

201900262

Memo To: Mayor and City Council

Re: Corban Early Learning Center Offer to Purchase 2010 Auburn Avenue

Date: 2/5/19

Dear Mayor Cranley and Members of Council:

For the last three years Corban Early Learning Center located in Mt. Auburn, an MBE and WBE with a Five Star quality rating, has been in catch-22 negotiations with the City Administration to purchase the building in which we operate our business.

After complying with all the City's extensive requests for financials, P&L statements, proof of funds to purchase, organizational documents and evidence of improvements, we expected to move forward with the purchase of the building.

For reasons we have documented and previously explained, we were presented with an unexpected substantial tax bill from the City, which has continued to accrue, as we have been waiting for the City administration to present us with the necessary Purchase Agreement. This is the lynch pin to freeing up the funds, already approved, for us to pay the entire amount of real estate taxes due.

Instead, we received an ultimatum to pay the real estate taxes due, in full, before the City will consider our offer. While we understand that the City Municipal Code may require the City to take this approach, prior discussions with the City led us to believe that we could pay the taxes due out of the loan proceeds we have secured for the purchase.

With no assurance that the City will honor its prior commitments to sell us the building, and with over \$100,000 of work scheduled to be undertaken in April, including a new roof and HVAC system, we believe this is bad faith on the part of the City Departments involved.

Our lender has agreed to pay the accrued taxes in full, immediately upon receipt of a Purchase Agreement from the City to sell us the building under the terms we have offered.

We are asking for your intervention to help cut through the stonewalling, and move this forward to our ownership of the building, which we have taken from an unused, vacant City asset and created a wonderful, highest-rated center for the positive development of young children.

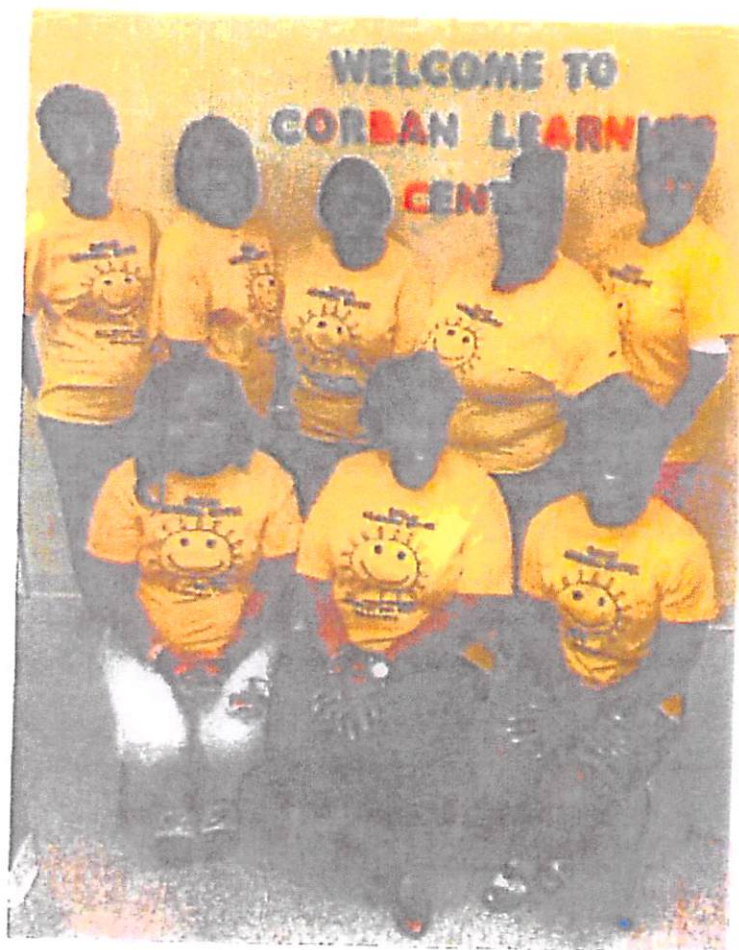
Thank you so much for your help and support.

