

# news from our neighborhood THE ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE

#### A Message from the Executive Director: Debbie Green

Not many incoming executive directors enter an organization that has been previously guided by two amazing leaders.

PIC was founded thirty-eight years ago on the idea that a child care center could be about building community. For twenty-five of those years, Executive Director Marni Sweet worked tirelessly to establish PIC as a high quality early childhood program in West Philadelphia and throughout the Commonwealth.



When we lost Marni suddenly in 2007, then Assistant-Director Cindy Roberts stepped in and took over at the helm. As a former PIC parent and member of the Board of Directors, Cindy knew the values of this organization well.

For the next five years, Cindy not only continued the strong foundation that PIC was built upon, she extended the vision of building a more diverse community. Under Cindy, PIC raised \$1 million for the renovation of the Sweet Building, which expanded enrollment by 30%. At the same time Cindy brought Pre-K Counts, PA's program for low-income families, to PIC. She was also the driving force behind the Magic Circle Nature Playground, a place

where children use their imaginations and play freely outside surrounded by natural materials.

The entire PIC Community was deeply saddened by the death of former Executive Director Cindy Roberts on February 10.

I find myself reflecting upon the significant accomplishments and growth of PIC during the leadership of both Marni and Cindy. I take comfort in the fact that their hard work establishing a strong partnership between families and teachers, bringing together families from different backgrounds, connecting children to nature, maintaining learning through play as a central tenet, and establishing PIC as a high quality program far beyond Philadelphia's boundaries continue to be the heart and soul of PIC.

I inherited a wonderful program and I am forever indebted to these strong, visionary women whose paths I follow. I am excited to continue the traditions begun, and introduce new direction.

With universal pre-k on the horizon in Harrisburg and City Hall, our center is uniquely situated to play a role in making quality child care accessible to more families. I am excited by what could lie ahead for PIC.

But, PIC has always been more than any one leader. It began and remains a community of people committed to shared values. As we explore PIC's future, I promise to keep community, diversity, and play at the heart of what we do. **But I will need your help.** 

You have been a big part of getting us to where we are today and I hope you will join me for all the greatness that lies ahead. In doing so, we will continue to honor both Marni and Cindy, as well as all of our families, our teachers, and our children.

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#### **News from our Neighborhood**

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#### www.parentinfantcenter.org

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#### A Message from the Board President: Leah Finnegan



My son's school recently held its 100 Day Celebration. For those of you with school-age kids, you know this marks the halfway point of the school year. In keeping with this theme, I'd like to share where the Board of Directors has been spending its energy this year and our goals for the remainder of the year.

As many of you are aware, the topic of early childhood education has gained momentum at every level of government—city, state, and

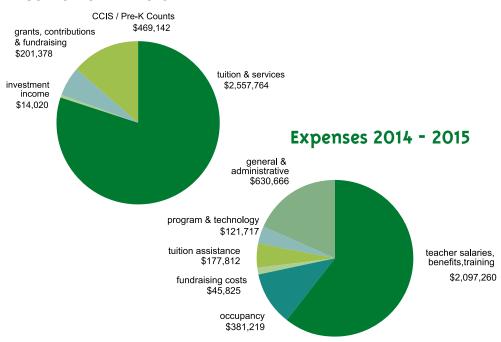
federal elected officials are all giving this topic the attention it so rightly deserves. In addition, funding streams (both public and private) will likely become available in order to help support the goal of quality pre-school education for all children.

The Board of Directors, in partnership with Deb Green and PIC administration, has been actively involved in understanding how PIC can continue as a leader in the early childcare field by leveraging the public interest and potential funding associated with increased enrollment. We have begun to consider the idea of site expansion and related facilities improvements, and are in the very early stages of considering what this might entail.

Increasing diversity at PIC is a continuing theme for the Board, which has an active committee focused on this topic. PIC's decision to participate in the Pre-K Counts program, and recent addition of nine slots adds to the socio-economic diversity at the center, and we expect any site expansion would similarly contribute to expanding the socio-economic demographics of the PIC family.

Community involvement has always been crucial to the center's success and we will continue to welcome those who want to share their voice and time for the betterment of the PIC community. In upcoming months the Board will continue exploring the viability of expansion, while at the same time ensuring we maintain the culture, sense of community, and financial stability that has made PIC the success it is today.

