



# RAISING *the* BAR

ANNUAL REPORT



THE MILES  
FOUNDATION  
Investments in Education



# *The* RAISING *of* FORT WORTH

What if we believe that [Fort Worth's future](#) depends on the health and development of its youngest children, age 0 to 5?

In early 2015, a small group of stakeholders who shared this very belief joined together to grow awareness and support for a quality early education for every child in Fort Worth.

In seven short months, approximately 200 community leaders and members rallied behind this effort, now called "[The Raising of Fort Worth.](#)"

[Three local events](#) hosted throughout the year [generated buzz](#) around the importance of quality early childhood development and its potential long-term impact on the Fort Worth community. While the first two events focused on sharing [key research](#) and facilitating dialogue about early childhood education, the last event in November culminated in the development of a detailed [cross-sector action plan](#) for supporting quality early education for all.

Increased community participation led to [advocates stepping forward from the business, health, faith, civic, education, nonprofit, and philanthropy sectors](#) to help recruit key leadership support and brainstorm relevant actions for their sectors.

The effort has been led by First3Years and sponsored by The Miles Foundation, in conjunction with the other Raising of Fort Worth committee partners: Camp Fire First Texas, Community Foundation of North Texas, Child Care Associates, Early Learning Alliance, The Parenting Center, The Rainwater Charitable Foundation, and United Way of Tarrant County.

The Raising of Fort Worth is [driving awareness](#), support, and action around quality early learning – an area that is critical to the success of our children and the safety, health, and productivity of the Fort Worth community. The Miles Foundation's support of quality early education is central to its mission to ensure the next generation's success. [We look forward to continuing to work together to shape a brighter future for Fort Worth.](#)

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# Letter From *the* **THE BOARD**

"Raising the bar" can be seen either as a catalyst for positive change, or the beginning of a daunting challenge (or sometimes both). While the phrase always connotes setting a higher standard, it also often requires doing things differently in order to achieve a different outcome. And change can be a scary proposition – even when its primary purpose is to emerge stronger, better, or more impactful than before.

In 2015, The Miles Foundation saw this theme mirrored both in its work in the community, and in its internal practices. Externally, our partners in the "Raising of Fort Worth" collaboration helped to advocate for a quality early education to prepare every child for success in school and in life. The Morningside Parent Engagement Collaborative worked to elevate the importance of parental engagement in a low-income neighborhood, empowering parents to take a more active and informed role in their children's development and education. In these instances, and in so many more, we saw that raising the bar requires not only setting our sights on a bold vision, but also engaging key partners who will help effectively employ a best-practice approach and measure progress along the way.

Internally, we took a critical look at the Foundation's goals and how we could best measure our own progress. We established metrics, aligned with the Foundation's mission, to help us stay accountable to our most important priorities. Through this exercise, we were able to validate those areas of focus that will continue to be vital in our mission to fulfill Mr. Miles' legacy. We also recognized that in order to raise the bar in our key areas of focus, we will have to be diligent in strategically prioritizing, communicating, and collaborating going forward.

Not surprisingly, "raising the bar" is ingrained in all philanthropic work – we collectively work towards bettering systems, communities, policies, and practices. But being intentional about raising the bar means committing to a process. From defining a new, better standard, to measuring progress against that standard, and finally (perhaps the hardest part), not being afraid to iterate, change, and adapt the approach—all of these steps are necessary to reach the desired goal.

