Project Eagle Reflections: Celebrating 25 Years, 1989-2014
Project Eagle celebrates 25 years of impact through the reflections, memories, and dreams of our families, staff members, and friends.
Dear Friend of Project Eagle,

Thank you for your ongoing support as we celebrate and reflect on our first 25 years. Project Eagle began in 1989 with ambitious goals: to enhance the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children; to strengthen the capacity of families; to partner with others in the community to develop a comprehensive system of services; and to contribute to the knowledge and evidence around early intervention. As we look to the next 25 years we continue to believe that children’s experiences and opportunities in the early years directly impact their future potential as a healthy and contributing member of society, and we continue to have an ambitious vision around maximizing this potential.

We invite you to join with us and invest in our next 25 years as we continue our commitment to our community’s most important asset, our children.

Sincerely,

Heather Schrotberger, Director
01 Accomplishment

I had mainly done my friend’s and family’s taxes, but now I have five clients that I can rely on for business. With this, I am better able to provide for myself and my future. I enjoy math, people, and helping others, so I still volunteer with my family’s financial needs. These accomplishments and activities I have undertaken are massive, and are encouraging. I know my boys will see a mother who not only loves them, cares for them, but can do great things, even with a little help now and again.

– Jolene Morel, Project Eagle parent and 2014 Kansas and Region VII Head Start Parent of the Year

02 Appreciation

It has been a long and memorable journey with Project Eagle. My family and I suffered an economic hardship when we moved to Wyandotte County from Wichita, KS. My husband lost his job in 2009 due to a lay-off as the vicious cycle began. A year later, we lost our home, our vehicle, and then our pride. We moved to Kansas City, KS and lived with my mother-in-law who kindly took us in. We had a family of 6 living in a 2 bedroom basement. Our stress level was unbearable and depression became a part of our everyday life. We felt defeated as we tried to find a balance between home life and work.

I still remember the day when Project Eagle was presented to us. We did not know about the program so we inquired about it. After participating in the interview process, we qualified. Since then, my husband and I were able to free up more time to pursue our educational dreams and our professional goals. We were finally able to move from my mother-in-law’s basement. With the support behind us, we felt empowered and regained our ability to take charge of our lives. Initially my children were afraid of the transition from home to school. They were not sociable so they did not want to be without us. Project Eagle changed that for us. My children are sociable, they know their alphabets, they can communicate fairly with others and they are happy and healthy. Project Eagle has helped my family through the most traumatic time in our lives and I can’t thank you enough. Not only has this program helped us become better parents, but it has also helped instill the good values, moral, ethical, educational values into our lives. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

– Bounme La Bledsoe, Project Eagle alumni
03 Chance
I’m encouraged by how Project Eagle’s staff is so invested in the lives of young children and their families. I believe all children deserve the same chance in life that my children have.

– Allison Lundquist, Project Eagle Manager of Administrative Services

04 Change
My granddaughter has made a complete 180 degree turn since she started Educare. She is communicating more and loves her school.

– Ed Montgomery, Educare grandparent

05 Children
All children have the capacity to be brilliant.

– Autumn Burton, Project Eagle teacher

06 Community
One of the qualities I noticed the most was the effort to instill community in families that feel unconnected. Encouraging participation in Policy Council and being an officer is a prime example.

– Nancy Sanchez, Unified Government Health Department
07 Confidence

I feel that while I’m working or at school my kids are in a good place. Siento que mientras estoy trabajando o en la escuela mis hijos están en un buen lugar.

– Mirka Murguia, Project Eagle parent

08 Education

Project Eagle has educated countless students in the fields of medicine, social work, early childhood education, and nursing in its 25 year existence. Through internships, observations on home visits or classroom experiences, students in these fields have a chance to understand the needs of families in the community and best practices in the field of early education.

– Jennifer Adhima, Assistant Director for Staff Development and Human Resources

09 Encouragement

Project Eagle has taught me that I need to set goals for my family and myself in order to become something in life. My family is more united, happier, and more educated.

– Anabel Perez, Project Eagle alumni

10 Exciting

Project Eagle is a great support for education and family learning. It is exciting to see my daughter’s growth daily. Project Eagle es un gran apoyo para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje familiar. Es emocionante ver el crecimiento de mi hija todos los días.

– Victoria Leyva, Project Eagle parent and Policy Council President
**11 Foundation**

Every child deserves a strong foundation.

– Jessica Haremza, Educare Site Director

**12 Future**

Every child deserves a bright future.

– Nicole Stejskal, Project Eagle Business Manager

**13 Gift**

Project Eagle has given the children and families of Wyandotte County a great gift, the gift of hope. Project Eagle has nurtured and supported families with young children for 25 years, giving countless children a great start in life.

– Dean Olson, The Family Conservancy

**14 Growth**

Project Eagle is a fun, safe, clean, and healthy place to learn and grow with your whole family.

– Natalie Lee, Project Eagle parent
Hope

I believe that by the work Project Eagle does with families, it adds a little bit of hope where at times people may have felt hopeless. With that hope, families become more confident in who they are and in their children’s futures.

– LaShawn Williams, Project Eagle MIS Coordinator

Influence

I remember the first time I interacted with Project Eagle. It was 15 years ago and I was a graduate student. During my short four month internship, my understanding of people and the different paths we all travel in life were expanded far more than they could ever have been in a classroom. At the time, I felt a deep connection to the amazing work accomplished every day by the staff at Project Eagle and feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to become a staff member myself. I have now worked for Project Eagle for over 14 years and could share so many reasons why I continue to come skipping into the office every day but, if it weren’t for the profound learning I experienced so many years ago as a Project Eagle student, it may have taken me much longer to realize where I wanted to direct my professional focus. One of my favorite aspects of Project Eagle is the program’s commitment to being a learning laboratory for students from a wide variety of career fields. Everyday Project Eagle has a positive impact on the lives of children and families in Wyandotte County and through our work with students we are able to expand our reach well beyond our program. I am thankful Project Eagle takes the opportunity to have a profound influence on the life of each student who enters our doors and I know that in some way, that influence will positively impact everyone they interact with in their future careers.

