Patricia Foley Karl, founder of Lawrence Family Development Charter School and Lawrence Family Development, Inc., passed away on November 28.

Patricia Karl grew up in Lawrence in a family of eight children. Her parents believed in the liberating power of education, which they instilled in Patricia. Following the completion of high school and college, Patricia spent a year as a volunteer teacher in South Phoenix, Arizona as part of the Regis Lay Apostolate with six other women teaching Mexican-American and migrant children in the Golden Gate Barrio. She later returned to Massachusetts to teach in Andover and Lawrence public schools. In 1990 she was hired to be the Executive Director of the Lawrence Youth Commission (now represented by Lawrence Family Development, Inc., as its Alternative Youth Programs) and then founded parent programs for ESL and Citizenship (now represented by Lawrence Family Development, Inc., as the Maria del Pilar Quintana Family Center). Of tremendous note is that her talent and energy working with parents, community leaders and visionaries created the Lawrence Family Development Charter School in 1995, well known for its accomplished history as one of the first of fourteen Massachusetts public charter schools. Patricia Foley Karl’s vision as founder was rooted in the mission of “Strengthening families and building community.” This work is represented in the charter school’s key design elements which prioritize: Parent Engagement, Dual-Language Instruction (Spanish/English), Effective Teaching, Partnerships and School Governance with a parent majority vote.

Patricia Karl impacted generations of students of all ages in Lawrence and will be greatly missed, while her work carries forward.

At an event in early 2019, we look forward to honoring Patricia’s life and her impact on Lawrence Family Development, Inc. and Lawrence Family Development Charter School with "A Celebration of a Legacy."

Contributions can be made online at https://tinyurl.com/pfkendowment; see the section “Apply my gift to” and scroll down and click on the Patricia Foley Karl (PFK) Scholarship Fund or checks can be made out to the Patricia Foley Karl (PFK) Scholarship Fund and mailed to Essex County Community Foundation, 175 Andover Street, Danvers, MA 01923.