

NEW JERSEY



SECOND STREET YOUTH CENTER

Plainfield, NJ (2018)

FINANCING

NMTC Financing Community Loan Fund of New Jersey, Inc. (\$8.8 million)
Equity Investor: M&T Bank

IMPACT

- 108 construction jobs
- 56 permanent jobs
- 210 pre-k seats

COMMUNITY

- Poverty rate: 22.7%
- Unemployment rate: 11.9x the national average

What does a “high-quality” educational facility look like? This was the question that Leah Dade, Executive Director of the Second Street Youth Center (SSYC), asked her board. “We had been in a space that was very old since inception,” says Leah. “We were operating a very high-quality education program in a district that’s known for its early childhood programs. So we asked, ‘How are we operating in a space that’s truly substandard?’”

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY CENTER EXPANDS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAINFIELD CHILDREN

For over 50 years, SSYC had been an anchor for Plainfield’s Fourth Ward, providing residents with affordable and quality childcare. When agencies and organizations began moving out and closing shop, SSYC stayed, offering children a safe and nurturing space to grow and learn. It became increasingly clear that a new developmentally appropriate educational space was needed to work in synergy with the services provided.

SSYC conceptualized a high-quality, state-of-the-art facility that catered to the developmental growth of children, supported a curriculum dedicated to healthy living and self-sufficiency, and forged strong ties with the surrounding community.

With help from \$8.8 million in NMTC financing from New Jersey Community Capital, SSYC opened its doors in September 2018 to a newly constructed 25,000-square-foot early childhood educational and community center, directly down the street from its former building.

To complement the center’s focus on health, safety, and developmental growth, the facility includes features such as in-classroom sinks to encourage each child to be independent and self-sufficient, bay windows for all-day access to natural light, and dedicated staff preparing daily meals from local ingredients. The center also launched a 1,200-square-foot aquaponics urban farm and agricultural education center, offering educational classes for parents and the broader community to further affirm healthy habits.

