



Valerie Martinez

Raising young children in the city can be difficult, particularly for a single parent with limited financial resources. More than finding affordable, decent housing, a single parent needs a secure place where neighbors can be relied on to help out when needed, more of a family than a neighborhood.

Valerie Martinez is a third-generation Little Earth community member. In addition to having a safe, affordable home at Little Earth, Valerie and her three children - Ayanna (7), Nycia (4) and Sequoy (3) - were able to take advantage of the education and parenting classes offered by the community. Nycia Martinez was the first child registered at the LE NELC and all three have been regular participants in the community's early learning programs.

As a single parent, giving her kids the freedom to play with their friends while making sure that they are safe was a great relief to Valerie. The family-oriented structure of the community allowed Valerie to do just that.

"The thing I liked most about living at Little Earth is that it is a community of families. I didn't have to worry about my kids when they were outside playing - we all look out for one another."

Although Valerie and her children recently moved into a new apartment outside Little Earth, they stay involved in the community. Her children still attend the LE NELC on a regular basis.

LE NELC

Little Earth Neighborhood Early Learning Center

Mission Statement

Provide a community-owned center whose leadership is committed to working with the Little Earth housing community, American Indian families and the Phillips Neighborhood to maintain a neighborhood facility for culturally-based early childhood education.

The Little Earth Neighborhood Early Learning Center is a gathering and learning center to support stronger families, healthier children and brighter hopes.

The Little Earth Neighborhood Early Learning Center (LE NELC) was formed in 1998 as a collaborative effort of the Little Earth Residents Association and the Little Earth of United Tribes Housing Corporation. Established as a separate 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation, LE NELC works with the residents of Little Earth and the Phillips Neighborhood to provide culturally-based early childhood education experiences for children of families in the community.

Services provided by LE NELC include:

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| Child and infant care | American Indian language revitalization |
| Preschool services | Mothers' support groups |
| Early childhood leadership development | Fathers' support groups |
| Therapeutic services for children | Housing resources and referrals |
| Parent education | Advocacy for domestic abuse victims |
| Family activities | |