COMMENTS FROM THE CEO

Two of our priorities you know well, direct financial support to operating agencies, and our relatively recent emphasis on more enlightened public policy as it affects the first years of life. The public policy focus is critical due to the limited collective capacity of private philanthropy. However, we have an emerging third priority, which is worth mentioning this year. We will briefly review the two more traditional categories, before elaborating on the third exciting direction.

DIRECT SERVICES INVESTMENTS
The provision of financial support to agencies servicing children, especially the youngest and most at risk, is not new to us. It is a core plank of our Vision and Mission platform, which you will find on Page One of the Annual Report and an original intent of our Founders. The hurdle for direct support grants is high. Good service delivery is necessary but not sufficient. Increasingly, successful proposals must embed something more breakthrough techniques or results; the establishment of a new benchmark or best practice in service delivery and/or a demonstrated commitment to systems change, through direct involvement in policy or advocacy.

SUPPORT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY INITIATIVES
Our direct investments in advocacy and policy initiatives have the potential to reshape public policy in support of our Vision and Mission.

MISSION-FOCUSED CONVENINGS FOR CLIENTS
Our most recent direction is the Foundation's financial sponsorship of training and professional development delivered directly to early childhood services providers. This professional development effort calls on, and underwrites, the expertise of lead service providers to train early educators. It is a new way of stretching our resources to increase the quality of early childhood programs with grants for early childhood education. Here are a few examples. We'd love to know what you think and welcome your ideas.

I. Sponsored Professional Development Seminars
In May of 2015, we invited Turrell-funded agency, the Stern Center for Language and Learning, of Winooski, Vermont, to present to a group of
early learning and development service providers from across our New Jersey-served area, including Essex, Hudson, Passaic and Union Counties. The core areas of focus were: state-of-the-art early literacy and development techniques for children and their families. Participants numbered in excess of 100. Response to the initial presentation was enthusiastic. This was so much the case that we offered to underwrite the work of interested agencies, with the professionals from Stern. The only requirement was that these agencies carefully document their specific needs, and pledge complete follow-through. The reception of this professional development and technical support to our clients has been phenomenal. Agencies which have participated have described the skills and techniques conveyed as enlightening and having an enormous impact on their work. Additionally, many participants were hard-pressed to identify a local source of similar technical support. We will keep this initiative going as long as the need, and commitment remain strong.

II. Early Learning and Development Conference
In early November of 2015, Turrell Fund Trustee Elizabeth Christie visited our Montclair office. In honor of this occasion, we invited several agencies involved in the delivery of services to the very young to meet with her. The discussion was wide-ranging and energizing. The session with Trustee Christie inspired an idea which we believe to have great promise. Meeting attendee, Beverly Lynn, CEO of Programs for Parents, the Essex County Resource and Referral agency, took the lead in developing the concept of an annual conference, to be funded by Turrell, for early years' service providers. The content of the conference will be driven by Beverly and several service delivery organizations which have expressed interest in planning the conference. Agencies throughout Turrell's catchment area are eligible to participate. It is no small irony that Trustee Christie was herself a long-time Director of one of Vermont's leading Resource and Referral agencies. This is one of several such informal seminars which have taken place during 2015. A group of New Jersey arts educators met, also in Montclair, with Turrell Vermont Trustee, Mark Sustic. Mark is President and Founder of an extraordinary troupe of student musicians, called Young Tradition Vermont. This seminar, too, produced many good ideas. The Turrell Fund is committed to bringing together arts educators, policy makers and funders in support of the arts as a fundamental element of core curricula.
"The Turrell Fund has long appreciated the value of training and performance in music and dance as a means of enhancing academic and emotional development."
- Curt Fields

III. Technical Support to Selected Operating Agencies
It is the case that many of the best early service providers whom we have the privilege to support are challenged by the many and burdensome governance, financial and back-office demands of agency management. One excellent agency, in the toughest part of our served geography, had just this set of circumstances. The Turrell Fund formed a team, composed of financial, information technology and governance professionals from our own circle of advisors. This team has worked closely, and consistently, with this benchmark agency for more than two years, in order to place them on the firmest possible operational footing. Of course, it is not practical for us to undertake such support activities on a massive scale. However, the experience has offered a glimpse of the potential benefit which a 'shared services' platform could provide. Such a platform would contain the professional resources which agencies of all sizes require, but may find difficult to retain or afford. We'll continue to think this one through. Your insights are welcome.

IV. Arts Education Leadership
The Turrell Fund has long appreciated the value of training and performance in music and dance as a means of enhancing academic and emotional development. This has been an important component of our overall grant-making. We are also strong believers in the goal of onstage Diversity, as it relates to the orchestral performance organizations serving our catchment and the nation. Turrell Trustee John Morning has been an important champion of this work. To this end, the Fund has sponsored 'field trips' to the Annual Sphinx Virtuosi Concert, at Carnegie Hall, in New York City. Sphinx is a nationally-recognized advocacy organization, dedicated to developing and showcasing students of color with exceptional potential in the study and performance of orchestral music. Participants in these field trips have included public officials, arts educators from public and private schools, other funders, professional musicians and students. We believe that this activity is succeeding in building interest, awareness and consensus for onstage Diversity as an important and achievable goal. Energized by our success, it is our plan to continue convenings of this sort,
too. The Meeting of the Turrell Board, in May of 2016, included a Panel addressing "The Power of Music and Dance!" A select group of arts educators spoke to our Board about their work and about the constructive impact on the children who benefit from it. Here is a sample of what we heard: Susan Stucker, Interim CEO of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), highlighted the phenomenal impact of Suzuki Strings Training on the academic performance of individual, and often at-risk students. Over twenty years, Columbia University has validated that exposure to this training is directly correlated with materially improved performance on standardized tests, along quantitative and qualitative dimensions. No one is quite certain why such exposure coincides with these outcomes. We know only that it does. We know also that for Verna Gray, Panelist and visionary Founder/Executive Director/Principal of the Blue Ribbon, Gray Charter School, the Suzuki method is a core element of the curriculum for every single child who matriculates. We believe that when parents uniformly understand the value of such exposure - and we aim to ensure that they all learn about it - it will be demanded, without exception. There are few sure things in life, or in education. This initiative comes about as close as any.

IN CONCLUSION
Please know that the Turrell Fund will continue to push hard along every dimension we have here outlined. Our vigil for ways to better serve is constant. Our hopes for our newest thrust, "Convening for Breakthroughs", are high. We invite and welcome your reaction to any aspect of what you read here.

We remain your champions.

Curtland E. Fields | President & CEO