

# Holy Cross Head Start

*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, Inc. is a federally funded school readiness and family development program. Holy Cross Head Start has provided early, continuous and comprehensive childhood development and family services for over 53 years. Currently, Holy Cross Head Start offers developmentally appropriate Pre-Kindergarten programming for 500, three and four year-old children. Our program focuses on school readiness, literacy, math, and social skills, integrating children with disabilities throughout the program while assisting family members in meeting their needs and achieving their goals. Our program offers comprehensive, holistic, and supportive services to an ethnically diverse population, creating programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive to our families. Holy Cross Head Start engages a large network of community collaborators who all share the same commitment to cultural and linguistic responsiveness and that offer health, mental health, disabilities, parenting, social services, and educational programs.



Holy Cross provides services for 500 children, ages 3-4 years old, and families in Erie County, New York in the following locations:

Holy Cross Center  
150 Maryland St.  
Buffalo, NY 14201  
716-852-8373

Northwest Center  
155 Lawn Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
716-877-5022

Central Center  
89 Military Rd.  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
716-875-1506

Dewitt Center  
368 Dewitt St.  
Buffalo, NY 14213  
716-424-0571

North Buffalo Center  
203 Sanders Rd.  
Buffalo, NY 14216  
716-464-7771

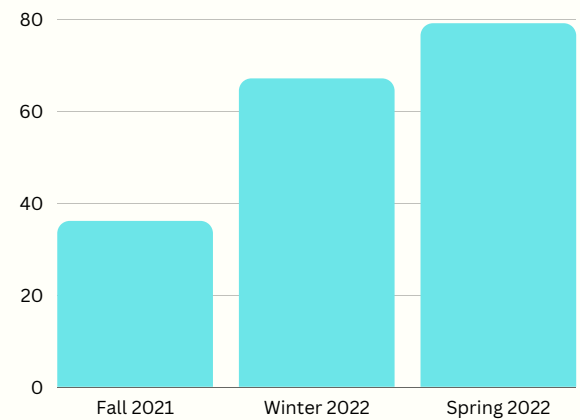
Sheridan-Parkside Center  
169 Sheridan Parkside Dr.  
Tonawanda, NY 14150  
716-876-0100

Holy Cross collaborates with the following to assist families: Read to Succeed Buffalo, Buffalo State College, D'Youville College, University Pediatric Dentistry, Catholic Charities WIC, Lead 716, Lead Prevention Program, Endeavor Health Services, Lion's Club, ECMC, Hearing and Speech of WNY, Buffalo Public School District and the Ken-Ton School District.

## 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 Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Teachers individualize and observe children daily, as well as collect portfolio samples. They also meet with families three times a year to discuss the samples and formulate goals for the children. The goals and observations drive the daily lesson plans.



This graph shows that by the spring of 2022, 79% of children were meeting or exceeding widely held expectations. HCHS showed a 43% increase in assessment data from the fall of 2021 to the spring of 2022.

## Charter School Fair

Throughout the school year HCHS Case Managers assist families with completing Kindergarten registration paperwork and determining which school is best for their needs.

HCHS held their annual Charter School fair this year to provide families with the resources needed to make informed decisions about kindergarten. Thirteen local charter schools were on site at each of the six locations to talk to families about their schools and help families with the registration process.



## Read to Succeed

Read to Succeed Buffalo integrates the CARE program with an Early Literacy Intervention Specialist who provides support, monitoring, professional development and data on 9 classrooms across 3 centers. The specialist works with the teachers and students to increase early literacy skills by providing literacy rich activities and classroom environments to support children's reading success. With the Read to Succeed program, our HCHS children have shown significant growth in alphabet knowledge, concepts of print and phonological awareness and are now better prepared for kindergarten.

## Student Support Services:

Holy Cross Head Start works closely with families to provide resources for parents who have concerns about their child's development. In order to meet the needs of each child, curriculum and instruction are individualized and classroom accommodations are made to support students within our program. Parents who have educational concerns for their children, are provided with information regarding referrals, evaluations and services that are accessible through their local school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). We collaborate with school districts and evaluating agencies to assist in the CPSE process to ensure that students who qualify, receive appropriate services and support. We also support families through the transition to school age special education programs and services.

Holy Cross Head Start advocates for families of students who are experiencing trauma, mental health issues or behavioral challenges. We assess students' social and emotional development using the Ages and Stages: Social and Emotional Questionnaire. Staff work together with the Mental Health and Disabilities Services Coordinator and families, to provide support through classroom accommodations and if warranted, a referral for additional services is made to address concerns. We collaborate with local counseling agencies such as Gateway-Longview and Endeavor Health Services to provide counseling for students and families who qualify.

