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, 2016 – 17**

James Higgs, President
James Carrigan, Vice President
Jim Low, Treasurer
Kirirath Saing, Clerk
Kevin Donaher, Assistant Clerk
John Augeri
Marion Canizaro
Marilyn Foster
Jay McManus
Diane Perez
Pastor PoSan Ung
Joyce M. Reen
Kimberly Rowe-Cummings
Fran Troutman
Thelma Velasquez
Dear Friends,

Here at LEO we begin each day with the goal of making lives better for the children and families of Lynn and surrounding areas. We make the conscious choice to embrace diversity, valuing respect and inclusiveness over othering, a divisive and insular psychology regaining a foothold across our nation.

The disparities in our community ignite a renewed passion within us to embrace our society as a whole, with no barriers. To strengthen LEO’s existing partnerships and actively engage in new ones that further demonstrate the value of that which connects us all.

We are proud of LEO’s professionals and volunteers, parents and children, for striving to build a more equitable society. Together we support a community where belonging extends to all ages and cultures. Thank you for being part of our progress.

What is Policy Council?

Policy Council connects program staff and the Board of Directors to the Head Start parent community, ensuring they understand the opportunities available to the whole family. Policy Council encourages parent participation in the programs; organizing activities with the assistance of LEO employees.

“I wanted to get involved in my kids’ education and development. I hope this great program continues for years to come.”

Joel Macario, President

“I am proud to be involved in my children’s education. As we move on from Head Start to the public school system, I hope I have motivated and encouraged other parents to take up the cause.”

Francisco Barrios, Secretary
Percentages below 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 2016 to Spring 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Area</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Emotional Development</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language &amp; Literacy</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptual, Motor &amp; Physical Development</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to Learning</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In August of 2017, Assistant Program Director Mary Hight traveled to Los Angeles to take part in a two-week intensive leadership and management development program at the UCLA Anderson School of Management. Mary is now the newest member of the LEO family to join an elite class of leaders in the Head Start organization. Mary brings 15 years of dedication and expertise to her position. Our programs benefit greatly from her knowledge.

### Continuing Education Credentials Earned in 2016–2017 with LEO’s Support:
- 3 Bachelor’s Degrees
- 1 Associate Degree
- 5 Child Development Associates (CDA)
Malak Almubarak moved from Home Based Care to Early Head Start (center-based care) in March 2017. She began EHS at one year old, weighing just 15 lbs., a weight so low that she was flagged for “failure to thrive,” falling below the 5th percentile on the growth chart. Malak rejected table food; she also refused to participate in classroom activities.

Malak is one of 43 children this year who were placed on an individual nutrition plan to address critical need for nourishment. Classroom teachers along with one of our Health Advocates worked closely with her and her family on achievable milestones, even supplementing Pediasure in the classroom during meal times. Simultaneously, EHS educators reviewed data and developed strategies to increase her classroom participation throughout the day.

Today, 8 months later, Malak is off of Pediasure and is eating all table foods. She is currently 21 lbs. and growing. Malak is also fully participating in classroom routines and activities. She has an amazing personality, is showing immense progress in language and enjoys playing with her friends in class. We look forward to watching her physical, social and emotional growth continue.
Belkis Sanchez moved from the Dominican Republic to Lynn with hopes of settling in and sending for her six-month-old daughter, Betsy. A single parent, she took a sales job and started earning money, but once reunited with her baby, she needed childcare to continue working. Sitters were costing her hundreds of dollars a week; money in, money out. There were times they were near homelessness.

**Belkis learned about LEO from a neighbor, and that conversation would plot her journey to success.** At first, LEO was just a nurturing place where she could leave her child while she worked. As time went on, the LEO staff observed Belkis interacting with her own child, and others as a parent volunteer; they saw potential in her.

She began with LEO as an assistant teacher, then a teacher, then a family case worker. She received her Associate Degree from North Shore Community College and her Bachelor’s Degree from Merrimack College. As her career grew, so did her family. Belkis is proud mother to three exceptional children: daughter Betsy is a graduate of Suffolk University; son Jose will graduate Bentley University in May; and her youngest, daughter Crisbeth, will finish Lynn Technical/Vocational School in June.

