

WE ARE WHAT SPECIAL NEEDS

SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER



Welcome Heather Martinez!

Dear Friends,

As our cold, blustery winter weather leaves and we begin looking forward to sunny days ahead, I am pleased to share that after an extensive search that involved the use of outside counsel, Heather A. Martinez joined DIC on May 1st as our new Chief Executive Officer. Heather brings with her a wealth of skills and experience in the field of special education, along with great familiarity with public as well as for-profit and non-profit charter schools and service providers.

As a Special Education Director for the Wayne-Westland Community School District, Heather was most recently responsible for overseeing all special education services for 10 elementary schools, as well as supervising various ancillary staff groups throughout the district. She has also served as an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Developmental Kindergarten Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Teacher Consultant, and more in other school districts, including Jackson Public Schools and Riverview Community School District.

In her "spare" time, Heather serves as the current president of the statewide Michigan Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC), whose "core purpose is to strengthen the field of education to impact success for individuals with exceptionalities."

Heather joins us at a time when our School Services program remains strong and our community-based LEAP (Learning, Enrichment, and Achievement Programs) initiative continues to expand, providing nearly 5,100 hours of services annually to under-resourced children with special needs. We look forward to her leadership in building on our progress to date and increasing our impact with children having special needs.

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I know the DIC board and staff (including Heather) join me in thanking you, our donors and stakeholders, for your generous support that allows us to maintain our impact and implement new programs like LEAP, which is funded entirely by donations. We hope that you will visit www.detroitchildren.org/donate or consider responding to our upcoming Spring Appeal to make a gift in support of our important work.

With all best wishes for a bright and sunny spring and summer,

Paige George

Paige George
Chair, Board of Trustees



AFTER-SCHOOL LEAP UPDATE



A personal gym trainer, social work grad student, high school teacher, and Wayne State adjunct professor, all connected by a common goal: To provide After-School LEAP students with special needs additional academic support at our Marygrove center.

Monday and Thursdays at around 4 pm, you can hear the excitement bursting through the doors as the younger students (grades K-5) begin to greet each other. Stories about their day are shared in-between snacks. After a quick group activity, tutors slowly round up the students for one-on-one and group sessions around math and literacy.

The atmosphere is different on Wednesdays and Fridays. With exasperated sighs, older students (grades 6-12) come with English reports and homework in social studies, math, and science.

Our older students are given assessments as it relates to independent skills youth need to achieve long-term goals. Areas assessed include daily living and self-care activities, money management, computer literacy, and study habits. After the assessment, tutors and students work together to create a learning plan to support the development and strengthening of skills.

We will also be providing speech and occupational therapy screenings to help participants receive needed services where appropriate. But more than the one-on-ones, screenings, and assessments, After-School LEAP is about connectedness with the students, families, and schools.

Schedule

K-5th

Monday and Thursday
(4:00 - 7:00 pm)

6th - 12th

Wednesday and Friday
(4:00 - 7:00 pm)

Contact

Kara Black
586-604-9017

kara.black@detroitchildren.org



"I want to help kids be able to overcome difficulties that hinder their discovery in the world of science. It is satisfying observing students get that light bulb moment as they grasp an idea. I want to impact my neighborhood in a tangible way through tutoring children and teenagers."

- Michael Johnson, Tutor



"I would like to see LEAP students improve academically, excelling at the level required by the state for their grades and developing social skills in this environment with their peers."

- Kara Black, Program Manager



"I hope our after-school program provides the space and support for students to gain a broader understanding of themselves and the world they live in; to move forward in their endeavors with confidence and hope, no matter their obstacles; to learn from each failure and not be afraid to fail; and to be brave enough always to keep going!"

- Deavyn Dishroon, Tutor



Summer LEAP

July 10th - August 10th

In-person (at Marygrove) and Teletherapy
Pre-K to 5th grade

Contact:

Desiree Garagiola
248.963.1224

desiree.beardeley@detroitchildren.org

Registration:

detroitchildren.org/leap-programming



Meet Our Team:

Cydney Randolph

Joined DIC: October 2022

Role: LEAPing Together with Families Parent Educator

Credentials:

- Bachelor's degree in Education, minor in Child and Family Studies from the University of Michigan-Dearborn and Walden University.
- Certified and trained "Parents as Teachers" Parent Educator (birth to kindergarten)
- Certified in Trauma Smart
- Certified in Growing Great Kids (birth to kindergarten)
- 13 years' experience in early childhood development working with children and families



About Cydney

Cydney was born and raised in Detroit and has a set of 11-year-old twins, Zoe and Zachary, and a family dog named Oreo.

Cydney comes to DIC from the CDC-Wayne County Health Department, where she worked as a liaison for Detroit and Wayne County schools during the pandemic educating school personnel and families.

In addition to her children's activities, Cydney serves as a community liaison, workshop leader, and volunteer registrar for Greater Metropolitan Youth Sports, and enjoys playing volleyball in her spare time.

What is LEAPing Together with Families

DIC's LEAPing Together with Families parent education initiative is based on the nationally recognized "Parents as Teachers" (PAT) program. It equips new and expectant parents with skills to promote positive child development from birth to kindergarten. LEAPing Together adopts a "whole family" approach to early childhood development and encourages the active involvement of the entire family. The program's in-person and at-home interactions aim to build strong communities, thriving families, and healthy, safe, and school-ready children. Partnerships with Abigayle Ministries, Brilliant Detroit, and the Christ Child Society provide additional support to families in their local communities.

Cydney's role as Parent Educator

- Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and create group connections by hosting playgroups at our Marygrove location
- Improve parenting practices, increasing children's school readiness and success by providing appropriate resources
- Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues using assessments and screenings
- Prevent child abuse and neglect by offering ongoing family support
- Implement at-home visits that aim to improve the health and well-being of families with young children

For more information, please contact Cydney at cydney.randolph@detroitchildren.org

BE A CHILDREN'S CHAMPION!

By making a gift to DIC, our Children's Champions give children with special needs and their families the help they need to overcome challenges and become thriving members of our community.

Each gift of \$45 (or more) provides one hour of direct services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, academic tutoring, family support) through our community-based programs serving under-resourced children age birth - 18 (Summer LEAP, After-School LEAP, LEAPing Together with Families).

We hope that you will visit www.detroitchildren.org/donate or consider responding to our upcoming Spring Appeal to make a gift in support of our important work!



2045 E. West Maple Rd.
Suite D407
Commerce Twp., MI 48390

Support DIC and Keep Children First

We know these are difficult times and we appreciate any gift you can provide in support of the work we do. Please use the enclosed envelope or visit www.detroitchildren.org/donate to make your contribution today!



DIC Program Wish List:
<https://a.co/dyGVf2M>



Shop at Kroger? Register your Kroger Rewards Card to donate a percentage of your transaction to DIC (and get great coupon deals while you're on their website!).
Our Organization Number is IM321.
Re-enroll every April!

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Heather Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

Mike Rhoads
Chief Operating Officer

Ara M. Hachigian
Chief Program Administration Officer

Niki Beebani
Director of Program Development & Quality

Nicole Regentik
Director of Human Resources

Jan Shimshock
Director of Development

Desiree Beardsley
Office Manager

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