

## Brightening the holidays for children and their families

The holidays are time for joy and celebration yet, for many of our Miami-Dade County neighbors who are facing tough times the traditional holiday season festivities can be a significant financial burden and source of stress. United Way of Miami-Dade partnered with the community to host a Thanksgiving food drive and a holiday toy drive for children at more than 20 United Way assisted early care and education centers and United Way-funded agencies. More than 200 turkeys and 3,300 toys were distributed this past holiday season.



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## Far beyond our walls



On November 18, Gladys Montes, Center's vice president, and Paula Moujalli, Demonstration School director, met with Afzal Habib, chief imagination officer at Kidogo and former management consultant at the Boston Consulting Group. Kidogo is a social enterprise that improves access to high-quality, affordable early childhood care and education to families living in poverty in East Africa. Mr. Habib toured the Center and was able to discuss how to implement our Center's model for early childhood and community partnership into their growing venture.

## Achieving national recognition



The process of achieving and maintaining an early childhood program accreditation is no easy feat. It involves staff and family participation, classroom observations, and health and safety checks. The accrediting agencies have high standards that often go beyond our state's minimum licensing requirements for childcare programs. These accreditation processes inspire early care and education programs to constantly improve in all areas. As of December 2016, all of our 21 United Way of Miami-Dade early care and education-funded programs are accredited and 17 are working towards maintaining or applying for the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accreditation, highest national recognition for early childhood programs. At the same time, our Demonstration School, Educare of Miami-Dade was re-accredited by NAEYC for another five years.