



Child Care, Inc.

Strengthening children, families & communities

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*Please remember us in your will.
A planned gift to R'Club builds
scholarships for our community's
neediest children.*

**Preferred Child Care Provider
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LIVE UNITED



United Way Suncoast

February 5, 2017

Janet C. Long, Chair

Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas

315 Court Street

Clearwater 33756

Dear Chair Long:

I am respectfully requesting a change of focus for the County BP funds awarded to Happy Workers Learning Center. The critical need is to rehab the existing classroom structures before rehabbing the historic King Center for two additional classrooms.

A few weeks ago, Happy Workers Learning Center Board of Directors (HWLC) requested R'Club present a proposal of acquisition as their financial status was dire and because of the probationary status of their child care license and their United Way funding as well as the likeliness of their Early Learning Coalition (School Readiness) contract facing cancellation by January 31, 2017. R'Club made such a presentation to the Board of Directors and it was accepted, so the process of an asset acquisition has begun, initially with a management agreement effective February 1, 2017 with a planned ownership (full acquisition) no later than June 1, 2017.

R'Club is currently covering more than \$125,000 in aging Accounts Payable for HWLC, assuring that payroll can be met and employee health plans remain in effect. R'Club will also begin subsidizing HWLC funding to assure payroll, etc. stays current. In addition, an R'Club Supervisory level staff member will be in place at HWLC during all open times. We have been providing training to the HWLC existing staff and hiring a few new staff to cover the previous staffing shortages. Our Training Department staff members along with our Behavioral Specialists are on-site training the existing staff in our safety and accountability procedures, role modeling appropriate, high quality teaching interactions and overall managing the program.

We've communicated with parents that the program is under new management and invited them to talk with our staff. Appropriate high quality staffing is the first step. Second, we have evaluated facility needs and the existing classrooms, not the church for expansion, are the most in need for renovation. We are looking at the potential for modular code approved classroom buildings that can be leased until additional funds are available for purchase and anticipate a full replacement with modular buildings or a full rehab of existing facilities could be as high as \$600,000.

A Legislative request for \$350,000 has been submitted in the House by Representative Newton and we anticipate inclusion in the Senate budget by Senator Rouson. A request for \$150,000 will be submitted to the City of St. Petersburg and a donor, I believe, will pledge \$100,000 to \$150,000. Our Legislative request would be much stronger if the BOCC can, in writing, enable us to use the funds for the renovation/replacement of existing classrooms, rather than the expansion of new classrooms in the historic King Center.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. #CH4305

We will get to that after we've "righted the Happy Workers ship." The current classrooms, without major renovation, are inadequate.

Increasing credentials and pay is also critical to the success of this center. Our pay schedule will enable all HWLC assistant teachers who have the state mandated credentials of:

40 clock hours for assistant teachers, \$10.10

CDA \$12.00/hour

AA \$14.00/hour

BA/BS \$16 to \$17/hour

We are able to pay these rates due to the extra fund raising R'Club manages, the fact that our early learning academies are nationally accredited and have the Governor's Gold Seal Award which will be a goal for Happy Workers in a year or two.

R'Club committed to maintaining the Happy Workers name in perpetuity which will be included in the deed with a reversion clause if the name changes or it ceases to function as an early childhood center.

Thank you for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,



Arthur O'Hara, MSW
Executive Director

AO

Attachment: Management to Asset Acquisition Agreement with R'Club

CC: Kenneth T. Welch, Commission Vice Chair

Pat Gerard, Commissioner

Charlie Justice, Commissioner

Dave Eggers, Commissioner

Karen Williams Seel, Commissioner

John Morroni, Commissioner