

ATHENA AWARDS

Children's Institute congratulates Deborah Johnson, Director of National Services, on being a finalist for the 2015 Rochester ATHENA Award.



Congratulations to Deborah Johnson on being selected as one of this year's Rochester

area ATHENA Award nominees. Debbie has been with Children's Institute since 1993 and is currently the Director of National Services.

The ATHENA Award, an international program, was founded in 1982 to honor the achievements of exceptional women leaders and provide inspiration for other women to achieve excellence in their careers. Since the program began, more than 6,700 women leaders in over 500 communities have received the prestigious ATHENA Award in the United States and internationally.

Debbie first joined Children's Institute in 1993 as the Director of Community Services before becoming the Director of Primary Project in 1999. She holds a BA in Psychology from the University of California, an MS in Psychology from California State University, and an Ed.D. in Executive Leadership from St. John Fisher College. Debbie has been a member of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) since 1975 and is Co-Chair of Continuing Professional Development.



Debbie's accomplishments are too numerous to mention, but we have highlighted a few of her career achievements:

- Debbie is part of the leadership team within Children's Institute and oversees the management of Primary Project, a social-emotional program developed in Rochester in 1957, which is now found in over 1,000 schools throughout the United States and Canada.
- In her role as Director of Community Services (1993-2005) and current role as Director of National Services (2005-present), Debbie has been a key participant in Children's Institute strategic planning and has used data from outside agencies as well as internal feedback to help chart a stable plan for the future growth of Children's Institute.

- The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) 2014 Presidential Award has been awarded to Debbie in recognition of her collaboration, advocacy, and leadership on behalf of NASP. She has received the Presidential Award four previous times, including 1995, 1996, 2002, and 2013.
- Debbie's faith has taken her toward a new career path with an eventual goal of becoming an ordained minister in a Lutheran church. She has added the role of student, as seminarian, to her many other commitments at Children's Institute, with more demands being placed on her leadership skills and experience as the organization expands.

Children's Institute would like to also recognize another of this year's nominees, Susan Acker, First Vice President at Merrill Lynch and a former board member at Children's Institute. Special congratulations go out to this year's ATHENA Award recipient, Amy Tait, Chairman, CEO and president of Broadstone Real Estate. All the nominees are outstanding role models for professionals in our community.



Deborah Johnson (fourth from the right) pictured with other 2015 ATHENA Award finalists.

A Note from the Director

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

–MARGARET MEAD

One of the biggest assets that Children’s Institute has is the people who work here and our success is driven by the talent and passion of each and every staff and board member. This issue focuses on the people who are vital to the work of Children’s Institute. Every day, they demonstrate they care about changing the course of children’s lives and want to give them the best possible chance to succeed.

In many non-profits, it is difficult to keep talented staff for an extended length of time. Here at Children’s Institute, we have people who have been with us for many years and are known in the community for the dedication they bring to their work. There have been challenging times for Children’s Institute in the past, but we are now entering a period of renewed vision and potential growth. The staff and board tackles each challenge with a shared purpose to positively impact the social and emotional health of one million children by 2020, which is our new vision statement.

In addition to the current staff and board, Children’s Institute has been fortunate to have had many talented, professional people share their expertise and passion throughout our history and we have built on their successes. I thank them for their service as well as their continued interest in our progress.

Children’s Institute is also involved in many community initiatives that are working to improve the lives of children, including ROC the Future and Mayor Warren’s 3 by 3 Initiative. Each member of these groups brings years of experience as well as an extensive knowledge of poverty in Rochester and its effect on young children.

It takes the right people to make a change. I believe that Children’s Institute is well-positioned to be a force in this community and beyond because of the commitment, passion, and talent we have in our staff, board, volunteers, and supporters. Thank you.

–A. DIRK HIGHTOWER, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Staff and board members gather for a group picture. R to L, bottom to top – 1st row: Dirk Hightower, Terry Hartmann, Patricia Clancy, Arlene Bobin, Ellen Leopold, Richard Schwartz (board); 2nd row: Teale Fox, Mary Jo Strassell, Nancy Cook, Kathleen Embt, Jonathan Richwalder, Guillermo Montes; 3rd row: Chris Ranalletta, Melissa Reynolds Weber, Donna DePeters (board), Cindy Harper, Gene-marie Van Wagner; 4th row: Stas Lotyczewski, Kim Avery, Shelley Sanyshyn, Carol Gravetter (board), Lauri Brugger; 5th row: Mary Maiolo, Lynn Smith, Geri Cone, Edy Zordan, and Georgia Miller. (Staff not pictured: Marjorie Allan, Jason Brundage, Stephen Cook, Jill Halterman, Deborah Johnson, Jeff Kaczorowski, Moria Story, and Cyndie Walker).

