

January 19, 2019

Dear Supporter,

I'm writing today because we have received a challenge grant and I'm asking key donors to lead the way in helping us meet this challenge. If you can participate, your gift would be matched, dollar for dollar by an anonymous donor.

Your gift will be used to help cover staffing costs, and ensure that NMCS' teacher wages are fair and equitable.

Paying our teaching staff a fair and equitable wage means NMCS can continue to provide high quality childcare, and exceptional educational and enrichment opportunities to low-income families in Marin.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, or to schedule a tour of our Childhood Education Facility on Wilson Avenue in Novato. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Williams, Development Manager
415-892-1643, ext. 261

Board of Directors

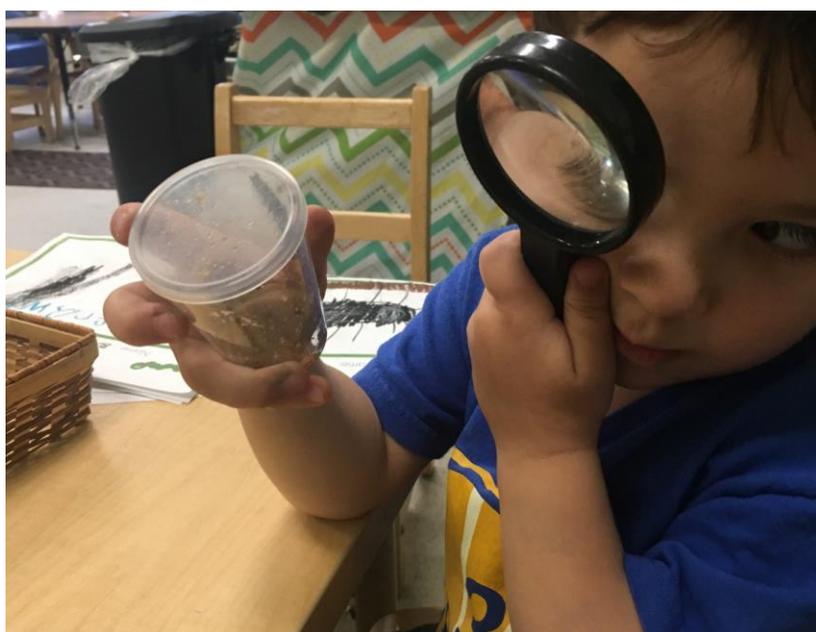
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Proposal for Equitable Wages for Teachers

North Marin Community Services (NMCS) is currently seeking \$25,000 in funding to meet a challenge grant. Funds used will support a much-needed critical wage increase for our twenty-nine full-time and part-time Child Development teachers and teaching assistants. NMCS is one of the largest licensed, subsidized childcare centers in Marin. We serve close to three hundred children, from infants to teen-agers, year round.

More than 66% of the children we serve are from low-income and very low-income families. NMCS provides reduced program fees and full scholarships to families that qualify, and are in need. Maintaining the number of spots for low-income families and providing clients access to care, regardless of income, is integral to our vision to build a strong community with opportunities for all.

Many families in our community struggle financially. Despite historic levels of prosperity, we are seeing widening inequality and increased poverty. Many parents in our community can't afford the high cost of childcare - or after school support. In fact, thirty-five percent of families living in Marin cannot afford basic living expenses¹.

Childcare is the second highest cost in the family home (next to housing) and is an essential safety net service that allows parents to work or continue their education. It is desperately needed in Novato where cost of living is high, income inequality is extreme, and the number of youth that receive free or reduced price lunches has increased by 83% over the past 10 years².

NMCS's Child Development Program gives working families the affordable childcare they need. It provides youth with enriched early care and extended learning opportunities, and paves the way for families in our community to succeed. A substantial body of research shows that investing in educational experiences significantly improves school achievement and a range of social and economic outcomes throughout life.

For example, research has shown that youth who attend afterschool programs regularly are less likely to drop out of school. The benefits spread into the community as well. For every \$1 spent on afterschool programs, between \$5 and \$7 is generated in public savings³.

NMCS's childcare and after school enrichment programs are at capacity. It is essential that we maintain our current staffing levels and provide fair and equitable wages to them. Fair and equitable wages translate to increased retention of trained and qualified NMCS staff - a key component to ensuring program quality.

While childcare educators are in demand throughout Marin, nonprofit childcare centers that provide state subsidized services (like NMCS) must work even harder to find and retain qualified staff. Our contract with the state does not cover the full cost of service (requiring us to fundraise to serve low-income families) and it requires our staff to receive additional training and education. This ensures a high-quality learning environment, but shrinks the number of available candidates.

¹Children Now

²Ed Data

³Children Now

Retention of our current teachers is critical, given demand for our services, teachers' expertise, and their current permits. NMCS will offer wages that are more equitable and closer to those at private and public childcare centers. A generous anonymous donor recently stepped forward with a \$25,000 matching grant to support the \$50,000 required to fill this need. The additional \$25,000 must be raised by June 30, 2019.

Our ability to retain and attract qualified educators directly affects our ability to provide subsidized childcare and after-school educational opportunities to families in need. Failure to keep pace with industry standards for teaching wages would put NMCS at risk of losing qualified staff, cause a reduction in services to the community, and have a negative effect on program quality.

We would like to ask you for a leadership level gift to support this key program area. Your gift will be amplified by the matching grant, and serve to inspire others' generosity. Paying teachers a fair and equitable wage is the right thing to do for teachers, and ensures program quality. It also enables access to care for the families in our community that truly need it.

