



# Impact Report

## 2025



# Table of Contents

4

Thank you to our partners

5

Letter from the ED

6

About Us

7

Impact by the Numbers

8

Looking Ahead:  
Vision to Action Plan

9

Early Education

12

Partners in Action

13

Family Success

14

Staff Highlights



# Table of Contents

**15** Community Services

**16** Charlestown Family  
Engagement Network  
(CFEN)

**17** Senior Services

**18** Memories  
with Murphy

**19** Food Security  
Initiatives

**21** Holiday Drive

**22** Volunteer of the Year

**24** Get Involved



# 2025 Community Partners

ABCD Boston - AGE Strong Commission - Beverly Gibbons Senior Center  
BCYF Charlestown Community Center  
Boston Family Engagement Network - Boston Housing Authority  
Boston Police Department - Boston Public Library  
Boston Public Schools UPK - Boston Senior Home Care - Bunker Hill Associates  
Bunker Hill Knights of Columbus - Center for Collaborative Education  
Century 21 Elite Realty - Charlestown Coalition - Charlestown District Court  
Charlestown High School - Charlestown Historical Society - Charlestown Mothers Association  
Charlestown Neighborhood Council - Charlestown Nursery School  
Charlestown Preservation Society - Charlestown Resident Alliance - Charlestown Soccer  
Christ Church Charlestown - Councilor Gabriella Colletta-Zapata  
Cradles to Crayons - David Whelan Scholarship Fund - DC Beane - Essem Art Studio  
Friends of Bill at 55 - Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard - Friends of Memorial Hall  
Good Shepherd - Harvard Kent - Harvest on Vine - JP Pilates - Jumpstart - June Bug  
Leggat McCall Properties - Malden Catholic - Massport - Mass Ability Commission  
Mayor Michelle Wu - Office of Community Safety - Office of Early Childhood  
Office of Food Justice - Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement - MPTA  
MGH Charlestown Health Center - MGH Institute of Health Professions  
Mystryde - NEW Health Charlestown - North End Music and Performing Arts Center  
Nurture by NAPS - Pann Home Services  
Representative Dan Ryan - RSM - Senator Sal DiDomenico  
St. John's - The Suffolk Company - Tech Goes Home - The Warren Tavern  
YMCA of Greater Boston - United Way Massachusetts Bay - Vivo Architecture

And to All Our Individual Donors and Volunteers

*Thank You*

Join Us



# A Message From The Executive Director

## Dear Kennedy Center Community,

The year 2025 marked the 61st year of serving children, families, and seniors in Charlestown! On behalf of everyone at the Center, **thank you for the many ways you have supported us through the decades:** our staff and board, partner agencies, elected officials, volunteers, program “ambassadors,” donors, business partners, and neighbors!

Throughout this Annual Impact Report, you will see the direct results of your support. You’ll see numbers that reflect our scale, and stories that describe the **true impact of deep, consistent nurturing.**

## Mission in Action

Although this report focuses on the past year, I also think about **what our staff are doing at this very moment to keep the safety net strong in Charlestown while the government shuts down.**

- In our preschool, our cooks are singing and stirring as they **prepare a healthy lunch for the children**
- In our classrooms, teachers are gathering children on the rug for story time, **a cozy learning moment for both literacy and emotional security.**
- In our offices, Family Advocates and administrators are **connecting parents to emergency resources,** food pantries, and vital supplies like diapers and formula.
- In our Tufts St. outreach center, staff are packing up tote bags with **groceries to feed our clients who have lost food benefits--in some cases, their only income.**

## Staying Strong for the Next 60 Years

Together, we can weave a safety net of care for the next generation. The work of nurturing requires the right combination of resources to be able to act quickly in a crisis and also sustain services for the long-term.

Given the uncertainties of public funding, we count on you, our supporters, to invest strategically in this community’s safety net. Please look for our Vision to Action plan at the back of this report. The plan outlines the priorities that will increase our impact across all services.

- Strong Staff Capacity and Training
- Strong Client Engagement
- Strong Facilities & Operations

To achieve these outcomes, we have launched the fundraising campaign, “Staying Strong for the Next 60 Years,” to raise \$250,000 by summer 2026. Please watch for updates on the campaign and multiple opportunities to get involved.

And mark your calendars for our gala on May 28, 2026!



