

THE VILLAGER

✦ SPRING 2023

EARLY LEARNING CENTER CREATES SAFE, TRAUMA-INFORMED ENVIRONMENTS



Early Childhood teacher Hazel sits with Benny in their Safe Place

The teachers and administration at the Warren Village United Airlines Early Learning Center (ELC) work every day to create safe, enriching, and trauma-informed environments in their classrooms. Teachers create trauma-informed classrooms by implementing the following characteristics: predictability, knowledge about how trauma affects students, physical safety, non-judgment, and self-awareness. Teachers rely on a holistic approach and a social-emotional curriculum, which support the needs of the diverse student population enrolled.

"Every child is unique and has different needs. It takes patience and knowledge to get to know each child. It's not one-size-fits-all," says Medish Ataman, Learning Center Assistant Director - Operations. "We have to figure out what strategies, tools, or techniques benefit the needs of each particular child." So what tools do Warren Village ELC teachers have in their tool belts to help children grow and thrive?

Conscious Discipline® and Positive Language

One of the tools that some teachers are beginning to use is Conscious Discipline®, a trauma-informed, adult-first methodology that helps teachers impart social-emotional competencies to young children, while also helping to develop these same skills internally for themselves. Conscious Discipline® is a disciplinary model designed to support children who have experienced trauma by allowing them to connect with trusted caregivers, develop a sense of self-behavior regulation, and learn new and powerful life skills. Strategies emphasize practices that build safety, connection and problem solving. Another tool teachers use is positive language. Here, a teacher will use language that focuses on what a child who is acting out is expected to do, rather than what they should not do. If a child is standing on a table, a teacher may say, "Feet on the floor. Keep our feet on the floor," instead of "Don't stand on the table, get down." Using positive language can help build up our children and create a supportive classroom community.

A Safe Place

Self-regulation happens most in the classrooms with older children. When a child has big emotions and challenging behaviors, the teacher gives them time and space to calm down before talking with and coaching them. Each classroom in the ELC has a Safe Place with sensory toys that are geared toward calming a child down. A teacher will direct a child to the Safe Place, and let them reflect as they begin to calm down, checking in with them, and asking how they're feeling. "Once they're out of that charged place and have calmed down, there are self-regulation techniques like the pretzel, the fountain, or the balloon breathing," says LiShanna Langley, Learning Center Assistant Director - Child Health and Enrollment.



Rylee plays with her favorite sensory toy in her classroom's Safe Place

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Hazel helps Benny put on noise blocking headphones in their Safe Place

Children as young as toddlers can learn breathing techniques. Hazel W., who teaches 2- and 3-year olds, talks through and names big emotions and feelings with the children in her classroom. "We tell them, 'Your body is safe even though you may not feel safe,'" she says. Hazel also uses gentle touch to a child's shoulders or arms as a physical sensory experience to connect the mind with the body.

One Word

Sometimes it takes something as seemingly simple as the consistent routine of a kind word or gesture. Medish remembers a young student who had behavioral issues, and who would come into the classroom every morning, dump everything on the shelves onto the floor, lay on the floor, and have a tantrum. Medish observed the student, and a word came to her head: *Darling*. "I don't even know where it came from, but I started calling him Darling," she says. "We came to a point in the mornings where his mom would be with him, and they would see me, sometimes at the end of the hallway, and he would come and hug me." The change was real. The student's tantrums stopped. He

no longer threw things in the classroom. He and his mother had made a positive, sincere, and trusting connection with Medish, and things began to get easier.

With these tools and techniques, our ELC teachers are prepared to find the best ways to support their young students. Even on tough days, our amazing teachers impact the children in positive ways that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. This is the two-generation approach in action. ELC staff supports the growth of the younger generation, while their parents have access to the support and resources they need to grow, too.



Left: Silas plays with a sensory toy that moves water and glitter back and forth in his classroom's Safe Place



Right: Finley proudly shows off the Safe Place in his classroom

WAYS TO GIVE TO WARREN VILLAGE

Did you know there are several ways to make an impact at Warren Village? Most people know that you can contribute through traditional means, like over the phone, sending a check in the mail, or making an online donation, but Warren Village accepts several other options for giving that help secure the vital resources for the families that we serve. To learn more, please visit warrenvillage.org/ways-to-give or contact Austin Locke at alocke@warrenvillage.org or 303.320.5056.

Monthly Subscription Giving

This is a convenient way to support Warren Village. Monthly giving provides a dependable base of support and ensures that we have resources for families every day.

