

5 & Under Initiative

Access to Opportunity
for Children in Poverty



In FY 2008, \$482,300 was awarded to nine organizations to support their second year of operations.

The Community Adolescent Resource and Education (Care) Center

Carson Center for Human Services, Inc.

Community Action!

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc.

The Salvation Army – Holyoke Corps

Springfield Day Nursery Corporation d.b.a. Square One

Springfield School Volunteers, Inc.

United ARC of Franklin and Hampshire Counties, Inc.

YMCA of Greater Springfield

Crystal is young and determined. She lives with her sister, grandmother, and daughter in a supportive, loving family that, unfortunately, lives in poverty. Crystal was nine months pregnant when she completed her GED at The Care Center in Holyoke which offers pregnant and parenting young mothers educational programs while their children attend on-site daycare.

Crystal worked with the Center's transition counselor, Joanna Weinberg Lawless to make the leap to Holyoke Community College. The 5 & Under Initiative grant has allowed The Care Center to employ transition counselors to encourage higher education and support students once they are enrolled at Holyoke Community College to remove any barriers to success.

After a three-year process that analyzed critical issues facing our region, \$1.1 million has been awarded through the 5 & Under Initiative to a total of eleven organizations, like The Care Center, that support high impact educational programs. These programs enable impoverished families with children five years of age and younger to improve their lives by addressing the root causes of poverty that affect them, and the entire community. Projects chosen focus in three areas:

- Enhancing the educational attainment of the children by focusing on their cognitive and socio/emotional skills
- Impacting the skills and education of parents
- Creating supports for effective parenting