



ROBINSON
COMMUNITY
LEARNING
CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

MISSION STATEMENT

The Robinson Community Learning Center welcomes community and Notre Dame partners who strengthen the Northeast Neighborhood of South Bend through relationship building and educational opportunities. By promoting innovation and excellence, the Center builds individual capacity and enhances existing systems throughout South Bend.



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Letter from the Manager

At the RCLC’s 10th anniversary celebration, it was noted that beginning a second decade meant that the RCLC was entering adolescence. Now that we are halfway through our 19th year, perhaps we are entering adulthood as we face a time-honored rite of passage—preparing to leave home and embark on new adventures in a new location.

The planning of our new home reflects years of input from RCLC community members—youth, parents, neighbors, partners, staff, board members, and volunteers. Over the past year, RCLC and Notre Dame staff members have met monthly with Alliance Architects and Kite Realty to turn all their ideas into a viable reality. We are thrilled that plans have been completed, with ground breaking in August 2019. The new RCLC will be open for business in the fall of 2020.

The new RCLC will continue to provide a welcoming entrance through a large, comfortable “gathering room” into a fully accessible one-story building. Located directly across the street from the current building, it will be closer to campus for our student volunteers who walk or bike. The new building will be 5,000 square feet larger, and will include:

- A large, fenced green space for safe outdoor play
- Windows for natural light
- A Black Box multi-use performance space
- A combined makerspace/tech lab
- A state-of-the-art early childhood classroom

The new RCLC will also honor our past and uphold our culture and core values. When participants were asked what they most wanted to keep from the old

RCLC, the top answer was “the murals.” The RCLC murals will be prominently displayed as a testament to our history in the community.

The RCLC will also continue to be an inclusive community where everyone’s voice is valued. For example, just as the members of the original RCLC community had the chance to choose some of the original furnishings, more than 300 members of the current community voted to choose the color scheme for the new building!

Please check out <https://rclc.nd.edu/new-rclc/>, the Robinson Community Learning Center Facebook page, and [rclcdirt](#) on Instagram to follow our progress over the coming year!

Jennifer Knapp Beudert
Manager, Robinson Community Learning Center

GOAL 1: HOSPITALITY

Create a setting that serves as a place of gathering and interaction among neighborhood residents, ND students, faculty and staff, and community partners.

Adult Programs

Lu Ella Webster,
Adult Program Coordinator

In preparation for the new building, RCLC staff reached out to our community to ask what should be kept from the original RCLC when we move into the new building. People overwhelmingly responded that the RCLC needed to continue to be a welcoming environment, with a comfortable gathering space right inside the front door. This was hardly a surprise (in fact, all planning discussions from the very beginning recognized the importance of such a space). Where else could one find lively interaction among people of diverse ages, backgrounds, religions, races, and cultures? People who come from down the block or across the world



tell us that they feel comfortable at the Robinson Community Learning Center—and that is something worth celebrating and fostering at the new RCLC.

Programs for Seniors

More than 50 senior adults regularly attend activities at the RCLC. These participants are improving their computer skills, learning to breathe and stretch to relieve physical and mental stress, sharing ideas about the books they are reading, or simply enjoying

socializing with their friends. The RCLC's Lunch and Learn lecture series remains a popular monthly event, with an average attendance of 40 seniors, and was recently the subject of WNIT's *Education Counts Michiana* television show (check them out on YouTube!)



English Language Learning

For more than 18 years, the RCLC has partnered with the South Bend Community School Corporation to offer ELL classes for adults. This year, the RCLC community has been enriched by the presence of 80 adults from 18 countries. They are most generous in sharing their cultures with everyone in the RCLC, and we have benefited from art demonstrations and classes, as well as delicious treats during holiday potluck meals.



“I loved being involved in tutoring. It was such an awesome experience and a great break away from campus. I really enjoyed getting to individually know each of the children I tutored and could definitely see myself volunteering here for the remainder of my time here in South Bend. It was awesome to see the improvement of each child and their motivation to learn after having a full day of school.”

