



2018 Annual Report

YOU Make the Difference



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Greetings

A Milestone Year

All because of YOU, 2018 was a celebratory year. Not only did we mark our 30th Anniversary with lots of fun activities and a party (thank you to those who attended) but Acre Family Child Care worked with more educators, families, and children than ever before! We have been blessed to have your support over 30 amazing years of helping women become financially independent. Whether you are a parent, an educator, a community partner, or financial supporter, our work wouldn't have been possible without you.

We think of the women who participated in the community needs assessment over 30 years ago who identified problems plaguing our neighborhoods. Of the educators who have opened their doors at all hours of the day to parents looking to make the best future possible for their children. Of the individuals and businesses that not only recognize the need to support women, families, and immigrants, but have written the checks to make sure these programs are sustainable. Your advice, your feedback, your care in giving freedom and opportunity to women and families makes all the difference.

Looking forward, the need to support our vibrant community is as strong as ever. Together we can help more women open their own businesses and achieve their dreams. When you read about Shirley know that you helped open this brand new, woman-owned, local, small business. When you read about Sivann see an example of the extreme situations that families find themselves in and how your support of Acre makes a real difference in their lives.

2018 was a remarkably successful year because of you, and with your continued support 2019 can change even more lives. As always, please reach out directly should you ever want to learn more about our programs and mission; and thank YOU for making a difference.



*Zelma Khadar
Co-Executive Director*



*Lucas Skorczeski
Co-Executive Director*

*Below: Educators gathered for
30th Anniversary celebration
on October 13, 2018*



Second Chances

Sivann's Story of Survival

Sivann loves her family and works tirelessly to support them. Growing up in Cambodia, she began working at age 5, and until recently she worked 7 days a week.

Everything she did was for her five children and three grandchildren. "It doesn't matter how many hours I work, how many days – like six, seven days, 70, 80 hours a week – because I enjoy working. I'm happy because I have money to pay my bills and take care of my family."

Sivann worked especially hard because she helped make equipment for the military. "Materials for planes, ships, boats. You have to think about it. All the stuff we build - that's someone's life up there. You have to make sure it's 100%."

Things changed. Drastically. One day on her way into work around 2:30AM, she saw headlights of another car coming right at her and they were on the wrong side of the highway. "All of a sudden I see that car coming, coming. And I see the light getting closer. And I realize that something bad is going to happen. And whatever happened... I don't feel anything."

It was a head on collision. The car scattered across the highway. Sivann was unconscious. She was taken by helicopter to a hospital and remained in a coma for 7 days. When Sivann woke up, her body and her mind had been damaged significantly.

"The doctor had already told my family that I probably would not make it"

Yet, life continues, and her mortgage and car expenses never stopped, and her need for child care was more important than ever. Sivann's two youngest children (now 9 and 12 years old) had been with Acre Family Child Care since they each were only a few weeks old. She found herself frustrated as she worked to find support from the state to help with the cost of child care. Thankfully, Acre was able to help navigate the often complex and confusing system. "Acre was able to make sure that my child care continued. And Acre Family is such an awesome, awesome place for the kids to be. Because for me, everybody is very helpful. They're like, 'whatever you need.' They try to accommodate you. Talk to you, explain to you, everything."

Sivann's youngest children are still in care



Sivann, with her children: Alicia (graduating), Amanda, Jaden and Justin. (Daughter Melissa not pictured)

with the same Acre educator that they began with as infants and continue to thrive academically at school.

"Enjoy life, because you don't know what is in front of you. Be with your kids and your family. Love them. Before I only work, work, work. Right now, I want to enjoy my life with my kids." Sivann is still recovering - physically, emotionally, and financially. Her positive outlook helps her get through the pain.

"My dream for my kids is to be successful. To have a good job. And when they have a family, they can be like me, be there for their kids."



A New Future

Shirley's Story of Finding Love in her Work

"You have to be kind and love children. While I know they are not my children, my heart is full of love for them and I care for them as if they were my own." Shirley shares her love and culture in many ways – including preparing traditional Colombian foods like arepas and speaking to them in Spanish. She says she is learning so much from the children as well.

Shirley arrived in Lowell 7 years ago with her young daughter, Maria. Like many parents, she needed to find work and child care. She found a job working in manufacturing and her daughter attended a program run by Sonia, an Acre Family educator. Inspired by Sonia, Shirley knew she wanted to open her own home-based business too. After several years, she bought her own home, and she began the process of obtaining her family child care license. In April 2018, she opened her doors and her program has been full since.



Shirley with Amelia

"My job in Colombia was a lot of time at a desk managing documents. I used a lot of mental energy. My job in Lowell working in manufacturing was very physical. Now as a provider, I must be physically and mentally strong."

Shirley plans her curriculum for the month, prepares her meal plans, and communicates the details to the families she works with. Her own family including her husband and daughter are key supports. Shirley is grateful for having the team at Acre Family. She appreciates the professional development days, the summer programming (with buses to events), and the coaching from her

home visitor, Angela. "Acre is a great support to me. They know this is my business and respect my decisions but are also helpful when I have questions."

As she approaches her one-year anniversary Shirley continues to build her business, expand her knowledge by attending the 75-hour training required of all new educators contracting with Acre Family, and study for her citizenship test. In her business, Shirley has found not only a new career but a new future for her and her family. With support from Acre Family Child Care Shirley's dreams are becoming a reality.

