





## A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Friends of Small Steps,

It is impossible to think about the 2020-2021 school year without acknowledging the changes and challenges caused by COVID-19. Yet, in a global crisis unprecedented in our lifetimes, we witnessed the faithfulness of God, the resilience of Small Steps students and families, and the generosity of our community like never before.

We knew we had to open for in-person school as soon as it was safe to do so. Being open meant our students could return to an enriching environment and our parents could go to work with confidence that their children would be safe and nurtured. We also offered virtual learning for families who weren't comfortable sending their children to school. As you can read in our parents' notes to the right, Small Steps is truly an essential service.

We couldn't have opened without our teachers, who adopted many new guidelines and cleaning procedures. Virtual teachers adapted their lesson plans and styles to meet the needs of their students through screens and with resources available to them at home. We are proud that 100% of parents who answered the year-end survey felt that Small Steps took appropriate measures to keep students safe in COVID-19.

Against all odds, the Gulfton campus opened in January! Launching mid-year during a pandemic is no easy feat, but it was worth it to begin serving this high-need, diverse community. We look forward to adding two more classrooms in the coming school years.

In our 25<sup>th</sup> year, we said goodbye to our original DePelchin campus, which has been a beacon of light in the First Ward since 1999. In turn, we launched the expansion of our Fifth Ward campus on Jensen Drive to continue fulfilling our mission of serving at-risk students and families in areas of greatest need.

Join us in celebrating this remarkable year and praying for God's continued blessing for our special community.

**Michael Fertitta**  
Board Chairman

**Ana Schick**  
Executive Director

## NOTES FROM OUR PARENTS

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this incredible life-enriching opportunity for my son. I have seen such wonderful progress and growth in just a short period of time."

"Thank you so much for everything. Because of all the support and help I received, I was able to keep afloat during the worst of the pandemic...I will forever be grateful towards Small Steps for all they did and continue to do for all the families."

"Without your support, my child would not be where he is now. Being taught can be done anywhere, but the nurturing atmosphere is a huge blessing."

"It hurts us all as we go to the next stage...because no place is like Small Steps, so caring and educational...You make the school like a home to us...We will never forget you!"



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## *July:* **COVID-19 Relief Continued**

Small Steps hosted food distribution events for families throughout the summer and provided household supplies, diapers, and other necessities as they dealt with the challenges of the pandemic.

## *August:* **Preparations for the School Year**

Small Steps' leadership combed through CDC, licensing, and other regulatory requirements and put in place processes and procedures to help keep students, staff, and families safe and healthy.

## *September:* **First Day of School**

On September 24, Small Steps opened to serve 140 students, both virtual and in-person. We were overjoyed and grateful to welcome students again!

## *October:* **Small Steps Luncheon & Golf Classic**

The Small Steps Nurture and Nourish Luncheon was successfully adapted to a virtual Picnic Luncheon. Both the Luncheon and Golf Classic exceeded our goals!

## *November:* **Thanksgiving Boxes**

Instead of our annual Thanksgiving Feast, generous volunteers and donors prepared and helped distribute food boxes and necessities.

## *December:* **Christmas Gifts**

Parents received gifts for every student and every sibling of a student to give on Christmas Day. Families received boxes of household supplies for the break.

## *January:* **Gulfton Campus Opens**

Our new campus in the Gulfton area opened with 27 two- and three-year-old students in three classrooms.

## *February:* **Winter Storm Uri**

Small Steps distributed \$25,000+ in funds to support the many families and staff members who experienced damage.

## *March:* **Easter Celebrations**

To celebrate Jesus' resurrection, students gathered for Easter Chapel and sang "Jesus is Alive!" They also hunted for Easter eggs on the playground.

## *April:* **Small Steps Clays Classic**

The Clays Classic was delayed to the spring of 2021 and exceeded its goal by more than \$30,000. The Wine Classic was cancelled due to COVID-19.

## *May:* **DePelchin Campus Sale**

The Board voted to sell the DePelchin campus and expand the Fifth Ward campus (pg. 5). The DePelchin campus was sold to our original founding partner, Impact Houston Church of Christ.

## *June:* **Kindergarten Graduation**

We hosted outdoor graduation ceremonies for 39 kindergarten students who will matriculate to elementary school in the fall. Each received a send-off backpack full of supplies. We will miss them!

