



2019 – 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



small steps nurturing center



Friends of Small Steps,

We look back at the 2019-2020 school year with a mix of wonder and pride. We believe that we prepare young students for success in elementary school and life, not through a single solution, but through a truly comprehensive early childhood program that develops the whole child. Every year, Small Steps seeks to fulfill our mission to the families we serve, and we accomplish this goal only through the generosity of many supporters, who give of their time, talent, and treasure to see our students succeed.

This year, we raised the bar across all areas of our program. We introduced STEAM curriculum into our classrooms; engaged parents in an intensive, weekly positive parenting program; created a SET Interventionist role to provide greater social-emotional support to teachers and students in the classroom; and enrolled in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program to provide nutritious meals to our students and increase the sustainability of our program funding. Through the kindness of our Small Steps community, we provided more Christmas presents to students and siblings than ever before and paired dozens of high-need students with volunteer Buddies.

In the fall of 2019, we announced our expansion to the Gullfton/ Sharpstown community, in partnership with St. Luke's United Methodist Church. The support we received for our third campus was overwhelming, and

we can't wait to open in January 2021 to serve a new group of families who lack high-quality options for the early childhood education of their children.

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had profound impacts on the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Many of our families lost jobs or wages, and food insecurity was a primary concern. Yet again, friends of Small Steps, new and old, rallied together to support our families. We are inspired by how our community rose to meet the challenges of this unprecedented season. While COVID-19 continues to impact our new school year, Small Steps' commitment to our mission and the families we serve remains steadfast.

The new school year marks Small Steps Nurturing Center's 25th Anniversary. Our founders believed that through nurturing children when they are young, we can have lasting impacts on their futures. We have the privilege of carrying out their vision and strengthening it with each passing year. We celebrate this milestone with you, cherishing the blessing of your kindness to Small Steps and the impact you helped make in the lives of our students and families over the last 25 years. May God continue to bless our ministry for many years to come.

Ana Schick
Executive Director

Michael Fertitta
Board Chairman



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Small Steps Nurturing Center provides an exemplary early childhood program to instill and foster the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of economically at-risk children and their families.

1995

Small Steps Nurturing Center was founded by passionate individuals who recognized the need for an early childhood program in some of Houston's most disadvantaged neighborhoods.

1999

Small Steps' first campus in Houston's First Ward was constructed and opened on DePelchin Street.

2006

Demand for Small Steps' services led to the opening of a second campus in Houston's Fifth Ward on Jensen Drive.

2012

Small Steps expanded our Fifth Ward campus by adding four additional classrooms. Across the two campuses, Small Steps serves approximately 180 children each school year.



2018

2020-2021

In partnership with St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Small Steps will open a third campus in the Gulfton/Sharpstown area, serving an additional 75 children each year once fully enrolled.

YEAR IN REVIEW

173

STUDENTS

134

FAMILIES

29

TEACHERS



34

KINDERGARTEN GRADUATES



30,000

NUTRITIOUS MEALS
& SNACKS SERVED



17

FAMILY MEMBERS OF
PAST OR CURRENT
STUDENTS EMPLOYED



4,000

HOURS OF MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION &
CONSULTATION PERFORMED ON SITE



1,378

PARENT TUITION HOURS
BY 133 FAMILIES



727

VOLUNTEERS SERVED
6,399 HOURS

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Small Steps recently celebrated our first college graduate! Louis Rodriguez, Jr., who attended Small Steps in 2001 and 2002, graduated from Baylor University in the Class of 2019 with a Health Science Studies major and a goal of becoming a surgeon. He remembers that Small Steps instilled in him a love for learning, and he can't believe that, "My preschool still keeps up with me!"

Reflecting on his experience at Small Steps, Louis wrote, "Small Steps gave me the confidence I have today, and as I look back, I want to thank everyone who has influenced me...Small Steps isn't just a school, it's a family."

Louis is now enrolled at Johns Hopkins University getting his Masters in Biotechnology Health Science. We look forward to cheering Louis on as he continues to pursue his dream.



NURTURING FAMILIES

Victoria is the single mom of two Small Steps graduates and one current Small Steps student. **Mateo** graduated from Small Steps in 2018 and is a rising 3rd grade student at Sherman Elementary School. This year, in the midst of the COVID-19 shutdown, **Ximena** graduated kindergarten and celebrated her milestone moment with a parade. **America** is entering pre-K in the 2020-2021 school year. Small Steps' holistic program enabled Ximena to access therapy and support services, allowing her to close the learning gaps she had and enter first grade without the need for services at her elementary school.

While Small Steps has been investing in her children, Victoria has given back to Small Steps. She earned the second highest number of parent volunteer hours during the 2019-2020 school year. When Victoria lost her job during the pandemic, she attended every food distribution event and ensured her children were active on our distance learning platform each week. Small Steps is honored to come alongside all of our families as they strive to provide a better future for their children.



“ I am always very grateful to you and to all those who make it possible to help us! ”

COVID-19 IMPACT AND SUPPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic, unprecedented in our lifetime, has catapulted each one of us into an extended season of uncertainty and isolation. In the wake of COVID-19, the health and safety of our community was (and still is) our top priority. Small Steps' campuses closed to students and families in mid-March, following Houston ISD's closure decision and Governor Abbott's orders. While closed, Small Steps actively evaluated and provided for the needs of our families.

