



# Bright Futures

## Connect With Us

414.562.2929  
2545 N. 29th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
NextDoorMKE.org



## Get Involved

### Volunteer or Host a Book Drive

Contact Martina at  
414.562.2929 x2529  
or mstevens@NextDoorMKE.org

### Donate

NextDoorMKE.org



**Our mission:** Next Door supports the intellectual, physical and emotional development of children by partnering with their families for success in school and the community.

**Our Vision:** Next Door's vision is to position neighborhood children and families for long-term success.

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## Hello from our President

As we begin the new year at Next Door, we have so much to be thankful for. This past holiday season brought an outpouring of community support for our students and families. Through company book drives, financial gifts supporting our critical programs, and holiday gift giving, the community stepped up and brightened the holidays for our families.

Along with this community support, I love seeing how engaged our families are in their child's education. We hosted a Winter Festival program at all of our locations and many of our parents came out to enjoy the fun, winter-themed arts and crafts and sensory activities with their children.

The past few months also brought some special moments and milestones for Next Door. Here are some highlights:

- Next Door received the Nonprofit Collaboration of the Year Award at the 2017 Nonprofit Excellence Awards from the BizTimes. This award honored our Child Care Partnership program – an effort led by Next Door with ten early learning partner organizations working to improve access to high quality early childhood education in Milwaukee.

- We hit a monthly record in November for our Books for Kids program with 9,100 books distributed to children in the community, including those books given through our Community Library program.
- Next Door continued the discussion from last fall's *On the Table* program with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. We hosted three additional conversations on how high quality early childhood education can help break the cycle of poverty and improve our community. We were featured on the 414WARD program on Today's TMJ4 to talk about our involvement in *On the Table*.

We have started 2018 with a lot to be proud of at Next Door. We are doing the most important work in Milwaukee and we couldn't do it without your interest and support!

**Tracey Sparrow, Ed.D.**  
Next Door President



# It was a “Season of Thanks” at Next Door!

Here’s what you did to support our children and families from Thanksgiving through the end of the year. Thanks for your generosity!

## Financial Gifts



We received **\$636,000** to support the critical, early childhood education programs at Next Door!

## Volunteers



Our dedicated volunteers put in more than **400** hours of service reading to Next Door students, cleaning books, wrapping gifts and more!

## Holiday Gift Giving



Community members donated gifts for **1,520** Next Door children and adopted **77** of our families, purchasing gifts for the entire family.

## Social Media



We ran a “Season of Thanks” campaign on Facebook and Twitter featuring **62** posts/tweets honoring our teachers, staff, donors, volunteers and parents.

## Books For Kids



Community members donated **8,543** books to help children build their home libraries, including **137** books purchased on our Amazon Wish List.

## Giving Tuesday



On “Giving Tuesday,” community members donated **355** books for Books for Kids. We welcomed **35** volunteers to read with our children, clean books, tour Next Door and participate in conversations about our community needs. We had **39** of our classrooms create **840** Thank You cards for our donors and volunteers.



## Literacy Coach Supports Teacher and Student Growth

One of Next Door's priorities is to strengthen our teachers' practice through continuous professional development. This school year, we added one more tool – a Literacy Coach-in-Residence.

The Literacy Coach-in-Residence is a specialist in early childhood language and emergent literacy development and supports Next Door teachers through everything from classroom observation to one-on-one feedback sessions.

Taking on this new role as a volunteer is Dr. Paula Rhyner, who recently retired from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she served on the faculty for more than 30 years. Her research focused on strategies that adults use to facilitate language and literacy development for children from birth to five years old.

"In doing my research, I had to rely a lot on early childhood programs to let me come into their programs and do my work. Now that I'm retired, I feel like this is my opportunity to give back to the early childhood community of Milwaukee."

Dr. Rhyner comes to Next Door every Monday morning and visits our Early Head Start classrooms serving children from zero to three.

"Next Door has a very positive approach and it really aligns with my philosophy in working with young children."

Dr. Rhyner's philosophy includes strategies Next Door teachers currently use, such as modeling and describing that foster language development in young children. She's encouraging teachers to continue promoting



Dr. Paula Rhyner, Next Door's Literacy Coach-in-Residence, shares some story time with children during a recent visit.

mealtime conversations as well as literacy practices helping children gain familiarity with books.

"It begins with teaching children what we call book conventions – here's the front of the book, here's the back of the book, here are the pages, let's turn the pages."

What she hopes to accomplish in the new year is expanding these strategies to more parts of the daily classroom routine and reinforcing themes of the day into back-to-back activities.

"If we were going to read a book, I might think about some free playtime beforehand and incorporate some toys that could relate to the book."

Dr. Rhyner is happy to be in a role strengthening early language and literacy development for Next Door.

"Those are two key factors that provide the foundation for everything in child development."

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## Exploring the Universe!



Our students had a chance to step inside a mobile planetarium over the past year and learn about the world of astronomy. This visit was part of the PNC Bank *Grow Up Great* program and featured a Sesame Street show taking the children on a tour of the night sky.





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## Milwaukee Bucks Thon Maker visits Next Door!



He's a 7' 1" tall NBA basketball star who made some Next Door students very happy last month. We were privileged to welcome Thon Maker – #7 on the Milwaukee Bucks – to read to our children and enjoy playtime together in the gym. Bango and some of the Milwaukee Bucks Energee dancers also came along for the fun. Everyone had a blast!