Children's Institute staff support community voluntarism

Children's Institute has been a valuable resource in Rochester for over fifty years as we've focused on improving the lives of children, families, and communities. Our employees believe in the spirit of voluntarism and help support a variety of programs throughout the area. Following are a few of the ways that Children's Institute staff are positively impacting other organizations and people in our community.

Kim Avery (Early Care and Education Specialist) teaches a weekly religion class for kindergarteners at St. Rita's in Webster as well as volunteering as the Community Events and Webelos Coordinator for Boy Scout Troop 108 in Webster. As the Community Events Coordinator, she coordinates volunteer opportunities for the boys to earn service hours as well as supporting the community's areas of need. **"My son, Ian, has been in scouting since he was in first grade and plans on becoming an Eagle Scout."**

Arlene Bobin (Senior Project Coordinator) volunteers once a month at the Blessed Sacrament Soup Kitchen. She helps serve people in need who come for a hot meal. Arlene also volunteers as a driver for the Greece Food Shelf. Three or four times a year, she picks up food to distribute to three families during the month. Arlene is involved with both programs because, **"I like to feed people."** Arlene is also an usher for Geva's Mainstage and Nextstage performances and loves to see the wonderful plays that are held there.

Teale Fox (COMET Product Manager) chairs the Planned Parenthood young professionals committee called 'REAL' (Rising Educators, Ambassadors, and Leaders). Charged with engaging the next generation of Planned Parenthood supporters, the committee does a mix of outreach, advocacy, education, and fundraising. Most of the work focuses around sexual health education and increased access and awareness about Planned Parenthood services. Teale got involved because it's a topic she's passionate about: **"I think access and education around sexual health empowers young people, and specifically young women, to be able to make informed choices. I also think, in Rochester, where we struggle with combating poverty, an organization that provides health services to all demographics is important."**

Cindy Harper (Senior Development Manager) volunteers with Rochester City School #54 in the Lyell-Otis neighborhood. She helps support a sixth grade girl's group called the "Blossoms" which teaches them about empowerment, manners, and envisioning their futures. Cindy and her 15-year-old daughter Laney collect various toiletry items so that each girl will have a "be prepared" bag, donate items to recognize positive behaviors, and help celebrate birthdays with the girls. They also help with a food backpack program for students at that school, in conjunction with the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsford, who fills 50 backpacks per week for students who face food insecurity on weekends.



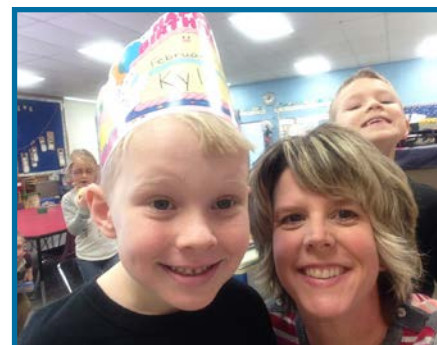
"I want to see these girls imagine a world where they can be successful in high school, college, and beyond – even with the challenges of poverty all around them."

Terry Hartmann (Director of Finance and Operations) has been a Trustee, Treasurer, and Finance Committee Chair at Geva Theatre Center for the past six years. He became involved with Geva because, **"A good friend asked me to and I felt I could help. Since then I've helped a bit, but have gained so much more – learning about theater (not a subject usually taught in engineering and business courses) and meeting so many wonderful people."**



For over 20 years, Terry has also been a member of the Rochester Chapter of Financial Executives International as a past president and current board member. He has also supported his wife Eileen's volunteer efforts for many years, including National Women's Hall of Fame, American Association of University Women, and Fairport Dollars for Scholars.

Lynn Smith (Social Worker) volunteers at Byron-Bergen Elementary School. **"My son, Kyle, is a kindergarten student and this is a way for me to be involved for lots of reasons – most importantly to get a feel of what his day is like, the learning that takes place, and how I can piggy back at home what he does at school. I'm also able to get to know his teacher and his friends at school."**



At various times, Lynn is able to help out in his classroom both for instruction time and/or fun activities like celebrations. She is also part of the school's STEP Boosters (parent organization) that offers events for families and elementary school students. In addition, Lynn is a horse lover and member of the Western NY Appaloosa Association that presents an annual horse show for the community.