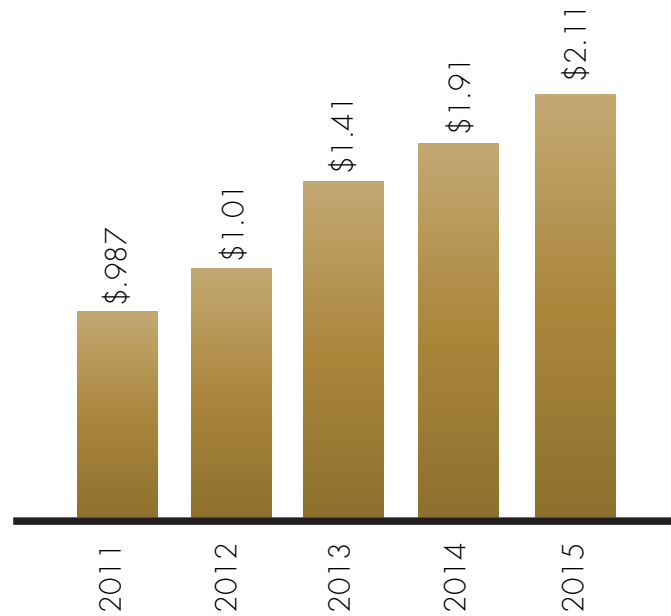
Our founder, Ellison Miles, was never afraid of a challenge. In many cases, he set the standard – from [fighting off the German Luftwaffe in World War II](#), to [innovating in Texas oil and gas](#), and [pioneering an educational scholarship tradition](#).

In Mr. Miles' memory, we strive so that one day we might reflect on bars we have helped to raise – for the children of Fort Worth, for the health and safety of our community, and for the future success of our city. Thank you to all of our friends and partners who join us in this great mission.

- The Board of Directors

# Our GIVING

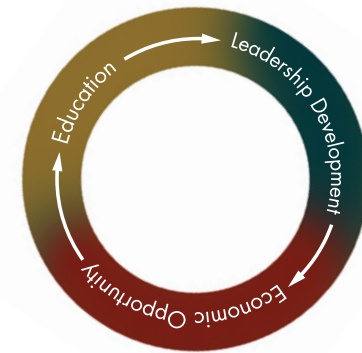
Giving in Millions



20% Increase in Giving to Early Childhood Education



\$530,000 Given to Innovative First-Year or Pilot Programs



# Our FUNDING AREAS

## Education

- Character Development
- Early Childhood Education
- Parent Engagement
- STEM  
(Science, Technology,  
Engineering,  
Math)

## Leadership Development

- Community Leadership
- School Leadership
- Student Leadership

## Economic Opportunity

- Adult Job Training
- Anti-Poverty
- Economic Mobility
- Financial Coaching

# FUNDING AREA SPOTLIGHT:

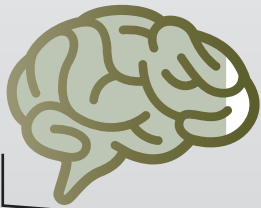
## Early Childhood Education

### Our View

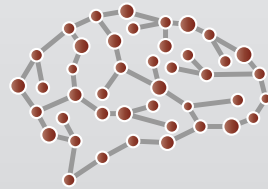
The youngest children of today will become our next generation of workers and leaders. The Miles Foundation supports quality early childhood development and education for children age 0-5 as the building blocks of a healthy, productive, and prosperous society. Quality early education is essential for the learning and life success of our children, and it is a critical investment in the future of our community.

### Why Early Childhood?

1) **90%** of a child's core brain structure is formed **by age 5**



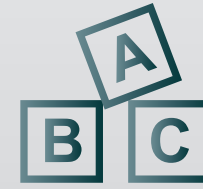
2) In the first few years of life, **700 new neural connections** are formed **every second**



3) Low-income children hear **30 million fewer words by age 3** than their high-income counterparts



4) **Quality early child care** and education of disadvantaged children have been proven to help **prevent the achievement gap**



Quality early education for disadvantaged children has proven to:

- ↑ Promote **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION** and higher education learning
- ↓ Reduce **CRIME, INCARCERATION** rates, and **TEENAGE PREGNANCY**
- ↑ Increase **WORKFORCE PRODUCTIVITY** and **EARNING POTENTIAL**
- ↑ Foster **MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY,** and **PHYSICALLY HEALTHY** adults



5) Early childhood development is a **SMART INVESTMENT**. **Up to \$16 for every \$1** invested in quality early childhood programs can be returned to society in the form of higher individual earnings, and reduced remediation and criminal expenditures.