#### Income 2014 - 2015



# PIC PLANT SALE IS ON...and online at picplantsale.org

# Online store opens March 21 | Sale Days are April 29 and 30

Feel the arrival of spring as you browse through this year's selection of plants at **picplantsale.org**. Don't miss our new selection of houseplants, annuals, perennials, herbs and vegetables. Then make sure you place your order **before April 15**.

This year we feature pre-made patio pots ready for your front porch or back deck. And as usual, a glorious selection of hanging baskets will be available to help dress up your outdoor space.

We accept on- and off-line pre-sales for the month leading up to our actual sale days, which are Friday, April 29 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm and Saturday, April 30 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. And as this is the weekend before Mother's Day, there will be plenty of choices for gifts for the moms in your life.

On Plant Sale weekend, the doors to the chapel (next door to PIC) open for the community to pick up advance plant orders or to purchase from our weekend inventory, which is full of items that weren't available online.

The Spring Plant Sale is a time when families, alumni, staff, friends, and neighbors of PIC come together to support families at PIC. Money raised will benefit PIC families who are unable to afford the high cost of quality child care.



The sale is truly a West Philly event! Start spreading the word to friends, neighbors, co-workers and family about our wonderful sale so they can get their porches, window boxes, and gardens ready for spring!

Join us on Saturday, April 30 as we pay tribute to former executive director Cindy Roberts. Cindy was a long-time champion of the Plant Sale. More details soon! parentinfantcenter.org facebook.com/parentinfantcenter.

# PIC Fundraising | Giving more children a chance

In 2015, PIC awarded close to \$40,000 in tuition assistance to children enrolled in our early learning, after school, and summer camp programs.

This money is raised through PIC's annual fundraisers, the Plant Sale and ArtStart silent auction, and by individual gifts made by friends, families, and alumni.

Established in 1986, PIC's tuition assistance program began as a way to ensure that children could grow up in a racially and economically diverse community, where all socio-economic levels were represented. *Its goal is to give more children a chance to be at PIC.* 

Through our internal assistance program, PIC awards financial support to families who earn too much to qualify for state subsidized care, but not enough to comfortably afford the cost of tuition. It also supports families experienc-

ing short term crisis, such as the loss of a job. These are working families who very often fall through the cracks.

PIC also enrolls families who receive subsidized child care through the CCIS and Pre-K Counts programs. There is a significant gap between the amount it costs for children to receive high quality care, and the amount PIC receives in subsidy reimbursement from the state. Tuition assistance helps close this gap.

Our committment to economic diversity remains firm, as we know it does for so many of you. Through generous financial support from our community, PIC remains in a stronger financial position to maintain socio-economic diversity and seek ways to accept more families from all income levels.

PIC has long-believed (and research has shown) the importance of children learning alongside peers who are both alike and different in all kinds of ways. We have families of different races, religions, cultural backgrounds, and family composition. Additionally, because PIC has families who pay full tuition, receive internal tuition assistance awards, and receive state subsidy via the CCIS and Pre-K Counts programs, our families also represent a wide range of socio-economic levels.

# Quality Teaching | recognizing excellence

It takes great teachers to inspire great learning. PIC supports teachers as they pursue advanced degrees in Early Childhood Education and beams with pride as they earn national recognition for their accomplishments.





#### Demita Hill receives national teaching award

Sunshines Lead Teacher Demita Hill is a recipient of the 2016 Terri Lynne Lokoff/Children's TYLENOL® National Child Care Teacher Award. As an award recipient, Demita will receive funding for her classroom to create more rich and meaningful experiences with words and stories. She is excited to expand her class library with new books, as well as add more soft pillows to the book area, flannel board stories to support storytelling, and a CD player to bring more movement and song to their emerging literacy activities. Demita's project is inspired by the toddlers in her classroom. "When the children come into the classroom, most are not talking much, yet. It is great to watch language develop for a child over the year and this award will support all that learning."