Belkis has also seen her share of despair in her time with LEO; nothing more devastating than the loss of her ten-month-old daughter, Destiney. Born with a heart defect, Destiney spent most of her life at Children’s Hospital, Boston. After two open heart surgeries, and many other invasive procedures,

Destiney’s small body surrendered. Belkis credits LEO for helping her regain focus. “Going back to work saved me.”

Recently promoted to the role of Community Engagement Specialist, Belkis now guides families who will hopefully follow in her shoes. “**LEO is my family. I want to do for them what they did for me.**”
Once she engaged with LEO’s child care programs, Catalina found there was also a job she could do at the agency, in between her course load, and while the children were at school. She accepted a position in the Transportation office, messaging between drivers, schools and parents to ensure students traveled safely and efficiently. That job would be the first of many at LEO.

Once Catalina graduated North Shore with her first Associate Degree in Management, she decided to return, earning a second Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. As a student, she worked as a classroom assistant. Ultimately, Catalina set her sights on obtaining her Bachelor’s Degree. When she made this decision, her daughter Clarinet was college age, but wavering in her commitment to higher education. “I told her if I am going you are coming with me!” Together, they made the weekly commute to Bay Path University. Catalina and Clarinet graduated in the same class!

In 2016 Catalina was promoted to Center Manager of the Blossom Head Start Center. She stands out as a role model for her dedication to teaching and learning. “LEO educated me as a professional, but they also made me a better parent. Family comes first with LEO; they always understood when I needed to care for my own children. That is something about the agency I really value.” Beside her eldest, Clarinet (now 25), she is mother to Georgie, Jr., 23, and Gealina, 15.
When Rona Henry moved here from the South, she did not have family or any support in the area. In fact, she didn’t move with much more than her children, and was apprehensive to leave them in outside care. She now has all three of her children in LEO programs. Her oldest daughter Julia is in our afterschool program, and her two little ones, Kendall and Cameron, are at our Jack Robinson Child Care Center.

Eager to find stable employment, Rona worked diligently with our staff and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to get into a job training program, and was ultimately accepted into a medical billing coding program at Salem Hospital.

She lives in the highlands and walks to JRCCC to drop the kids off at school. Most mornings Rona arrives early and plays games with her children in the driveway: I Spy, Red Light Green Light. Rona embodies the qualities of a fully engaged parent.

Success at LEO is measured in steps forward; moving each day toward a goal. Showing up for your children AND yourself.
Hungry for data?

Nurturing our families means caring about where their next meal is coming from.

Together with the Red Cross Mobile Food Truck, from 2016–2017, we handed out 1,120 bags of food.

At our largest distribution, we served 180 families.

In each bag, the Red Cross packs approximately 3 lbs. of chicken, a bag of onions, a bag of apples, eggs, juice, and healthy groceries totaling nearly 20 lbs. of food.

A kitchen staff of three at LEO prepares 2 meals plus snacks every day across our 4 childcare centers. Collectively, our sites have 43 children with individualized nutrition plans to address food allergies or proper growth and development benchmarks.

Breakfast: 40,282
Lunch: 34,923
Snacks: 53,951
Total: 129,156
Tasked with the enormous project of the Community Assessment Survey, Chief Program Officer Lilian Romero (standing) set the lofty goal of surveying 1000 Lynn residents. She assembled a rock star team of parent volunteers, including stand outs Thelma Velasquez (a member of the Board of Directors), Rosario Del Rosario, and Grisela Rojas Machado. Together they met people at schools, stores and churches, surpassing their goal. 67% of respondents were not LEO clients. Lynn Residents spoke honestly; we will meet their candor with dedication to these goals.

