



SUPPORTING THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMUNITY
BY INVESTING IN ITS YOUNG PEOPLE

Press Release

MV Early Childcare Providers Emergency Fund Announces \$150,000 in relief awards

Chilmark, MA (May 21, 2020) – The Martha’s Vineyard Early Childcare Providers Emergency Fund, established by MVYouth to support the Island’s early childcare providers, has awarded \$150,000 in relief funding to support home-based and center-based childcare programs negatively impacted by the Covid-19 state-mandated closure period.

MVYouth established and seeded the Childcare Providers Emergency Fund with \$50,000 in mid-April after assessing the cumulative impact of the closure period on the Island’s twenty childcare providers. Three MVYouth Founders, the Couch Family Foundation, Ziff Family Foundation and Mary & Jerome Vascellaro contributed to the fund, as did Martha’s Vineyard Bank Charitable Foundation. A grant from the Commonwealth Children’s Fund was also received to specifically support the home-based providers.

"Working families are under enormous financial and emotional stressors as a result of the forced pandemic-related closures," said Martha’s Vineyard Bank Charitable Foundation, President & Director James M. Anthony. "Having access to their regular childcare is imperative as they return to work so they may normalize their lives as soon as possible."

Awards for each childcare provider were calculated after evaluating each program’s operating expenses, revenue normally collected from family fees and public subsidies received from unemployment benefits and PPP loans. "Our goal in establishing the fund was to stabilize the Island’s childcare providers during the mandated 15-week closure period so that they will be in a less vulnerable financial position when it is safe to reopen." said Lindsey Scott, MVYouth’s Executive Director.

Juliette Kayyem, Senior Belfer Lecturer in International Security at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and the former Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security for President Obama wrote the following in a May 14, 2020 email to Strategies for Children, "As a crisis management expert, we tend to view ‘critical infrastructure’ as those aspects of society that are essential functions for life and livelihood: transportation, water, food, electricity, supply chain. This pandemic has taught us about one more: child care is also critical. Working parents cannot

go back to work, cannot re-engage in our economy, if kids are home. There is no simple answer, but it must be at the front of our discourse.”

Martha’s Vineyard has twenty licensed childcare programs – nine center-based programs and eleven home-based providers. Together these programs serve roughly 380 young children. The majority of licensed childcare spaces on MV are for preschool-aged children (2.9-5 years old). According to detail furnished by a consultant MVYouth hired this winter, Boston-based consultant, Sally Sharp Lehman, roughly 84% of the preschool-aged population is served. However, the infant and toddler populations are grossly underserved. According to the report, only 30% of the toddler population (children 15 months-2.9 years old) are served and only 5% of the infant population (children 3 months-15 months old) are served in licensed programs. “Having recently understood the inadequate supply of early childcare spaces on Martha’s Vineyard pre-Covid, MVYouth felt establishing the Emergency Fund was an critical step to ensuring that the existing community issue was not compounded by losing any programs weakened by lost revenue.” said Scott.

“The child care sector - long overlooked and long deprived of adequate public investment - is foundational to today’s economy. Nearly 80 percent of parents with young children are in the workforce. To borrow a well-loved Massachusetts tagline, our economy runs on child care.” explain authors Elizabeth Warren, Bruce Mann, Joseph Kennedy III, Lauren Birchfield Kennedy, Katherine Clark, Ayanna Pressley, and Conan Harris in a March 24 Boston Globe article entitled “The Coronavirus Puts Child Care Sector in Need of a Bailout”.

With many industries reopening and the summer season approaching, families with young children will be reliant on childcare providers in order to get back to work. Mandated protocols for reopening are currently being developed by state and local officials. “The Island’s home-based and center-based childcare providers have always focused on staying as affordable as possible for families, many of whom struggle to afford the childcare they need to work. In most cases, programs establish their fees by dividing the operating expenses by the number of children their licenses allow them to enroll and include very little extra cushion.” said Scott. Necessary safety measures could further threaten childcare providers whose margins are already very thin. “If reopening protocols limit the number of children providers can enrolled, childcare providers could face additional revenue loss that will further threaten them.” said Scott.