



Early Childhood Equity a New Initiative

“Research shows that experiences in the earliest years of life form the foundation of brain architecture and critically inform a child’s experience throughout the “cradle-to-career” framework. We also know, that relying solely on well-intentioned individuals and singular programs will not change systems that explicitly or implicitly create or maintain opportunity gaps.”
Marin Promise Partnership

Summary

West Marin Fund is launching a new initiative in May 2019 to help level the educational playing field in coastal West Marin, with a focus on the earliest years. Our aim is to support high-quality, affordable pre-school for all young children in coastal West Marin and to increase the quality of childcare both at home and at pre-school. Recent studies show that if children are given high-quality care in their earliest years, including attendance at pre-school, their chances of success in school and beyond are highly likely to increase in a variety of ways – emotionally, socially, professionally and academically. Studies also show that when parents have reliable, affordable and quality childcare that fits their work schedules, they are able to contribute more fully to the workforce and their community.

West Marin Fund plans to address early childhood inequities in West Marin through grants and educational workshops over a five-year period. The Fund will work closely with the pre-schools of the area to:

- improve teacher compensation, so as to secure stable, quality staff;
- increase scholarships to ensure all families have access to quality childcare and pre-school;
- build parent knowledge and involvement in the care and education of very young children;
- strengthen West Marin’s pre-school network for joint learning and action.

This initiative complements and intersects with the vibrant efforts of other nonprofits, local school districts, funders, communities and families, to level the educational playing field in West Marin for all children from cradle to career.

Current Situation

Coastal West Marin is in the strong position of having pre-schools operating in Bolinas, Point Reyes, Inverness, and Tomales – with Nicasio in formation. This

infrastructure of pre-schools has been largely built and maintained over the last 45 years by the local communities and families of West Marin, with significant investment of time, knowledge, and resources, and with important contributions and support from funders, nonprofits and early childhood specialists.

However, these pre-schools face an increasing number of challenges. They are struggling to remain economically viable, maintain aging buildings, meet growing educational standards, offer affordable services in the face of higher costs, respond to the needs of a changing demographic in rural West Marin, and be culturally appropriate with bi-lingual staff and programs. As with many pre-schools throughout the USA, their teachers have low salaries, few health benefits, and little prospect of pay increases in the near future.



Papermill Creeks Children's Corner outdoor classroom

At the same time, many families in West Marin struggle to give their children the thriving start in life they would like, with limited access to pre-schools and a shortage of quality child care. They face multiple constraints and barriers, due to low income, demanding work schedules, rural isolation, limited transportation, the high costs of childcare and pre-school, and limited access to financial support and scholarships. While there has been a growth in scholarships and mentoring for young people in coastal West Marin in high school and college entry – thanks in large part to the Inverness Garden Club Scholarship Fund and 10,000 Degrees – there is still a significant gap in the resources available for early childhood development for all. Pre-school and childcare can cost as much as \$3,500 a month, which is beyond the means of many families in West Marin.



Educational Opportunities for All

West Marin Fund began funding early childhood education in 2013 and has since awarded grants totaling \$78,000 to pre-schools in Stinson, Bolinas, Point Reyes and Tomales. It has also supported educational enrichment programs with grants totaling more than \$340,000 over six years to nonprofits in West Marin for summer camps, youth centers, environmental and arts programs in the schools, as well as scholarship funding.

In 2018, West Marin Fund was chosen by Maureen Kennedy, former member of the Inverness Garden Club Scholarship Fund, to help realize her vision of equitable education for all in West Marin. Through her generous contribution, The Madrone Fund of West Marin Fund was established and now supports Marin Promise Partnership with the ten-year goal of closing the cradle to career educational achievement gap in West Marin.

Our Approach

In order to support high-quality, affordable pre-school for all young children in coastal West Marin and to increase the quality of care for young children both at home and during pre-school, West Marin Fund plans to provide strategic grants combined with a series of workshops over a period of five years. The initiative will bring together practitioners, families, researchers and decision-makers to share information, design plans, and collaborate on achieving early childhood equity. The grants will support greater access for low income families, improve teacher salaries and benefits, increase parent knowledge and skills in early childhood development, and other key actions that help level the playing field. The series of workshops will help connect the pre-school leaders with each other, with practitioners and specialists, as well as with nonprofits and families in their own communities.

