



# Teachers Helping Teachers in the Midst of Harvey

*Hamsa Vizirani, owner and director of Little People's Greater Life, is forever grateful to Collaborative for Children for the support and assistance in getting her center repaired after Hurricane Harvey.*

It was hard to say what the effects of Hurricane Harvey would be on the Greater Houston area. Hamsa Vizirani, owner and director of Little People's Greater Life (LPGL), did her best to prepare her center. "This will just be a little rain," said Hamsa. "We'll be fine." To prepare, she and her staff put valuables in high, secure places. But after the rains came, she saw through her security cameras that the damage was much greater than she thought.

For 15 years, Little People's Greater Life has served families with children from infants to 12 years old in the League City and Friendswood area. The center is Texas Rising Star certified, as well as Texas School Ready certified.

The images from her security cameras showed books, toys and other classroom materials floating in seven feet of water. Through the center's website, Hamsa was able to communicate to her families by posting updates, including information on when and where the center would relocate.

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A few months before Harvey, a new child care center, Hope Academy, had opened nearby. Back then, Hamsa had introduced herself to the director and assisted her in some of the ins and outs of child care guidelines. After Harvey

came, the director of Hope Academy opened her doors to LPGL. Hamsa and her staff were able to reopen Sept. 5, 2017 in their temporary space.

"It couldn't have worked out better," said Hamsa. "I never thought my center would flood, but it was a great blessing to have Hope Academy close by."

While at Hope Academy, LPGL was able to operate in four classrooms and through family referrals grow to add 17 children to the program. In addition, Hope Academy teachers were impressed by the behavior and social emotional development of the children enrolled at Little People's Greater Life. The teachers started to talk with each other, asking for tips and guidance on how to replicate the same observations and behaviors in their classrooms. So the LPGL teachers began to train Hope Academy teachers on how to create structure and lesson plans.

"We formed a great partnership with them. It was amazing to see my teachers train other teachers," said Hamsa. "I'm glad that my staff and I were able to pass along tips and other strategies we've learned at trainings from Collaborative for Children. Young children deserve the best."

Finally in November 2017, Little People's Greater Life was able to move back into its original building along with the help from the community. Currently, the center is operating with four classrooms and waiting to build out the remaining five. Hamsa looks forward to being able to be back at 100 percent soon. "I can't thank Collaborative for Children and their staff enough for giving my center much needed and timely support after Hurricane Harvey," she said. "I will always be grateful!"