# About Us



The John F. Kennedy Family Service Center is a multi-service nonprofit agency dedicated to increasing the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for children, families, and seniors.

Our mission is to provide individuals and families in need with services, opportunities, and the tools they require to lead productive and fulfilling lives.



**Thara Fuller**  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



**Griselle Tejada**  
DIRECTOR OF  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES



**Crystal Galvin**  
DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICES



**Joseph Maciel**  
CONTROLLER



**Ta'Nia Atkinson**  
EDUCATION  
COORDINATOR



**Kimberly Kyle**  
SENIOR SERVICES  
COORDINATOR

## Board of Directors

### President

Eileen Ward

### Vice President

Thomas Cunha

### Treasurer

Melissa Becker

### Clerk

Alina Lopez Thomas

## Directors

Philip X. Carr, Jr

Aileen Gorman

James Henry

Phyllis Hickey

Tim McKenna

Eric Philippi

John L. Tobin, Esq.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

# 1,678

Total individuals we reach each year

# 550

Families participated in Family Enrichment

# 100

Senior Clients who have home care services

# 200

households received emergency clothing assistance

# 1,180

Individuals with increased food access and security

- We increased support for children's mental/emotional health by hosting a licensed counselor 2 days per week through a partnership with NEWHealth clinic
- We expanded senior wellness activities
- Our Community Baby Shower celebrated new babies & provided their families with Welcome Baby baskets of toiletries, diapers, blankets, and local resources.
- We hosted bilingual workshops for families navigating the special education system
- We graduated 3 classrooms of children ready to start kindergarten, and supported families to confirm placement in BPS schools
- We completed construction on our brand new toddler classroom to open in 2026



# Progress on Vision to Action Plan

In 2024 we began a visioning process based on focus groups with staff & clients. Based on the 4 priorities identified, we created action steps to achieve our goal. Below is the 2025 progress report.

## JOHN F. KENNEDY FAMILY SERVICE CENTER



# Early Education

## Kennedy Center Preschool Goals:

- 1) Promote healthy growth & development of children ages 15 mo. to 5 yrs
- 2) Provide nurturing childcare while parents/guardians work, pursue their educational goals or care for other family members.



Our programs include:

- Early Head Start (intensive wraparound supports for at-risk toddlers)
- Boston Pre-K (a BPS partner K-1 program for children ages 3 and 4 living in Boston)
- Head Start Part-day (HS curriculum 8:30-2:30)
- Full-day Childcare (extended hours until 5:30)

We welcome families of all backgrounds to our preschool.

As a Head Start Partner, we prioritize enrolling children whose families meet HS eligibility criteria, such as food insecurity, involvement with the foster system, low income, and other risk factors. We also accept childcare subsidies.





The Kennedy Center’s Head Start program blends fun, instructive play with key academic learning, tailored to each child’s developmental stage. Using a child-centered approach, young learners explore integrated themes in math, science, and social studies, build strong literacy skills, and thrive in predictable, engaging classrooms that support progressive skill development. Our program prepares every child for kindergarten with confidence, focusing on essential skills for academic and social success, including:

- Learning How to Learn: Deductive reasoning and problem solving
- Building Positive Relationships: Teamwork, sharing, and social interactions
- Focus and Self-Control: Listening skills and impulse control
- Expressing Themselves: Effective verbal communication
- Following Through: Completing multistage instructions and tasks



## Professional Development and Quality Care

Our early education teachers are committed to continuous learning and participate in required professional development to strengthen classroom management practice and ensure safe, high-quality learning environments.

Training includes child growth and development, first aid & CPR, understanding children's behavior, social-emotional learning, play-based teaching, and essential health and safety routines.



# Partnerships in Action

Grounded in best practices for early childhood development, our partnership with the MGH Institute of Health Professions (IHP), made possible through support from RSM, expanded and strengthened our existing developmental screening work by integrating specialized expertise and targeted interventions for children and families.

This initiative enhanced the screening process with deeper analysis, educator coaching, and direct access to IHP's clinical resources. With a shared commitment to equity, the project ensured that screenings were not only universal and consistent but also paired with timely, high-quality follow-up for students whose results indicated developmental needs.

