

# Legacies

Over the last year we have lost two treasured members of the Acre Family Child Care family. For more than eleven years, Kathy Reticker led as Executive Director, with caring and commitment. We also remember Mike Holland, Director of Transportation, who passed away in early 2017. According to one board member, Mike was the “steady hand at the helm,” handling a bewildering number of transportation challenges over the years. (Read more about Mike on page 3).

We dedicate this issue of the Annual Report to Kathy and Mike. Their passion will continue to inspire our work for years to come.

## The Kathy Reticker Forum

We plan to honor Kathy's life work of making high quality, affordable child care available to all families in Massachusetts and are raising money to establish an annual forum to focus attention on Kathy's cause. The Forum will bring together stakeholders to learn from experts, invigorate the child care community, and increase advocacy for family and child care issues.

Our plan is to raise \$50,000 to establish the Forum and fund it for future years. The fundraising goal is 80% complete and we are working on inviting an inspirational speaker for the first Forum. We plan to hold the first Forum in Lowell in the Fall of 2017.

The Kathy Reticker Forum Committee:  
KRforum@acrefamily.org



## Kathy Reticker

By all accounts, Kathy Reticker was a force of nature.

In December 2005, Kathy took over the reins as Executive Director of Acre Family Child Care (AFCC). She inherited a \$2.76 million operation with 16 paid staff, with 45 Educators serving about 298 children daily.

Under Kathy's leadership, AFCC continued to advance its mission to help women with low-incomes gain economic independence through the creation of high quality child care services, so that others in the community might work,

knowing that their children were cared for. Currently our network covers 61 family child care programs, serving on average 420 children a day. This is a fantastic accomplishment.

AFCC has indeed become, as Kathy once said, the “story of women realizing their dreams, and building a strong community.”

But Kathy's contribution to our organization goes deeper. She developed special relationships with staff and community members, respecting the unique experience and background everyone brought. She supported AFCC Educators by meeting them “where they are,” as Chief Operations Officer Zelma Khadar observed. Kathy worked on her Spanish to better communicate with many of our Educators and families. She was responsive to personal and professional needs, offering advice and support. She was a colleague, and a friend.

Kathy also was a visionary who saw the potential of AFCC to serve a larger role. She created important educational partnerships with prominent organizations like The Discovery Museums in Acton, and the Lowell National Historical Park, to benefit children and their families. With guidance from board member Allyssa McCabe, Kathy developed a collaborative project with University of Massachusetts-Lowell psychology students, with child care homes serving as early literacy research sites.

Whether helping a family experience hands-on learning at a museum or science fair, or working with the Erikson Institute to support academic research into best practices working with children, Kathy positioned AFCC as a leader and community resource.

There have been many personal success stories. Like the client, living in a homeless shelter, whose first-ever visit to a museum was to the Discovery Museums with her children. Or the women with limited job prospects, for whom our programs offered a path to self sufficiency.

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Letter from our Board Chair

February 2017

Dear Friends,

It's with a profound sense of loss that I write this annual letter. Acre suffered two tremendous losses in 2016: our Executive Director, and dear friend, Kathy Reticker died of pancreatic cancer in September, and our beloved former Transportation Director, Mike Holland, passed away at the start of the 2017 after a period of health issues. Both Kathy and Mike were vital members of the Acre family and their loss weighs heavy in our hearts. We are committed, however, to carrying on with the work to which they dedicated themselves.

In reflecting on the breadth of the contributions Kathy made to Acre's success over her decade of leadership I was struck by some statistics: the number of Acre providers increased by 36% under Kathy; Acre's income increased 53%; the number of children served per day increased by 41%; the size of the staff increased by 31%; and 56 educators began with Acre with 66% of them remaining today. What an incredible legacy Kathy has left.