ND student volunteer

Tutoring

Ty Johnson, Youth Development Program Director
 Jennifer Wittenbrink Ortega, Literacy Program Director
 Kris Arizmendi, Volunteer Coordinator

DURING 2018-19

133 children tutored
 15 schools represented
 215 volunteers from 7 local colleges
 More than 5,000 hours of tutoring

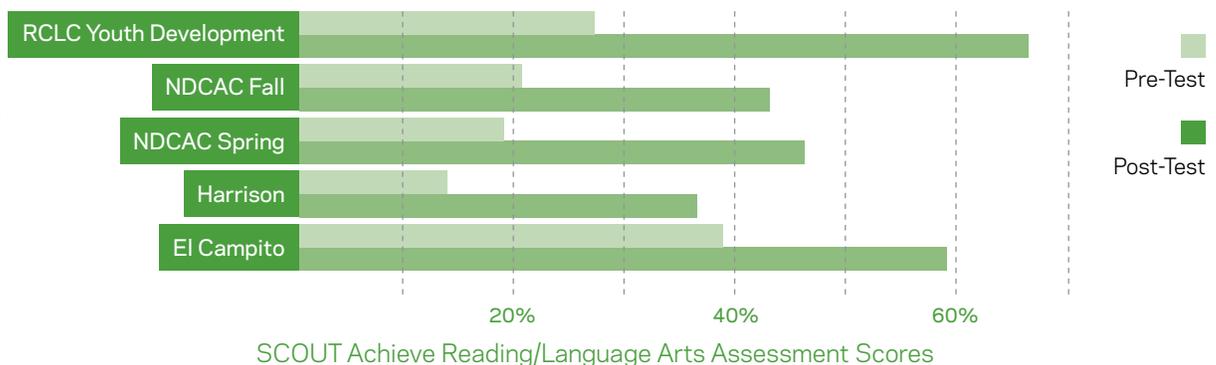
- Second-grader Addison was convinced he would never learn to read, but after three months of tutoring, he read seven books during one session.
- Third-grader Harvell didn't even want to come into the room for tutoring, but he was inspired by his student-athlete tutor who created reading competitions for the two of them (involving many push-ups). By the end of the year, Harvell had advanced three grades in sight word recognition.

- Esmeralda arrived from Mexico just in time to start fifth grade, and spoke very little English. After working with her tutor she became the star of the afternoon drama class.

These are just a few of the success stories from the RCLC's Afterschool Tutoring programs this year. During 2018-19, literacy tutoring was provided for K-6 youth, at the RCLC, the Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture (NDCAC), the Harrison Boys & Girls Club, and the El Campito Child

Development Center. Sessions focused on vocabulary, reading, writing, and comprehension. A pre-post assessment measured literacy competency and identified individual goals for each child. Children at all sites showed growth in goal areas, with an average pre-post gain of 25 percentage points; 53 percent of children advanced more than two grades in sight word recognition. On end-of-year surveys, tutors reported seeing positive growth in students' reading and writing skills, as well as in enjoyment of books.

Average Pre-Post Growth on Literacy Goals





“The MyAmerica trip helped me realize that a lot of people in the past have contributed to the way we live life today in the African-American culture.”

RCLC Youth

Enrichment Activities for Youth

During 2018-19, RCLC youth learned about a wide range of subjects, including brain health, climate change, biology, rockets, chess, broadcasting, and sailing—and that learning did not just occur within the walls of the Robinson Center. Campus and community partnerships enabled youth to explore new places and opportunities locally, as well as outside of Indiana.

“MyAmerica” Trip

Twenty-one RCLC youth traveled to Tennessee this spring on the eighth annual MyAmerica Trip! Their trip included visits to the National Civil Rights Museum, the Hermitage, and the Nashville Public Library’s Civil Rights Room, as well as a Civil Rights Walking tour of Nashville.



Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture

Participants in the arts education programs at the Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture had hands-on experiences with art, music, dance, and traditional foods from cultures around the world. They got to try soap-carving, needlework, print-making, watercolor painting, photography, string art, and blind contour drawing. They also enjoyed learning about famous artists and trying to create works of art in their styles! Like us on Facebook at ND Center for Arts and Culture.



LEGO Robotics

After its strong performance at the Indiana State Competition, the RCLC LEGO Robotics team was invited to participate in the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) Mountain State Invitational Tournament, a 62-team event targeting the best FLL teams from North, Central, and South America. Members traveled to the competition in West Virginia by bus, which allowed for interesting stops along the way, including a visit to the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh and MuseumLab! At the competition, the team won second place in the Alliance Round and their robot came in 16th out of 62!



940 youth participated in Robinson Shakespeare Company activities during 2018-19

“Watching my students gain self-confidence and work with others has been such a joy. I believe with all my heart that the drama integration lessons have played a HUGE role in our success as a class who works together as a family.”

Classroom Teacher

Education, Shakespeare

Christy Burgess, Shakespeare Program Director

Robinson Shakespeare Company

The Robinson Shakespeare Company (RSC) entered into its second decade this year! To celebrate, the RSC tackled the challenge of presenting two productions of Shakespeare’s *Othello*. The company of older students did some of their best work to date, and the full production featured actors who have been performing with the RSC for as many as 11 years. The Robinson Shakespeare Young Company performed a half-hour version of the play with 30 cast members! Some of the parts were triple-cast, so the actors had to really be on their toes.

