



For Immediate Release  
October 24, 2023

Contact: Kara Porter  
440-668-4675  
[Kara.Porter@starting-point.org](mailto:Kara.Porter@starting-point.org)

### **Billie Osborne-Fears Tribute Fund Announces Fellowship Program**

The Billie Osborne-Fears Tribute Fund today announces the launch of the Billie Osborne-Fears Leadership Fellowship Program. The Billie Osborne-Fears Leadership Fellowship is a two-year full-time experience located at the non-profit organization Starting Point with simultaneous enrollment in the Certificate Program for Nonprofit Management at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University. Its overarching goal is to help create the next generation of transformational leaders in the early childhood field, honoring the memory and legacy of Billie Osborne-Fears, the founder and long-time leader of Starting Point.

“The Tribute Fund’s Advisory Committee is thrilled to carry on Billie’s legacy by dedicating funding and support that will grow emerging leaders in early childhood education,” said Marcia Egbert, Program Director at The George Gund Foundation and chair of the Billie Osborne-Fears Tribute Fund. “This is a critical time for the field, and it is important that we invest in individuals with the capacity and vision to lead change.”

Applications for the fellowship will open immediately, with one Fellow selected for the inaugural two-year Fellowship term. The Fellowship will be awarded in March of 2024 and the program period will be June 1, 2024, through May 31, 2026. Acceptance into the Program includes acceptance into the Certificate in Nonprofit Management Program at The Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences

“The Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences is proud to partner with Starting Point on the Billie Osborne-Fears Fellowship Program,” said the school’s Dean, Dr. Dexter R Voisin. “We believe the knowledge gained through the Certificate of Nonprofit Management will be a powerful tool for the Fellow.”

Nancy Mendez, President and CEO of Starting Point, expressed excitement about welcoming a Fellow to her team. “A strong early care and education system is critical to our workforce now and our workforce of the future,” said Mendez. “We are eager to elevate an individual that can bring passion and on-the-ground experience, and who wants to contribute to the field at a higher level.”

More information about this program and how to apply can be found [here](#).

**About the Billie Osborne-Fears Tribute Fund**

*The Billie Osborne-Fears Tribute Fund is a Donor Advised Fund held at the Cleveland Foundation. This fund was established to honor the legacy and vision of Billie Osborne-Fears, the founder of Starting Point, by investing in the child care and early childhood development system in Cuyahoga County. At this time, the fund does not accept unsolicited proposals.*

**About the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences**

*Case Western Reserve University's Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences is a national network of scholars and practitioners who shape the course of social work and nonprofit practice and research to drive societal change in our backyard and around the world.*

**About Starting Point**

*Starting Point is a non-profit organization that prepares children and youth for a lifetime of success by building the capacity of professionals to provide high-quality care and education, connecting families to those services, and advocating for systems change.*

###