Lynn Economic Opportunity (LEO) works to alleviate the immediate impact of poverty while providing pathways to financial stability for individuals, families, and for the benefit of the community of Lynn and its surrounding towns.
Board of Directors, 2015–16
James Higgs, President
James Carrigan, Vice President
James Low, Treasurer
Marilyn Foster, Clerk
John Augeri
Marion Canizaro
Christina Cassano
Kevin Donaher
Diane Perez
Joyce Reen
Kimberly Rowe-Cummings
Kirirath Saing
Fran Troutman

Dear Friends,

In 2015–16, our new and renewed partnerships with area organizations, legislative leaders, businesses, and residents bolstered our ability to improve the lives of thousands of our neighbors. Thank you for working with us!

LEO’s strategic approach to address the needs of the community and to forge pathways to opportunity for all continues to evolve. Internally, we prioritized our focus on building upon the skills and resources of parents including: additional ESOL classes, the Good Guys Group for fathers and father figures, positive parenting/coping support groups, and postpartum intervention and care.

Aligned with like-minded partners, our work with families is a key factor in strengthening the overall community. Thank you for being part of the progress.

BIRGITTA S. DAMON
Chief Executive Officer

JIM HIGGS
Board President
Percentages show the amount of children on track or exceeding developmental benchmarks for their ages to determine school readiness.

**Birth to Five School Readiness Data**
**Fall 2015 - Spring 2016**

**Approaches to Learning**
- 66%
- 78%

**Social and Emotional Development**
- 71.5%
- 84.5%

**Language and Literacy**
- 68%
- 75%

**Cognition**
- 65%
- 71%

**Perceptual, Motor & Physical Development**
- 79.5%
- 85.5%

**Taking Early Education to the Next Level**

LEO’s Jack Robinson Child Care Center on Commercial Street achieved Level 3 status within the MA Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS) which assesses the quality of child care centers—a *status shared by only 5.7% of the 635 centers statewide!* Within our region, only 2.8% of the number of child care centers have earned this superior quality status certification with LEO.

(The highest rating, Level 4 has been achieved by less than 1% of centers across the state. We’re on track to be recognized as a statewide leader in quality early education care. Stay tuned!)
In intensive care for months after birth, P.J. began life with major medical and family challenges. He came home to his biological aunt’s care when his mother wasn’t able to care for him, and he required a G-tube for feeding. Kerri, his aunt, knew P.J. would thrive at Early Head Start where his sister already attended. At home, he had no social skills developed, and at one year old could not yet eat or drink on his own.

When many child care centers would shy away from the risks of a one year old with a feeding tube, the LEO team said “yes” and began coordinating health plans and strategies with other service providers. Kerri lights up when she talks about P.J’s progress one year later: “He’s drinking from an open cup! My husband and I dance every time he tries a new food! He’s socializes with the other toddlers, and his verbal ability has skyrocketed.”

Did you know?

68% of children enrolled in Early Head Start in 2015–16 had some type of disability requiring early intervention and other services.
Imagine how alone and scared Sonia felt when she learned her youngest son, Luis, had cerebral palsy. She immediately got early intervention services from Aspire for her one year old, and Aspire pointed her to Early Head Start home visiting. Heather, a LEO home visitor, guided Luis toward age appropriate tasks and Sonia began to consider her a trustworthy mentor.

When Luis transitioned to LEO’s center-based care, Sonia anxiously lingered at drop-off time, cautious and fearful he might not get the right care. At the time, he didn’t nap, ran around the classroom and threw toys. He couldn’t sit through circle time or table meals. In just two months, he was fully participating. Says Sonia, “I’m the happiest mother in the world! He progresses every single day. Early Head Start has filled me with faith and hope. I want others to know about what LEO can do and I want to give back for how they’ve helped my family.”
Willy & Emely: A Brother & Sister Find Their Voices

Willy • Years at LEO: 4

What’s your favorite LEO memory?
“When Chef Nick came. He taught us how to cook!”

Emely • Years at LEO: 6

What have you learned from LEO programs?
“How to respect each other, treat and talk to each other.”

“They have a fantastic family support system with grandparents who help out mom while she works as much as she can. Mom still manages to get Willy to speech therapy appointments and to carve out one-on-one time with Emely. It’s been so rewarding to see Willy go from nonverbal communication at age 4 to speaking full sentences with his peers and teachers now! Emely, once a shy kindergartner, has transformed into a social middle schooler. I could talk about them and all my awesome after school kids all day long.”

— Meghan Rebidue, Afterschool & Summer Programs Manager
A two-generation approach means investing in parents—building their skills and resources to provide their children the opportunity to meet their fullest potential. In addition to individual family case management for every family enrolled in Birth-to-Five care, parents this year participated in:

- Organization Leadership Opportunities on Policy Council, Board of Directors
- Parent Education Workshops (Nutrition and Health topics, Financial Literacy, First Aid/CPR)
- English Classes
- Good Guys Group (fathers and father figures)
- Positive Parenting Support Group
- Classroom Volunteering

Empowering Parents: Children’s Most Important Teachers
When Hunger Stops, Learning Begins

In response to the closing of several local food pantries last year, LEO rallied to connect with the Red Cross Mobile Food Truck, which began monthly deliveries of fresh groceries: over 1,000 bags donated since May. Director of Nutrition and Health, Marilyn Perry, worked as part of the Lynn Hunger Network to find more permanent solutions for food access for the entire community.

