# Innovative Early Childhood Services in Rural Nevada

Community Chest, Inc.

Michael-Ann Lazzarino, COO Peach Coons, Youth Programs Director Sarah Dillard, Home Visiting Director

## Community Chest

**WHO WE ARE:** Community Chest is a non-profit agency serving children and families in rural Nevada since 1991. We provide holistic solutions with the goal of building and sustaining strong families and communities.

**WHAT WE DO:** Community Chest provides a diverse range of services which include:

- Counseling
- Home Visiting
- Youth Development Programs
- Early Childhood Programs
- Food assistance
- Library services



**WHO DO WE SERVE:** We currently have programs serving Storey, Lyon, Mineral, Churchill, Douglas, Carson City and Northern Nye counties in Nevada.

## Purpose of Today

To share innovative strategies
Community Chest has
implemented to increase access to
early childhood supports in rural
Nevada.



## **Expected Outcomes**



- Spark ideas to expand early childhood supports in your community.
- Facilitate conversations around early childhood needs and ways to meet them.
- Provide opportunities for ongoing collaboration between our early childhood champions.

## Where we were 10 years ago

- 4 mobile preschool classrooms serving two counties.
- A community needs assessment showing early childhood services as the number one need.
- Zero to few child care centers in our rural service area with long waitlists and expensive tuition.
- Continuous requests from clients and community members for early childhood resources and supports.
- Robust youth programs for youth 6-14 in one community.

#### Where we are now

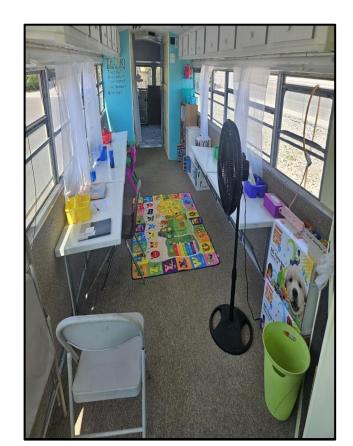
- Seven mobil preschool classrooms in six communities and four counties
- Two Before and After School Programs
- Three Early Childhood Centers in Storey County
- Home Visiting in Seven Counties
- Early Childhood Community Health Workers serving three counties



### COW (Classroom on Wheels) Bus







## Nevada Families First







parents @ teach



FREE in-home service!

100% voluntary

No income restrictions

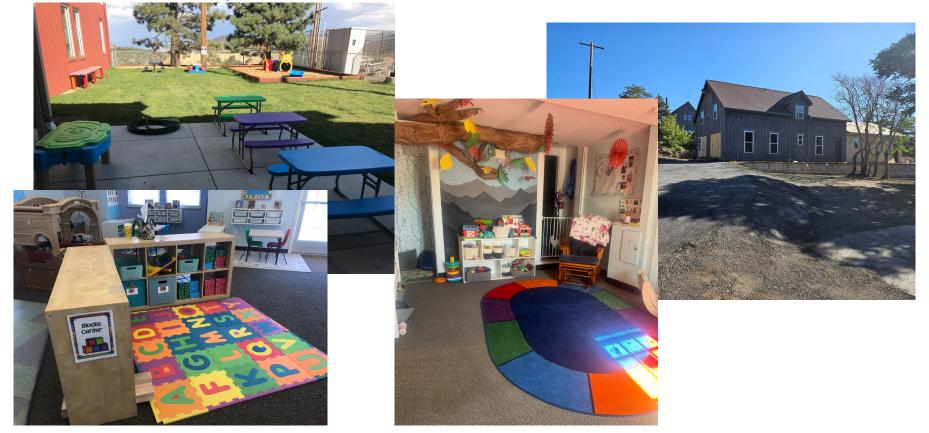
**Evidence Based Curriculum (PAT)** 

Prenatal - Kindergarten entry

Resource identification & Referral

**School Readiness** 

## Licensed Early Childhood Centers



## **ECE Community Health Workers**

- Literacy events
- Building at home libraries
- Collaboration between home and school
- Child Find events and screenings
- Resources and referrals



#### **Looking Toward the Future**

- Additional center in Hawthorne
- Additional center in Lockwood
- Advocate to expand the accepted age a of early childhood services to 8yrs old or 3rd grade
- Additional ECE CHWs to support more communities





## How did we get here?



- Wrap around services and combined program models
- Diverse and unusual funding streams/support
- Meaningful community partnerships
- Thinking outside of the box

## Staff growth and Retention

- Growing staff from within the organization and programs
- Intentionally changing the ECE workforce narrative and celebrating it as an honored profession
  - Closing the pay gap
  - Providing benefits
  - Ensuring those who love this profession can retire from it
- Reflective supervision
- Creating a family centered company culture that supports work/life balance



## Group Activity - The building blocks of early childhood

- Using the building manipulatives and labels on your table brianstorm with your groups to build your dream Early Childhood Supported community.
  - What resources would be available?
  - What supports are needed to make this possible?
  - O What we





## **Questions?**