\*Sources: Heckmanequation.org, Perry Preschool Study at Age 40, Voices for America's Children and the Child and Family Policy Center, "Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3", Harvard University - Center for the Developing Child



# STRONG BEGINNINGS *for a* BRIGHTER FUTURE

This year, The Miles Foundation partnered with Fort Worth-based Red Productions to create its first-ever video, "[Strong Beginnings for a Brighter Future](#)." Featuring Mayor Betsy Price and a number of local community leaders, the video emphasizes the importance of quality early learning for every child in Fort Worth.

"The investment in our children, particularly from birth to kindergarten, is the **single most important investment** we can make."

*- Betsy Price, Mayor of the City of Fort Worth*

"When we talk about **preventing incarceration, preventing teen pregnancy, encouraging graduation** – all of these things **really start at birth** and are firmly set into motion by the time a child turns age 3."

*- Sadie Funk, Executive Director, First3Years*

"Investment in early childhood development does have a **return on investment**. For every dollar we invest, there is **up to \$16** that can be returned from that investment."

*- Julie Piggott, Chief Financial Officer, BNSF Railway*

"It's much more **cost effective** to deal with this issue when they are **very young**, than to deal with **the aftermath**."

*- Dr. Dyann Daley, Anesthesiologist, Cook Children's Medical Center, Executive Director, The Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment*





# AVANCE

AVANCE's dual-generation approach to breaking the cycle of poverty has gained national acclaim for its combination of quality early childhood development and personalized parenting education programs. AVANCE has positively impacted its child graduates' development, testing scores, and graduation rates, while helping parents increase their workplace and parenting skills.

AVANCE's recent expansion into Fort Worth has included a book club that introduces families to its programming. Hosted at a local library, the book club emphasizes interactive reading, engaging both active listeners (parents) and readers (children). It not only familiarizes families with the library's expansive resources, but also focuses on the parent-child bonding that can occur during the simple practice of reading together.

In 2014, the AVANCE-Dallas program reported that 86% of the children age 0–2 were developmentally at or above their target age on the E-LAP (Early Learning Accomplishment Profile). In addition, 81% of the 2014 parent participants demonstrated at least 75% of the 44 “ideal” parenting behaviors on the AVANCE Home Visiting Checklist while playing with their child. This benchmark was up from a mere 2% of participants at the year's beginning.

*“We are extremely grateful to have been able to introduce our programming in Fort Worth over the last year, and are excited about our potential impact going forward.”*

*Anne Thomas  
Executive Director  
AVANCE*

# the CONCILIO

An award-winning nonprofit organization, The Concilio empowers parents to improve the education and health of their families. Its programs help parents build the confidence and skills they need to successfully engage in their children's education and growth.

The Concilio's signature "Parents Advocating for Student Excellence" (PASE) program boasts a 90.2% high school graduation rate among the children whose parents attend the program. It also has ensured that 78% of those parents' children who graduate high school move on to post-secondary education.

The Concilio's impressive outcomes are achieved by employing an authentic approach to partnering with parents. The organization's philosophy on parent engagement establishes it as a leader in the field and trusted partner to the families it serves.

*"The Concilio's move into Fort Worth has been a model partnership – with The Miles Foundation, the schools, and the parents. We are building strong, meaningful connections that will serve as the foundation for our work going forward."*

Florencia Velasco Fortner  
President and CEO  
The Concilio



# TCU LiINK PROJECT

The Texas Christian University (TCU) LiINK Project is driven by research from the U.S. and other countries that shows that children who engage in more physical activity and play, as well as less academic content daily, will actually perform better academically than children who are sedentary, less creative and active, and pressured with more academic content daily.

The TCU LiINK Project's approach includes four primary components: 1) increasing the amount of physical activity via recess in schools, 2) adding ethics and character development as a content area, 3) assessing students differently (i.e., assessing with developmental tracking instead of grades twice a semester), including less standardized testing and more local control, and 4) restructuring the school day to feature less hours in the classroom for K-6 students and extra time in play and creativity for all students.

LiINK demonstrated early success in impacting student behaviors and continued to track positive results throughout its first year, including the improvement of student attention and academic performance.