– Leslie Warlen, Project Eagle Assistant Director of Health and Screening Services
17 Investment
We can make no wiser INVESTMENT in the workforce of tomorrow than making an INVESTMENT in our community’s youngest children today. As Project Eagle nurtures young minds, it is developing the next generation of leaders and parents in Kansas City and making an investment that will reap many dividends for our city, our state and our country.

– Dr. Judy Carta, Professor and Senior Scientist, KU’s Juniper Gardens Children’s Project

18 Leadership
At Project Eagle we have always had big dreams for the children and families of this community. We have always held firm to the belief that all children and families should have the opportunity to have big dreams for themselves. We continue to lead the way by envisioning and pursuing these dreams.

– Heather Schrotberger, Project Eagle Director

19 Learning
Project Eagle has affected my child in a social, emotional, and academic way, all positive! She is always learning. Project Eagle ha afectado a mi hija de una manera social, emocional y académico, todos positivos! Ella siempre está aprendiendo.

– Aida Mera, Project Eagle alumni

20 Motivation
Project Eagle was a great motivator for me and my children. They have wonderful resources. Project Eagle taught me time and budgeting. It also taught me how to communicate with my children and be a good parent. My son has always had confidence. We have been able to succeed.

– LaShasta Payne, Project Eagle alumni
Opportunity

I have worked for Project Eagle collectively now for 15 years. When we were in the old building and on the 10th floor, families were engaged in the elevator while leaving a Policy Council meeting. A little boy the same age as another girl from a different family was chatting all the way down the elevator. The mom of the girl was impressed by the boy’s language skills. She asked why he talked so much more than her child. The answer had been discussed numerous times on home visits about one of the benefits of reading books to your child will increase their language skills. Not until this socialization with other families did this mom realize the importance of reading frequently to your child. The other mom explained how she read to her son every day. After this, the little girl’s mom started reading to her on a daily basis and her daughter’s language started to show improvement. There were already several books in the home as the family was given books from Reading is Fundamental and other sources. It took this contact with another family to show the mom what a difference spending quality time with your child makes. This encounter also demonstrates the importance of socializations with families. I often tell this story to staff and enrolled families in the program.

The mom of “that little boy” has credited the program for her son’s success in school. He just graduated from high school in the top 20% of his class. He is enrolled at The University of Kansas for the 2014-15 school year and is majoring in Architectural Engineering. He plans to pursue his Master’s Degree in Architecture.

– Rhonda Rush, Project Eagle Home Based Programs Manager

From the “mom”… In the beginning our lives were very hard. I had no job and had not worked in years. I had no knowledge as to how to care for my child. Many of my parenting skills I learned helped me to be an awesome parent and to raise an incredible son. My case workers were so patient and so knowledgeable that they helped with housing and childcare, but most importantly with how to be a good mom. My son is going to college…something I never did and I believe we would not be here today without Project Eagle.

– Elaine Boyd, Project Eagle alumni
CELEBRATE THE GRAD

Dakota Draven Boyd
and his mother are proud to announce his graduation from Shawnee Mission North High School

May 13th, 2014
7pm

WE INVITE YOU TO CELEBRATE WITH US ON HIS GRADUATION DAY
22 Parents

My favorite thing about my work is not only helping parents learn about and enjoy their kids, but also that I get to enjoy their kids with them! I love working with families long term and seeing their babies grow into toddlers and then preschoolers. It is truly fun for me when parents are interested in the information I give. I enjoy knowing that their children will be better understood or cared for because of education I provided. It is also wonderful to see that even though all different types of parents come into the program with different experiences, backgrounds, and methods for raising kids, they all want what is best for their children and have chosen us to help them with that goal.

– Kimberly Burau, Project Eagle home visitor

23 Partnership

I believe being in a child's life gives them a positive male role model and gives them a sense of discipline.

– Grandpa Robert, Foster Grandparent volunteer

24 Promise

When the Kansas City, Kansas community heard that Project Eagle, a research program, was coming to their community, they were doubtful. Other programs and initiatives had come and gone, taking with them what they needed without making an investment or long-term commitment to the community. Project Eagle was committed and determined to be different. It would be a comprehensive child development and family support program that immersed itself into community life, pledging to work in partnership to enhance the quality of life for all children and families. Project Eagle is a promise fulfilled.

– Martha Staker, Project Eagle Director 1989-2012
25 Success

My kids learned to talk better, all my kids are healthy and strong and smart and doing well in school. My kids communicate with me if there is a problem.

– Shana Wilkins, Project Eagle alumni
Project Eagle Reflections: Celebrating 25 Years
Contact Us

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Project Eagle is a program of the Department of Pediatrics at The University of Kansas Medical Center.

Vision
Project Eagle’s vision is for all children to have an opportunity to experience healthy growth and development.

Mission
Project Eagle’s mission is to nurture the healthy growth and development of the community’s most vulnerable young children and families by providing a foundation for school readiness and strengthening family engagement.

Location
Project Eagle is housed at the Children’s Campus of Kansas City (CCKC), 444 Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas 66101. The CCKC is the result of a successful public-private partnership in which private dollars financed the construction of a state-of-the-art facility where agencies, sustained by public dollars, provide quality programming for children and families on a bedrock of research and evidenced-based practices.