

FROM: THE CHILD CENTER OF NY

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For Immediate Release

**AFTER ONE YEAR, THE CHILD CENTER OF NY CELEBRATES SUCCESS
OF ITS GROUNDBREAKING DIRECT CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Initial \$1.5M investment from Phyllis Backer Foundation Inc. allowed the Cash+Community Works initiative to empower and support 300 low-income families in 2022

NEW YORK—A year after receiving a generous \$1.5 million commitment from the Phyllis Backer Foundation, [The Child Center of NY](#) (TCCNY) announces the success of its pioneering Cash+Community Works program, which assisted 300 low-income families in Queens and Manhattan in its first year. The program, which launched in early 2022, invests in under-resourced families with capital, trusts them with power, and connects them with peers. Via a \$200 monthly stipend and additional microgrants, and the support of regular peer-to-peer networking with other program participants, families participating in Cash+Community Works have created community improvement projects, saved critical funds towards improving their housing situations, created or expanded small businesses, and more.

Participating families receive stipends of \$200/month for eighteen months (\$3,600 total) and an \$800 transition-to-independence grant upon exit. Each family joins a close-knit cohort, journaling and participate in peer network meetings on a monthly basis. Many cohorts are using their collective power and stipend money to improve and give back to their communities. Examples include:

- Organizing a backpack giveaway for neighborhood children, using their stipends to purchase the bags and the schools supplies with which they filled them.
- Improving the neighborhood playground, installing new lighting for safety, and restoring functionality of the bathrooms. This same cohort, all residents of NYCHA’s Hammel Houses in Far Rockaway, also banded together to advocate for improvements to the building and grounds, which were damaged by Hurricane Sandy.
- Expanding a nearby community garden, and selling (and giving away, for those who can’t afford them) plates of food prepared with fruits and vegetables grown in the garden.

Others are using funds to pay for enrichment classes and camps for their children, obtaining a driver’s license by using stipend money to pay for testing and other mandatory fees the participant was not previously able to afford, and beyond.

“Our measure of success of this program isn’t just in numbers: we’re looking for social gains, better material conditions for children, a sense of improved neighborhood vitality, and more. The progress made by families participating in Cash+Community Works reaffirms what we were already confident in, and that’s the creativity, resourcefulness, and social consciousness of those living in the communities we have been active in helping for years,” said Traci Donnelly, CEO of The Child Center of NY. “Our participants have used their resources in a way that doesn’t just positively impact them, but their

families, peers, and wider community. This is a transformative economic experiment that is working, because we are directly investing in the strengths and ingenuity of the families we serve—predicated on our belief that families know what’s best for themselves. The proof is in the results of this first year, and we can’t wait to see what the future brings.”

“We are very happy to support this innovative approach to addressing community needs,” stated the Phyllis Backer Foundation’s Board of Directors.

Subsequent donations from the William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation and The Gottesman Fund have also assisted TCCNY in expanding the program’s scope and maximizing support for its cohorts.

Cash+Community Works is specifically designed to accommodate low-income families, and eligible participants must live in or close to the neighborhoods of Elmhurst/Corona, Far Rockaway, or East Harlem. Individuals interested in learning more about Cash+Community Works can click [here](#) or visit <https://childcenterny.org>.

About The Child Center of NY:

Our mission is to strengthen children and families with skills, opportunities, and emotional support to build healthy, successful lives. Founded in 1953, The Child Center is a multiservice organization that annually reaches more than 43,000 children, adults, and families each year through 100 programs, 60 school and community locations, and virtual and home-based programs.

The Child Center works in six main program areas: early childhood education; behavioral health; residential services; prevention and family support; health homes and integrated care; and youth development. The Child Center serves children and families in all five New York City boroughs, as well as Long Island. To learn more, please visit <https://childcenterny.org/>.