"I am excited to bring on new providers to Acre Family who understand the foundation of the business is children. Shirley is very organized and clearly loves being with the children."

– Angela Mendonca,
Child Care Specialist

Investing in Our Community

Each day I feel honored and privileged to work with Acre Family Child Care. The need for safe and nurturing places for children in our community is ongoing. And having quality care means parents can go to work and provide for their families. It seems simple yet is SO critical for our community to thrive. With 30 years of experience, Acre Family and the dedicated staff serve as the backbone to over 60 small business owners – offering coaching, development programs, budgeting classes as well as classroom set-up, parent interviews, and access to STEAM curriculum. Courageous women, like Shirley looking to start a business get the support they need to be a successful business owner.



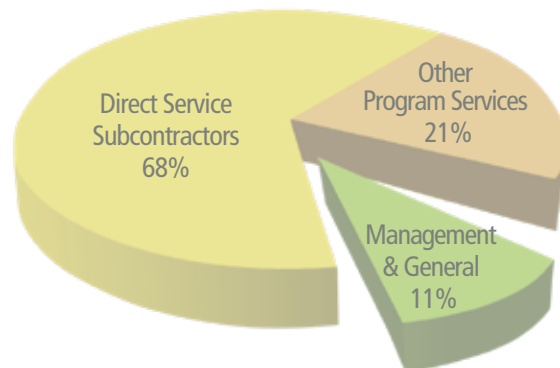
Getting to know the providers. Hearing the stories of adversity, struggle, and triumph. Witnessing the impact. Knowing that our agency and the unwavering work and commitment of the staff and leadership makes a difference for parents like Sivann. And helping spread the news of Acre Family cultivating economic independence for women. It's why I serve on the Board of Directors.

We thank you for standing behind us, next to us, and with us to ensure newcomers many learning English – can work to support their own families and other families in our community. We look forward to the next 30 years together!

Bethany Fitch, *Board Chair*

	FISCAL YEAR	
	2018	2017
Revenue & Support		
Program Service Revenue	\$5,009	\$4,361
Other Revenues	\$39	\$55
Grants & Contributions:		
Grants – Government	—	—
Grants – Foundations	\$68	\$51
Individuals & Businesses	\$77	\$41
Grants & Contributions	\$145	\$92
Gross Support & Revenue	\$5,193	\$4,508
Expenses		
Direct Service Subcontractors	\$3,406	\$2,980
Other Program Services	\$1,042	\$999
Management & General	\$529	\$454
Total Expenses	\$4,977	\$4,433
Operating (Loss) Income	\$216	\$75

Total Expenses 2018



In 2018, 89% of all expenditures were used to support our child care service programs, while general management and fundraising expenditures required only 11 cents of each dollar spent.

Kathy Reticker Forum for Children and Families

The Forum was established in 2017 in memory of Kathy Reticker, Acre Family Child Care’s Executive Director from 2005-2016. In 2018, we continued our efforts to focus attention on the need for high-quality, affordable early childhood education for all children and to honor Kathy’s lifetime work and advocacy.

In 2018, we were thrilled to award the first Kathy Reticker Scholarships. On March 6th we awarded \$1,000 scholarships to two Middlesex Community College students studying Early Education. The recipients were Erin Fitzgerald and Market Lekesova who are pursuing degrees in education.

On May 9th we awarded two \$500 scholarships, one to Haley Bomil and the other to Olivia Crowley, both graduating seniors at Lowell High School, who plan to study early education.

On June 10th at the Lowell High School Auditorium, we sponsored a Forum with the 3rd Congressional District U.S.

Representative candidates regarding their ideas of how to address vital issues facing Massachusetts families and children. All 10 Democratic candidates and 1 independent candidate participated. The Forum was ably moderated by Marta Rosa, who is active in the Massachusetts educational community. Pat Nelson, Executive Director of the Concord Children’s Center, opened the Forum with a quote from Nelson Mandela on the screen behind the candidates: “Our children are the rock on which our future will be built.” Each candidate took the opportunity to discuss how they would work to improve the lives of children and working families if they went to Washington.

We plan to hold a forum in Spring 2019 and are in the beginning stages of organizing it with our lead partners: Acre Family and Strategies for Children. We will also award 2019 Kathy Reticker Scholarships to students studying early childhood education at Middlesex



Zelma Khadar and Jack Flynn award Kathy Reticker Scholarships at the 2018 Lowell High School Honors Night.

Community College and to Lowell High School graduating seniors who plan to study early childhood education. We welcome your ideas for future events.

www.KathyRetickerForum.org

Impact in 2018

15
women
began 75-hour
Benchmark
Training



1500+
home
visits

94
businesses
supported



6
new
businesses
created



OUR MISSION

Acre Family Child Care provides a pathway for women to achieve economic independence by operating high quality child care businesses in their homes.

560+
children
400+
families

71
professional
development
hours



14
business loans
\$52,000 to
enhance child care
businesses

"We are all strong, stronger than we think. You can get across a river even if you cannot swim."

– Bopha Tran, Child Care Specialist & Keynote Speaker, 30th Anniversary Celebration



Heng Sek, educator-retired
July 2018 with Bopha

Thank you to our 30th Anniversary Celebrations Sponsors

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Empower

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Innovator

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