#### Joanne Browley Makes the Cover

Big news! the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) will feature **PIC Rainbow Lead Teacher Joanne Browley** on the cover of the April/May issue of their professional publication *Teaching Young Children*. For her teacher profile, Joanne describes her teaching style as "positive, purposeful, and playful." *Congratulations Joanne!* 

#### Applauding Achievement: Ethel & Kristy

PIC applauds two infant teachers. **Ethel Simmons**, an Assistant Teacher in the Bumblebee room, made the Dean's List at Eastern University, where she is working towards her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Ethel is a caring and nurturing teacher to our youngest learners by day, and a very dedicated student at night. *Congratulations!* 

Wild Things Assistant Teacher **Kristy Carter** is one of many PIC teachers who has gone back to school. Kristy is studying for a Master's degree in Special Education with a concentration in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Education students are required to do field work. Scheduling it can be tough for students who, like Kristy, work full-time. PIC wants to support teachers going back to school and arranged a leave of absence for Kristy. Last October, she worked with 3 – 5 year olds with developmental delays at an Easter Seals program in Philadelphia. We recognize Kristy for her efforts and determination!

#### Early Education Transformed

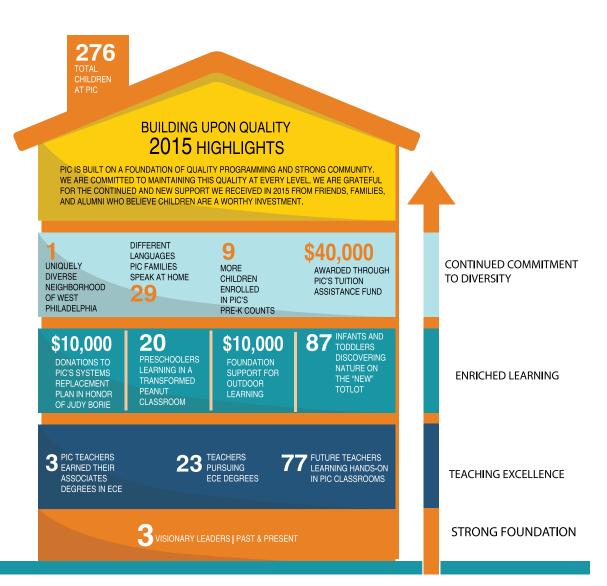
PIC teachers continue to meet the latest educational requirements of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In 2015, Classroom Assistants **Rachel Graves**, **Novella Pope**, and **Ann Vo** earned associates degrees in Early Childhood Education. We also recognize the hard work of 23 PIC teachers who are currently in school. These teachers will help transform early education into a field where teachers will be well prepared to help children learn through play and appropriately compensated for such important work.





#### Investing in Future Teachers

PIC welcomes students from several area programs to observe and complete practicum requirements in our classrooms. This past year 77 students from programs at Philadelphia Community College, St. Joseph's University, and the University of Pennsylvania spent time in PIC classrooms. We are proud to have such strong partnerships with faculty and students at these area schools.



## Bridging the way to After School



One of the ways that PIC's After School Center (ASC) attracts high-quality, highly-motivated, talented teachers is by sharing a precious handful of them with the Early Learning program and offering

them a full-time position in a field of part-timers.

ASC recently welcomed Rachel Kolber, who has worked with the Early Learning program for the past five years, most recently as a valued member of the Peanuts teaching team. The school-age children were delighted to recognize a teacher from their "earlier" years.

Specialists are hired for a particular talent or interest, such as art, drama, literacy or movement/sports. They work in every classroom at PIC with infants to fifth graders, sharing their talents with the children. Mornings are devoted to early learners and afternoons are with the school-age children. In this way, the specialist serves as a bridge that spans early learning and after school programming.

A PIC Specialist has an extraordinary vantage point, experiencing the social-emotional learning that kids acquire in their progression from infancy to tween-hood. In fact PIC is unique in offering this type of link between the early-learning and school-age experiences for children.

Research has shown that high-quality after school programs support the development of social and emotional competencies (knowledge, attitudes, skills). Just as important is the fact that high quality early-learning programs provide the groundwork for such development to occur. Children, parents, and teachers all benefit from this well-integrated environment at PIC.

#### Maintaining a 4 STAR Rating

PIC has again been re-designated a **STAR 4 center** by the **Keystone STARS** program, PA's early learning quality improvement initiative. Performance standards are grouped into four levels with a STAR 4 rating being the highest. We continue to earn great marks from the Commonwealth!

Last year, PIC was awarded close to \$90,000 based upon the quality of our programming and center size, plus dollars earmarked for teacher retention and education.