Sincerely,


Olivia Darks
President



Parent Testimonials



Olivia Darks, Owner, (top right), Ary Underwood-Grant, Director (bottom center) and the teaching staff at Corban Early Learning Center in Mt. Auburn

My husband and I both work full time and we visited every daycare in the downtown Cincinnati area and just couldn't find a place where we felt like it would be a good second home for our child. Because that's the thing - a daycare is a second home for the children. Or at least it should feel that way.

During a walk one spring day, we passed by what would soon be Corban Learning Center and we noticed a sign advertising as such. We knocked on the door and luckily Olivia was there. Within five minutes of meeting her, we knew this would be the place for our daughter. It was the most unofficial tour - the center was not open yet, Olivia was still setting up the rooms and we did not make an appointment. But she opened the door to us and it felt more like visiting someone at their home than visiting a place of business. After our visit, we were so thrilled to find a place that felt so perfect, we passed the information along to our friends who were expecting a child sooner than we were and also lived



close to downtown and were at a loss for finding a good daycare for their child. Quinn Kutcher ended up being one of the first children at Corban Learning Center when it opened and I know the Kutchers would also speak highly about their experience at Corban.

And once the center did open, we went back and visited a couple of times - the center is located about two blocks from where we lived at the time and we frequently went on walks around the neighborhood. Every time we stopped in, we felt welcome and it felt authentic. We never felt like anyone was trying to hide anything from us or create a special environment just because there were guests in the building. Juniper started attending daycare there in November 2014.

Our Juniper was not one of those giggly, silly babies. She was always strong and strong willed. If you wanted her to like you, you had to work for it. But those women at Corban - they loved our daughter. I felt like we had four nannies who loved our child like she was one of their own. They engaged her, snuggled her, taught her, rocked her, guided her, loved her. As a parent, it is tough to drop your child off at daycare. Juniper is nearly four years old now, and sometimes I still want to cry when I drop her off at school. But knowing that these women cared so much for my child took the sting off a bit.

And the office door was always open. If we ever had a question, request or concern, I always felt comfortable talking to anyone at Corban about it, especially Olivia. She was perpetually working on making that place the best place it could be for all of the children.

We moved to Blue Ash in November 2016. Juniper now goes to a different daycare because the drive to Corban each day just wouldn't make sense logistically. But we loved Corban and credit our two years of experience there for helping us raise such a grounded, well-rounded, compassionate and silly little human.

If you ever have any questions or would like to discuss our experience any further, please do not hesitate to contact me at 513-

Dear C.E.L.C Staff,

I want to take the opportunity to thank you for caring for my child before her transition into Cincinnati Public School Pre-school. She has blossomed so much with your team of caregivers, it is simply amazing. I appreciate each and every staff member that she has come in contact with. I have had nothing but positive experiences with them.

When she first began, it took some time to adjust as a parent. She had been with her grandmother and I knew that would be a difficult transition for both she and I. But you guys made it seamless! Once she was comfortable with her peers and teachers she was able to be herself. You all have protected my child, educated my child, and loved on my child as if she were your own and I am forever grateful for that. Corbin has prepared her for the second leg of many educational journeys, pre-school being one, and to my relief, that went off without a hitch.

I have nothing but great things to say about Corbin Early Learning Center. Your location is prime for students and working families and I have already recommended families to your establishment and will continue to do so. You guys are exceptional and deserving of more funding/assistance from our state and local gov't to make your program a more successful program. I wish you and your team the BEST!

Keep up the good work!

Taruna McGuire
RODIE



July 13, 2018

A Letter in Support of Corban Learning Center.

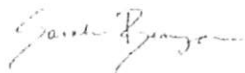
My husband and I loved having our son at Corban. He was at Corban from October 2016—November 2017 and only switched to a different childcare center when he was 18 months old because I was employed at a church with a center that started at 18 months.

The number one thing that set Corban apart from the other childcare centers we looked at was the continuity of teachers and their genuine care for the work they do. All the lead caregivers in the baby room stayed constant while our son was there and I even got to know the teachers in other rooms because they were consistent too. None of the other centers we looked at that we could afford had anything close to the employee longevity that Corban has. Nor did any of the other centers have people who seemed actually interested in engaging with the babies—whereas at Corban I could see how much the teachers just enjoyed the children!