✓ Comfort and safeguard residents through fuel assistance and weatherization
✓ Provide quality education from cradle to career
✓ Make our immediate community safer and healthier by providing education on substance use disorder, directing those affected to quality local resources
✓ Improve community safety through increased community engagement
✓ Fight housing instability and homelessness through collaborative efforts in our service area

Join us in welcoming AmeriCorps VISTA member Peter Lorenz to the role of Community and Volunteer Engagement Coordinator. Peter has a Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Minnesota, where he double majored in Economics and Spanish. Fluent in Spanish, Peter is well prepared to serve the residents of Lynn, with the goal of engaging the community to support the mission of LEO as well as the partnering goals of the Impact Lynn collaborative. LEO is already benefiting from Peter’s insight and enthusiasm.
Warmth is not a luxury.

- This year the Fuel office served nearly 7,000 individuals.
- More than half the households served included a child under 17 or a senior citizen.
- 1 in 3 households is eligible for help with their heating and utility bills.

We assist...

✓ employed and unemployed
✓ subsidized and non-subsidized tenants
✓ families and individuals
✓ homeowners and renters

What is “weatherization”?

An everyday measure to secure and conserve the energy in your home.

This year, LEO's Weatherization team improved 160 homes by...

✓ replacing damaged oil tanks
✓ replacing unsafe or inoperable heating systems
✓ installing insulation and weather stripping
✓ conducting home energy audits and upgrades
The After School Program Is a Family Affair

Siblings Deisy De Leon Escobar, 12, Sammy Vasquez, 10, and Marilyn Vasquez De Leon, 7, moved to Lynn from New York City this past year. The move was difficult for the family, and the children were apprehensive to join an after school group that was already bonded. **What if they are mean? What if they don’t like us? Will there be anyone who can speak Spanish?**

Each of the children approached the program with a quiet perseverance. In the beginning they moved as a unit, playing only with each other. They were collectively nervous about the family style approach to eating. They invested in the routine, and became comfortable with sharing, passing and asking for more. Over time, their social circles have expanded widely.

The children are separated in school throughout the day, and light up when they make it back to LEO. Deisy is kind and known for her willingness to mother the youngest children in the program. Sammy is athletic and brings a soccer or basketball to play each day. He loves to be physical, and welcomes play from children of all ages, an unexpected quality in a ten-year-old boy. According to After School Program Supervisor, Kassandra Jackson, “Marilyn is everything creative. She loves art, music and dance. She is also a gentle soul, so forthcoming with her feelings.”

Education is important to the entire family. The children have near perfect attendance in the program. Both parents are involved in their progress and check in regularly to make sure time spent is both playful and academic. Welcome to the LEO family.
Partnerships and Affiliations

Action Inc.
American Latino Committee
American Red Cross Mobile Food Truck
Aspire, Inc.
Bridgewell
Catholic Charities
Centerboard
Children’s Friend and Family Services
Citizens Energy
City of Lynn
Community Giving Tree
Cradles to Crayons
Element Care
Elliott Community Human Services
Emergency Food & Shelter National Program
Enough Abuse Campaign
First Jobs
Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)
Greater Boston Food Bank
Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC)
Iglesia de Dios de la Profecia de Lynn
Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Ultimos Dios
Iglesia Pentecostes Rayo de Luz
JVS, Boston
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 Public Library
Lynn Public Schools
Lynn Shelter Association
Lynn YMCA
Lynnfield Council on Aging
MA Association for Community Action (MassCAP)
MA Coalition for the Homeless
MA Dept. of Children & Families (DCF)
MA Dept. of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
MA Dept. of Youth Services (DYS)
MA Head Start Association
MA Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
MA Working On Wellness
Ministerios Vision Christiana
Mission of Deeds
My Brother's Table
Nahant Council on Aging
New American Center
North Shore Career Center
North Shore Community College
North Shore Housing Action Group (NSHAG)
North Shore Women Infants and Children (WIC)
Northeast Justice Center Pathways
Project COPE, an affiliate of Bridgewell
Salem State University
Salvation Army
Saugus Senior Center
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
St. Joseph Parish
Swampscott Council on Aging
Toys for Tots
Wakefield Council on Aging
Zion Baptist Church
The 3rd Annual Best Trivia Night Ever was a swinging success! Everything was fantastic; food, drink, music, hilarious MC and the best guests an event could ask for. Big congrats to the winning team from Bridgewell who just can't be stopped! Thanks to all who sponsored and attended, nearly $30,000 was raised to improve programming. Thank you for believing in our mission.
LEO finished FY 2017 in a strong fiscal position. Federal grants remained stable, comprising the majority of our revenue and providing substantial support for child care, community services and energy assistance. As the agency has gained stature in the community, we have seen significant increases in private philanthropy—counting more than 80 generous gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations. This additional funding is critical; it allows us to broaden our reach, exploring and implementing new ways to deliver vital services.

