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WHAT A DIFFERENCE A NIGHT MADE!

Community Supporters Provide \$240,000 In Scholarships For At-Risk Preschoolers To Receive High Quality Education



ST. LOUIS, March 28, 2016 — What a difference a night made! SouthSide Early Childhood Center (SouthSide) celebrated 130 years with the 2016 “Champions for Children” Gala Dinner & Auction, held on March 5, 2016 at the Ritz-Carlton in Clayton, MO. Breaking records, over 380 guests raised \$240,000 in scholarships for at-risk preschoolers to receive the high quality education they deserve at the region’s leading expert in early childhood education!

With a goal of raising \$100,000 during the scholarship fund paddle-raise alone, SouthSide surpassed expectations within two minutes and provided 26 children with during the paddle-raise, a record amount for the 130 year-old early childhood center.



Honorary Chairs Neil and Rachel Rackers

Former NFL star Neil Rackers and local personality Rachel Rackers served as Honorary Chairs for the evening’s festivities . Both Neil and Rachel Rackers have been longtime advocates for children and became avid supporters of SouthSide when they moved to St. Louis. Neil even auctioned off his team at the SouthSide Scramble Golf Tournament on June 9th to raise scholarships for the children at SouthSide!

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SouthSide named their coveted “Champions for Children” with an awards ceremony highlighting their work for the children and families at the region’s leading preschool.

Gina Hoagland, Owner of Collaborative Strategies, Inc., was awarded the “Champion for Children” title for her twenty years of service on SouthSide’s Board of Directors and Advisory Council. When presented with the honor, Gina dedicated the award to the teachers and staff at SouthSide.



Gina Hoagland, Owner of Collaborative Strategies, Inc. and Champion for Children

The Gateway Chapter of the National Charity League was honored as a “Champion for Children” for their philanthropic works benefiting the children and families SouthSide – volunteering at events and in classes, coordinating diaper drives and providing childcare during parent meetings. Nina Abboud accepted the award on behalf of the organization comprised of mothers and their teenage daughters.

Coat-a-Kid was named a “Champion for Children” as well for their many years of providing winter coats and gloves to keep the children at SouthSide warm during the coldest months. Carolyn Cotta, lifetime Board Member, accepted the honor on behalf of Coat-a-Kid.



Gala Co-Chair Courtney Reeves Toder and Board Member Alice C. Benner

Overjoyed with the record-breaking generosity from community members at the event, SouthSide will be able to provide 48 scholarships for early education and family services to at-risk preschoolers in the south city area with family incomes that fall below the poverty level. What a difference a night made!

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About SouthSide Early Childhood Center

SouthSide’s mission is to nurture, educate and inspire children and families in a diverse and inclusive environment, promoting healthy development and a strong foundation for success. Our vision, since our founding in 1886, is that every child will love to learn, live a purposeful life, and contribute positively to the community. Our hands-on, research-based curriculum, coupled with an extensive in-house network of early intervention services for children who face



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developmental or mental health challenges, ensures every child will have the skills needed to succeed. Our Family Partnership Program connects families with resources to help them be strong advocates in their child's education, and to help provide a safe and secure home. SouthSide Early Childhood Center, formerly South Side Day Nursery, is a proud member of the United Way of Greater St. Louis. Find us online at www.southside-ecc.org; Twitter [@SouthSideECC](https://twitter.com/SouthSideECC); and Facebook [SouthSideEarlyChildhoodCenter](https://www.facebook.com/SouthSideEarlyChildhoodCenter).

About United Way of Greater St. Louis

The United Way funds nearly 200 health and human service agencies located throughout a 16-county area in Missouri and Illinois. More than one million people in our bi-state community receive services that strengthen families, help the elderly, keep children healthy and safe, and build stronger neighborhoods. For more information, contact [314-421-0700](tel:3144210700) or visit www.stl.unitedway.org.