

EVERYDAY HEROES

An inside look at the people who make dreams come true at Meeting Street

August 2023

No Break for Summer!

Hello and Happy August! We hope you've been enjoying the gorgeous weather of late and are getting ready for what the fall has in store. It has *not been quiet* on Meeting Street's campuses this summer! The Schwartz School is in session and preparing for their upcoming big night, **Endless Summer**, construction of our new **Center for Early Childhood Development** is in full swing, and our early childhood teams are busier than ever, re-engaging families who were unable to access services during the pandemic.

In this edition we feature our summer Everyday Hero, **Nicole Faison, LICSW**, one of our Assistant Directors of Early Childhood Programs, and her team of responsive, compassionate professionals who are ready to partner with families at a moment's notice. We hope you enjoy this issue, and as always, THANK YOU for being part of the Meeting Street family!

- Lori Sousa, Director of Development



Meet Nicole Faison, LICSW

Assistant Director, Early Childhood Programs
(Providence and New Bedford)

When a distressed member of a family in crisis called Meeting Street for help recently, Nicole Faison knew precisely what needed to be done.

For three straight hours, the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) reached out to her colleagues across Meeting Street's early childhood programs to connect the young family with appropriate services and to gather needed personal items for them, including clothing and baby formula.

It was all in a day's work.

"Everything we do here, every day, is singularly focused on making an impact on children and the family structure," says Nicole, one of three assistant directors of Meeting Street's comprehensive early childhood programs, based in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Meeting Street's services for children five and younger include 11 evidence-based programs, all aimed at strengthening the family unit and preparing kids — socially, emotionally, mentally, and physically — for success in school.

The family Nicole and her colleagues served so diligently that day is just one of 3,000 enrolled in our [early childhood programs](#). By providing comprehensive services at the earliest point in a child's development, the potential for academic failure is turned on its head.

As an assistant director, Nicole leads a team of 26 highly skilled professionals. Second only to her love of helping children and their families is her deep admiration for her colleagues. Though she joined Meeting Street just last fall, the LICSW quickly became enamored of her staff.

"The members of my team are so caring, and when I see them proud and happy in their work, I find that very satisfying," says Nicole.

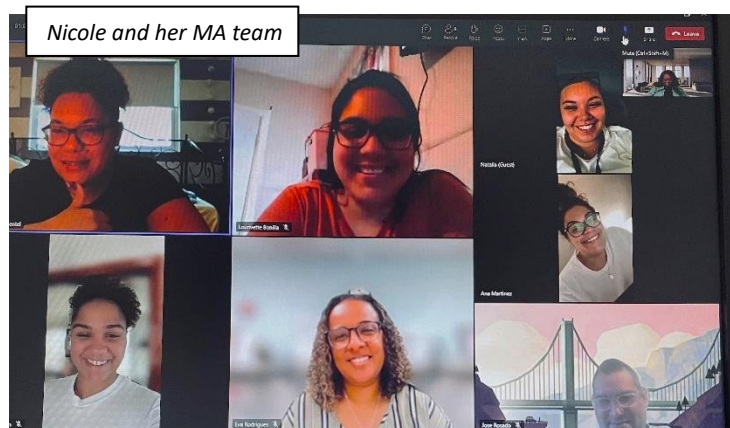
"They are very creative individuals and when they engage with our families, they shine."



Nicole oversees four programs: Parents as Teachers and the Teen Parent Initiative, based in New Bedford, and Early Head Start and Healthy Families America (HFA), based in Rhode Island. Before joining Meeting Street, she ran HFA for eight years at South County Health, partnering with families to support them in creating positive parent-child interactions, learning child development, and connecting to needed resources.

Casey Ferrara, Director of the Early Childhood Programs, ticks off the many reasons Nicole is such a great fit at Meeting Street.

"She's compassionate and extremely patient. She's good in a crisis, always asking the right questions to get the right services for our families. And with her expertise in social work, Nicole strongly rounds out our teams," says Casey. "She's a great resource for all of us."



Meanwhile, the Covid epidemic has only heightened the need for early childhood development services, Casey says.

"The earlier we start preparing kids for school, the greater their potential for academic success," she points out. "During Covid, with young kids isolated at home, the social-emotional component of their development was at risk. If children don't have these skills, they won't be ready for school."

To make sure that doesn't happen, Casey, Nicole, and the entire early childhood programs staff come to work each day with the same mission — to go above and beyond for the kids and families they serve.

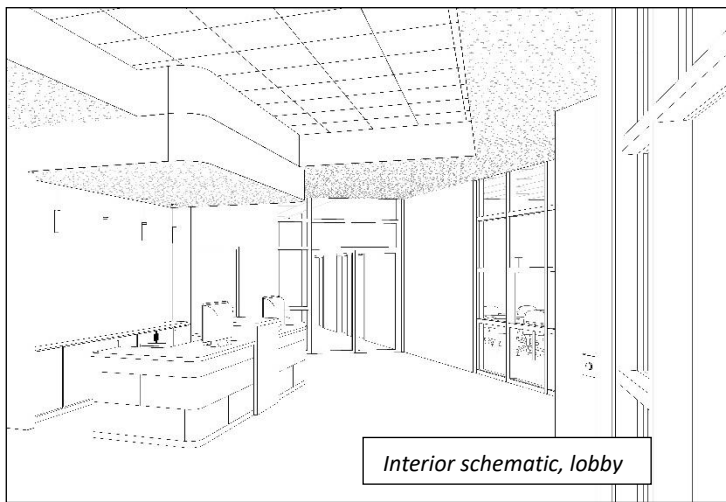
"We all love working with very young children," Nicole says simply. "It's why we're here."

Construction Update: Center for Early Childhood Development (*Providence*)

We are 12 weeks into construction and progress is visible on the Center for Early Childhood Development, the latest addition to our Providence campus. Upon its opening in August 2024, the two-story building will be the home to all of Meeting Street's early childhood programs for children prenatal to age five, including the Early Childhood Connection Continuum we told you about in [our last issue](#).



View from our existing school building



Interior schematic, lobby

The Center will include the [Early Learning Center](#), our fully inclusive pre-school program for children six-weeks to five years, a family resource library, where parents can utilize computers and checkout books to read with their child, a sensory integration gym and a visiting clinician room, where families will have access to medical, vision, and dental care for their child.





MEETING STREET'S

Endless Summer

PRESENTED BY CLARKE



Meeting Street
The Schwartz School

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26
KILBURN MILL, NEW BEDFORD

A waterfront night of great food, cocktails, friends & music... all to benefit the children of Meeting Street.



Donor Dollars at Work!

The Schwartz School Art Show

Thanks to YOU, our generous donors, students of [The Schwartz School](#) in Dartmouth were able to host their first art exhibition in three years! On May 31st, students welcomed their parents, friends, and families to view their original works of art. Each child was supported in their creative endeavor by art educator, Mr. Anthony, who is committed to finding an adaptive style to meet the needs of each of his students.

Donor generosity makes our adaptive art program possible, and we thank you for your support!



The Schwartz School
Art Show
2023