In my first full year as the Chair of CEO’s Board of Directors I am proud of the work that was accomplished amidst the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It’s a pleasure and so informative to meet with my fellow board members and senior staff members on a regular basis to discuss the daily challenges CEO faces. The specific challenges may change, but the overall themes when related to providing services to those struggling with poverty, rarely do. CEO is an important fixture in Rensselaer County, and it has been an honor to see how the CEO team adapted to the evolving needs of the community this past year.

Food insecurity is an ongoing issue across the country, and Rensselaer County is no exception. CEO’s Food Pantry has been a resource for Rensselaer County residents for decades, but in the midst of the pandemic, new trends and needs emerged and, expectedly, CEO responded. The Food Pantry in downtown Troy may not have been as accessible for those challenged with transportation needs, so CEO organized pop-up distribution events across the County. CEO responded to the higher demand and supply chain uncertainties by offering toiletries and cleaning supplies in addition to nutritious food to increase the health and well-being of Rensselaer County residents living in poverty.

In addition to supporting CEO’s staff as they respond to the needs of the community, I am proud that the Board of Directors has also been helping CEO plan for the future. The main campus on Fifth Avenue is the lifeblood of the agency, housing many of the program operations offices, the administrative offices, and some early childhood services classrooms. The plan for how to best serve the community and utilize this space has been an ever evolving one. This past year, CEO sold the former Troy FRC building on Old Sixth Avenue, as it was no longer able to meet the needs of our Early Childhood Services program. We also demolished the warehouse building at the end of the Fifth Avenue block to allow for future projects and increase parking capacity. We are excited about what these changes could mean for CEO in the next few years.

Through all of this pivoting and planning, it has been rewarding to see how CEO continues to keep the larger community in mind. It is an honor to support this team as they in turn support the entire staff, the children and families we serve, and Rensselaer County at large.

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Resilience: The process and outcome of successfully adapting to challenging life experiences.

This is the word that comes to mind when I think of the past year at CEO and in our greater community! Despite the ongoing challenges that COVID-19 has placed upon our lives, I am incredibly proud of the dedication and commitment of the staff in our programs that have come to work every day to deliver the necessary services that our community depends on! Children and staff returned to our Head Start and Pre-K classrooms and are now preparing for their year-end ceremonies; WIC staff are meeting the nutritional needs of young children and their moms in record numbers; homes continue to be made energy efficient by our BEST Team; and Foster Grandparents are starting to return to the classrooms.

I am incredibly proud of our WIC Vendor Management Team, including our Oneida office, that continues to oversee and provide training for vendors in 35 NYS counties that provide WIC food and formulas.

As a Community Action Agency, CEO has taken action to meet the challenge of food insecurity in our community. Through our partnership with Nourish NY, we have worked with both rural and urban partners to provide fresh NY products to local pantries and pop-up food giveaway events around the county. We have reached more customers with fresh produce than ever before and expanded our partnerships to local schools, colleges, and non-profits to deliver to those in need. We have also established partnerships with community groups and non-profits to help deliver the resources needed to prevent eviction and stabilize housing.

I am incredibly thankful and proud to be a part of the CEO team and to have the oversight and guidance of our dedicated and supportive Board of Directors. I look forward to a new year of hope, challenge, growth and of course, Resilience!
To plan for a safe re-opening our program had to adapt our policies, procedures, and protocols to ensure we were in compliance with COVID-19 regulations and expectations. To remain COVID safe we had smaller class sizes, practiced social distancing, re-imagined classroom learning experiences, and increased our cleaning and sanitizing procedures. All the planning and reconfiguration of our service delivery model was worth it when we were able to begin serving children again in person!

Children, families, and staff alike were excited to be able to back to in person learning again after not being able to do so for an extended period. CEO’s EHS/HS main goal was to bring children back to program in a safe manner because we knew that our program was critical to children’s success. During the school year we continued to provide comprehensive virtual services and programming to children and families who felt more comfortable with that program option. We worked extremely hard to meet the needs of all the children and families we served during this tumultuous time. Families were so grateful that their children were able to see their teachers again and gain the benefits from in person learning.