FOOD AND NECESSITIES

1,500

FAMILY FOOD BOXES DONATED



\$44,000

GIFT CARDS DISTRIBUTED TO FAMILIES



90

FAMILIES, ON AVERAGE, ATTENDED FOOD DISTRIBUTION EVENTS



DISTANCE LEARNING

90%

OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN DISTANCE LEARNING



600+

HOURS OF MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION OR CONSULTATION



34

KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS GRADUATED WITH A PARADE



GULFTON EXPANSION

In 2019-2020, the Small Steps Board of Directors voted unanimously to open a third campus in partnership with St. Luke's United Methodist Church at their Gethsemane location.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

- **48%** of residents live below the poverty line.
- The median income is **\$23,228**.
- The area has the **lowest unemployment rate** in the City of Houston.
- **Only 2%** of households receive public assistance.
- Residents hail from around the world and speak more than **50 languages**.

OPENING PLANS

2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023
45 students	60 students	75 students
3 classrooms	4 classrooms	5 classrooms

CONNECT COMMUNITY

We are joining forces with Connect Community, a collaboration of best-in-class organizations in the Gulfton area committed to improving opportunities for those who live there.



EXPANSION CAMPAIGN

Small Steps is responsible for raising \$3 million for campus start-up expenses, operating costs for the first three years, limited renovations, and investment in our continuity fund.



The beautiful Gethsemane church sanctuary on Bellaire Boulevard.

INTRODUCING

KENTASHA MCGREGOR McMORRIS

Campus Director, Small Steps Gulfton



Kentasha McMorris joined our Small Steps family in June 2020 as Campus Director for our new Gulfton campus. Kentasha is an accomplished educator with a breadth of experience in the classroom and leading early childhood teams.

Born and raised in Houston, Kentasha is an original KIPPster as a member of the first KIPP middle school campus and a graduate of Incarnate Word Academy. After receiving her Bachelor's degree from Stephen F. Austin University, she joined the KIPP Texas team as a Pre-K and Kindergarten teacher and Grade Level Chair. She spent time teaching Kindergarten in Houston ISD before returning to school to earn her Masters of Education Administration from Lamar University. Kentasha returned to her KIPP roots as Founding Assistant Principal for KIPP Unity Primary School.

We are thrilled to add her passion, experience, and love for early childhood education to our team!



2019-2020 FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Contributions	\$2,968,864
<i>Signature Events</i>	\$1,540,522
<i>Foundations</i>	\$920,588
<i>Individuals</i>	\$179,296
<i>Community Organizations</i>	\$164,212
<i>Corporations</i>	\$80,520
<i>Churches</i>	\$83,726
Government Funding	\$94,843
Program	\$4,046
Other Revenue	\$81,758
Gifts in Kind	\$ 83,884

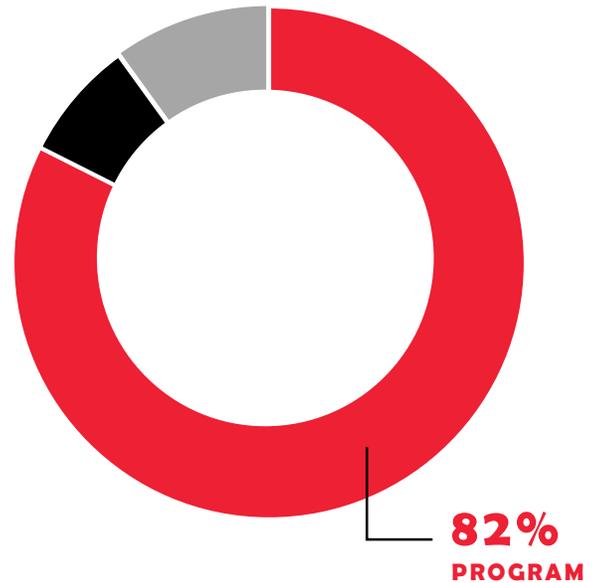
TOTAL REVENUE **\$3,233,395**

Notes: The unaudited financials presented here exclude Gullton expansion campaign revenue and expenses. In 2019-2020, we raised more than \$2 million of our \$3 million campaign.

EXPENSES

Program ●	\$2,930,889
Management & General ●	\$269,856
Fundraising ●	\$354,727

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$3,555,472**



WE  **OUR TEACHERS**



LEADERSHIP

ANA SCHICK
Executive Director
aschick@ssnc.org



LOCATIONS

JENSEN CAMPUS (MAIN OFFICE)

2902 Jensen Drive
Houston, TX 77026
(713) 236-0330

DEPELCHIN CAMPUS

1709 DePelchin St
Houston, TX 77007
(713) 862-1020

GULFTON CAMPUS

6856 Bellaire Blvd
Houston, TX 77074
(713) 402-5196



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Fertitta, *President*
Hilcorp Energy Company

Jessica Brazelton, *Vice President*
Community Volunteer

Emily Sheeren, *Secretary*
ghSMART

James Gilligan, *Treasurer*
Retired Investment Professional

Robert O. Bond
Midcoast Energy Partners

Julie Boone, M.Ed.
Early Childhood Educator/Administrator

Chris Bradshaw
Bristow Group

Jane Cabes
Community Volunteer

Karen David-Green
Marketing & Communications Executive

Brooks Despot
EnCap Investments L.P.

Ryan Devlin
EnCap Investments L.P.

Jennifer Hazelton
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

Greg Highberger
Lime Rock Partners

Susan Light
Community Volunteer

Jon Marinelli
BMO Capital Markets

David McCarver
First Horizon Bank

W. David de Roode
Lockton Global Energy & Marine

Tim Samson
Thompson & Knight LLP

Bobby Stillwell, Jr.
Cadre Energy

Carolyn Tanner
Community Volunteer

Leticia Trauber
Community Volunteer