# Quality Learning | creating great spaces

## Driving discovery on the TotLot

After the success of our **Magic Circle Nature Playground**, we were eager to tackle our infant and toddler outdoor play space. Last fall, with a generous grant from



the Germeshausen Foundation, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work.

The biggest challenge on the "TotLot" is its ground cover, a turf-like play surface and cement. But, with a little

creativity, we brought nature to our young learners.

The installation of bamboo fencing immediately gave a more natural feel. Young trees planted in large custom-made tree boxes frame the space and we added shrubs in wooden planters. We "greened" a grassless space!

A beautiful shade structure canopies a newly constructed sandbox, enhancing outdoor sensory play. Plus, mud boxes have been loaded with dirt where little hands can dig all the time.

With warmer weather upon us, our youngest learners are outside in a re-imagined natural space with much more opportunity for discovery.

## Outdoor learning and literacy



What happens when you add young children, an imaginative teacher, a few great stories, and one Magic Circle Nature Playground? **20 preschoolers make a story book come to life.** 

During a recent study of sound, the Peanuts discovered the classic, *We're going on a bear hunt*, which they read aloud on PIC's Magic Circle Nature Playground.

According to Lead Teacher Jacob Kerner, "Reading this book with the freedom of volume and sensory experiences was fantastic."

One child grabbed a branch full of fall leaves to make the "swishy swashy" noise of tromping through tall grass. Girls took off running and spinning through the "whirling, twirling" sounds of a snowstorm. While other children headed for the mud kitchen to "squilch and squelch" through the mud.

For Jacob, who has a passion for reading, writing, and literacy, "this creative outdoor space gave us the chance to tell a great story in a truly great way." It was interactive, expressive, and will be played out again and again on the playground.

## Maintaining the Magic Circle

Since the Magic Circle Nature Playground opened in 2014, children have enriched their own learning in truly imaginative ways. In this space, classrooms have read stories, made music, searched for hidden treasures, built amazing structures, and shared picnic lunches. In addition to being used by PIC children, this space is open to the West Philadelphia neighborhood. This nationally certified outdoor classroom was made possible by the generosity of PIC families, alumni, and friends who believe in the power of play. We also received significant support from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Each year, it requires upkeep, such as summer watering and landscaping, additional plantings, and replacing materials. Thanks to continued support from the PIC Community, we will ensure that this play space is sustainable and remains an inspiring place for many children and teachers to come.



#### **Environments with intention**

Over winter break, the Peanut classroom was outfitted with new cabinets and countertops and the walls were given a fresh coat of paint. But, the most striking difference was the floor! The very-aged tile and worn-out carpet were replaced by an engineered wood plank flooring.

The room was lighter, brighter, and felt more spacious. This makeover went beyond just facility updates. Inspired by the the Reggio-Emilia approach, we created a learning environment that greets you warmly and child-centered activities happen easily.

We rearranged furniture, added more natural materials, incorporated home-like elements and soft objects, such as wall hangings, area rugs, and soft pillows.

As the Peanuts have embraced their new space, we are seeing how classroom environment impacts the learning of young children and know that it is worth continual investment. This project was possible because of gifts made to our Systems Replacement Fund.

# Quality Facilities | gifts for improvements

## Judy Borie Retires



Last fall, we honored the retirement of PIC's longtime Finance Director, Judy Borie (pictured left) with a special breakfast. Many of Judy's biggest fans turned out, including PIC alumni and former Board members, current Board members, PIC staff, and close friends.

As a tribute to her own retirement, Judy put out a call to her friends to make a gift to PIC's Systems Replacement Plan. Executive Director Debbie Green was pleased to announce that through her request, **Judy raised over \$10,000 to help PIC maintain its facili-**

ties. We are so grateful to Judy for her dedication to PIC and its fiscal health.

### **Annual Giving**

**Our 2015 Annual Fund Campaign raised over \$16,000.** This year, we kicked off our year-end fundraising on #GivingTuesday, a day when PIC friends, families, and alumni posted on social media, sent emails, shared #UNselfies, and gave to PIC. Annual donations give children the highest quality child care, help families better afford tution, and allows us to remain a diverse community of families from different backgrounds, family composition, and socioeconomic levels.