28% of children enrolled at LEO require individualized nutrition plans developed by our health and nutrition team to address allergies and other special medical needs.

Our kitchen staff prepared and served 133,902 breakfasts, lunches and snacks in 2015-16.

Shout out to Chef Nick from Project Bread who made healthy cooking a fun learning experience for LEO children this summer!
Child Care Director is Head of the Class

Director of Child Care Programs, Gerri Bertrand is one of just 41 graduates of the UCLA Head Start Management Fellows Program this year, an intensive 12-day leadership and management development program, conducted at the UCLA Anderson School of Management in Los Angeles. She has been a key staff member at LEO for over 20 years.

Congratulations to our education team for continuing their education!

Credentials Earned in 2015–16: 5 Bachelors Degrees and 4 Associate Degrees; 12 Child Development Associate credentials renewed

From left: Yasmine Daniel-Vargas, Director, National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations, Gerri Bertrand, Director of Child Care Programs at LEO, Dr. Blanca Enriquez, Director of the national Office of Head Start and Dr. Alfred E. Osborne Jr, Senior Associate Dean of the UCLA Anderson School of Management.
“If you’re working, you can’t get fuel assistance.”

FALSE

TRUE: Families with an income of up to $64,000 and up to 4 family members still qualify for a discount on utilities and fuel subsidies for any type of heat.

“This benefit is only for people who rent.”

FALSE

TRUE: 26% of clients in 2016 were homeowners, who are also eligible for further energy conservation/weatherization services.

“Lynn’s in the name, so LEO only serves Lynn residents.”

FALSE

TRUE: 19% of households receiving fuel assistance are in Lynnfield, Nahant, Saugus, Swampscott and Wakefield.

More Fast Facts

23% of individuals supported with fuel assistance are children under the age of 17.

36% of fuel assisted households include a resident 60 years or older: 1,082.

Total number of households: 2,979, with over 6,800 individuals served.
A Youthful Energy in Conservation

With guidance from the MA Dept of Youth Services (DYS), Cesar knew he needed to right his path, and invest more seriously in his future. DYS partnered with the Conservation Office to provide an internship for Cesar, as well as all the hands-on training and certification necessary to thoroughly evaluate and repair heating systems. Cesar has been a tremendous asset to LEO, reaching out to fuel assistance clients in his native language, Spanish. According to Jan Baronian, Director of Conservation Services, “Cesar has grown, exponentially, in his time in our office. He has gained self-confidence in his skills and in communicating within our Spanish-speaking clients, especially.” It has been our pleasure to watch Cesar grow into a qualified professional. He currently has job offers to work in the private sector, with local heating vendors. Congratulations, Cesar! We at LEO are lucky to have you.

Over 500 homes received repairs or replacements of new heating systems and oil tanks, clean and tune-ups, appliance updates and LED light bulb installations.

Cesar has earned multiple training certifications in energy conservation programs from the Dept. of Energy.
Partnerships & Affiliations

- Action, Inc.
- American Latino Committee
- Aspire, Inc.
- Bridgewell
- Catholic Charities
- Centerboard
- Children’s Friend and Family Services
- Citizens Energy
- City of Lynn
- Community Giving Tree
- COMPASS (Lawrence Community Works)
- Cradles to Crayons
- Element Care
- Elliott Community Human Services
- The Enough Abuse Campaign
- First Jobs
- Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)
- Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC)
- Impact Lynn
- KIPP Academy
- Latino Support Network
- Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce
- Lynn Community Health Center
- Lynn Continuum of Care
- Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND)
- Lynn Hunger Network
- Lynn Public Library
- Lynn Public Schools
- Lynn Shelter Association
- Lynn YMCA
- Lynnfield Council on Aging
- MA Association for Community Action (MassCAP)
- MA Association of Early Education & Care (MADCA)
- MA Dept. of Children & Families (DCF)
- MA Coalition for the Homeless
- MA Dept. of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
- MA Dept. of Youth Services (DYS)
- MA Head Start Association
- MA Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition
- MA Law Reform Institute
- Mission of Deeds
- My Brother’s Table
- Nahant Council on Aging
- New American Center
- New England Eye
- On-Sight Mobile Van
- Northeast Justice Center
- North Shore Career Center
- North Shore Community College
- North Shore Housing Action Group (NSHAG)
- North Shore Women Infants and Children (WIC)
- Operation Bootstrap
- Prevent Blindness America
- Project Bread
- Project Cope, an affiliate of Bridgewell
- Red Cross Mobile Food Truck
- Salem State University
- Salvation Army
- Saugus Senior Center
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Swampscott Council on Aging
- Toys for Tots
- University of Massachusetts RN Program
- Wakefield Council on Aging
- YMCA (Metro North)
Nearly $30,000 was donated from our trivia-loving friends and sponsors who care about the needs of our community. Thank you!

