



The LoveLight Story

In November of 1995, a small group of people with a vision created LoveLight, Inc. to help people, especially those considered economically or otherwise disadvantaged, to move toward reaching their potential and to promote positive, healthful lifestyles. Non-profit status was granted in 1996 and LoveLight began providing free summer lunches and activities for children in lower-income neighborhoods in Kent, Ohio and other local communities. During the summer of 2019, 2,189 hot and cold congregate lunches (1,815 first meals and 374 second meals) were served, bringing the total to more than 63,989 congregate lunches since LoveLight was established; these lunches help fill the gap when school lunches are not available, promote healthful lifestyles, and build a sense of community among program participants.

In addition, during the nine weeks of LoveLight's 2019 summer program, 5,820 shelf-stable weekend meals were distributed to children in lower-income families living in eight neighborhoods in Kent and Ravenna.

Due to the Co-vid pandemic, during our summer 2020 program, a total of 14, 838 meals were picked up and taken home from four Kent neighborhood sites as well as the Brimfield Community Cupboard, i.e. LoveLight provided 7,419 non-congregate breakfasts and 7,419 non-congregate lunches. At the Kent sites, activities were also sent home for the children. The federal government extended the program, and between October 2020 and mid- August 2021, we distributed 35,722 non-congregate suppers and 31,588 non-congregate snacks in partnership with the Brimfield Community Cupboard and Renaissance Family Center for children in Kent, Brimfield, and Windham, and 4,153 non-congregate breakfasts for Kent children, for a total of 118,702 meals, over 31,588 snacks, and 5,820 shelf stable weekend meals for children since the summer of 1996.

A CARES grant also financially supported the extended program and enabled the purchase of freezers and a refrigerator. In Kent, with the help of a grant from the City, activities were also sent home and magazine subscriptions, art lessons and supplies, books, and cooking tools as well as chef hats and aprons which were purchased continued to enrich the lives of the children in the subsequent months.

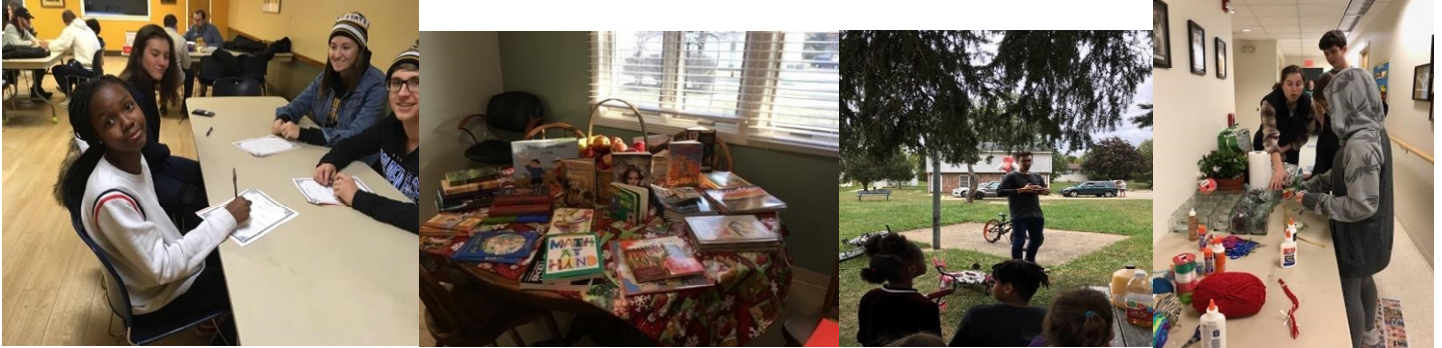


When school resumed for the 2021-2022 year, LoveLight sent home a weekly activity and snack for children in four Kent neighborhoods as well as providing magazine subscriptions to The Week Junior and arranging for five youth to attend Kent State's art experiences program for children in first through sixth grade.

Since our first summer, with the help of many individuals and organizations including local churches and Kent State University as well as some funding from grants, LoveLight has undertaken a number of projects focused on the healthful development and well-being of youth, particularly those who are low income. Besides the summer lunch and ABC's of Fun summer program, other initiatives have included:

- Traveling Playground involving university students (mostly future teachers) who planned and carried out educational and enrichment activities with youngsters in low-income neighborhoods; LoveLight's Executive Director gave a presentation on the Traveling Playground at the 2003 UNESCO Conference on International Education in Finland;
- StudyBuddies, which consisted of pairs of college students assisting pairs of public school children with their academics;
- LoveLight Learning Center and neighborhood tutoring;
- Licensed afterschool program for children ages 5 through 14;
- In conjunction with Kent City Schools and community partners, PEAKS mentoring program for lower-income eighth-grade "at-promise" youth;
- Building Community, Building Futures activities for youth in local low-income neighborhoods;
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Academy which over three school years, provided professional development for teams of P-12 educators (270 individuals) in order to create Professional Learning Communities in their schools to increase student learning and teacher retention as well as improving school climate; the academies were held at Kent State and participants had the option to receive workshop credit from KSU if they engaged in further work under the direction of LoveLight's executive director.
- Initiating Rhythmic Movement Training Symposia held at Kent State University and presented by Swedish psychiatrist Dr. Harald Blomberg. BRMT exercises, which mimic natural baby movement patterns, have been found to improve attention, cognitive, emotional and motor functioning, vision, reading, speech, and handwriting;

- Tutoring PLUS, one-on-one sessions for youth and adults experiencing difficulties with academic and/or overall functioning; these sessions are focused on addressing underlying causes of these difficulties.



Lovelight’s goals for the future include the creation of a model, intergenerational child development and lifelong learning center/community. STARCHILD is an acronym for Service, Teaching, Advocacy, and Research Center for Human Integration, Learning and Development, reflecting a broad vision extending beyond the immediate benefits of a nurturing, stimulating, and health-promoting environment for the low-income and other children enrolled in the program.

