



## The FCT Mission

The mission of Families Creating Together (FCT) is to provide inclusive community opportunities in the arts for children of all abilities and their families and to strengthen their community systems of support.

Through the arts, FCT aims to connect Jamaica Plain and Boston-area community members across lines of ability, language, race, culture, class, immigration status, generation, family composition, neighborhood.

FCT works to fulfill this mission through provision of free/low-cost inclusive creative arts workshops, cultural field trips for families, and other community-based arts opportunities. Through these activities, we promote family-to-family support, celebration of children and families' strengths and stories, and creation of a caring network which counters stigma and barriers to inclusion and success faced by children with special needs and their families - as well as other families at risk of marginalization and isolation.

### How YOU can help...

FCT is supported entirely by grants and donations. We welcome your tax-deductible contribution to support our work. Donate online at [www.familiescreatingtogether.org](http://www.familiescreatingtogether.org), or send a check payable to Community Service Care, Inc. (write "FCT" in the subject line) to the address below:

**Families Creating Together c/o Tree of Life Coalition**  
295 Centre St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**Edward Pazzanese, Director**  
617-522-4832  
[familiescreating@gmail.com](mailto:familiescreating@gmail.com)

## Testimonials

*"I am a foster parent of deaf children, teacher of the deaf, Certified Sign Language Interpreter and Consultant. Families Creating Together provides a great opportunity to explore the arts from all perspectives for my children, family, friends and other deaf children. They always provide quality and qualified sign language interpreters, so that my children have full access. There are not many programs IN THE COMMUNITY that provide opportunities like this for ALL children. Families Creating Together program is wonderful! We all enjoy the supportive, encouraging, open environment that it provides."*

**- Darlene G. Ratliff, M.ED.**  
**Certified American Sign Language Interpreter**

*"It is my pleasure to share enthusiastic support for Families Creating Together. Family Ties is a state-wide, parent-led, parent-driven program that provides informational and support services to families with special needs children. Our families tell us there is a lack of supportive, creative outlets for their children with disabilities. FCT meets the needs of children with disabilities and their extended families. They are able to attend workshops with non-disabled brothers and sisters, parents and sometimes grandparents - to just have fun. What a concept in a data-driven, frameworks-focused day and age!*

*In addition, FCT draws together members of Boston's diverse immigrant communities. Playing and working together, families from around the globe living in neighborhoods across the city learn the value of cooperation, build personal understanding and strengthen relationships."*

**- Mary Castro Summers, Director**  
**Family Ties/Federation for Children with Special Needs**

*"I like the idea that my two girls can create art and have a chance to interact with others and also have a good time. I'm so grateful that this program is offered and we can all together - all three of us - have this experience."*

**- Rosie (deaf parent, through sign language interpreter)**

## Families Creating Together



*Families Creating Together is an award-winning, multi-generational, creative arts program serving children of all abilities and their families.*

**295 Centre Street**  
**Jamaica Plain, MA 02130**  
**617-522-4832**

Logo design: Evelyn Berde  
Photographer: Christle Rawlins-Jackson

# Families Creating Together (FCT): What We Offer



Families Creating Together (FCT) believes the power of the arts can be life-changing. Our Director/Founder Edward Pazzanese says, "Creating art together in an inclusive environment is an empowering experience that supports children and families to move forward in their lives with pride, strength, and joy!"

FCT invites the full participation of children of all abilities and their parents, siblings and caretakers in building an ongoing arts learning network based on the core values of sensitivity and respect for different abilities, cultural backgrounds, and financial circumstances. The community we build counteracts the risk of marginalization and isolation faced by people with disabilities, and also those who are deaf, non-English-speakers, experiencing homelessness, and grandparents raising grandchildren.

With an emphasis on serving low-income families, FCT provides free/low-cost inclusive, broadly accessible, multicultural, multilingual, intergenerational, community-based programs in the creative and narrative arts. We also organize affordable, accessible visits to arts, cultural, & science institutions in Boston's neighborhoods and city center, that program participants may have been unaware of or unable to attend due to economic barriers.

FCT program staff are experienced professional artists and facilitation assistants who reflect the diversity of our participants' identities as people of color, immigrants, Indigenous, elders, and people who are deaf or live with disabilities. Our workshops are run in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language.

## History of FCT

Founded in 2008, Families Creating Together drew inspiration from many places, particularly the vision put forth by Elders Share the Arts in NYC of an inclusive, intergenerational, multicultural community grounded in the arts as a vehicle to celebrate people and groups that our society undervalues and isolates.

In collaboration with Spontaneous Celebrations and City Life/Vida Urbana's Parent Organizing Project, the first FCT workshop was held with a group of Latino families of children with special needs in 2008.

In 2013, FCT became a fiscally-sponsored program of Community Service Care, Inc., joining the JP Tree of Life/Arbol de Vida Coalition. We now operate year-round; our Spring, Summer, and Fall Family Arts Learning Cycles - which include workshop series for families and process-oriented art training for adults held in accessible community sites in Jamaica Plain & Roxbury, plus field trips - serve 100+ people annually, FCT received the 2013 Arts/Learning *Good Neighbor* Award, presented at the 27th annual Champions of the Arts Advocacy Awards Ceremony at Lesley University, Cambridge MA. We are profiled in a chapter in *The Promise of Play* (Marcia Nell & Walter Drew, Editors; Redleaf Press/Nat'l Association for the Education of Young Children, 2018).

## PROGRAM ADVISORS

- Jody Steiner, Deaf Community Liaison
- Irene Glassman, Development Consultant
- Judy Battat, Program Evaluator

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

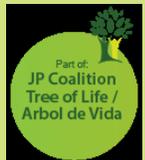
- Edward Pazzanese, Director
- María Christina Blanco, Assistant Director
- Thanks to: Carol Miranda, Coordinator, JP Tree of Life/Arbol de Vida Coalition (liaison to FCT's fiscal sponsor, Community Service Care, Inc.)

## KEY COLLABORATORS

- JP Tree of Life Coalition
- Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry, Roxbury
- Jamaica Plain Community Centers (Curtis Hall)
- ABCD Headstart, Jamaica Plain
- MSPCC KinNectons Network
- Massachusetts College of Art & Design
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- Boston Museum of Science
- Puppet Showplace Theater
- Wheelock Family Theatre, Brookline

## SELECTED FUNDERS

- Lenny Zakim Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Boston Cultural Council
- Boston Centers for Youth & Families
- MA Dept of Children & Families (Via JP Tree of Life Coalition)
- Boston Foundation Vision Fund



## ADVISORY BOARD

- Sandie Fenton: Visual Artist/Writer/Educator
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- Shanté Rabouin: Child Mental Health Clinician/ Guardian at Litem
- Sara Asmerom: Federation for Children w Special Needs, Boston / East African Parent Advocate
- Garry Ratliff: Family Therapist/ MA DCF Special Ed. Surrogate Parent provider for deaf children