With CEO Birgitta Damon at center, the Bridgewell team takes the heavy responsibility of donning the paper crowns as two-time champions.
John Turco, the evening’s emcee.

The team from U.S. Congressman Seth Moulton’s Office.

The team from Scholar Sponsors Rogers & Gray.

Honor Roll Sponsors Lynn Kids Dental.
Last year, important decisions were made which strengthened our fiscal core to deliver our programs more effectively, and to address the future needs of our community. Our housing properties were sold to another nonprofit organization and to first time home buyers, which reduced our risk and exposure while providing essential capital for repairs at 156 Broad Street. Fuel Assistance provided was lower than previous years due to a particularly warm winter. Other changes include a hefty investment in raising the wages of education staff and establishing a rubric for merit increases for years of service and education levels. An overview is highlighted by the charts to the right.

Revenue: $11,121,287
Expense: $10,881,044
Change in Net Assets: $240,243
Foundation Support, Corporate Gifts and Sponsorships

$500,000 +
National Grid

$30,000 - $50,000
Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation
Van Otterloo Family Foundation

$15,000 - 29,999
Amelia Peabody Foundation
The Boston Foundation
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation

$5,000 - 14,999
Children’s Investment Fund
PM Gallagher Construction
Rogers & Gray Insurance
Salem Five Charitable Foundation
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
Women’s Fund of Essex County

$1,000 - $4,999
Atlantic Weatherization
Bridgewell
Attorneys James Carrigan, Anne Gugino Carrigan & Ronald Malloy
Demoulas Market Basket
Hillyer Festival Orchestra
David Hughes, Century 21 Hughes
John’s Oil
Laredo & Smith, LLP
Lynn Housing & Neighborhood Development
Neighborhood Health Plan

Additional Support
Under $1,000
AAFCPA’s
Bentwater Brewing Co.
EDIC
Essex County Bar Foundation
Greater Lynn Senior Services
Bridget Kimball, J. Barrett Realty
Law Offices of Loring P. Fluke
Lynn Auditorium
Lynn Kids Dental

State and Federal Funding

Federal Emergency Management Agency
MA Department of Early Education & Care
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Office of Children & Families
U.S. Office of Community Services
U.S. Office of Health & Human Services

Approximately 38% increase in $$$ from individual and foundation support over 2014–15.
October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

**Individual Donors**

**$1,000+**
- Julia Kehoe
- Kathleen McDonald

**$500 – $999**
- Ryan Carvalho
- Lorraine & David Errico (In Memory of Griffin Lamar)
- Agabos Makonnen
- Carol Meharg
- Elliott Sclar
- Kristina Tecce

**$250 – $499**
- Atty. James J. Carrigan
- Frances Kellogg-Troutman
- Heather Fraser & Todd Maio
- Joyce Reen

**$100 – $249**
- Douglas Adgurson
- James Bacik and Lisa Carrigan
- Bacik
- Janet Baronian
- Gerri Bertrand
- Stephanie Brown
- Mario C. Capano
- Committee to Elect Brian Lapierre
- Lydia Conley
- Jeffrey C. Crosby
- Cheryl & Michael Crounse
- Birgitta & Scott Damon
- Sean Deveney
- Emily Donnelly
- Michael Duffley
- Robert F. Eastman
- Marilyn Foster
- Aldo Hernandez
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- Robert L. Marder, Esq.
- McGlone & Associates
- McGrath Enterprises
- Amanda Pelcher
- Diane C. Perez
- Marilyn and Bob Perry
- Joy Richmond-Smith
- Lilian Romero
- Jennifer Sclar
- Joel & Rosie Segil
- Chris Smith
- David Solimine
- Robert & Beverly Stearns
- Erik & Wendy Sundsted
- Richard L. Vitali

**GIFTS UNDER $100**
- Anonymous (2)
- John Augeri
- Amanda Beard
- William C. Berry
- Jessica Boton
- Patrick J. Burke
- Marion Canizaro
- Linda Castetter
- Ann F. Cohen
- Christopher Copelas
- Kyle Daddieco
- Karen & Kevin Donaher
- Iris Dupellii-Otero
- Matthew Farren
- Maura Flaherty
- Ronald Fox
- Charles Gaeta
- William Gordano
- Lisa Gray
- Bethany Hatch
- Steve Krause
- Catherine & Howard C. Latham
- Elaine LeBrasseur
- Harry MacCabe
- Ann M. Malloy
- Kevin McCarthy
- Germaine McManus
- Kimberly Rowe-Cummings
- Drew Russo
- Joseph Scanlon
- Jayna Baronian Smith
- Rick Starbard
- Jeffrey Weeden