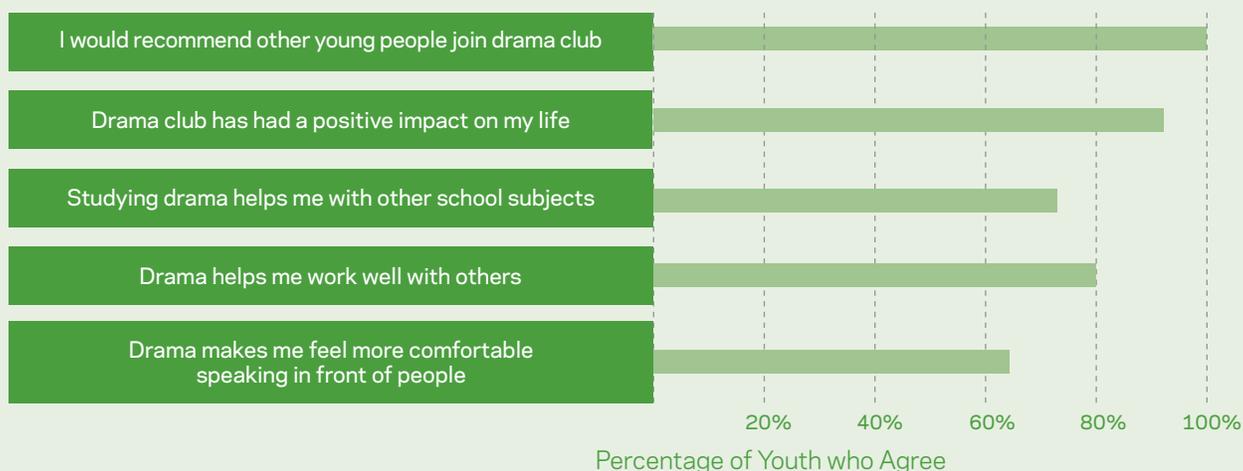
Community Outreach

The RSC Community Outreach Initiative offered weekly drama integration instruction and afterschool drama clubs at three partner schools and the Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture, serving 650 youth, grades 1-8, during the school day, and 220 youth after school. By expanding these school partnerships to serve entire grade levels rather than individual classes, RSC Outreach provided weekly drama instruction to 250 more youth than last year!



Two Othellos

RSC Afterschool Club Survey Responses



Like us on Facebook at [Robinson Shakespeare Company](#)



Advanced Skills and Youth Entrepreneurship

Michael Boyd, Advanced Skills and Entrepreneurship Program Director

- “The Class Act” app enables students to ask clarifying questions to a teacher during class without interrupting his or her lecture.
- The “Pedestrian Scissor Lift” is a barrier that rises from the ground to protect those who are not paying attention when they cross train tracks.
- “Group Live” is a virtual reality headset that allows you to be a part of meetings all over the world without leaving your seat.

These three innovative ideas won the top awards at the 2019 Invention Convention, the business plan

competition that is the end-of-year culmination of the RCLC’s Youth Entrepreneurship program. RCLC young entrepreneurs also had the opportunity to compete in the annual Idea Pitch Competition, and at Ball State’s Innovate WithIN regional competition. Middle school students were able to participate in hands-on workshops focused on Design Thinking and Ideation at the IDEA Center and the Innovate WithIN event.

During 2018-19, more than 200 local youth engaged in the RCLC Advanced Skills and Youth Entrepreneurship Program, which includes classes at the RCLC, a summer Entrepreneurship

Camp, clubs at Dickinson Fine Arts Academy and Navarre Intermediate Center, and outreach classes offered in partnership with the Jobs For America’s Graduates (JAG) programs at Adams High School, Mishawaka High School, and the Career Academy.

Robinson Enterprises

With new buildings on Eddy Street, the Robinson Enterprises team had fewer lots on which to park cars, but still managed to meet its fundraising goals! This was due in large part to the intrepid youth who parked cars for the Garth Brooks concert and were not fazed by the sleet and hail!

Don’t forget to make parking reservations for the upcoming Notre Dame football season online at rclc.nd.edu.



“Here at Notre Dame, we are taught to ‘be a force for good in the world.’ Every time I stopped to reflect after a Take Ten seminar, discussion, training, or teaching session, it became increasingly apparent that Take Ten was providing both its participants and teachers the opportunity to be such a force. In a world where violence is arguably all-too-present, teaching methods of restorative justice to South Bend students was highly rewarding, but most importantly, also humbling. You learn that while you may have the title of ‘teacher,’ there is always something you can learn from the situations life brings your way.”