This expansion was driven by the exceptional leadership of our Education Coordinator, Ta'Nia Atkinson. Ta'Nia coordinated the partnership, strengthened educator training on administering and interpreting the ASQ with fidelity, and built streamlined pathways connecting children and families to supports such as the IHP Speech, Language, and Literacy Center. Her work has resulted in more proactive intervention and empowered families who feel better equipped to advocate for their children's development. This achievement reflects Ta'Nia's dedication to equity and her unwavering commitment to student success.



# Family Success



"When I was out of work and facing a difficult time, the Kennedy Center stepped in to support my family. Programs like Cradles to Crayons and holiday assistance helped us stay afloat. The Center also provided critical support for my children, including enrolling my youngest in Early Intervention for speech development.

With my children thriving under the care of the dedicated staff, who also offered invaluable emotional support, I was able to return to work and continue my education. The Center is more than a resource; it is a community. From events my children enjoy to daily support, the Kennedy Center has strengthened our family and helped us move from a period of crisis to a stable, hopeful path.

Four decades ago, Mr. Shah immigrated from Pakistan and built a life and family around his two pizza shops. His world was upended when his wife passed away from cancer, leaving behind medical debt that wiped out his life savings and forced him to lose his home and businesses.

Now living in Bunker Hill Housing, Mr. Shah is starting over with support from the Kennedy Center. His two young daughters attend preschool, becoming bilingual and preparing for kindergarten. Our health manager carefully monitors the older daughter, who once needed serious surgery but now plays freely on the playground.

The Shah family's story reminds us to recognize the strength and resilience of families facing poverty and loss. Mr. Shah's gratitude and joy inspire all of us: "I lost everything, but now I am so happy for my wife and my kids. Problems are nothing."



# Staff Spotlight

## Lillian (“Lili”) Sgro



Lillian Sgro first connected with the Kennedy Center as a parent and volunteer, often bringing her son to help at community events. Her humor and easy way of connecting with other neighborhood parents soon led to a role on our Family Engagement Team as a Parent Partner, organizing events and leading toddler playgroups.

We discovered her talent for graphic design as she created amazing flyers and program announcements. We encouraged her as she completed a certificate program in graphic design.

Now, Lillian plays an essential role in shaping the Kennedy Center’s visual identity, contributing her artistic talents to many of the stunning designs featured across our social media platforms and outreach materials. Her work beautifully captures the spirit and mission of the Kennedy Center, helping us connect with and inspire our community.

## Nefira Masic, Boston Pre-K Teacher

Nefira Masic, a graduate of Playmaker University, brings trauma-informed play into her Boston Pre-K classroom. When five-year-old C struggled with impulsivity and aggression, she discovered his spark, curiosity, athletic energy, and a love of drumming, and integrated these interests into classroom routines.

She gave him the role of movement break announcer and taught him techniques like drumming on his body and superhero breathing to manage big emotions. Through her approach, C.M. shifted from withdrawing in frustration to engaging eagerly with peers.

Nefira’s work, recently highlighted in the Playmaker University newsletter, shows how connection and play can help children thrive while inspiring teachers themselves.



# Community Services

**JFK Basic Needs Fund** offers direct relief including food assistance, financial support, and case management services for individuals and families in need.

**JFK Food Security** initiatives provide consistent relief and programming that support long-term nutrition, sustainability, and self-sufficiency. Programs include the Senior Grocery Program, Summer Eats Meal Site, the Charlestown Farmer's Market, and the Vacation Meal Pack program.