Asset or Stock Gifts

This is an easy way to make a non-cash gift. These charitable gifts may lead to enhanced tax benefits and additional savings.

Wills, Trusts, and Estate Gifts

Include Warren Village in your estate plans. Directing all or a portion of your estate to Warren Village ensures that the work we do will continue in perpetuity.

Gifts Through a Donor Advised Fund

Through work with a sponsoring organization like Fidelity Charitable or Charles Schwab Charitable, you can establish a fund and make tax-deductible contributions to Warren Village.

THE STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIP

From Our President & CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

At Warren Village, relationships and trust are the foundation for change in our community. Warren Village offers something we all want—the chance to be a part of positive community change, to be a part of something that is bigger than any single person, the chance to connect, and to witness transformation first hand. Whether it’s our friends at AAA Colorado who provided coats and winter accessories for our families, or ELC teachers like Hazel, who tirelessly ensures our children learn and grow every day - together, through our shared values, we can ensure our strong, hardworking single moms (and dads) have the opportunity to change the trajectory of their lives.



Partnership and community are themes that resonate throughout this issue. You’ll read about the path to sustainable housing our residents take with the support of our Family Services team. You’ll learn about our efforts toward building a more inclusive workplace. And, you’ll get an update on our third campus and the impact it will have for 89 additional families as they build their community in southwest Denver. Collectively, through the community created amongst and between the residents themselves, and the one that is defined by the many partner agencies who come together to support our families, we can have a demonstrable impact in Denver and beyond.

To all of you – our supporters, donors, and volunteers—we welcome you to take some time and walk through the halls of our campus, to be reminded of how you contribute to building our community and how very important this community has been, is, and will continue to be to our families.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ethan Hemming'.

Ethan Hemming, President & CEO

PROGRESS ON WARREN VILLAGE AT ALAMEDA

Warren Village staff, Board, and our developer team continue their relentless pursuit of creating more affordable housing, supportive services, and early education and care for single-parent families in Denver. “89” has become the clarion call—representing the number of families who will be served at the new campus on Alameda in late 2024. The project achieved a significant milestone in November when Warren Village earned approximately \$26,000,000 in federal low-income housing tax credits. This funding constitutes approximately 50% of the funding needed. The review and award process was competitive and represents a critical validation of the campus, the model, and our long-term efforts to increase services and meet growing demand.



Rendering of Warren Village at Alameda | SAR+ Architects

Warren Village has carefully measured the demand for supportive services for single parents in Denver for many years. Interpolating from the most recent Metro Denver State of Homelessness report, we estimate there are between 200 and 400 single-parent families in need of supportive and affordable housing, services, education, and early care. Additional sources of information, inclusive of our wait lists, further validate the need for more supports like those we will be offering. This project represents a significant and needed step forward in meeting that demand in our community. The team’s momentum will only increase this spring. Much internal work continues on the financial side of the process. If all goes accordingly to plan, we will close the financial deal in May and break ground in June. This project would not be possible without the leadership of our board, a hard-working staff, and the generous support of key foundations in Denver and the taxpayers. Most importantly, we continue to be driven by the 89 families who are houseless or unstably housed today who will soon find a safe home, transformative services, and early education and care for their children.

WARREN VILLAGE CONTINUES COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



In July 2022, Warren Village took the next step in its commitment to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment by hiring consultant Candace Johnson. Candace specializes in generative collective process and training around education and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), or as Candace shares, equity, justice, and anti-oppression.

This is the mentality that Candace brings to her work with Warren Village—the knowledge, language, and skills to begin to create change within systems through trainings, providing thought leadership on projects, and supporting the organization's staff-led DEI Committee. One such project was building a racial equity decision-making tool. "The tool is a series of questions and prompts to help people consider the impact on racial and ethnic groups to see if a decision will be something that perpetuates deeper oppression or that adds a benefit and helps to undo oppression and racism," describes Candace.

"There are so many big decisions that are made—from selecting vendors to implementing programs to interacting with donors." Candace has also helped edit job descriptions, making sure the language encourages a full range of diverse and talented candidates to apply, and reaffirms the organization's commitment to building an inclusive workplace.

In addition, Candace has led many staff trainings and has been a listening ear for staff members to share things they are experiencing in the workplace. "The idea was to come in and do base level ground setting trainings for the staff so there can be a shared language and shared tools of analysis," she says. "A lot of the trainings have been based on what staff members have been bringing up, things they are facing here in the workplace." During her nine months working with Warren Village, Candace has noticed a lot of reality checks within the organization, investment in the work, and a lot of work still to be done. "The desire to support staff at interrupting your thinking and being more intentional around harms and benefits to people according to their race and identities is really powerful. As long as there is an earnest effort and commitment, it may be slow, but you will be moving in the right direction."