West Marin Fund is working closely with Marin Promise Partnership which has the goal of closing the educational achievement gap in West Marin, where students experience low rates of achievement across the cradle to career continuum, especially in 3rd grade reading and college completion. By gathering and analyzing data, Marin Promise highlights the challenges facing kids of color and from low income families, and can catalyze resources and relevant action. Its Kindergarten Readiness team, of which West Marin Fund is a member, is working to identify and address key issues that improve the chances of young children when they enter school.



Leo Cortez and Edith Rojas at pre-school

Steering Group

West Marin Fund is establishing a Steering Group to guide the Early Childhood Equity program. Specifically, it will help set program goals; inform program strategy and grantmaking guidelines; review grant applications; and help develop processes for assessing results, both quantitative and qualitative.

Members of the Steering Group come from a range of backgrounds with a deep knowledge of early childhood development, issues of equity, knowledge of West Marin, a community perspective, and experience in program strategy and the allocation of resources. They are part of respected organizations in Marin County as well as in West Marin.

Implementation

By September 2019, we plan to award the first round of grants to at least five early childhood organizations in the \$15,000 range. We will also offer an Early Childhood Equity workshop in late 2019. We are developing a 5-year implementation plan which will include annual monitoring of progress against established goals. This plan will ensure that any improvements made over five years can be sustained in the long-term, and will take into account any new legislation and flows of funding stemming from Governor Newsom's commitment to early education for all.



Schedule for 2019

Activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop framework				
Establish Steering Committee and hold meetings				
Secure challenge funds				
Raise matching funds				
Hold event to launch program				
Establish goals, guidelines and monitoring methodology				
Award 1 st Year grants				
Organize grantee workshop				
Develop 3-year plan				
Secure additional funding				
Hold partner and donor meeting				

Budget

Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Grants	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$75,000
Workshops	\$3,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
Materials & publications	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$6,000
Results assessment	\$3,200	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
Coordination & grants management	\$19,500	\$24,500	\$24,500	\$24,500	\$17,500
TOTAL	\$104,700	\$143,000	\$143,000	\$143,000	\$106,500
FIVE YEAR TOTAL					\$640,000

Fundraising Plan

Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
West Marin Fund	\$75,000*	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$35,000	
Barinaga Goodman Fund	\$25,000*				
Marin Community Foundation	\$50,000**	\$75,000			
Individual Donors	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$40,000	\$35,000	
Total	\$250,000	\$200,000	\$120,000	\$70,000	
FIVE YEAR TOTAL					\$640,000

*Committed. **Invited and Pending



Help us meet the challenge!

We have the opportunity to positively affect the lives of hundreds of young children and their families in West Marin in the next five years through our Early Childhood Equity Initiative. Our goal is to invest \$640,000 in the initiative over five years and raise the first \$250,000 by December 31, 2019, so we can support the program through 2020.

This money will be used for:

- creating competitive teacher compensation;
- increasing scholarships to ensure all families have access to quality childcare and pre-school;
- building parent knowledge and involvement in the care and education of very young children;
- strengthening West Marin's pre-school network for joint action;
- monitoring success and communicating results.

Every gift is important and will be matched dollar for dollar.

You can give via check, cash, credit card, stocks & securities, or IRA charitable rollover. For more information, please visit www.westmarinfund.org/give or call Sarah Hobson at 415-663-9733.

We also need your help to spread the word about this challenge and the opportunity it provides for children and families in West Marin. Please talk about the initiative with your friends and colleagues and share this link with them: www.westmarinfund.org/earlychildhoodequity

Please ask people you know to contact us who are interested in making sure all children in West Marin have a great start in life.

We look forward to partnering with you!

Sarah Hobson, Executive Director, sarah@westmarinfund.org
Harriet Moss, Board Chair, harriet@moss.net
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Please make checks out to West Marin Fund and mark for Early Childhood Equity. Mail to West Marin Fund, PO Box 1496, Point Reyes Station, California 94956