Second, Corban provided care that we could afford. And since it was affordable to us (two students at the time) and accepts vouchers, we knew our son would be in a socioeconomically diverse school, which is an important priority for our family.

Third, it's important for our family that our son grow up around children from different races and to have African American women as authority figures in his life. Corban has a racially diverse group of children and is led by African American women.

Finally, it was important to us that Corban was in its current location—at the time, my husband was a medical student and we lived barely a mile away from the center. One of his colleagues could come to Corban and nurse her baby because the location was so close to the hospitals. It was the really wonderful how one of the most conveniently located childcare centers was also the one with such quality care for our son.



Sarah Bereza, PhD

Webster Groves, MO 63119



My name is Melissa Revels. My daughter, Ivana Revels attended Corban Learning Center from age five months to nine months. My husband had recommended this daycare to me.

As a new parent I was SUPER nervous about leaving my infant daughter with people I didn't know. Would they love and protect her as much as I did? Would she learn anything while she was there? Ms. Airy and her team of capable staff members eased all of my worries.

They kept the center very clean, the children had plenty of things to do. They catered to each infant individually. My daughter fell in love with Ms. Dottie and eventually didn't want to go home.

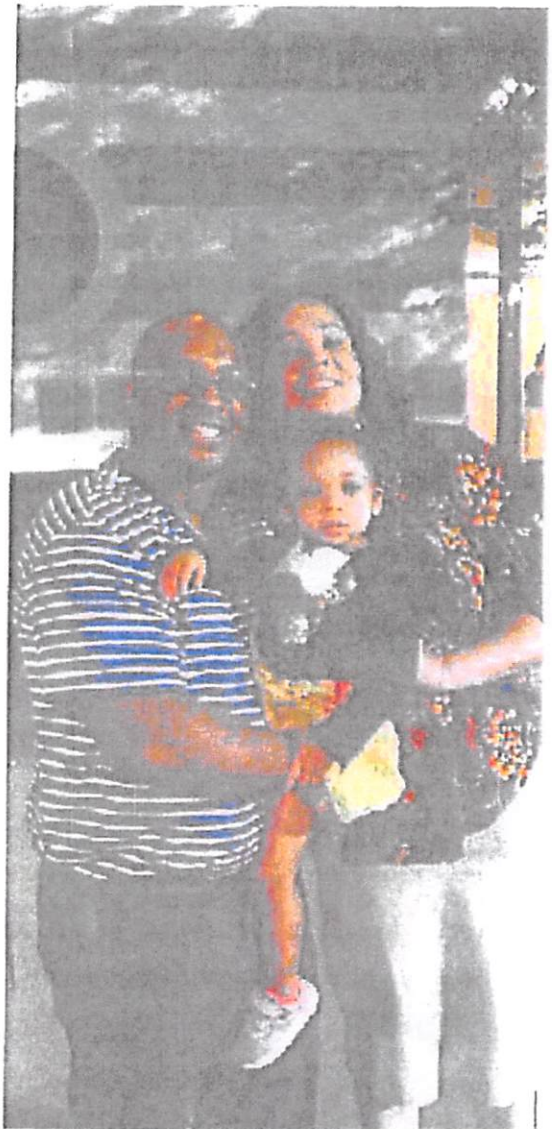
I called all the time to check on her and no one ever was frustrated with me. They were understanding and flexible. I knew other parents who had children there and they also remarked how excellent the staff and facilities were

I hated having to take Ivana out, but the state wouldn't approve my voucher request and I couldn't afford the fees. I would recommend anyone to send their children to Corbin Learning Center.

If you would like more info, please don't hesitate to call me at 513 or email me at

Thank you

Melissa Revels



In June of 2015, I moved into the city from the suburbs. As a working, single parent, receiving no financial assistance, I was in need of affordable daycare with a solid educational foundation for my daughter, Alani. Corban Learning Center was the answer to my prayers. Corban became a nurturing and caring environment, giving Alani the opportunity to grow, learn and develop relationships with children of different backgrounds and cultures; and in close proximity to my job.