*“The Miles Foundation’s interest and support of the LiINK Project have been phenomenal. We need partners like The Miles Foundation who believe in our mission, and who can help us as we seek to measure results, communicate our successes, and expand our efforts.”*

*Debbie Rhea  
Head of LiINK Project  
Associate Dean of Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences at  
TCU*

# Center *for* TRANSFORMING LIVES

For more than 100 years, the Center for Transforming Lives (formerly the YWCA Fort Worth & Tarrant County) has worked to help women, children, and their families transition from poverty to independence by facilitating three critical factors for success: housing stability, high-quality affordable childcare, and financial self-sufficiency.

The Miles Foundation has proudly partnered with the CTL to support its Child Development Program. On any given day, this program serves approximately 300 children between the ages of six weeks and five years through three development centers in Fort Worth and Arlington.

The centers provide high-quality childcare, free of cost to homeless families and at a reduced cost for low-income families. The program enables parents to go to work with peace of mind, while helping to prepare their children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

*“The Miles Foundation team cares about key issues and is looking into what really works, what can we do better, and where we can collaborate so that we can serve our clients in the best way possible. We greatly appreciate The Miles Foundation’s informed and educated approach to their giving.”*

*Corinne Fiagome  
Development Coordinator  
Center for Transforming Lives*



# CASSATA High School

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2015, Cassata is a private, nonprofit outreach high school that provides young people with another chance at success. In 2014, about a third of Cassata's graduating students were the first in their family to earn a high school diploma, and 40% were former dropouts.

Cassata provides structure through a non-traditional learning environment. Whether originally from large public or private schools, students at Cassata experience new flexibility to meet the demands of their work and personal lives. Many Cassata students also take advantage of the resources offered through the "Cassata Connections" program, which include a dual enrollment program with Tarrant County College, one-on-one tutoring, and college preparatory services, among others.

Some Cassata graduates progress to 2- or 4-year colleges, while others enlist in the military or attend a trade school. Cassata's diverse student body shares a commonality that unites them all: each student has a story of hardship and hope that has brought them to this place to learn – and grow – together.

*"What The Miles Foundation does for us makes all of this possible. We are hugely appreciative of their partnership."*

*Amanda T. Harrier  
Director of Development & Marketing  
Cassata High School*



# RIVERTREE ACADEMY

## Summer Work Program

Every weekday for 10 weeks during the summer, the boys of the Rivertree Academy Summer Work Program learn essential lessons about life and work while providing a valuable service to their community. Through the summer work program, boys from the high-crime, low-income neighborhood of Lake Como apply and interview to be a part of the selective team that is hired to help clean up the local neighborhood.

The program is organized and led by the staff of Rivertree Academy, a recently-opened private Christian school in Como that provides community-funded education for under-resourced students from the area. In 2015, the program was able to hire 16 boys, in addition to four college-aged team leaders to help mentor and support the boys throughout their three months together.

The initial projects were simple, such as picking up trash and mowing yards. But by the end of the summer, the work program students were taking initiative on much bigger projects, such as disassembling dilapidated sheds on abandoned properties, digging trenching for a water system, and painting the entire exteriors of their neighbors' houses.

*"This was an awesome effort with folks across the community. We couldn't have done it without the help of all of our partners, including The Miles Foundation, the R4 Foundation, The Cary Brown Foundation, and so many others."*

Terrence Butler  
Executive Director  
Rivertree Academy





# MOMENTOUS Institute

For 95 years, owned and operated by the Salesmanship Club, Momentous Institute has pioneered best practices in children's social emotional health. Through longitudinal research, the organization has proven that coupling therapeutic practices with education can help at-risk children and families overcome, persevere, and thrive.

Integrating social emotional development into the fabric of an educational curriculum helps prepare children to succeed in school and in life. It develops children who can self-regulate, communicate, and problem-solve. Social emotional health also translates to children who are empathetic, grateful, gritty, and optimistic – even in the midst of adversity.

The results are definitive: Seven years after leaving Momentous Institute, 99% of its alumni graduate high school on time. 86% of its alumni advance to higher education, while 87% of those college freshmen re-enroll for their sophomore year.

Whether learning to address conflicts between others, or simply settle their own internal emotions, the Momentous Institute's innovative social emotional curriculum is helping students to thrive both inside and outside of the classroom.