Take Ten volunteer/ND student

Take Ten

Ellen Kyes, Take Ten Program Director

Take Ten is a violence prevention/ conflict resolution curriculum that focuses on teaching skills to handle conflict in a peaceful way. Take Ten provides participants with the tools to “Talk it Out, Walk it Out, or Wait it Out” as alternatives to violence, and builds their capacity to make better, more positive choices.

Take Ten in the Community

During 2018-19, Take Ten served 1,698 youth, grades K-12, at 12 schools and eight agencies, and 102 adults at six agencies, including the RCLC, NDCAC, the Center for the Homeless, the YWCA, Hope Ministries, the Department of Corrections South Bend Re-Entry Center, and Reins of Life. The Take Ten curriculum was

taught by teams of volunteers from the University of Notre Dame, Saint Mary’s College, Holy Cross College, IUSB, and Bethel University. These 140 Take Ten volunteers provided 4,520 hours of service for our community! On year-end surveys, 97 percent of volunteers reported that participating in Take Ten had a positive impact on their collegiate experience.

Evaluation

Take Ten conducts annual evaluation of the program through surveys administered to participants, grades 3-12, three times per year. Results from the 2017-18 Take Ten evaluation demonstrated positive pre-post growth in the following areas:

- Ability to define conflict and violence
- Understanding personal agency in impacting conflict
- Ways that individuals can escalate or de-escalate conflict and potentially violent situations
- Belief that learning about conflict and how to handle it will make schools safer

The full analysis of Take Ten Program Evaluation Data for multiple years is available at <https://rclc.nd.edu/take-ten/>.

Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/taketen.nd.edu](https://www.facebook.com/taketen.nd.edu).



English as a New Language Preschool

Jennifer Wittenbrink Ortega, Literacy Program Director

This year's English as a New Language (ENL) preschool class came from 13 countries and spoke six languages. Their parents were refugees, asylees, and graduate students—and all attended adult English classes. Most of the children spoke barely a word of English when they started. By the end of the year everyone was chattering in English—playing dress-up, telling stories, asking questions, and of course singing boisterously along to “Baby Shark”! Parents learned alongside their children—taking home literacy packets on weekends, attending Parents As Teachers and Talk With Your Baby classes, participating in art activities,

and going on family field trips. Learning English became a family affair!

- After nine months of preschool, children demonstrated an average gain of 25 months of English language development, as measured by the Peabody Test of Receptive Language.
- On end-of-year surveys, 100 percent of parents agreed that children looked forward to coming to school, preschool staff were welcoming and helpful, and they would recommend the ENL Preschool to a friend!



“You are just amazing! The way you care is so beautiful, and you are really making many lives better! Keep doing it!”

ENL Preschool Parent

Talk With Your Baby

Kris Arizmendi, Talk With Your Baby Coordinator



The Talk With Your Baby (TWYB) program educates parents and caregivers about the importance of talking and interacting with children right from birth in order to foster language, literacy, and social development. This year brought TWYB outreach into Elkhart County, and added South Bend partnerships with Beacon, the B.A.B.E Store/WIC, and

the downtown public library. TWYB offered new family activities for the summer, including Sensory Saturdays, Messy Mondays, and the outdoor P.A.R.K. series (parents, activities, recreation, knowledge).

The TWYB coordinator traveled to Washington, D.C., this spring to represent Indiana as part of the Zero to Three organization's “Strolling Thunder” campaign. She met with elected officials to talk about caring for children 0–3 years old, and shared the great work that TWYB and its partners do for our community.

DURING 2018-19



210

parents and caregivers participated in TWYB classes

35

new TWYB facilitators were trained

GOAL 4: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Foster active citizenship and a commitment to community building among the Center's partners and participants.



186,632

Total AmeriCorps hours served from 2011 to 2018

194

Education Awards received

253

RCLC AmeriCorps members since 2011

600

Volunteers recruited/ supported annually

2,000+

RCLC participants served annually

36

AmeriCorps members served more than one term

AmeriCorps

What do these amazing AmeriCorps members have in common? All of them used to be RCLC youth participants—some for as many as 12 years! They have gone on to graduate high school, attend college, work in the community, and pursue a wide range of interests, yet all of them have been inspired to give back to the Center that nurtured them by becoming RCLC AmeriCorps members. As AmeriCorps members, they have tutored children, directed Shakespeare scenes, taught conflict resolution, and been wonderful mentors. No doubt they are inspiring the current RCLC youth to be future leaders as well!

