture lifelong success in all that we do through the development of children and students' critical, creative and social and emotional thinking.

Thank you for being here, now and always.

In solidarity,

Shannon Starkey-Taylor

## River Cities Project Connects Students to Careers

NaviGo's River Cities Project led to numerous full time job offers for its 2020 graduates interested in logistics careers.

DHL offered eight students a full-time job, and five students accepted. 2020 Dayton HS graduate Collin Hollingsworth was one of them. "I felt like the co-op program at DHL was great. It was a wonderful way to get real-world job experience during school. I feel the program was successful in every way possible. I built bonds and friendships while getting an education and money in my pocket."

Jerson Bravo, a 2020 graduate of Newport HS co-oped at Wayfair. "I learned the value of hard work" said Bravo. "The people are what make it a comfortable place to work and I want to start a career in logistics and supply chain management." Bravo is now employed full-time with Wayfair.

DHL and Wayfair joined other logistics companies including Cengage, Verst Logistics, Kroger, Atlas Air, Legion Logistics and CVG for this program. All students are now Certified Logistics Associates (CLA).

Stephanie Layton of NaviGo stated, "Working with high-school students in preparing them for going on co-op is extremely rewarding. Monitoring their placements and hearing the amazing feedback from their worksite mentors, and from



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the students themselves, lets me know that we are on the right track in preparing young people for success, and in meeting the needs of local businesses by establishing talent pipelines within the high schools. The fact that all students were offered full-time employment once the co-ops ended just reiterates the need for this kind of collaboration, something that Northern Kentucky does very well indeed."

## New Partnership with Great Oaks Career Campuses to operate Early Learning Center

Opening in November, Learning Grove will operate the Early Learning Center on the Scarlet Oaks Career Campus, serving infants through preschoolers.

With the ever-growing need for early education teachers, we believe this program can be a model and recruitment tool for high school students interested in learning more about this vital field. Students in the Childhood Education Program will have the ability to observe and learn in the center as part of their school day.

Harry Snyder, President/CEO of Great Oaks Career Campuses said,

**"This new partnership with Learning Grove provides an important service for Great Oaks Career Campuses and the surrounding communities and gives our Early Childhood Education students additional experiential learning opportunities. It's a win for local families and business, and a win for our students."**

Visit [learning-grove.org](http://learning-grove.org) for enrollment information.



## Back to the Business of Shaping Young Minds

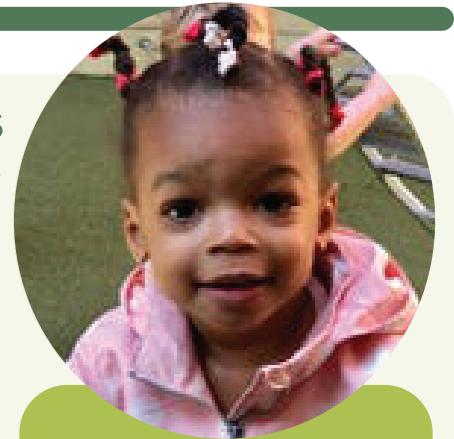
The pandemic created physical and emotional challenges for young children and their families throughout our early childhood education programs. Our teachers and staff have worked diligently to make sure our reopening is safe and welcoming both physically and emotionally.

Protocols were put in place to make reopening as safe as possible. This has included providing masks for staff and family members; screening the temperatures of staff, parents, children and any other visitors before allowing them to enter our buildings; monitoring children's temperatures twice daily; cleaning and sanitizing toys, surfaces, and common spaces between use; maintaining children and their teachers in the same space throughout the day; and limiting visitors to those considered absolutely necessary.

The health and safety of our children and families comes first at all times. What has also been critically important is our teachers' responsiveness to the unique emotional and developmental needs of young children. Due to the pandemic teachers are spending even more time listening to and observing children as they play out their feelings. Through this process, our teachers have created their own books and stories to help children work through current emotional stressors.

The emotional well-being of our children is critically important for their development. We continue to share our learnings with families and the community as we strive to prevent any negative effects the pandemic could have on children and their development.

Now and always, our commitment remains the same, to continue to stand side by side with our families, meet our children and families where they are every day - leading with empathy and dedication.



### Brief Timeline of Events

- March 2020:  
Programming forced to close by Ohio and Kentucky Governors
- March 2020:  
Two pandemic sites open to serve essential workers and their children
- June 2020:  
Early Learning Centers reopen with new health and safety protocols
- August 2020:  
Temporary kindergarten classrooms open to support virtual learning

## Nourishing Meals, a Partnership with Tikkun Farm

While COVID-19 certainly has brought many challenges to say the least, it has also brought new collaborative opportunities and partnerships for which we are truly grateful. One such opportunity is Nourishing Meals, a new partnership with Tikkun Farm, a 3.5 acre working farm located in the Mt. Healthy neighborhood in Cincinnati. As part of the program, Learning Grove families receive healthy crockpot meal kits, including fresh ingredients, a recipe card and a new crockpot in which to assemble and cook the meals on a weekly basis from Tikkun Farm. The goal of the program is to provide families the tools and ingredients to learn how to cook inexpensive meals that are healthy and delicious. Each crockpot meal serves between 4-10 individuals, depending on family size.

Launched in June 2020, 16 families have enrolled to-date. Recipes are accessible to English or Spanish speaking families and can easily be saved for later use. "The program has been well-received by all of the participating families to-date. Many of our families struggle to make healthy meals on a tight budget, often without access to fresh food. This program helps provide our families that access and the resources. An unanticipated benefit of the program

was provided soon after it was launched after two of our families tested positive for COVID and were quarantined for nearly 6 weeks. The program allowed us an additional avenue to provide extra support to these two families in need." shared April Mueller, Director, Family Outreach Program.

The program is open to families enrolled in our early learning programs or have children enrolled at Roberts Academy or Oyer School. Additional program partners include Community Learning Center Institute and Freestore Foodbank.



For more information, contact April Mueller at [amueller@learning-grove.org](mailto:amueller@learning-grove.org).