*“It has been a great forward-thinking partnership with the funding community. We aren't building the solution in a year. We're taking a thoughtful approach to help inform next steps so that we can effectively scale our impact.”*

*Michelle Kinder  
Executive Director  
Momentous Institute*

# MORNINGSIDE

## Parent Engagement Collaborative

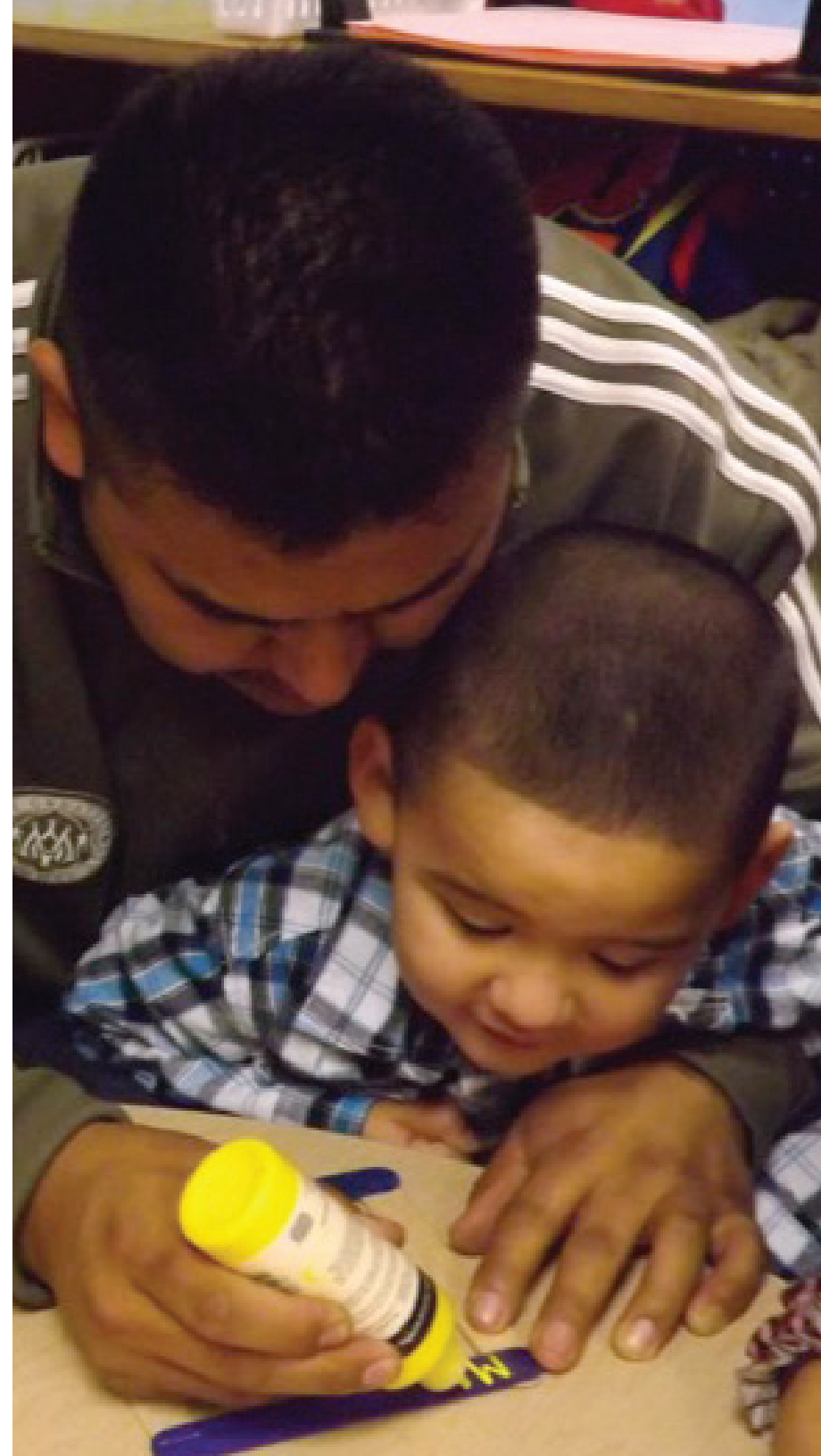
In early 2014, leaders from The Miles Foundation, The Morris Foundation, and The Rainwater Charitable Foundation discussed how an early childhood parent engagement initiative in Morningside could impact kindergarten readiness and student achievement. Morningside is a 2.2 square-mile neighborhood in Fort Worth where more than 70% of the residents live below the poverty level, and nearly half lack a high school degree.