# A YEAR OF COVID-19

While the challenges of this school year were unprecedented, the resilience of our students and strength of our staff cannot be understated. New processes, procedures, and requirements impacted the day-to-day experiences at school. Yet, our caring and committed teachers went far beyond the extra mile both to keep their students and classrooms safe and to foster each child’s holistic development. Despite every obstacle, our students learned, played, grew, and were nurtured. We praise God for his protection over our wonderful Small Steps community this year!



## Intellectual Development

Small Steps teachers focused on language development as the core of learning activities both virtual and in-person. They incorporated math, science, and critical thinking to prepare children for their next step.

## Physical Development

Students attending in person had most of their nutrition needs met through two meals and a snack provided during the school day. Small Steps continued hosting monthly food distribution events for virtual families.

## Social-Emotional Development

The SET program remained an integral part of the daily experience of *all* students. Teachers worked frequently in collaboration with the SET team to nurture close relationships with students.

## Family Development

Parents were still required to complete tuition hours through virtual or streamed parent education opportunities. Consultations and referrals to community resources continued virtually this year.

## “ EXPERIENCE OF A VIRTUAL TEACHER ”

I am the pre-K Lead Teacher for our virtual pre-K class, The Green Leaves...To say [distance learning] has been an interesting and challenging experience as a teacher is an understatement. I have had to spend time considering how best to teach concepts that require a hands-on approach such as measurement, weight, volume/capacity, scissor skills and fine motor development...My most important reward is the progress I see every day in all my students: *they are learning.*



**80+ iPads**  
Provided to Pre-K and Kinder Students



**725 Food Boxes**  
Distributed to Families



**164 Referrals**  
to Community Resources

## THE GULFTON CAMPUS IS OPEN



After delaying the first day of school by a semester due to COVID-19, we were overjoyed to open Small Steps' Gulfton campus on January 19, 2021! After months of preparations—student enrollment events, teacher interviews and onboarding, furniture purchase and assembly, and so much more—we welcomed our founding students to their new school. Our Gulfton students reflect the demographics of their area: their families hail from around the world, including Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle East.



Small Steps' \$3 million expansion campaign is complete! Gulfton campus operations are fully funded through June 30, 2023. *Thank you* to the many generous donors who helped bring the Gulfton campus to life!



## EXPANSION IN THE FIFTH WARD

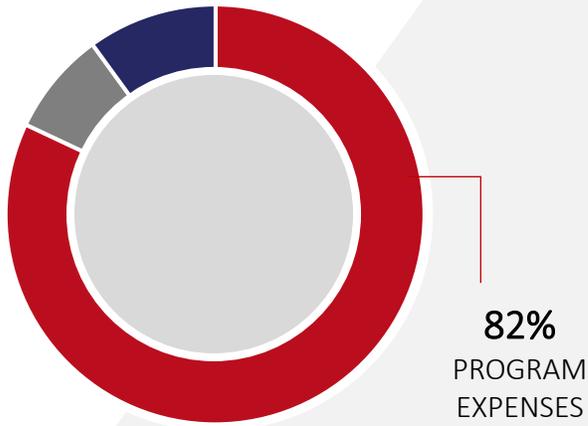
After much consideration, the Small Steps Board of Directors voted to sell our original DePelchin campus, which is located in an area that has significantly gentrified since the campus opened more than 20 years ago. In turn, we will expand our Fifth Ward campus on Jensen Drive to add four additional classrooms and other program service spaces. Once complete, we will serve 180 students in the Fifth Ward community.

# REVENUE

Contributions	\$	3,094,192
Signature Events	\$	879,579
Foundations		1,598,321
Corporate, Church, & Community Organizations		355,288
Individuals		196,168
Young Professionals		64,836
Gifts in Kind		81,127
Program		3,235
Investment Income		192,519
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,371,073</b>

# EXPENSES

Program	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	\$	2,574,373
Management & General	<span style="color: blue;">●</span>		263,209
Fundraising	<span style="color: gray;">●</span>		313,961
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$</b>	<b>3,151,543</b>



## Non-Operating Income

PPP Loan Forgiveness	\$535,440
Gain on Sale of Property	\$619,822

Gulfton Campus First Day of School



Kindergarten Graduation Day



Summer Program Splash Day



These financials do not include Gulfton campus revenue and expenses, which have been accounted for separately.



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.

Kindergarten Graduates



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ana Schick  
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 713-236-0330

## CAMPUS LOCATIONS

Fifth Ward Campus  
 2902 Jensen Drive  
 Houston, TX 77026

Gulfton Campus  
 6856 Bellaire Blvd  
 Houston, TX 77074

Kindergarten Graduates



## QUESTIONS?

Contact Sara Terry, *sterry@ssnc.org*

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