While the Acre family has been understandably saddened, the day-to-day work of the agency continues: our educators continue to provide excellent care to the hundreds of children in our programs, the staff continues to provide training and support to the educators, and the Board of Directors continues to ensure that Acre is the best family child care agency in Massachusetts. Thank you very much for your support of Acre. We look forward to reaching new heights in the spirit of Kathy and Mike in 2017.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Sullivan Talty  
Chair, Board of Directors



Acre Board Chair,  
Patricia Sullivan Talty



Mike Holland

*A big teddy bear. A big brother. A big personality. A big kid. A big voice.*

Donna Fortin, a staff member at Acre Family Child Care (AFCC), described her 20 years of knowing Mike by saying, "We just had fun together, he was cool. He loved kids, he loved his family, its amazing, he's such a jolly giant." To people who knew Mike – which includes much of the Greater Lowell area – he was warm and welcoming and his big voice was unforgettable. Donna continued, "He was always there for me no matter how busy he was. If I needed somebody to talk to he would take the time to listen. He let you talk no matter what it was about. He just let you talk."

Mike began working at AFCC in 2003, and for 13 years as the Transportation Manager he scheduled the bus routes for thousands of children; dealt with snow storms and traffic jams; managed a small fleet of busses; and coordinated information with families, educators, drivers, and the office, amongst other duties. But he loved it. Sometimes he would ride the busses to get out of the office and be with the children and drivers, just for the fun of the ride. He was more than a supervisor to those who worked for him.

As Mike became sick and dealt with a variety of health issues, we never heard him complain or draw attention to himself. He would call daily at times to ask how everyone was doing, to check in on any issues, and to thank people for their friendship, never wanting to be removed from the work and the people he cared about. As Sheila Primeau, another AFCC colleague of many years, described it, "He was a participator, he loved what he did. You don't expect that from a guy, to be so in love with kids and families and helping people, and especially somebody who sounded like they should have been a sergeant in the Marines or something." His home – the center of his world – was filled with people, with laughter, and with love; everyone was welcome and everyone was respected.

No matter the obstacle that Mike faced, he never lost his sense of humor, kindness, courage, or strength. It is because of these attributes that Mike made Acre a stronger organization over the years; he led with a love of his work and a love of those he worked with.

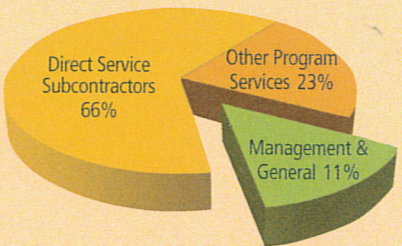


Acre Family Child Care / Financial Summary

(unaudited, in thousands)

	FISCAL YEAR	
	2016	2015
<b>Revenue &amp; Support</b>		
Program Service Revenue	\$4,185	\$3,955
Other Revenues	63	78
Grants & Contributions:		
Grants – Government	111	104
Grants – Foundations	35	59
Individuals & Businesses	33	33
Grants & Contributions	179	196
Gross Support & Revenue	4,427	4,229
<b>Expenses</b>		
Direct Service Subcontractors	2,913	2,727
Other Program Services	991	1,034
Management & General	488	500
Total Expenses	4,392	4,261
Operating (Loss) Income	\$35	\$(32)

Total Expenses 2016



During the past 2 years, 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.



2016  
BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

Kathleen Reticker  
*Executive Director*

Patricia Sullivan Talty  
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Matthew McLaughlin  
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Valessa Marques

Allyssa McCabe

Velda McRae-Yates

Derek Mitchell

Darmery Montoya

Chris Ortiz

Theresa Park

Blanca Valencia

## Kathy Reticker *(Continued)*

Consider the children of our Educators, who, inspired by their parent's success, go on to college and even graduate school. Or the parent enrolling his child in an AFCC child care program similar to the one he attended as a child. Our impact on families is truly generational.

According to board member and Kathy's long-time friend, Pat Goldstein, Kathy was a "force to be reckoned with." Kathy was a tireless advocate on behalf of women, supporting their individual needs for early childhood education, business training, and even English language supports. She strengthened our Educators' understanding of how their work impacts the local economy, and helped women from low-income and immigrant backgrounds become financially independent.

Kathy led Acre Family Child Care with her unique combination of spirit and grace. She encouraged us to explore new ideas and local partnerships, with the goal of strengthening families, opening the educational doors wide for young children from low-income families, and helping more women achieve their dreams of job fulfillment. Kathy helped us envision the future of Acre Family Child Care for our women, and our community.



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