Mary Jo Strassell (Grants Support Assistant) volunteers at a local hospice where she is called a friendly visitor; she visits patients in homes, hospitals, and out-patient settings. Depending on the need, volunteers might do any of the following activities: prepare meals, read stories, wheel patients to flower gardens, or just sit quietly with a person. Mary Jo shared that, **"Really, it's just about showing up for someone and being fully present with them in their time of need."**

Staff presentations

Kim Avery, Early Care and Education Specialist, presented “The Stage of Change model of professional development” at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference in Dallas, TX. (November 2014)

Guillermo Montes, Director of Research and Evaluation, and **Jill Halterman**, Medical Director, presented “Characteristics of children whose parents report they no longer have autism spectrum disorder (ASD)” at the 5th Congress of the European Academy of Pediatric Societies in Barcelona, Spain. (October 2014)

Edy Zordan, School Psychologist, presented at the New York Association of School Psychologists (NYASP) conference, “Promoting wellness in the classroom and beyond” in Albany, NY. Her presentation, titled “A system of supports to promote social-emotional development of young children in child care settings,” was written by Edy Zordan, Deborah Johnson, Moria Story, and Arlene Bobin. (November 2014)

Welcome aboard



Fernán R. Cepero, MA, MS, PHR, joined the board of directors of Children’s Institute. He is the Chief Human Resources Officer for the YMCA of Greater Rochester. He has also

served as an Employee Development Manager for The Perrier Group of America where his responsibilities included recruiting, employee development, and ensuring effective succession planning.

Fernán serves on the faculty at Medaille College and the University of Phoenix. He is Immediate Past President of the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (GVCSHRM) and served as State Director of the New York State Society of Human Resource Management. He is on the boards of the Ibero-American Action League and the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School and also is an active member of the Senior Human Resource Executive Forum of the Rochester Business Alliance.

Fernán has an MS in Human Resource Development from Rochester Institute of Technology, an MA in Foreign Studies from the American University, and a BA from Fordham University.



Dennis M. DeLeo, JD, joined the Board of Directors of Children’s Institute. He holds a BA from the University of Rochester, a JD from the University of Chicago Law School,

and completed the Advanced Management Program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Business. Denny is currently President of the Venture Jobs Foundation and a Senior Partner at Trillium Group, which he co-founded in 1997. Trillium is a Rochester-based venture capital and private equity firm. Prior to founding Trillium Group, he was employed by Eastman Kodak Company, initially in the corporate legal division followed by executive assignments in technology development and operations. He also served as President and CEO of Eastman Technology, Inc., a Kodak subsidiary formed to launch businesses based on leading-edge technologies.



PRESENTED BY CHILDREN’S INSTITUTE

Save the Date: September 26 & 27, 2015

Children’s Institute is rolling out a new fundraiser – “Kids and Trucks!” Plan to bring your kids and experience up to fifty different trucks – a unique opportunity to climb on trucks and explore. Children’s Institute is thrilled to carry on this event, which was originally presented by the Western New York chapter of the American Liver Foundation for many years. A special thank you goes to Nancy Koris, Past Executive Director of the Western New York chapter. She began this fundraiser many years ago and now turns it over to us, ensuring that this family-friendly event will continue to be offered to children all over Rochester! Please visit our website for event information and online ticket purchasing.



Kimberly A. Valentine, DC, joined the Board of Directors of Children’s Institute. Kimberly is a Doctor of Chiropractic with over 30 years of experience in the

field of complementary and alternative medicine. Kimberly’s passion and focus is on biopsychosocial health care, mindfulness practice, and Eastern and Western healthcare practices. She maintains continuing chiropractic education and training in pregnancy, pediatric, and wellness care and often lectures on the topics of Stress Management, Medicine and Spirituality, and Raising Healthy Children. Kimberly has been actively involved in professional local, state, and national associations as well as volunteering with local charity and church committees. Kimberly has been blessed by 26 years of marriage to her husband and 25 years of motherhood to her two beautiful daughters.

Dan Draper named as a finalist for 2015 ESL Jefferson Award

Children's Institute recently nominated Dan Draper for this year's ESL Jefferson Award and is proud to announce he has been selected as one of the finalists. We are grateful for his tremendous contribution to our organization, as well as many other non-profits in our community.

During his career, Dan held many management positions within Kodak, both locally and across the globe. He then was one of three original founding consultants of the DPV Group which specialized in marketing strategies, organizational review, and turnaround strategies for businesses across the country and internationally. Dan began volunteering here five years ago and started by working with staff and leadership to develop a value proposition for Children's Institute. In simple terms, a value proposition is a series of decisions as to what we will ask customers to do, what products and services they will be asked to buy and use, and what specific experiences the business will cause the customer to have as a result. This is far from what most non-profits use in their planning and was tremendously beneficial in guiding our strategic planning.

