



180 CLINTON STREET • NEW BRITAIN, CT 06053
PHONE (860) 225-8601
FAX (860) 225-4843

Rocco Tricarico
Executive Director

Paul D. Catanzaro
Board President

New Britain, Connecticut has a crisis.

Its attendance rate of three and four year olds in quality preschool is 47%, which is the lowest in the state. Connecticut's average attendance rate for this age group is 75%. One of the main causes of this low rate is the lack of available space suitable for licensure; therefore buildings must be renovated or built to increase the number of classrooms.

The Human Resources Agency of New Britain (HRA) has been awarded funds to renovate its current Early Childhood Learning Center from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA)/Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS). This is the first investment CHEFA is making to improve the dire situation in New Britain. HRA must raise \$2,243,488 in match money in order to receive bond funds. Cash must be in hand by April 2006 (Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) will provide a bridge loan for committed funds that can not be in hand by this date).

Study after study shows that quality preschool education is an indicator of later success in life¹. These studies show that children who attend quality preschool experience less teen pregnancy, are more likely to graduate high school, are less likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, are less likely to be abusive toward others and are more likely to become economically self sufficient adults.

This quality preschool attendance rate has left New Britain vulnerable to repercussions that have been proven to be related: New Britain has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state, it suffers from a 28.6% high school drop out rate², the local Coalition against Substance Abuse focuses on reducing youth usage of alcohol and drugs, New Britain has the highest documented rate of child abuse in the state and one out of five children in the City live below the Federal poverty line.

An important fact that further points to the urgency of this project is that State Education Commissioner Betty J. Sternberg is seeking an additional \$14.6 million to provide 2,200 new preschool slots. There is tremendous support around this issue; even the Governor M. Jodi Rell has made quality preschool a focus of her administration. Without the space that this project will create, New Britain schools and organizations will be unable to apply for these additional preschool funds when they become available.

¹ Grunewald, Rob and Rolnick, Arthur, [A Proposal for Achieving High Returns on Early Childhood Development](#); Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, May 2005.

² Cumulative four-year rate for class of 2002