

2015 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT



Working on the Frontlines of Savannah's Future...

Dear Friends:

Much has been accomplished since the Savannah Early Childhood Foundation (SECF) began its partnership with Parent University in 2011 to create a special module called Early Learning College at Parent University (ELC), and we entered the 2015–16 school year with tremendous positive momentum.

ELC is a parent-centric program designed to enhance parenting skills for caregivers of children birth to three years old, a time when research shows the vast majority of brain development occurs. The goal is to improve a child's school readiness by teaching their parents how to create safe, nurturing, language-rich environments during this critical stage of life.

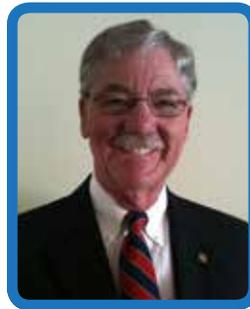
So far, the reception from the community has been incredible.

Parent attendance continues to grow at amazing rates. We've expanded our reach to more than seven schools, and community groups all over the area are asking us to bring ELC to their neighborhood. A large and growing number of community donors are providing crucial financial support. And a number of existing organizations are offering to share their expertise with our parents. We're stitching together all of these community resources to build something truly unique in Savannah.

Most notably this year, International Paper created a special paid sabbatical for Michael O'Neal to serve as the full-time executive director of Parent University, which he founded, and Early Learning College at Parent U. Michael and IP were recently recognized by Fortune magazine for his service to the community.

With your support, we're making progress toward the ultimate goal of building a better-educated workforce and breaking the multi-generational cycle of crime and poverty in Savannah.

More to come... Thanks for your support!



Paul Fisher
President,
Savannah Early Childhood Foundation

"It is so vital for parents to be involved at an early age, and this program provides them with the perfect opportunity to engage their child at each stage of development and contribute to their emotional, social and intellectual growth. ELC is an important part of our future."

**– ELC Principal Maggie Walker,
Otis J. Brock Elementary**

Learn how **Early Learning College at Parent University** is making a difference in the community –
and how you can help...



Our Mission

Established in 2011, the Savannah Early Childhood Foundation (SECF) is a first-of-its-kind 501c3 organization, working to stitch together community resources to ensure that all Savannah children are ready for school. Combining public and private resources, SECF is uniquely focused on helping parents create high quality learning environments for their children starting at birth through age five through our flagship program Early Learning College at Parent University, hosted on Saturday mornings in select neighborhoods throughout the school year. If brought to scale, we believe make real progress toward solving some of Savannah's most difficult social and economic challenges within a generation.

A Message from Executive Director Michael O'Neal



PARENTS ARE HEROES!!! This notion is the overriding theme behind the growing success of Parent University and now Early Learning College at Parent University (ELC).

We've learned a simple, but important truth over the course of the past 16 years of helping parents, many of whom are living in generational poverty – all parents care about their children's future. But they don't all know that they are actually their child's first teacher.

Once we are able to help parents understand that, we arm them with a new sense of purpose. And we've found their appetite for learning knows no bounds.

In our ELC sessions, we model a safe, nurturing, language-rich environment and teach parents ways to develop the same in their own homes. The whole idea is for parents to be proactively invested in preparing their child for school, and then partner with teachers for the further education of their child.

The cornerstone of our success has been keeping parents actively engaged in the development process, repeatedly asking for their input. Parents feel a real sense of ownership of this program, and

they return time and time again... and bring their friends along.

In our first three years of operation, 480 parents participated in ELC, attending an average of 4-5 sessions. In the 2015-16 school year, we plan to more than double the neighborhoods that we serve. Eventually, expect to serve more than 2,500 parents at ELC sessions each year.

We're working hard to make sure we have the resources in place to accommodate that growth and also to document our progress. In partnership with Armstrong State University, we have created a database to track attendance and knowledge acquisition among participants. The early results have shown tremendous positive impact.

We realize that we are just at the beginning of a journey. But every day, we grow more convinced that this nascent endeavor will prove, in time, that nurturing more knowledgeable, confident parents will not only positively impact their children, but help to positively change our community for years to come.



"These workshops have informed me about community resources that I never knew existed. It's let me know there are people still out there that do care."

– ELC parent

By the Numbers...

"ELC works because the parents and families are engaged in the process of learning about themselves and their children (or grandchildren!) in an environment they actively help to shape and play a part in."