In September 2014, the three foundations launched the Morningside Parent Engagement Collaborative (PEC), partnering with seven local nonprofit agencies to offer parent engagement programs to Morningside families with children ages 0-5. Each of the partner agencies – including AVANCE Inc. (in partnership with United Community Centers), Camp Fire, The Concilio, East Fort Worth Montessori Academy, Fort Worth Library, and The Parenting Center – designed and implemented unique programs targeted to this group.

In its first year, the Morningside PEC reached 230 parents, 50% of whom had an income of less than \$18,000 per year. Survey and focus group results showed significant increases in parental knowledge and confidence, as well as parents spending more quality time with their children as a result of the program.

*“Year one was a success – our partners made a significant impact in the community, reached over 200 parents, and learned a great deal along the way. Next year, we look forward to our continued collaboration with funders and agencies to fine tune our approach, broaden our reach, and deepen our relationships here.”*

Jay McCall  
Director of Programs  
The Miles Foundation





# EXCERPTS *from the* Miles Foundation Blog

Notable Stats, Quotes and Insights

*"Funding is only one tool in your arsenal. You also have knowledge, relationships, influence...invest all of them in your nonprofit partners."*

- Jeremy Gregg's guest blog, [Shifting the Collaboration Paradigm Between Funders and Nonprofits](#)

*"1 in 4 kindergarteners nationwide – 1 million total – come from low-income families and enter school not fully ready to learn."*

- [A New Guide for Kindergarten Readiness](#)

*"Thou shalt not use the name 'collaboration' in vain."*

- Suzanne Smith's guest blog, [The Collaboration Commandments](#)

*"In response to a question about how to face a leadership setback, Mark Cuban said, 'You think for a second, 'What can I change?', you think for another second, 'What have I learned so I can do it differently next time?', and then you move forward."*

- [The Presidential Leadership Scholars Class of 2015 Graduates](#)

*"Quality child care teachers greet children warmly by name, get on their eye-level when talking to them, respond to the needs of children quickly, and build a classroom community that gives each child a sense of belonging."*

- Dr. Dyann Daley's guest blog, [Why Are Only 7% of Licensed Child Care Programs in Tarrant County Considered Quality?](#)

*"Creating a quality early childhood environment requires acknowledging parents' pivotal influence and role as primary teacher in their children's lives."*

- [Star-Telegram Op-Ed](#) by Grant Coates, President & CEO

*"Children raised in a single-parent household are almost five times more likely to live in poverty."*

- [Insights on Single Parenthood](#) by Jay McCall, Director of Programs

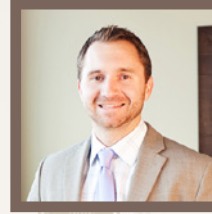
*"Whether it's deepening grantee relationships, building a team with shared goals, rallying a community around key issues, or advocating for change, all foundation impact begins and ends with relationship."*

- [Intentional Philanthropy: A Framework](#) by Sara Redington, Director of Communications

# BOARD *of* Directors & Staff



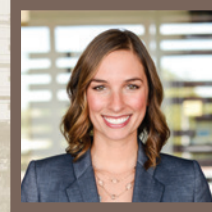
**Grant Coates**  
Chief Executive Officer &  
President



**Jay McCall**  
Director of Programs



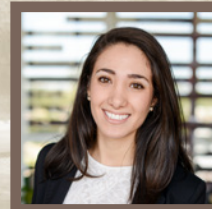
**Sherry Wilson**  
Board Member



**Sara Redington**  
Director of Communications



**Jack Burdett**  
Board Member



**Fernanda Bigham**  
Executive Assistant



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