Dan worked with us to develop new programs that reach thousands of children using this model, including our RECAP program which is a community-wide quality assessment for pre-k classrooms. He also laid the groundwork for a spin-off partnership with SophiTec, a local technology firm, with a focus on developing the COMET® system to track children's progress in after-school programs through attendance, individualized assessments, and program evaluations. He served on the Advisory Board of this roll-out and provided valuable guidance on requirements to provide useful data to customers using this product.

Deborah Willsea, a former Children's Institute board member and community volunteer wrote, "Dan's strategic vision and dedication to facilitating positive organizational change has significantly benefited the Rochester community. Dan's expertise and his tremendous time commitment to each community-focused endeavor have served as an influential beacon for all who have had the privilege of working with him. Dan is indeed an 'unsung hero' who deserves to be recognized for his profound community impact."

In response to his nomination and selection as a finalist, Dan shared that, "I am very thankful that the focus of much of my time this past 5 years has been with Children's Institute. Providing input, perspective, and advice is only gratifying when it gets used. For Children's Institute, this means delivering more and better evidenced-based programs that can be used to improve the life outcomes of a greater number of children. I just love seeing the Institute succeed and knowing they have the capacity to continue to do so for many years."

Congratulations and many thanks to Dan Draper for his work at Children's Institute.



Dan Draper (pictured on right) meets with Executive Director Dirk Hightower.

Helping children adjust to family transitions



Picture a young child who watches as her mom or dad goes away one day, knowing that s/he will be gone for a long time. The child knows that her parent is working to keep us safe. Her parent is in the military and is being deployed. Children may not always understand why they are going, just that it is going to be a long time and they are often sad and sometimes afraid. This scene repeats itself in communities around the country and often these service members are members of the National Guard or a reservist. Research has found that children of these service members feel more loneliness and disengagement than those of active duty who often live near a military installation. What they are experiencing and feeling is "invisible" to teachers and after-school providers unless the family or child shares this information. Based on census data, we estimate that there are approximately 2,600 children in the greater Rochester area who have a parent or sibling who is currently a member of the military.

Children's Institute knows that disruptions to family life and fear for their family member's safety affect a child's ability to learn and attend to the daily requirements of school. Through play, children can express their feelings about their family and transitions such as a military deployment or other changes at home. Thanks to funding from the American Legion, ESL, and Tompkins Charitable Trust, Children's Institute has distributed the "Possibilities of Play: Building Connections" DVD to schools, veteran's organizations, and Boys and Girls Clubs around the country - along with local workshops for school mental health professionals. The DVD explores both the joyful and serious sides of play and why play is so important to the healthy development of children.

Visit our website to purchase The Possibilities of Play DVD.

Children's Institute website a finalist for "Best of the Web" Award

Last year, Children's Institute recognized that our website needed to be upgraded to add more online functions that are considered vital for growth with today's technology. At the same time, we also made the decision to bring the website design function back in-house. **Jonathan Richwalder**, Systems Administrator, and **Mary Maiolo**, Senior Graphics Coordinator, began work and implemented online donations, product ordering, and training registrations – all functions previously completed manually by staff. Each update went smoothly and was quickly accepted by our customers and donors.



We submitted a nomination for a "Best of the Web" and were selected as a nominee for the Digital Rochester's Business Transformation Award. Per the Rochester Business Journal criteria, this award is given to a Rochester-area firm that has transformed its business through the Web. Past finalists and winners have demonstrated business success gained by using the Web for strategic growth, harnessing cutting edge technology in website launches, mastering unique Web functionality, or by making a significant impact on their organization through the exploration of online technologies. Other finalists in this category included Draft Sharks (draftsharks.com), JMS Capital Management Inc. (jms-cm.com), and Roberts Wesleyan College (roberts.edu)

Visit www.childrensinstitute.net to see our new and improved look!

Recent grant funding

Thank you to...

- **Rochester's Child** for grant funding to do developmental screening for three-year-olds in the city of Rochester and evaluate preschool programs for key quality measures.
- **The Child Care Council of Suffolk County** for providing consultation funding for children who were victims of Super Storm Sandy.
- **The Tower Foundation** (through the Center for Governmental Research) for funding the collection of community data to determine the impact of their efforts in four key funding areas – substance abuse, mental health, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities.

Listen to WXXI radio this spring for spots about Children's Institute – we're reaching out to the community!

... **Primary Project** program works to help thousands of pre-k to third grade children affected by emotional and behavioral challenges adjust to school each year.

... **RECAP** partnership evaluates preschool programs across the community to support children as they begin their journey through school.

... **Children's Institute**, working to advance the social and emotional health of young children in Rochester and beyond for more than 50 years. Its programs aim to change the lives of one million children by 2020.

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News & Views

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