AmeriCorps, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, has engaged more than 1 million members over the past three years in service to communities. Members give a year of their lives, supported by only a modest living allowance plus an education award that may be used for future schooling or to pay off student loans. RCLC AmeriCorps members not only serve with RCLC programs, but with partner organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Club, the Moreau College Initiative, and the El Campito Child Development Center. RCLC AmeriCorps members have been serving the South Bend community for eight years!

2018-19 AmeriCorps Members

Alexander Uryga
Alfreda Gillespie
Ashley Uphoff
Breyona Gray
Brian Lebron Williams
Celine Marcos
Chloe Deardurff

Chloe Spurgat
Da'Qwan Dockery
Elizabeth Cummings
Emily Sullivan
Eva Hornikel
Jenae Longenecker
Jessica Lee

Josh Crudup
Joy Moore
Kasey Bridges
Kennedi Bridges
Leslie Omeeboh
Lucia West
Maggie Long

Meaghan Gilroy
Morgan Livinghouse
Nicholas Dolan
Precious Parker
Raini Fleming
Samantha Musleth
Sha-Nia Clay

290,257

hours of service provided to the South Bend community from 2011 to 2019



Thank you, Chicago Blackhawks!

Despite the January chill in the air, 200 members of the RCLC community eagerly attended the National Hockey League's Winter Classic at Notre Dame Stadium as guests of the Chicago Blackhawks! This was not the first time the Blackhawks have taken the entire RCLC to a game—they have been wonderful partners since 2014! RCLC youth were even invited to skate with team members at the Compton Ice Arena.

As a legacy to the 2019 Bridgestone NHL Winter Classic, the National Hockey League and Chicago Blackhawks donated \$100,000 to support the redevelopment of the new RCLC. This donation will support a new tech lab/makerspace that will include the Future Goals' Hockey Scholar online program, which uses hockey to teach STEM (science, technology, education, math) concepts. The program is targeted to students in grades 4-7, leveraging hockey to teach critical STEM skills, develop scientific and critical thinking skills, and introduce STEM-related hockey careers.

A new generation of hockey players!

The Blackhawks, through their Get Out and Learn (G.O.A.L.) program, are providing the RCLC with hockey equipment, training programs, and hockey clinics. Five RCLC youth received scholarships to the Little Blackhawks Learn to Play program this spring, receiving head-to-toe equipment for free! This initiative was also made possible through collaboration with the staff of the Compton Family Ice Arena.



Many thanks to our 2018-2019 sponsors!

The Robinson Community Learning Center would like to acknowledge our generous sponsors, without whom our work throughout the community would not be possible:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Arco/Murray National Construction | Notre Dame Alumni Association |
| Community Foundation of St. Joseph County | Notre Dame Center for Social Concerns |
| Better World Books | Rea Charitable Trust |
| Bowsher-Booher Foundation | Riley Children’s Foundation |
| Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County | Serve Indiana/AmeriCorps |
| Dollar General Literacy Foundation | Shakespeare at Notre Dame |
| El Campito Child Development Center | South Bend Community School Corporation |
| Holy Cross College | University of Notre Dame |
| Indiana Arts Commission | Wells Fargo Bank |
| Jessie Ball DuPont Foundation | Individual donors and those who wish to remain anonymous |
| Key Bank Foundation | |
| Harvey R. and Doris Klockow Foundation | |
| Muessel-Ellison Memorial Trust Foundation | |

RCLC History

The RCLC was launched in February 2001 as an off-campus educational initiative of Notre Dame in partnership with Northeast Neighborhood residents of South Bend. While RCLC staff report to Public Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, programs are overseen by a program advisory board composed of residents, program partners, Notre Dame faculty/staff, and students.

The Robinson Community Learning Center is a department in the Office of Public Affairs and Communications, under the direction of Jay Caponigro, Director of Community Engagement; Timothy Sexton, Associate Vice President; and Paul J. Browne, Vice President for Public Affairs and Communications. See more about Notre Dame’s local outreach efforts at publicaffairs.nd.edu.

And to our 2018-2019 RCLC Program Advisory Board Members

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Mike Ball | Angela Fitzpatrick | Sarah Martin | Amanda Russell |
| Annie Cahill Kelly | Kreece Fuchs | Maria McKenna | Duane Wilson |
| Mia Copeland-Palm | Kiana Jackson | Torrence Moody | Richard Pierce, co-chair |
| Steve Egan | Nicole MacLaughlin | G. David Moss | Carmen Williams, co-chair |