

**Helping Children and Families
Succeed-From Preschool Through Life**



Holy Cross Mission Statement: To provide comprehensive educational opportunities for eligible families and their children birth to five in collaboration with community partnerships in a safe, diverse environment.

Holy Cross Head Start is a school readiness and family development program- helping children and families succeed from preschool through life. Along with meeting the educational and socialization needs of pre-school children, Holy Cross Head Start provides support to families as they work to achieve their goals. Comprehensive services in the areas of health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities and social services are provided. In addition, Holy Cross Head Start strives to involve parents and other community members by offering a variety of enriching parent involvement

and volunteer opportunities.

Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. is one of the many Head Start pre-school programs serving children 3 and 4 years old and families throughout the country. Holy Cross is a literacy based program with certified teachers for each classroom, actively recruiting children with disabilities. A research based curriculum, bilingual staff, family style meal service, transportation options, along with a variety of different program options including part day, full day and Universal Pre-K are just a part of what makes Holy Cross

Head Start unique.

Holy Cross Head Start is a delegate agency of Community Action Organization of Erie County. Children who are or will be three and four years old, according to date of birth guidelines of the school district which the Head Start center serves, are welcome to apply to our high-quality program. Head Start is federally funded, with no cost to enrolled children.



Holy Cross provides services for 499 children ages 3-4 years old and families in Erie County, New York in the following areas:

Holy Cross Center
150 Maryland Street
Buffalo, NY 14201
716.852.8373

Northwest Center
155 Lawn Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14207
716.877.5022

Central Center
89 Military Road
Buffalo, NY 14207
716.875.1506

DeWitt Center
368 DeWitt Street
Buffalo, NY 14213
716.424.0571

Parkside Center
169 Sheridan Parkside Drive
Tonawanda, NY 14150
716.876.0100

North Buffalo Center
203 Sanders Road
Buffalo, NY 14216
716.464.7771

Service Options:

Holy Cross offers a range of program options to fit the needs of families including: Extended Day, Full Day and Half Day options. In addition to these options, Holy Cross also has collaborations with The Summit Center and Buffalo Public Schools Universal Pre-K .



Find us on the web:

www.holycrossheadstart.org

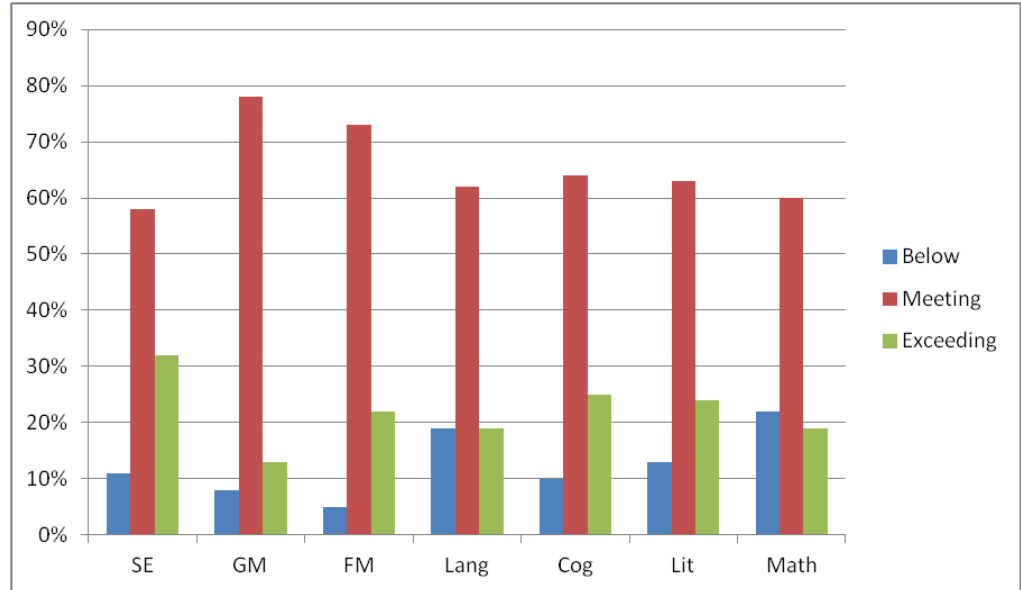
2016-2017

**Holy Cross Head Start, Inc.
Annual Report**

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

To help prepare children and families for kindergarten and beyond, school readiness goals were created using learning objectives from the Creative Curriculum's *Teaching Strategies GOLD* assessment tool. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is utilized not only as a framework to guide children's learning but is also the main database used to collect, analyze,

and interpret assessment data. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is based on 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school readiness and goals that focus on the success of the five essential domains and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, State Early Learning Guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.



MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITIES

Holy Cross Head Start works closely with families to provide accessible resources for parents who have concerns about their child's development. Parents who have educational concerns are given information about referrals, evaluations and services through their local school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Holy Cross Head Start works closely with school districts and evaluating agencies to assist in the CPSE process to ensure that students, who qualify, receive services and support at school. Holy Cross Head Start provides learning opportunities for all children and our teachers individualize instruction to meet the needs of each child developmentally. We also offer a collaboration classroom at our Holy Cross Center with The Summit Center, an educational resource center that works with students who demonstrate developmental challenges.

Holy Cross Head Start advocates for families who have children who are experiencing mental health or behavioral challenges in their lives. We assess all children's social and emotional

needs with the Ages and Stages: Social and Emotional Questionnaire. Children and families are provided with the results of the questionnaire, and if warranted, a referral for additional services or classroom support is made to address any concerns.

A key strength of our program is that we proactively teach and help develop strong social/emotional skills for children within our pre-school curriculum. In 2012, Holy Cross Head Start was awarded a two year grant to assist in addressing social and emotional concerns. The grant through the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation and the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills (PEDALS) program. Holy Cross Head Start was provided with the *Second Step Early Learning Curriculum* for all classrooms, in house training and mentoring for all teaching staff, as well as additional funding to promote Mental Health awareness throughout the agency. The grant concluded in June 2014 with a concrete plan for sustain-

ability. We continue to utilize the curriculum in each of our classrooms and find it a valuable resource in teaching social-emotional skills.

Teachers also implement daily mindfulness activities through the *Calm Classroom* program. Children learn simple research based techniques to help develop self-awareness, mental focus and inner calm. We also recently provided classrooms with training and materials for *Theraplay- Sunshine Circles*, large group teacher directed activities that help foster positive relationships with adults and peers. This year we are continuing our trainings in positive behavior strategies through the *Pyramid Model Program for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children*.

The Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator is a special education teacher who is able to provide consultation or direct support for children in need of classroom modifications, academic support, behavior plans, special education referrals, counseling referrals or additional resources to meet the needs of families.

Holy Cross Night at the Zoo

One of many successful family engagement events held throughout the school year, took place in September 2016. Our “Night at the Zoo” provided an evening at the Buffalo Zoo for all the families we serve at no cost to them. Each child was able to attend with up to five family members. Zoo volunteers were stationed throughout the zoo to answer questions and provide interesting information about the animals. We had one thousand (1000) people who attended the zoo and had an enjoyable evening with their family. With the success of this event, Holy Cross Head Start will be venturing to host a similar event at the Buffalo Museum of Science in the 2017-2018 school year.



Annual End of the Year Event

On June 2nd, 2017, Holy Cross Head Start held their Sixth Annual End of the Year Event at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. This year’s event was a dance with the theme, “A Roarrrrring Safari Party!” where all of HCHS children and families were invited to enjoy dancing, desserts, fun photos and quality time with their family and friends. This event had 700 children and families in attendance and was completely sponsored through generous donations from the community. Family engagement and the involvement of parents in the education of their children is a vital

Holy Cross Head Start as Regional HUB for the Cavity Free Kids Program

Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. received the grant and is now the local HUB for Erie, Niagara, Genesee and Orleans Counties for the Cavity Free Kids Oral Health Program created by the Delta Dental/Washington Dental Service Foundation. Leading this outstanding program is Holy Cross’s very own Health Coordinator-Christine Tedesco. With her leadership, HCHS and CFK have increased collaborations within the community.



The goal of CFK is to increase oral health awareness in our children, families and community and increase the awareness on how having good oral health leads to ones over all good healthy state. Knowledge is a powerful tool to decrease the amount of dental caries in our children. The children at Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. brush their teeth daily. They receive oral health education through the Cavity Free Kids curriculum by performing dental educational experiments, crafts and other activities. They will build a solid foundation for developing good oral health habits for the rest of their lives.

NUTRITION

All children that attend Holy Cross Head Start receive 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs. Children who attend half day sessions are given either breakfast and lunch or lunch and a snack. Children enrolled in full day classrooms receive breakfast, lunch and snack. All meals follow the nutrition guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are low in sugar and high in vitamins.

Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to participate in menu planning and can review and make suggestions to the meals that are served to their children. Nutrition staff collaborate with teaching staff to teach and model healthy eating activities in the classroom. The Nutrition Sub Committee of the Health Services Advisory Committee meets throughout the school year to discuss nutrition issues relevant to the community and the families enrolled in Head Start. Many community members are present at the meetings including, Cornell Cooperative Extension Eat Smart New York program, Catholic Charities WIC, D’Youville College Dietetics Department and Buffalo State College Dietetics Department.



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors works closely with the Executive Director, Cortland Purks, to oversee the program. The Board is made up of people from various professional and community backgrounds. The Board meets quarterly each year and participates in the Federal Review and Strategic Planning for the agency.



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