The organization's commitment to building an inclusive workplace is ongoing. "The journey didn't start with me coming on. It's been something that Warren Village has been committed to for the past few years," reflects Candace. "I've seen a trajectory and progression toward deeper investment and commitment from Warren Village, and that's really heartening and promising."

BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWS

Warren Village is tremendously grateful to our Board of Trustees for their tireless work to advance the mission of the organization. One of our key strategic goals is to build the capacity, breadth, and diversity of our Board. Over the last six months, we were thrilled to welcome the following new Board members, each of whom, brings passion, expertise, and a willingness to help take Warren Village to the next level: Carla Ladd, Founder and President, IIMS, L.L.C; Cristen Lawton, Partner, KPMG LLP; John Shellenberger, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Johns Manville. We will be welcoming new Board members this spring, and are excited to welcome them in the next issue of *The Villager*. For a complete listing of our Board members, please visit WarrenVillage.org/#board-of-trustees.



Carla Ladd



Cristen Lawton



John Shellenberger

THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE HOUSING



Housing and Finance Navigator Ashley Rimler meets with a resident to go over her housing and finance plan

Warren Village is a safe, affordable, and supportive place to live. Residents have access to resources and programming to support them as they work to change the trajectory of their lives and achieve economic mobility and independence. So what happens when residents are ready to move out and how do they reach that major milestone? The process begins with a resident finding their footing and settling in when they move into Warren Village and connecting with their family advocate, and it ends with that resident moving out to stable housing. Residents navigate the path to sustainable housing with Family Services staff, specifically Housing and Finance Navigator, Ashley Rimler, and Housing Continuum Assistant Director, Lynn Halfmann.

"When a resident first moves in, we let them settle in with their family advocate and assess what emergency services they might need," says Lynn. "Do they have income? Do they have furniture? Do they have kids in school? Do they need mental health services?" After about three months, the resident meets with advocates to figure out whether they would like to focus on education or career or both. Ashley then meets with them to create a housing and finance plan. Together, they go over the resident's finances, education and career goals, and housing goals. Ashley will pull their credit score, one of the most important pieces of information in the process, and together they assess any barriers the resident may need to overcome to reach those goals. Residents most often come to Warren Village with a low credit score, high debt to income ratio, debt to a landlord, or evictions. These financial barriers, many of which are results of inequitable and oppressive systems, keep them from getting into subsidized housing, renting at full-market value, or getting homeownership loans.



Warren Village alum and new homeowner Reba and her children in the doorway of their house

To raise credit scores, residents participate in rent reporting, as well as financial education classes. Warren Village is a Financial Empowerment Center through the City and County of Denver. "We have a free financial counselor who residents meet with on Zoom," says Lynn. "Residents are most successful when they meet with the financial counselor every month." In addition, Ashley teaches three Life Skills Classes about rent reporting, and housing application education and navigation. Ashley and Lynn are passionate about empowering residents with the education and knowledge, and to let them become the experts. "Our hope is that residents leave here with the knowledge they need, and are confident about their housing options and their rights as a renter or homeowner," says Lynn.



Warren Village alum and new homeowner Jada and her daughter Gabriella in their new house

Housing plans look different for every resident. They may see themselves in subsidized rental housing, full-market rental housing, or maybe homeownership. After residents learn about the different options, Ashley signs off on each housing plan. Then, when they meet one-on-one over the next two years, they can update the plan, pivot if needed, and discuss and assess housing offers as they come up. Recently Lynn and Ashley have seen residents really leaning into their housing dreams, putting in the hard financial work, and achieving their goals. Seven residents purchased homes upon exiting in the last year, and 93% of residents have permanent housing when they leave Warren Village. "At the end of the day, it's the residents who are really working on every single thing," says Ashley. "To see that confidence build over time, it's my favorite part."

BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPOTLIGHT: CAROLINE TURNER



Caroline Turner is a longtime member of the Board of Trustees, and has held leadership positions including Secretary and President of the Board. She is a loyal donor and advocate for Warren Village. She has supported the growth of the organization for decades and has an understanding of the needs of the community we serve. We asked Caroline to reflect on her history with us and her continued involvement.

How did you first become involved with Warren Village?

It was decades ago. I was a mother of teenagers—a boy and a girl—and I thought, *Well, they're going to be out of the house in a few years, I should find some good volunteer work, but not yet.* I got involved in an organization that led me to somebody who said, “You should know about Warren Village.” The minute I heard about Warren Village, all that stuff about not getting engaged yet went out the window. I was blown away by the mission.