LEO is especially grateful for its first $100,000 donor from the local community: the Demakes Families, who do business as Old Neighborhood Foods.

Sound financial management allowed us to invest in our staff, providing merit increases based on performance, years of service and education credentials. Attracting and retaining talented and dedicated employees is another way LEO can excel for the community we serve.

Revenue: $11,153,733
Expense: $10,731,500
Change in Net Assets: $427,994
## Philanthropic Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$500,000+</strong></td>
<td>National Grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$100,000+</strong></td>
<td>The Demakes Families – DBA Old Neighborhood Foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$10,000 – $25,000</strong></td>
<td>Amelia Peabody Foundation, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$5,000 – $9,999</strong></td>
<td>C.L. Hauthaway &amp; Sons Corp., Children’s Investment Fund (CIF), Essex County Community Foundation, Northshore Workforce Investment Board Working on Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$500 – $999</strong></td>
<td>Julie Kehoe, Lancelot Janitorial &amp; Paper Products, Inc., Laredo &amp; Smith, LLP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development (LHAND)
Lynn Kids Dental
The Kimball Group
Seth Moulton for Congress
Woodward & Higgs Insurance Agency Inc.

$250 – $499
A & M General Contracting Action Inc.
Birgitta & Scott Damon
Choate Hall & Stewart LLP
Donald L. Feldman DMD
Equitable Bank
Friendly Knights of St. Patrick
James Low
John Costigan & Janet Baronian
Joyce Reen
Marblehead Savings Bank
Partners Health Care
Robert F. Eastman
Rosie & Joel Segil
Siemasko + Verbridge
Sticca Contracting Co.
Todd Maio & Heather Fraser

$100 – $249
Bertram House of Swampscott
Billy Trahant
Catholic Charities North
Cynthia & Jerome McManus
Diane Perez
Elaine D. LeBrasseur
John & Bettyann Augeri
John Greenley
Kelly Martin
Kevin & Karen Donaher
Lauren & Eric Lomas
Marion & Kathleen Canizaro
Michael Duffley
Neal A. Price & Company, LLP
Pedram Javedan
Strategic Consulting Services

Gifts under $100
Anonymous
Elaine & Robert White
Eric P. Jacques
Erica Foss
Erin George
Fritz Mathis
IUE-CWA Local 201
Jared Camire
Johanna & Joe McEvoy
Karen Sutton Hair Studio
Larry Grant
Lisa Carrigan Bacik
Marisa Strano
Matt Vallis
Michael Turi
Nikolaus & Izabela Kennedy
Olivia Lyons
Sagan Realtors

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

Sara Johnson
Scott Courtney
Tim & Nezi Hoxha
Todd Linsky
Wendy Emerson
Yves & Ginny Mathis
Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc.
156 Broad Street
Lynn, MA 01901
Administrative Offices
Fuel Assistance
After School Child Care

Stepping Stones Family Child Care Center (Birth to 3)
35 Waitt Avenue
Lynn, MA 01902

Jack Robinson Child Care Center (ages 3 – 5)
38 Commercial Street
Lynn, MA 01905

Blossom Street Child Care Center (ages 3 – 5)
110 Blossom Street
Lynn, MA 01902

781.581.7220 | leoinc.org

Photos by Leise Jones and Anna Wistran Wolfe