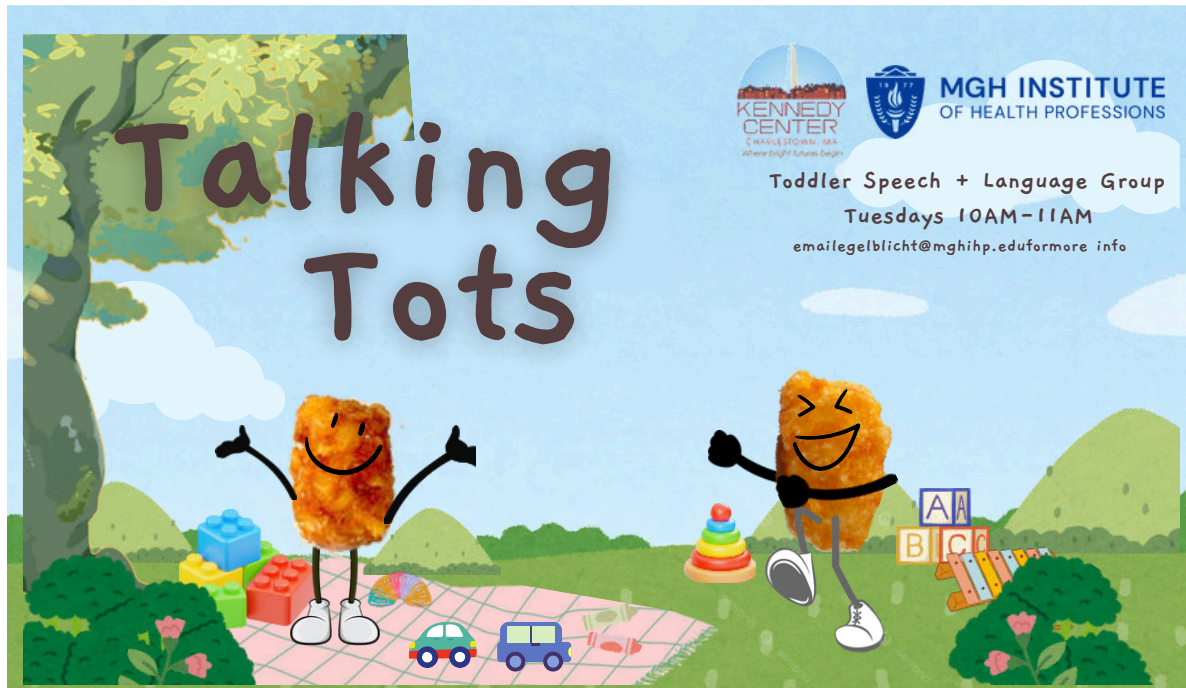
## **Charlestown Family Engagement Network (CFEN):**

Partners with families of young children (ages birth through six) and community stakeholders to promote children's learning, development, school readiness, and success. We provide FREE programs that connect families to high-quality early learning programs and promote parent education, family engagement, and early literacy.

## **Community Building:**

The Center supports community building and pride through our many special events or activities, including our Annual Holiday Drive, Bunker Hill Pride, and related celebrations.





## Talking Tots Speech Therapy Program

In response to a clear gap in speech and language services, the CFEN team, with support from the Charlestown Impact Fund, launched Talking Tots, a toddler speech therapy playgroup.

Led by Katy Flemming, a Charlestown resident and graduate of the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions, the program provides free access to critical assessments and support for every toddler in our school and community programs.

Through a language-rich, play-based environment, Talking Tots strengthens early literacy skills and builds a strong foundation for lifelong learning.



# Senior Services

## Thriving at All Ages

Senior Services promote wellness, social connection, and access to resources important for quality of life.

### Examples of Activities

- In-home Homemaking & Personal Care Services
- Workshops on prevention & management of health issues
- Gatherings for crafts, book discussions, or coffee and a chat
- Multicultural holiday luncheons



### Did You Know?

**1 in 4 seniors in MA are 'socially isolated'.  
This factor is linked to: 50% increased risk of  
dementia 32% increased risk of stroke**

Appointments for help with individual concerns, such as accessing benefits programs for medicine, food, and related services.

Mr. Murphy's stories of "back in the day" in Charlestown draw in a crowd of all ages. The beloved former head of our preschool, Mr. Murphy, not only brings a lot of historical knowledge, but also humor and compassion. Because people know and trust him, he plays a key role in outreach to seniors.

During the pandemic, he started wellness checks by phone, a practice he continues for those at risk of isolation, food insecurity, and health issues.



**Memories with Murphy**

# Memories with Murphy



A summer highlight was our Memories with Murphy group's collaboration with the Boston Athenaeum on the exhibit, "50 Years Later: Where's Boston?".

In July, Athenaeum Associate Curator Lauren Graves visited the Kennedy Center, sharing 1970s historic Boston photos by Constantine Manos. Our seniors were invited to help identify people in the images.



With the keen eyes of our participants and neighbors, we successfully identified Roger Chesebrough, a proud member of the Charlestown Militia during the 1976 Bicentennial. Weeks later, Roger met with Lauren to share his militia stories and reflect on his deep Charlestown roots.

Roger will be featured in the Athenaeum exhibit, a well-deserved recognition honoring his legacy and the neighborhood's spirit. Moving forward, Memories with Murphy is launching an oral history project to preserve and celebrate the stories, traditions, and lived experiences of Charlestown's older adults, connecting past and present.