What has changed at Warren Village since you got involved all those years ago?

I think the Warren Village program has shown more flexibility than we used to have, like allowing residents to stay longer if they're close to getting a degree. Technology has changed how residents access information, and has created a need for on-site computer labs. The kinds of job opportunities available to residents have changed.

What about growth at Warren Village?

The growth has been happening in little ways ever since I got involved. I remember sitting in a strategic planning session where we did goal statements, and one of the goals was to serve more people. We did studies to see if we could add space at 1323 Gilpin, which wasn't worth the cost for the space we would get. We have First Step now, and Ivy Crossing. We know that it takes the housing, the Learning Center, the Family Services, and the community. The residents are neighbors; they help and support each other. When things don't work, they are there for each other. I think that community part will be true at our third campus on Alameda or any other place we expand to.

When Ethan first came on as President and CEO, I gave him the pitch about how Warren Village needs to be serving more people, how we can replicate this model, and how we can teach it to other people and transform public policy. I can't wait to be at that groundbreaking for our third campus.

Are there parts of your professional career that connect with the Warren Village mission?

I was the first female Senior Vice President and General Counsel of (Molson) Coors. I was the first woman to get in the C-Suite. I had my head bruised on the glass ceiling. I was in that generation that was breaking into traditionally men's roles. I thought that if we as women in the workplace knew and supported each other, life would be better. I'm a real believer in women's abilities, and in doing the work in my fields to remove the obstacles women face. Warren Village supports women—it supports all single parents, but mostly single mothers—and creates that community.

What do you hope for when you look at Warren Village's future?

I want Warren Village to be better known for what we do, because I do think we can be an inspiration to others doing similar things, especially with transformational housing. My vision is that we have lots of Warren Villages and that we continue to find places to bring the secret sauce, or wraparound services. We stimulate others across the nation to go, “Oh, I see how that works. You need to have a Learning Center attached so that children go through transformational change, too. You have to be in safe and stable housing.”



Caroline attends the 2019 Summer Garden Party | Photo by Bernard Wooten, FocusTree Photography

CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT: AAA COLORADO

Warren Village continues to grow its corporate partnerships, making connections with new companies, and deepening those with our long-term partners, such as AAA Colorado. With the support of corporate partners, we can continue to expand and strengthen the Warren Village community and give residents access to more resources and opportunities for growth as they work toward economic mobility.

AAA Colorado has volunteered with and supported Warren Village for over 20 years. The Women in Leadership Employee Resource Group (ERG) of AAA Colorado hosted a coat drive on behalf of Warren Village in October 2022. Emily Frazzini, the Co-Chapter Coordinator of the Women in Leadership ERG was excited to partner again with Warren Village. "We are all moms in this group, we know how quickly kids grow out of their clothes, and how important winter wear is in Colorado, we didn't want to see any kids go without," Emily says.

Field Vice-President of AAA Colorado Kenneth Bolser has been on the Warren Village Board of Trustees for two years. "The Auto Club Group Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion mission includes promoting a culturally inclusive environment that energetically connects our vibrant workforce, our members, and the communities we serve," said Bolser. "Warren Village has a proven track record of successfully helping single-parent households in meaningful, life-changing ways. At AAA Colorado we want to support their efforts by sharing our time and resources."

For corporate engagement opportunities, contact Shardai Perry-Miller at sperry-miller@warrenvillage.org or 303.320.5032.



Warren Village kids pick out coats and winter accessories during the AAA Colorado coat drive

WINTER HOLIDAYS AT WARREN VILLAGE



Residents got in the holiday spirit at our Holiday Party in December. They made ornaments, candy jewelry, and other crafts, and shared a meal. Thanks to Griffis Residential volunteers for making the party so festive! | Photos by Bernard Wooten, FocusTree Photography

We are so thankful to our partners at United Airlines for flying Warren Village families to the North Pole on December 17. Families boarded a decorated plane at DIA, flew to Colorado Springs and back, and landed at a United Airlines hanger that had been transformed into the North Pole. There, families enjoyed games, treats, and visits with Santa and his elves.



WARREN  VILLAGE

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WARREN  VILLAGE

Aspire Gala 2023

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Save the Date

Friday, October 6

at the Denver Art Museum

Join us for an incredible evening to celebrate Warren Village families, hear inspiring stories, and build community. Contact Michele Kilen, Development Director, at mkilen@warrenvillage.org or 303.320.5057 for sponsorship opportunities.