



Foundation *for*
Appalachian
Kentucky
RISING WHERE WE'RE ROOTED

August 4, 2021

Grantmakers of Kentucky Annual Gathering 2021

SMIRFing in the Mountains of Appalachian Kentucky





APPALACHIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORK

A Partnership Initiative to Scale High Quality, Affordable Child
Care in Appalachian Kentucky



Foundation *for*
Appalachian Kentucky
RISING WHERE WE'RE ROOTED



New Beginnings: The only 4-Star childcare center in southeastern Kentucky *Photo Credit – Cris Ritchie*

Building Strong Families

Transition Leads to Transformation

- New Beginnings Early Learning Center closes, leaving 150 families without childcare.
- After months of struggle, former staff and parents approach the Foundation for help with an idea.
- They wanted to reopen the Center with their own “sweat equity” and needed some help with back office, marketing, basically – starting a new independent business.
- But they needed to get the now bankrupt umbrella nonprofit to let them do it.
- The Foundation intervened with them, offering the needed assistance in return for permission to launch.



This is going to take all of us. These guys deserve it!

Photo Credit – Cris Ritchie

Social & Moral Capital

A Community Problem Means A Community Solution

Child care in the mountains is fairly scatter shot at best, nonexistent at worst.

In Perry County, an “economic hub” where New Beginnings is located, there are a few options. Not nearly enough to absorb this sudden closure.

Unfortunately, New Beginnings was not the only childcare closure.

We saw our first and best role as bringing light to this issue. Childcare is critical to our economic wellbeing. We needed to elevate the issue and separate it from just another business failure.

This was a community crisis.



Intellectual Capital

The More You Know

Our region lost 40% of our childcare infrastructure over the past 3 years. If ANY OTHER industry closed at those rates, there would be a tailspin of investigation and investment.

People cannot work without someone to care for and nurture their children. In addition, the quality of our workforce for the future is in jeopardy.

Our role became one of lifting up and integrating the story of childcare in Appalachia to the large state and national conversations.

So we went to our friends at the Eastern Kentucky Child Care Coalition for help.



Reputational Capital

A Channel for Investment

- EKCCC, after serving the region well for more than 20 years, was in deep financial struggle as well.
- Their highly regarded leadership was aging out, and the staff and board were ill-prepared to move forward.
- The Foundation's role quickly became one of using our ability to convene, to "see the big picture," to facilitate and manage.
- Seeing the relationship between our fragile childcare infrastructure and the waning ability to hold our region's position of policy impact, we pulled everyone together.



Intellectual Capital

Hub for Rural Development,
not about us.

But it's



- After more than two years of struggling IN and WITH our local childcare center, our regional advocacy organization, and most of all, communities across our region, we were able to pull together a comprehensive proposal that would get us a “seat at the table” for addressing childcare and bring to light the unique assets and challenges that come with living in remote, rural places.
- This collaborative has a strong voice on the Prichard Committee’s Strong Start Coalition, the Kentucky Early Childhood Division, the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood and has a growing reputation for being the “go to” for rural childcare issues.



Financial Capital

Never Lead With Money



- Did all this work take money? OF COURSE!
- But only after the time and effort it takes to get everything in order (remember that sweat equity the New Beginnings folks came to us with?)
- Armed with a comprehensive plan rooted in the communities where we live, the Foundation was able to reach out to local, state, regional and national philanthropists and foundations to create a base of funding that allows for the work to ramp up over time.

Transition

New Beginnings & EKCCC go from bankrupt to bankable.

Transformation

New Beginnings becomes the home of a resource hub that brings tools & resources to build a network of family child care homes to serve our region while advocating for better policies to address this national issue.

SMIRF Investing : It's What We Do

Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky connects people to resources. When we meet people working to make their community better, we help them make a plan to do it.

Our approach is to meet communities where they are instead of molding them to work how we think they should. Because, at the end of the day, we believe that investing in the people rooted in communities is the way to make them better.

Questions?



Kristin W. Collins, Chief Operating Officer

kristin@appalachianky.org

|

www.appalachianky.org