This facility will not only help us to “feed children for a day”, but also “feed children for a lifetime.”

Imagine...

... Highly qualified staff, early childhood pre-service teachers, and senior citizens interacting with preschool children from families of various income levels to create a wonderful nurturing, engaging, developmentally appropriate and aesthetically pleasing environment, which will include natural sunlight, indoor plants, and mirrors to encourage body image and awareness;

... Babies, toddlers, and pre-school children enjoying gross motor activities designed to develop their cognitive, movement, and social skills.

... In the infant/baby area, lockers for storage and cubbies, painted in rainbow colors, with cribs, rocking chairs, and a carpet area to provide “belly time” for healthful sensorimotor experiences;

... Youth of all ages playing outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine so important to their healthy growth and development.

... Mini-hikes on uneven terrain, communing with nature while building strong bones and healthy vestibular systems.

... Children, senior citizens, and community health faculty and students creating a bountiful garden of vegetables, a process beneficial in itself as well as yielding fresh produce to include in nutritious meals and snacks enjoyed by the children in companionship with each other.

... Delighted pre-school children gathering sun-ripened strawberries, grapes, and other fruit that they have planted.

... Children, teens, and adults spending quiet time in the peace garden surrounded by beautiful flowers.

... Pre-school and school-age children enjoying creative activities, science, and nature exploration.

... Storytelling and reading stories with “grandmas”, “grandpas”, and college students serving as honorary big brothers and sisters.

... Children riding tricycles in an outdoor pavilion which can also be used for community activities.

... Musical and dramatic performances on a porch used as a stage.

... STARCHILD children engaging in such activities as imaginative play, building with blocks, games, art, music, poetry, stories, drama, science, math, and social studies exploration using a developmentally appropriate approach;

... LoveLight programs such as Tutoring PLUS, youth entrepreneur club, community theater; and community events, for example, a health fair, senior socials, and chess tournaments.

... Fundraising events to generate money to support a variety of programs for low-income youth.

... Any many, many other possibilities...

We are currently looking for a property to enable LoveLight to fulfill our mission. Beautiful acreage will provide many opportunities to engage in learning about and enhancing an appreciation for the natural environment. In addition, ample grounds offer many opportunities for the children to enjoy the fresh air and outdoor play so important for healthy development. Although childhood has been represented as a carefree time of life, the reality today is that many children suffer from stress and anxiety; in the peace garden they will learn relaxation techniques, coping skills that will continue to be useful on into adulthood.

The “Golden Treasures” component of STARCHILD will feature interaction between senior citizens and children, enriching the lives of both. Our strong focus on supporting healthful child development will include not only such elements as nutritious food; gross and fine motor activities; language, creative, and expressive arts including music activities; and science and math exploration, but also other developmentally appropriate activities designed to establish a strong foundation for future success. As with other LoveLight initiatives, STARCHILD will not only benefit the participating children and their families as well as the local economy, but will

also provide a wealth of opportunities for university and high school students to gain valuable experience related to their coursework.

When STARCHILD is not in session, we anticipate offering community activities such as an entrepreneurial and empowerment program for teens and events for senior citizens. In addition, we will continue to offer such STAR Institute services as workshops and Tutoring PLUS, innovative one-on-one sessions involving the identification and addressing of the underlying causes of learning and functioning difficulties. For example, participants and their parents will experience and be taught stress reduction techniques and Blomberg Rhythmic Movement Training exercises to practice at home.

We anticipate that the work of The STAR Institute and its foundational program, STARCHILD, will provide benefits well beyond its immediate environment, eventually impacting quality of life and promoting future success for children and their families in communities throughout northeastern Ohio.

Our guiding principles will continue to be:

- Respect and care for yourself
- Respect and care for each other
- Respect and care for the world around you

LoveLight, Inc. is a small, grassroots non-profit with a big vision, but we believe there are many people with a heart for helping children and teens, especially those who need an extra hand to help them realize their potential and give them hope for the future. We are inviting you to share our vision and be a part of this transformational project by making a donation electronically at www.lovelightcares.org, via a check to LoveLight, Inc. at P.O. Box 123 Kent, Ohio 44240 ATTN: Lisbeth K. Justice, Executive

Director, or making a deposit to the LoveLight account at one of the following banks:

Hometown Bank

(Invest in Our Children account); Huntington Bank (LoveLight savings account); Key Bank; or Portage Community Bank. Also, please visit our Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/lovelightcares

We are also asking that you share this information with friends, family, colleagues, and others who would like to make a positive difference in the world. In order to purchase and furnish a building, our goal is to raise \$800,000; however, the immediate need is to raise a lesser amount. Therefore, we recently initiated “100 Special Friends”, asking individuals and groups to each donate or raise \$1,000 and the “2500 Person Challenge” to encourage 2,500 people to each donate \$100.



October 2019 marked the launch of the LoveLight Shop with Gift Cards Circle of Friends project to provide an ongoing source of revenue to support our efforts. Participants can use gift cards, or in many cases e-cards, to shop at grocery stores, restaurants, clothing stores, fast food establishments, and a host of other options- members receive the full value of their gift card while vendors donate a percentage of the card's value to LoveLight.

During 2022, we are looking forward to a collaborative venture with the Center for Pan African Culture at Kent State, exploring the Black Experience, a youth development and empowerment program for local high school students. We also plan to hold a Multicultural Holiday Festival in November to support our services to the community.

For more information on LoveLight, please visit our website,

www.lovelightcares.org

Please feel free to contact us at (330) 673-5839 or lkjusti1@kent.edu

On behalf of our children, We Thank You!