

# Robinson Community Learning Center

Annual Report  
2022-2023



The Robinson Community Learning Center mourns the loss and celebrates the memory of RCLC’s founding director, Jay Caponigro. [Read about Jay’s legacy at the RCLC and throughout the South Bend community.](#)

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## RCLC Youth Programs

More than 100 youth, grades 1-12, participated in RCLC Youth Development Programs during 2022-23. Fifty children were enrolled in the afterschool program, receiving an hour of tutoring each day from 100 college student volunteers, followed by enrichment activities including makerspace activities and drama integration. More than half of the students enrolled demonstrated a 25% pre-post gain on the SCOUT Achieve Literacy Assessment. An



additional 15 middle and high school students participated in evening tutoring. 25% of RCLC youth were enrolled in multiple programs, including multiple evening clubs, such as Lego Robotics and Podcasting.

When the pandemic closed everything down in spring of 2020, there was a group of RCLC middle and high school students that were preparing to go to New York City for the annual MyAmerica Trip. Three years later, the MyAmerica program was back, and those young people were specifically invited to participate. The semester-long program culminated with the long-delayed trip to NYC, attended by 14 youth participants. The young people reported that their visits to Ellis Island and the 9/11 Museum were particularly impactful. (They also enjoyed Times Square).



*A University of Notre Dame student, right, tutors a child at the Robinson Community Learning Center. (Photo by Barbara Johnston, University of Notre Dame)*

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## Robinson Shakespeare Company

During the academic year, the Robinson Shakespeare Company (RSC) served 30 youth, grades 3-12, divided into younger and older companies, that rehearsed weekly in the RCLC Black Box Theatre. The RSC performed a winter recital of scenes and monologues to a standing-room-only crowd of more than 100, and, in the spring, performed two productions of *King Lear*. Nineteen youth, grades 4-12, participated in the RSC Summer Camp, which culminated in a performance of *Merry Wives of Windsor* for an audience of 75 friends and family members. Those students also had the opportunity to perform

scenes at the Community Foundation's Summer Performing Arts Series. Drama integration instruction was offered weekly to 400 youth weekly during the academic year at the following sites: Nuner Fine Arts Academy, Jefferson Middle School, the Harrison School Boys & Girls Club, the Notre Dame Center for Civic Innovation and RCLC.



# Preschool



A total of 31 children, ages 3-5 years, attended the RCLC Preschool during the 2022-23 school year as well as in the summer. The preschool served families from Bahrain, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, Myanmar, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Sudan, Venezuela, Mexico, and Japan.

The preschool used the HighScope Preschool Curriculum. English language/literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, writing, and alphabet recognition were integrated into the daily schedule.

Families took monthly field trips to places such as the South Bend Civic Theatre and the Children's Museum. LEAP (literacy exploration in action) packets with books and activities were sent home with families every weekend. After nine months of preschool, children demonstrated an average growth of 16 months in language development as assessed by the Peabody Test of Receptive Language Skills.



## Programs for Senior Adults



Programs for senior adults continue to thrive. Monthly Lunch and Learn Lectures had an average attendance of 40, and two book clubs, a computer class, a quilting class, and a retired women's group met regularly at the center throughout the year. RCLC seniors attended multiple events at Kelly Park during the summer, including concerts by the Music Village and the Back to School Picnic. The Back the Bend Day bus tour was also a huge hit, with visits to the Grotto, the Basilica, and United Way's 1Roof Southeast Facility.

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## Notre Dame Center for Civic Innovation



This spring marked the 10th anniversary of RCLC Educational Programs at the Notre Dame Center for Civic Innovation (NDCCI). Fifty children participated in youth programs at the NDCCI during the school year. The Afterschool Program provided an hour of tutoring from 108 college student volunteers, followed by enrichment activities for children grades 1-5.

Children demonstrated pre-post gains of 21.25% on identified goals using the SCOUT Achieve Literacy Assessment, and advanced an average of 1.5 grades on sight word recognition. An additional 25 children attended NDCCI evening clubs, including Vex Robotics, Art Club, Creative Writing, Design Thinking, Dance and Jump-Rope. The Winter Holiday Walk and Art Exhibit was a highlight of the year, showcasing art by NDCCI youth and local vendors. More than 200 community members attended.

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## Talk With Your Baby

The Zoom Talk With Your Baby (TWYB) classes, which began during the pandemic, continue to thrive through a partnership with WIC/the B.A.B.E. store. Classes are offered weekly in both English and Spanish, and during 2022-23 were attended by 132 parents and caregivers. In addition to the Zoom classes, in-person TWYB classes were also offered at RCLC, the School-Age Mothers Program, the Women's Care Center, and the Tutt Library as well as by agency partners Healthy Families, Hannah's House, Memorial Hospital NICU, and St. Joseph Hospital, reaching an additional 105 participants. With the warmer weather, TWYB moved outdoors to offer events for parents and babies including Reading in the Park, Sensory Saturdays, and Messy Monday.

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## Summer Partnership with ACE



RCLC began an exciting new partnership with the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) Teaching Fellows program during summer 2023. The partnership allowed the Summer Camp to expand from a ½ day to a full day program. [Read more about it here.](#)

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# Volunteers and AmeriCorps Members

RCLC runs on its volunteers. During 2022-23 a total of 484 volunteers served in RCLC/NDCCI programs and events, providing 9,775 hours of service to our community. The majority of volunteers come from Notre Dame, but college students from the other local colleges, as well as others from the community, contribute to these efforts.

In addition, 39 AmeriCorps members provided 24,681 hours of service to RCLC programs and 32 AmeriCorps members successfully completed their service to receive a Segal Education Award.

We are pleased to announce that the RCLC AmeriCorps program has been awarded another three-year cycle of grant funding. This will be our fifth cycle.



# NEWS AND UPDATES

## Marguerite Taylor awarded Honorary Degree from Notre Dame



Marguerite Taylor, daughter of Renelda Robinson for whom the Robinson Center is named, and the first RCLC employee, was the first South Bend community member to receive an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Notre Dame. [Read about it here.](#)



## RCLC announces director appointment

In April, **Susan Devetski** was announced as director of RCLC. Devetski is an experienced education leader and consultant on school design, curriculum, leadership and governance. In her position, Devetski leads the staff and the center's strategic direction, including the enhancement and development of partnerships and curriculum.

**Jennifer Knapp Beudert** continues as the center's manager, handling day-to-day budget matters, leading the AmeriCorps members and writing proposals for grants, which fuel RCLC's programs.



**Timothy Sexton**, associate vice president for public affairs, said of Devetski and Knapp Beudert, "Susan's and Jennifer's skills complement each other and their work will serve the RCLC — and the Northeast Neighborhood — well into the future." [You can read more about it here.](#)



# Thanks to our sponsors

The Robinson Community Learning Center would like to acknowledge our generous sponsors. Thanks to you, our work throughout the community is possible.

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