We are grateful for the gifts we received throughout the year from individual donors, as well as support from area businesses and organizations. While we are unable to recognize you all by name in this publication, please check the online *Neighborhood News Spring 2016* edition for a complete list of our friends and supporters from 2015. Visit PIC's website at parentinfantcenter.org.

#### **Sending Science**

In 2015, PIC was awarded a **Lois B. Cohan Museums-to-Go Grant from the Terri Lynne Lokoff Child Care Foundation**. With this generous grant, our pre-k classes enjoyed a visit from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University where they had an up close look at a wood turtle, chinchilla, and eastern screech owl. The children asked questions, learned about each animal, and touched the turtle. This is science enrichment at PIC.

#### Inquiry-based learning and invention



Grasshoppers
pre-k teachers
Brooks Wilson and
Nichole McLeer began a study of simple
machines with observation. The children
noticed machines
around them. For
example they looked

at ramps, pulleys, and wheels and talked about how they improve our lives.

Class discussions also featured the people behind the inventions such as Thomas Edison, George Washington Carver, and of course Ben Frankin. By visiting a statue of Ben Franklin, the teachers took their study into the real world. They dove deeper by reading books related

making PIC stronger

Honoring Judy

Margaret and David Balamuth Lori Basher Debbi Bonneau Bob Brand and Elizabeth Werthan Julie and Barry Bush Randi Carr John and Helen Davies Tom and Ellie Elkinton Steve Elwell and Kate Judge Brian and Leah Finnegan Mary Graham Cathy Guenzel Alice Hershberger Lisa and David Hoke Florence Horsfield Mimi lijima and Steven Minicola Anne Marie and David Inglis Rachel Isaacson and Etai Dori Gary and Meg Jones Kathryn Keeler Jason and Carol Lerner Vicki and Michael McGarvey Rita McGlone and Dabney Miller Cheryl Monturo and Vincent Paul Sara Nerken Steve Pogarsky and Leila Graham-Willis Sara and Andrew Richman Cynthia Roberts and Dan Biddle Anthony Rostain Todd Sandler and Alison Williams Dick and Pat Schaphorst Barb Strandell and Katheren Koehn David Sweet and Elaine Kihara Anilet and Christopher Tharp Bonnie and Steve Devlin Jan Verhage Dick Winston and Jane Combrinck-Graham

to inventors.

Next, the children created their own inventions. They found a problem, and explored a solution. Ideas and designs were represented on paper or as 3-D models. From a faster way to get to Mars, to a better way to cut the grass, the Grasshoppers discovered ways to improve our lives.

To share what they learned, the Grasshoppers invited other classrooms to come to a special "World Fair." When Brooks looked around he saw some Grasshoppers take guests by the hand and lead them across the room. For him, "watching ordinarily quiet children emerge as leaders among their friends was amazing."

In the end, the Grasshoppers had become inventors. They had gained a real understanding of the topic through a variety of activities that included literacy and numeracy, and they shared what they learned with friends.







#### ArtStart Took Us Around the World

On October 22, more than 200 parents, alumni, friends, and staff gathered in St. Andrew's Chapel, **raising over \$30,000** to benefit PIC's Tuition Assistance Fund.

Guests enjoyed a wonderful exhibition of children's art, cocktails, silent auction bidding, a wish garden, and an elaborate buffet generously donated by our **dinner sponsor**, **Beijing**.

We are grateful for our item donors, guests, advertisers, contributors, and volunteers. Together, we created a wonderful evening where alumni parents reconnected and current families enjoyed an adult evening out.

ArtStart 2015 received tremendous underwriting support from Barefoot Wine and Bubbly, Franklin Square Capital Partners, Deirdre Woods Technology Advisors, and Cindy Roberts and Dan Biddle.

We especially thank our event committee. Through their efforts, we had more than 90 unique auction items, tremendous support from area businesses for the program book, and donated food and drink.

The evening was a great success (and lots of fun!). Money raised through ArtStart strengthens our tuition assistance program and enriches PIC programs.