When my job relocated to Oakley, I decided to look into affordable preschool options for Alani prior to the 2017-18 school year that were closer in proximity to my job, offered a small, nurturing and caring classroom environment similar to Corban; and a seamless path to kindergarten and beyond. With the various school options that Cincinnati has to offer, and the low performance of my neighbor school, I decided on catholic school.

Alani was enrolled in a new preschool program at St. Vincent Ferrer School in Kenwood offering exactly what we both needed. She has successfully completed preschool and now on a seamless path into elementary. I am thankful for the foundation that Corban provided Alani during those two important years of her life.

-Arielle Willis



July 13, 2018

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is in reference to my family's experience with Corban Learning Center. My son, Quinn, was enrolled at Corban from their opening in August 2014 until we moved from downtown in September 2015.

The moment I met Olivia Darks with her glowing smile and a giant hug I knew Corban Learning Center would be the ideal place with the right team to take care of my newborn. Our experience while we were enrolled, confirmed that every day. While Ms. Darks is an impressive businesswoman (Corban was exceptionally well-run), her compassion and enthusiasm for children is what permeates through the school.

In terms of child development, the team at Corban was a godsend for first time parents like my husband and me, guiding us through the process of helping Quinn grow. We were thrilled when Quinn would return home having learned new animal sounds, sign language signs, or colors. More importantly, my son adored his teachers at Corban – and they adored him. It's difficult to leave your child with someone else while you work, but I always felt confident that Ms. Olivia and her team were there to help my child – and every other child at Corban – thrive.

We left Corban when our family relocated from the West End to Blue Ash. While we still have excellent childcare, I often miss the energy and community of the school. Corban truly is a special place.

I have recommended Corban Learning Center countless times since then to fellow moms seeking childcare near downtown. I am now thrilled to provide this letter of recommendation as well.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions at 513.

erin.mccloykutcher@gmail.com

Kind regards,

Erin McCloy Kutcher



To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to provide a recommendation for Olivia Darks for the purchase of the building for Corban Learning Center

My son, Kendal, attended Corban Learning Center for just over a year from May 2015 through June 2016. During his preschool year there we had a wonderful experience

The staff was generous, kind and loving to the children. They provided an excellent learning environment and I watched Kendal's growth and development as he was excited to go to "school" every day

Olivia was extremely accommodating and allowed us to have a flexible schedule at the center that would blend with our work schedules. It is very difficult to find an affordable location for child care that is convenient and willing to be flexible with parents - Corban Learning Center does all of that

The facility was clean and inviting, and the staff was well-prepared and helpful in every capacity

Purchasing of the property will allow them to grow and become a stable location in a community that is in need of great child care services

Jaime Love, M Ed , CHES
Program Officer

INTERACT
HEALTH

3805 Edwards Road, Suite 500
Cincinnati, OH 45209
(513) 458-6615
(513) 458-6610 fax

Stu Smidder Wulfin
5711 Clifton Ave
Apr 26
Channah, OH 45202

June 21, 2018

To whom it may concern:

Our son, Wally, currently attends the Corban Learning Center. We enrolled him in January of 2016 when we moved to Cincinnati from Washington, DC. Wally was six months old at the time and he has been there for the past six months.

We are happy to recommend Corban to other families looking for a good place for their child. We have been very satisfied with the care Wally has received while at Corban. Each day, Wally smiles and laughs as we drop him off in the morning. And every afternoon, Wally is smiling and happy when we pick him up. It is hard to leave your child in the care of other people, but the teachers at Corban have shown us that they will love and affection and we know they are looking out for him.

While at Corban, Wally has learned to sit up, roll over, crawl, and even stand up. The staff at Corban taught Wally how to eat: first baby food and then solid foods. Wally gets to go to parks, read his A's, and play with other children.

We appreciate everything Corban has done for Wally and recommend it to other families.

Sincerely,

Stu Smidder Wulfin *Claire Smidder Wulfin*

Stu and Claire Smidder Wulfin



July 20, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I enjoy my child being at Corban Learning Center, because they take their time with Naomi who is two years old. She knows her colors and alphabet.

The staff at Corban is amazing. They are nice, and straightforward in the care of the children.

When my daughter started school, like any parent I was nervous. I quickly saw that Naomi was comfortable and that filled my heart with joy.