Thank you for your consideration. Below you will find additional facts that support this need, and the impact of NMCS' Child Development Program in the community:

The Need for Affordable Childcare and Educational Programs for Youth in our Community

As a whole, Marin County leads the state in standards of health, wellness, education, and prosperity. However, such averages mask Marin's extreme income inequality and the very real struggles too many in Novato face today. As seen in the following data, whole swaths of our community engage in daily battles to achieve wellness and make ends meet.

Thirty-five percent of families living in Marin cannot afford basic living expenses⁴ and 58% of renters in Novato spend more than one-third of their income on rent⁵. High housing costs mean many low-income people do not have enough money left for food, childcare, and other fundamentals, and have great difficulty saving for a rainy day, leaving them vulnerable to upheaval when encountering even minor unexpected setbacks.

Affordable childcare is unavailable to 55% of children in Marin with working parents⁶. The lack of affordable childcare hits low-income families hardest and contributes to Marin's academic achievement gap in which, for example, 89% of White and 85% of Asian-American students in second grade meet grade level standards in math compared to 53% of Latino and 41% of African-American students⁷.

Additionally, only 11% of low-income youth in Marin have access to state funded afterschool programs⁸. Research has shown that youth who attend afterschool programs regularly are likely to show improvements in academic achievement and are less likely to drop out of school.

⁴ *Children Now*

⁵ *HealthyMarin.org*

⁶ *kidsdata.org*

⁷ *HealthyMarin.org*

⁸ *Children Now*

NMCS Child Development Program

Our Child Development Program serves approximately 300 children, ages six months to fourteen years old. Transportation to our facility on Wilson Avenue is provided for those in need. In addition, all children receive healthy, nutritious snacks and meals at NMCS. We believe nutrition plays a critical role in learning and development. Twenty-nine NMCS part-time and full-time teaching staff carry out the following activities for these children:

Early Care & Education: Provides children three months old to five-years-old with a safe and supportive, high quality learning environment that engages parents and enriches children's learning in language and literacy, math and science, and social-emotional and physical development.

Youth Enrichment: Engages children five years old through fourteen years old in before and after-school care and learning programs that strengthen foundational academic practices, socio-emotional skills, and increase motivation to be successful in school and beyond. Examples are individualized tutoring, test-preparation, fieldtrips, building the growth mindset, curriculum to increase socio-emotional skills and prevent bullying, and close communication with parents to identify other areas of need and support. NMCS' summer enrichment program includes daily English and Math building activities and exploration through engaging and memorable field trips.

NMCS Child Development Program Impact

NMCS actively measures program impact by administering evaluations throughout the year and by gathering qualitative and quantitative data. We employ the CA Dept. of Education's Desired Results Development Profile. Below are some program impact highlights:

Early Care & Education: Preschool students showed an increase in all eight of their developmental domains, which included Self-Regulation, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy Development, Cognition, Math and Science, Physical Development, Social Science, Visual and Performing Arts.

Youth Enrichment: 100% of parents agreed that their child is more successful in school because of the academic support provided in this program.

NMCS clients regularly express their sincere appreciation for our services, as NMCS enables them to maintain their jobs. Clients are also grateful for the food and transportation that NMCS provides – these are key supports to low and very low-income families.

Additionally, anecdotes like the following help illustrate a fuller picture:

A fourth grader who attends the Novato Youth Enrichment Program had been displaying a variety of challenging behaviors among her peers and teachers, including showing a lack of integrity, low self-esteem and suffering grades. Her behavior made it difficult for her to make friends, alienated most people around her, and made her difficult to trust. Through Second Step (a social-emotional evidence-based curriculum used weekly throughout the school year), her teacher focused on specific areas of the curriculum that she felt

would benefit the student. Some areas included: how to handle accusations, managing disappointment, managing hurt, identifying others' feelings, accepting differences, and showing compassion.

As she began to master these skills, her teacher incorporated giving her leadership roles and tasks. This is when she really began to flourish and shine. Throughout the transformation, fluid communication with the child's parent was essential to her success. It allowed everyone to be on the same page about what was working and what to reinforce. With consistency between our program and her home, the fourth grader grew more confident in herself, her ability to make friends became greater, and she can now easily own up to her own mistakes. She now walks with confidence and looks to find opportunities to help other students and her teachers!

NMCS Organization's History and Mission

North Marin Community Services (NMCS) evolved as a 501(c)(3) on January 1, 2018 through a merger between the Novato Youth Center and Novato Human Needs Center, two organizations that sprouted from grassroots, community efforts and have since been serving the community for 45 years. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (tax ID# 94-1735064). Our mission is to empower youth, adults and families in our diverse community to achieve well-being, growth and success.

Over 250 volunteers and 60 staff members work together to make our mission a reality. We are proud that half of our staff members are bilingual, enabling us to serve a culturally and socio-economically diverse mix of families in a manner that integrates and unites our community. Through our three programs areas of Child Development, Health and Wellness, and Family & Community Engagement, we work to build a strong community with opportunities for all.

Conclusion

We believe that investing in youth is a powerful way to positively affect our community now and for generations to come. NMCS' quality childcare and youth enrichment program helps children to grow, learn, and thrive. Please consider investing in our highly qualified teaching staff so that we can continue to serve vulnerable families in our community, and make a difference in their lives.

Thank you.