

PRESS RELEASE

Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center
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Recess at The Hive Shines Spotlight on Young Children

Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center Raises Funds and Awareness at First Annual Fundraiser

The first annual *Recess at The Hive* raised \$125,330 toward the capital campaign for the new Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center that will be located on J Street, adjacent to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Scott Family Amazeum. The event was sponsored by Sam's Club and hosted by John Furner, President and CEO of Sam's Club. *Recess at The Hive* attendees were treated to a multi-course meal by Chef Matt McClure while the program was emceed by Comedian Raj Suresh and 40/29 Co-Anchor Paige Presse.



The event, honoring the legacy of Mrs. Helen Robson Walton, was attended by over 150 guests who were personally invited by the center's Development Coalition, to discuss the project and the impact early childhood education has on our rapidly growing region.

Just like the community gatherings held in 1982 to discuss the lack of early childhood education options for young children, community leaders attending *Recess at The Hive* stepped up with investments to ensure high quality early learning options for future generations of young children in Northwest Arkansas.

"Northwest Arkansas is one of the nation's most successful regions, and I know we all want that success to continue for years to come," said John Furner. "Making that happen means supporting organizations that invest in early childhood education by building a future of talented, skilled and innovative workers and citizens. It's an important cause to me, and so many other business leaders, parents and members of our community."

David Lewis, Principal of LTL Architects gave a passionate presentation on how the project began by placing the needs of young children first. He and his team promised to breathe life of Mrs. Walton throughout the new facility, along with innovative design ideas including blurred lines between indoor and outdoor learning and the use of healthy building materials.

Keynote speaker Dr. Menna Demessie of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation spoke about the culture of the organization, now 35 years old. “When you walk in, you are instantly awakened to this sacred space of learning, engagement, interaction, and opportunity between child and adult. You know you are walking into the realized vision of Helen Walton’s foresight made real by people. The vision *works* because education is about relationships, values, and of course people at the end of the day.” She spoke about how communities focusing on early childhood education are setting children up for future success, and challenged the audience to “be an interventionist or an investor”. Research shows Arkansas sees a 9:1 return on investment when supporting early childhood education through reduced remediation, less use of social services, reduced incarceration, and higher income earnings over a lifetime. It makes good economic sense for Northwest Arkansas to provide a smart start for young learners.

The campaign will not break ground until 100% of the funds are raised. To honor the legacy of Mrs. Helen R. Walton and her commitment to young children, please contact the center today to discuss investment options and remaining naming opportunities, or visit the campaign page at <http://ecicnwa.org/capital-campaign/>

For more information, contact Sunny Lane or Kristen Herbert at (479) 273-3552 or visit ecicnwa.org.

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About Helen R. Walton Children’s Enrichment Center

Children are our first priority at the Helen R. Walton Children’s Enrichment Center; our doors opened in 1982. We are a trusted name in both the community and the early childhood industry. Our commitment is to provide families access to the highest quality early childhood education and care. The Center reaches beyond our families served and collaborates with early childhood programs throughout Northwest Arkansas. Visit hwcec.org to learn more.

About the Early Childhood Initiatives Center

The ECIC collaborates with the nearly 500 early childhood programs in Northwest Arkansas, to ensure that every child, infant through pre-k, has access to the highest quality of early childhood education and care. High-quality early childhood education benefits the child, workforce and society through increased graduation rates, parental earnings and employee retention, and ensures a talent rich pipeline, leading to a \$9.21 return on investment for every dollar spent in early education. We rely on the generosity of volunteers, advocates and donors in our community. Visit ecicnwa.org to learn more.

About Sam’s Club

Sam’s Club®, a division of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT), is a leading membership warehouse club offering superior products, savings and services to millions of members in 659 clubs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. To learn more about Sam’s Club, visit the [Sam’s Club Newsroom](#), shop at SamsClub.com, and interact with Sam’s Club on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).