A key strength of our program is that we support the development of strong social-emotional skills in our students, throughout the school day. Second Step Early Learning Curriculum, a social-emotional skills curriculum, is implemented daily in all of our classrooms. Our education staff has participated in multiple trainings on the topic of positive behavior strategies (PBS) including trainings in Modules 1 and 2 of the Pyramid Model Program for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. Activities, strategies and materials from the Pyramid Model are utilized in every classroom.

Teachers also practice daily mindfulness activities with students, through the Calm Classroom program. Calm Classroom helps children learn simple research based techniques to develop self-awareness, mental focus and inner calm. Teachers incorporate trauma informed care practices and activities in classrooms, such as Theraplay- Sunshine Circles. Sunshine Circles are large group teacher directed activities that help students foster positive relationships with adults and peers.

Our 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 students and families.







## Holy Cross Head Start as a regional HUB for the Cavity Free Kids Program:



Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. is 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.

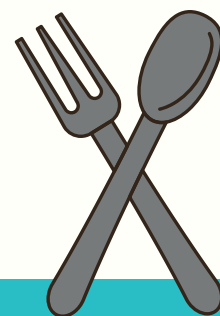
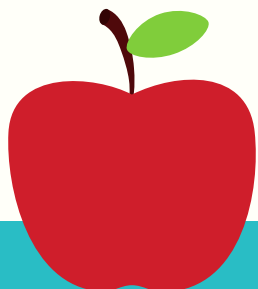
The children at Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. brush their teeth daily. They receive oral health education through the Cavity Free Kids curriculum by performing dental educational experiments, crafts and other activities. The University at Buffalo School of Dentistry and Just 4 Me Pediatric Dentistry also provided virtual dental education to the children during the school year. The children have the tools to build a solid foundation for developing good oral health habits for the rest of their lives.

## A Healthy Start:



All children that attend Holy Cross Head Start receive 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs. 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, and Buffalo State College Dietetics Department.



# Overview of Head Start Spending & Expenditures

Fiscal Year March 1, 2021-February 28, 2022

<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>		
	HCHS Grant	4,847,670
	Head Start T&TA	6,807
	In-Kind Revenue	525,251
	Grants from Governmental Agencies	1,004,424
	Other Income	7,350
<i>Total Revenue</i>		6,391,502
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>		
	Personnel Costs	2,985,831
	Fringe Benefits	1,574,343
	Travel	6,807
	Equipment	
	Supplies	555,180
	Contractual	118,412
	Construction	0
	Other	1,150,929
<i>Total Expenses</i>		6,391,502

## 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.

Mrs. Maria Cruz-Torres, President  
Ms. Tania Fuentes, Vice President  
Ms. Davida Black-Heubach, Secretary  
Ms. Nelly Perez Garcia, Treasurer  
Mr. Daniel Figueroa  
Mrs. Delilah Ventura  
Mr. Carmen Gentile  
Ms. Ada Marilyn Collado  
Ms. Nan Gallivan  
Ms. Nadira Durant Morales



## Leadership Team

### **Cortland Purks**

Executive Director

[cpurks@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:cpurks@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Janice Crews-Dearing**

Chief Financial Officer

[jcrewsde@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:jcrewsde@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Katie Adamczak**

Director of Program Operations

[kadamczak@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:kadamczak@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Angela Rizzo**

Human Resources Manager

[arizzo@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:arizzo@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Silvia Steele**

Disabilities/MH Coordinator

[ssteele@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:ssteele@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Lindsay Kilijanski**

Education Coordinator

[lbuntich@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:lbuntich@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Ruth Padin**

Nutrition Coordinator

[rpadin@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:rpadin@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Christine Tedesco**

Health Coordinator

[ctedesco@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:ctedesco@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Cynthia Mix-Schoenrock**

Social Services Coordinator

[cschoenr@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:cschoenr@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Katie Cipollone**

Central Center Director

[kmcgee@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:kmcgee@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Kristin Gruber**

Northwest Center Director

[kgruber@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:kgruber@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Amy Rosen**

Dewitt Center Director

[arosen@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:arosen@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Katie Robinson**

Parkside Center Director

[krobinson@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:krobinson@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Jennifer Falletta**

Holy Cross Center Director

[jyantz@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:jyantz@holycrossheadstart.org)

### **Tara Wilson**

North Buffalo Center Director

[twilson@holycrossheadstart.org](mailto:twilson@holycrossheadstart.org)