I appreciate Corban Learning Center because my parents are passed, and this is my first experience with a daycare.

Naomi's teacher is amazing she has taught her how to recognize colors, numbers, the alphabet and sign language. Everything that she learns at her school is reinforced at home.

Overall, I thank God for the genuine care this staff has given my child.

Thank you all so much for opening Corban Early Learning Center.

Sincerely,

Ms. Angel Kennedy

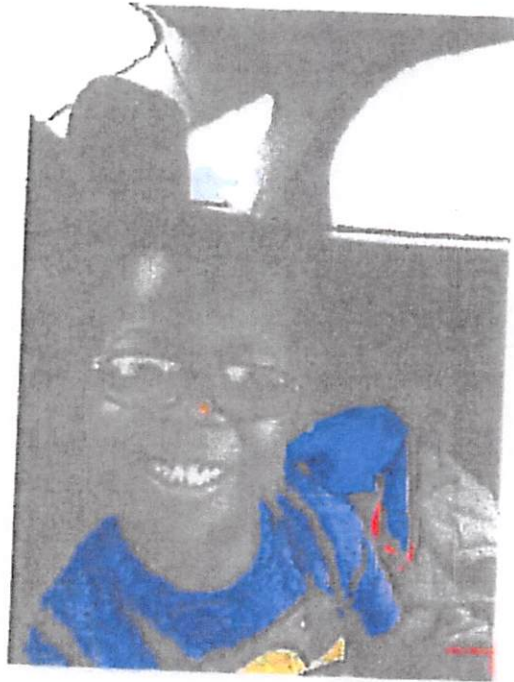


I enrolled my 2 sons into Corban when the doors first opened. My son was only 6 weeks old we were the first family to enroll.

Being a single mom living in the neighborhood and that it was in walking distance was a plus for me. I remember coming for a tour and the staff greeted me with a hug and a smile I knew right at that moment this was where I wanted my sons to be. Corban has been like a family to me and my boys, the staff and Mrs. Darks have given me and my son's so much support and showed us so much love.

My son who was 2 years old had to have open heart surgery, Mrs. Darks did not miss a day coming to the hospital after she had worked a full day at Corban to sit with me and offer support. There were nights I would have to kick her out she would fall asleep but, she would insist on staying she didn't want me to be alone. My son today calls her grandma I think kids can feel when they are loved and cared for.

My son is leaving this fall going to kindergarten which makes me sad if I could I would keep him at Corban until he was in the 12 grade. I can say with confidence Corban has given my boys the tools they need socially and emotional to give them the confidence they need to succeed in school. I feel blessed to have the Corban family in me and my son's lives.



Latoya

July 2018

I enrolled my son Alex at Corban Learning Center in January 2016 at the recommendation of a work acquaintance whose son attended. We were first time parents, and I as a working mom harbored some guilt about leaving my 3 month old son in daycare. However, with amount of love and attention Alex received, my concerns quickly abated.

From day one, I was encouraged to call and check on Alex whenever I wanted. I work in the neighborhood and was welcome to come visit Alex if I had the spare time. Alex very clearly loved his caregivers and we grew very fond of them as well. I appreciated that Ms. Evelyn always kept things very tidy and organized and communicated with us when Alex needed more diapers, wipes, etc. Ms. Dottie was consistently full of cheery greetings and excited updates on Alex's progress. Many of the support staff would insist on a hug from Alex before we would leave for the day.



At one point, Alex was having some difficulty making it through the full work day with the amount of breast milk I could pump. Everyone was very supportive in helping find a solution that worked for all of us - they let me use the management office to nurse Alex in the morning which helped him be able to make it through the day. I was incredibly grateful to have their support as a mom dedicated to exclusively breastfeeding.

In June 2017, my husband changed job locations away from downtown Cincinnati. I was also pregnant with our second child at the time. It no longer made logistical sense to have our children in daycare only near my workplace, so we moved Alex to a center closer to our home in October to be settled in before his baby brother arrived in December.

I would highly recommend Corban Learning Center for infant care. They provide a very loving and nurturing environment. I wish them all the best!

Liz Whitaker