#### What we wished for in 3D

ArtStart's "Wish Garden" featured paper flowers representing items that classroom teachers would love in order to enhance lessons and enrich learning. They submitted these items before the event and through the generosity of one of our guests, After School had their wish come true! Read about the reaction:

Recently, when the after schoolers arrived at PIC, they immediately noticed something new in the Stucco Building. Next to the computers sat a large cube shaped piece of equipment that none of the children recognized. When we revealed that it was a 3-D printer, the response was enthusiastic and they asked "Can I copy myself?" and "Can we make candy?" The children were excited to see how it worked and began to think of things that they could make. Since Legos are one of their favorite activities, the children decided to look up different types of Lego pieces they could "print." The children will learn 3D modeling and 3D drawing in robotics club and during other special activities. It is exciting to encourage critical thinking and young imaginations as we incorporate this new tool into our program.

#### Other ways to support PIC

Make a donation and ask if your company has a matching gift program. Designate PIC to receive your gift to the United Way or Penn's Way Campaigns by using our number: 02671. Kindly remember us in your estate planning. For more information on these and other ways to support PIC, please contact Development Manager Karen Stachelek at 215-222-5480 or send an email to kstachelek@parentinfantcenter.org.

## Alumni in Action: The Juergens-Behr Family Returns



above: Annie (right) and her mom Nancy in the Wild Things classroom on Grandfriends Day. below: Cleo



Annie Juergens-Behr attended PIC in the early 1980s. Her parents Bob and Nancy have remained active supporters of PIC ever since. Annie returns more than 30 years later, but this time as a mom. She lives in West Philadelphia with her husband and young daughter, Cleo who is in the Wild Things infant classroom. Here's Annie on her time at PIC.

I started at PIC when I was two and continued there until I went to kindergarten. I remember an indoor jungle gym, which was gigantic! My parents say that there was an indoor climbing structure, but not the size of a jungle gym. It's funny how big things seem in preschool.

I remember Marni Sweet, who had soft checks and gave warm hugs. She remained a mentor to our family for many years.

One of the things both my parents and I remember most
—Annie Ju
about PIC is all of the families we became friends with
over the years. One of my PIC classmates remains a very close friend today.

One of the things both my parents and I remember most about PIC is all of the families we became friends with over the years.

-Annie Juergens-Behr

I am so excited to be able to send Cleo to PIC. The programs and the teachers are as wonderful as ever, and it's exciting to be able to see them with a parent's eye. I am absolutely enamored with her teachers, who are all wonderful, insightful, caring, smart people. My mom remembers a teacher of mine who "was just as lovely as Cleo's teacher Jasmin."

Are you or your child(ren) an Alumni in Action? Send news to risaacson@parentinfantcenter.org.

Want to keep up with PIC? Find us on facebook.com/parentinfantcenter

#### OUR GRATITUDE: We are very grateful for the support of our friends whose generous contributions we received in 2015

James and Martha Aguiar in memory of Jasper Aguiar Allred Daniel and Ann Aharon Ergin and Selver Ahmed Erol Akcay and Ebru Erden-Akcay Nancy Potter and Jon Akins Linda and Ronald Althoff in honor of Phoebe & Hannah Bush Linda Amsterdam Marjorie and Wolfram Arendt Clay Armstrong and Clara Franzini-Armstrong Jacquelyn Aveta and James Gentile Pushkala Jayaraman and Kumar Ayyagari Margaret and David Balamuth in honor of Judy Borie Tiara Durham and Floyd Barnett Lori Basher in honor of Judy Borie Ellen and John Bauder Julia Baylor Harton Michael and Karen Beckman Vivian Begley Robert Behr and Nancy Juergens Frances Biddle in honor of Cindy Roberts Jeffrey and Kristen Block Maya Nayak and Christopher Bole Mac and Judith Borie Megan and Nicholas Bowers Bob Brand and Elizabeth Werthan in honor of Judy Borie Robert Brooks and Holly Miller-Brooks Sally and Bob Brown Seth Budick and Fatimah Johnson Julie and Barry Bush in honor of Judy Borie James and Diane Calkins Alex and Shannon Camps Craig Carnaroli and Amie Thornton Randi Carr in honor of Judy Borie Brendan Carr and Sarah Winters Rotonya and Tyree Carr II April Carter Robert Chaney and Ellen Napier Susannah Chang and Jonathan Raper Adrienne Chapman and Peter Cline Erica Cheslock Albert and Lori Cho Lisa and Michael Clapper Tamara Clark Barbara Cohen in honor of Elizabeth Pokempner Matthew Cohen and Sarah Busis Jodi Cohen David Comberg and

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