Our program continued to rethink our collaborations and one of our highlights was offering virtual music classes with Connor and Mike, as well as virtual yoga classes to some of our Head Start classrooms. Even during the pandemic we wanted to ensure children experienced joy and had music and yoga to look forward to. A program highlight was a virtual Winter Sing-along that Connor and Mike facilitated. Families, staff, and children were able to participate in the seasonal concert that made everyone feel like a kid at heart! Our program continued to flourish and impact the lives of many, even with all that was going on in the world!

After being impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, CEO’s Early Head Start/Head Start program took the Summer of 2020 to plan and re-open our doors for children in the Fall of 2020.
Head Start Funding

**Fund Source** $7,815,141

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 87% $6,782,993
- In-Kind 12% $952,715
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (thru NY State) 1% $79,433

**Fund Allocation** $7,815,141

- Personnel 49% $3,835,877
- Fringe 15% $1,175,468
- Occupancy 13% $1,032,106
- In-Kind 12% $952,715
- Other 3% $200,969
- Supplies 2% $188,980
- Food 1.5% $105,376
- Training/Development 1.5% $102,358
- Consulting 1% $80,738
- Insurance <1% $68,398
- Phone/Mail <1% $63,028
- Transportation <1% $9,128

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**Children with Health Insurance** 477 (89%) at enrollment

**Children Ages 0-5 Meeting or Exceeding Age-Appropriate Skills**

**Social**
- Children Ages 0-5 Meeting or Exceeding Age-Appropriate Skills 85%

**Physical**
- Physical Development 89%

**Language**
- Language Arts 70%

**Cognitive**
- Cognitive Development 78%

**Literacy**
- Literacy 70%

**Math**
- Math 77%

**Total Parent Volunteer Hours** 447

**Total Staff Training Hours** 4.5k

**Number of Children going to Kindergarten** 61

**Number of Children with Disability** 200

**Number of Children with Dental Home** 350

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Some EHS children didn’t need a dental home.
CEO’s WIC program has been providing virtual services to participants since the pandemic began. Our program has worked diligently to continue to meet participant needs during this time, offering virtual breastfeeding groups, phone-based visits for benefits, and a number of retention activities.

CEO’s WIC also has a number of valued partnerships that are diligent in sending pregnant and post-partum mothers to our service to ensure proper nutrition for both the mother and child up to age five.

CEO’s WIC Vendor Management Agency contracts with and oversees approved vendors that provide WIC food and formula items to their communities.

CEO’s WIC Vendor Management Agency (VMA) serves 35 counties and St. Regis Mohawk Reservation. Through our locations in Troy and Oneida, our services span across New York State.

VMA’s focus is to partner with the vendor community to ensure WIC participants have access to quality resources and services provided by well-trained staff.

The Nourish NY Grant allowed CEO to extend the reach of our Food Pantry in 2021.

We were so pleased to be able to offer up support to Sidewalk Warriors in Troy in the form of weekly food donations. Sidewalk Warriors Troy is a dedicated team of volunteers that meets every Thursday night to serve those experiencing homelessness or food insecurity, providing meals, beverages, pantry and personal care items free of charge, no questions asked.

Homes weatherized with energy efficiency improvements

Winter coats distributed to those in need (non-EC)

Renters assisted with rent and protected from eviction

YouthBuild students obtained employment for 90+ days

Volunteer Hours donated to our organization (CEO)

WIC participants assisted (2,318 in 2020)

Stores contracted to accept WIC Benefits (40+ counties)

Households supplied with cleaning and hygiene items

The numbers

11.8k
Individuals served in 2021

4.9k
Households served in 2021

7.3k
Volunteer Hours donated to our organization (CEO)

2.6k
WIC participants assisted (2,318 in 2020)

438
Stores contracted to accept WIC Benefits (40+ counties)

232
Households supplied with cleaning and hygiene items

117
Homes weatherized with energy efficiency improvements

83
Winter coats distributed to those in need (non-EC)

33
Renters assisted with rent and protected from eviction

29
YouthBuild students obtained employment for 90+ days

192x300
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Every year, CEO relies on the support of our community partners to help fill any gaps between funding sources and community needs.

A huge THANK YOU to every partner that helped this past year, whether it was through providing personal hygiene items for our food pantry, sponsoring a specific youth program, or something else!
We're Hiring!
Let's make a difference together.

Apply online today
ceoempowers.org

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2021 Annual Report