– Cynthia Hendry, RNC-MNN, Coastal Health District Perinatal Coordinator and ELC instructor

26
Saturday morning ELC sessions (since August 2013)

\$87,500 in additional support pledged from City of Savannah and Savannah Chatham County Public Schools

Expanding from **3** neighborhood schools (East Broad, Shuman, Brock) to **7** (+Savannah Classical Academy, Haven, Juliette Low, Spencer) in 2015-16

40
Different classes offered to parents



Over **\$385,000** in private donations raised to date

Analysis of parent pre- and post-test results shows improvement in **88%** of classes and "significant improvement" in nearly **60%** of classes

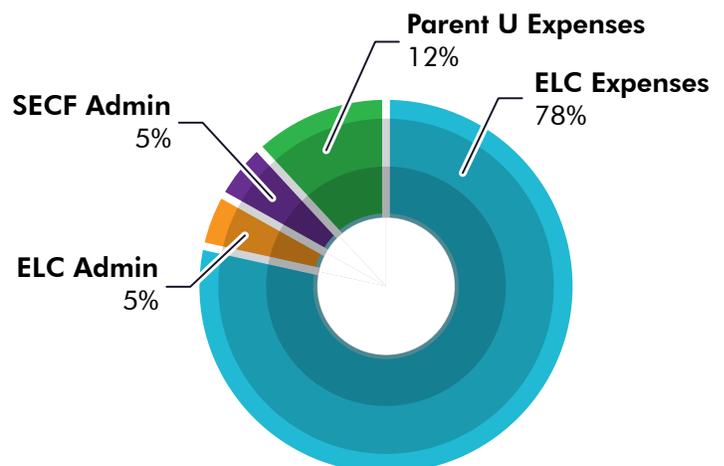
Our Partners

Stitching Together Community Resources

- ▶ Parent University
- ▶ Early Start Child Care Resource and Referral
- ▶ Wesley Community Center
- ▶ Lady Bamford Center
- ▶ Armstrong State University
- ▶ Live Oak Public Libraries
- ▶ Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority
- ▶ West Broad Street YMCA
- ▶ City of Savannah
- ▶ Savannah Chatham County Public Schools
- ▶ The Children's Hospital at Memorial Health
- ▶ Coastal Health District
- ▶ UGA Chatham County Extension Office
- ▶ Georgia Southern University

2014–15 Financial Snapshot

In the 18 months beginning January 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015, total program expenses were \$116,369, and divided accordingly:



In the News...

"Parent University expands reach to combat generational struggles in Savannah," Savannah Morning News, 11/1/15

"Michael O'Neal: 2015 'Heroes of the 500'," Fortune, 6/17/15

"Breaking the Cycle of Crime, Poverty Starts at Birth," Savannah Morning News, 3/7/15

"Teaching Parents to Teach Their Children," WTOG-TV, 10/15/14



"When ELC participants gain new confidence in their abilities to guide their families, they return and invite other friends and family, hence spreading such confidence and education to families throughout Chatham County."

– Tameka Tribble, ELC instructor

Join the Movement!

Find out more about how you can support our work online at

www.SavannahECF.org

www.facebook.com/SavannahECF

With Great Appreciation...

ELC at Parent U was made possible in the 2014-15 school year by generous support from the following \$1,000+ level donors:

- ▶ International Paper
- ▶ Gulfstream Aerospace
- ▶ St. Peter's Episcopal Church of Skidaway Island
- ▶ Skidaway Island Presbyterian Church
- ▶ Savannah South Rotary Club & Members
- ▶ Kiwanis Club of Skidaway & Members
- ▶ Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices | Southeast Coastal Properties
- ▶ The J. C. Coleman Foundation
- ▶ The Gaynor Estate Fund
- ▶ The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation
- ▶ The Mary Lane Morrison Foundation
- ▶ The Susan Thompson Fund
- ▶ The Johanna Anderson Trueblood Foundation
- ▶ John & Carol Duren
- ▶ Paul & Camille Fisher
- ▶ Diane Harvey-Johnson & Herman Riley
- ▶ Gary & Monica Hughes
- ▶ Steve & Robin Lewis
- ▶ Dennis & Cathy McKeever
- ▶ Donald & Sandra Mayer
- ▶ Tom & Mary Sharp
- ▶ Dr. Samuel Torres