# Food Security

## Government Shutdown Response

During the government shutdown and uncertainty surrounding SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), **we distributed over 300 meal packs, provided free groceries to 30 seniors, and contributed 3,000 pounds of produce for Harvest on Vine's Thanksgiving distribution, serving 650 residents!**

With the support of Turn It Around youth volunteers, community members, funding from United Way through a SNAP response grant, and strong backing from our Board of Directors, the Center ensured families and seniors had reliable access to food. This demonstrates our vital role in emergency response and our commitment to strengthening community well-being.



## Charlestown Farmers Market Celebrates 30 years!



On July 30, 2025, we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Charlestown Farmers Market, bringing together local vendors, live music, and family activities. The event launched the “\$30 for 30” campaign to strengthen and sustain the Center’s Basic Needs Programs for families in the years ahead.



Andrea and Merritt of Stillman Farm were honored with official citations from Mayor Michelle Wu for their decades of dedication to the market and community.



Special thanks to Market Manager Natalie Mangrum for her leadership and continued commitment to the Charlestown Farmers Market.

# 2025 Holiday Drive

# 680 Children

## RECEIVED

## BOOKS, PJS, TOYS, BOOKS AND MORE



# Volunteer of the Year: Aileen Gorman

We were proud to recognize Aileen Gorman as our 2025 Volunteer of the Year. She was also honored as one of ABCD's 2025 Community Heroes at the celebration on October 24 at the Westin Copley Place.

A lifelong Charlestown resident, Aileen has dedicated countless hours to supporting families, organizing community events, and helping neighbors in need. Her volunteer work includes the JFK Center's Thanksgiving Turkey Drive and the Charlestown Mother's Day Brunch for seniors. For Aileen, the most meaningful part of volunteering is "bringing people together and making connections." Aileen's dedication extends beyond the Center. She helped establish All Roads Lead to Charlestown, a nonprofit focused on revitalizing the community and supporting local businesses in the aftermath of COVID-19, and she is a devoted mother to her four children, Hailey, Neeve, Paige, and Jack.

"We're honored to celebrate Aileen for all she does to make Charlestown stronger every day," said Crystal Galvin, Director of Community Services. Eileen Ward, President of the Center's Board, added, "Aileen's compassion and leadership reflect the very best of Charlestown. She leads quietly but powerfully, always focused on lifting others."

The Kennedy Center is deeply grateful for Aileen's partnership, her steadfast commitment to the Center, and her tireless efforts to strengthen the Charlestown community.





When you give to the Kennedy Center you are investing in the community safety net for the most vulnerable among us. Be a hero for those in need by supporting the Kennedy Center.

### **Trusted**

6 decades of building trust gives us an advantage in reaching people who are reluctant to ask for help.

### **Connected**

Our extensive network of partnerships and sponsors allows us to deepen our impact with the additional expertise and connections they provide. When someone comes to us for assistance, if we don't have what they need we can find someone who does.

### **Authentic**

Most of our staff grew up in Charlestown or similar neighborhoods. Some still live in walking distance of the center. We are the real deal.

# Get involved



## 01. Give



Every Penny Matters! The Kennedy Center relies on the generosity of individual donors, corporations, and foundations. Several of our educational and community service programs are funded solely by contributions and grants so all donations are significant to assuring the Agency's ability to continue to offer these critical services. The importance of every donated dollar is reflected in the improved quality of life for every child and adult receiving our services.

Visit [www.kennedycenter.org/donate](http://www.kennedycenter.org/donate) to make an impact today!

## 02. Volunteer



There are a range of volunteer opportunities available at the Kennedy Center. To explore your volunteer options please contact Crystal Galvin, Director of Community Services, at 617-241-8866 EXT.1352 or [CGalvin@KennedyCenter.org](mailto:CGalvin@KennedyCenter.org).

## 03. Follow US



If you would like to get a copy of our current schedule, be added to our mailing list, or have questions about JFK happenings, please reach out or follow us on social media.

**Kennedy Center - @kennedyfsc**  
**Charlestown Family Engagement Network - @CtownFEN**  
**Kennedy Center Senior Services - @KennedyCenterSS**

[www.kennedycenter.org](http://www.kennedycenter.org)



**We thank you for your  
continued support!**

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