



Bright Futures

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NextDoorMKE.org



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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

I always look forward to a new school year and this year we have a lot going on! Through several program additions and physical improvements, we are raising the bar even higher with the impact we can have on the children and families we serve.

I'm especially excited about the Leading Men Fellowship program. Run by the Literacy Lab based in Washington, D.C., the fellowship works to engage more African American men in early childhood education and provide positive male role models for the children. We have six fellows working at Next Door this school year. You can read more inside.

Some additional highlights include:

- The opening of ten new infant and toddler classrooms and additional play areas will allow Next Door to serve more children ages zero to three. This move is part of our strategic plan because the first three years of life are so critical to a child's brain development.

- Next Door's Trinity Fellow from Marquette University is forming a cohort of undergraduate students to serve as early literacy tutors for our children ages zero to three. Their training focuses on developing language and literacy skills. A few students began working in classrooms this fall.
- We are partnering with Employ Milwaukee and Milwaukee Area Technical College to launch an Employee Resource Network supporting our nine early childhood education partnership organizations starting this fall. The network offers a Success Coach who leads training and provides resources to encourage employee advancement and retention.

These projects moved forward because of the hard work and commitment from our Next Door team and generous community supporters – without them, we couldn't do the most important work in Milwaukee!

Tracey Sparrow, Ed.D.
Next Door President



Combating the national teacher shortage

One of Next Door's new partnership programs is engaging Next Door parents to become early childhood educators. The Early Childhood Scholars program offers parents a chance to earn a Child Development Associate accreditation through classes at Next Door taught by faculty from Milwaukee Area Technical College. Next Door staff is involved in the training as well. We are working together to introduce parents to early learning careers and to build a pipeline of qualified teachers to help alleviate the pressures from the national teacher shortage.

In August, we celebrated the completion ceremony for the first group of Early Childhood Scholars. Our 14 graduates spent six months taking evening classes twice a week at Next Door. A second cohort of more than 30 Next Door parents began this program earlier this month. After completing the program, the Early Childhood Scholars become priority candidates for hire at Next Door.

Back to school at Next Door!

The 2018-2019 school year began with a red carpet welcome for our students! Since then, the children have enjoyed several highly engaging learning experiences, including designing self-portraits, exploring a sand sensory table, "Tot Time" reading adventures with our volunteers, and visiting our Books for Kids library to select free books to take home.



Next Door pushes action at 2018 *On the Table* program

For the second year in a row, Next Door served as a Super Host for the *On the Table* program from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. The region-wide forum took place Tuesday, October 9th. We welcomed around 60 guests for conversation focusing on the role of high quality early childhood education in creating long-term, positive change for Milwaukee children living in poverty. Our guests included city leaders, journalists, Next Door volunteers, donors, staff and parents. Before they left, they filled out a "Next Door *On the Table* Action Plan" and selected an option to help Next Door carry out its mission. Our team will follow up with participants this fall.



Engaging young men as early childhood educators

Leading Men Fellowship brings more men of color as role models into Next Door classrooms



"It's really good experience especially because I'm right there doing it with the teachers, helping them out and seeing how they do their work in class," Shine said.

Shine starts his day leading a "Daily Message" offering students a taste of what's to come. He sings learning songs with the children, reads stories to them and helps them practice spelling their names. He knows being a role model is important, too.

Isouma Shine is getting a lot more hugs these days than he usually gets – and they're not coming from his family or close friends. Instead, it's a class of four-year-olds at Next Door showering the 18-year-old with these warm embraces.

"There are a lot of hugs, especially when I'm leaving," Shine said.

Shine is one of six Leading Men Fellows from Milwaukee working in Next Door classrooms for the 2018-2019 school year.

The Leading Men Fellowship is run by the Literacy Lab of Washington, D.C., for recent high school graduates. The goal is to give them on-the-job experience to explore a career in early childhood education while helping organizations, like Next Door, get children ready for school.

The fellows participated in extensive training in Washington, D.C., and locally. They currently have regular coaching sessions alongside the five days a week they spend in the classroom at Next Door.

"A lot of them do some of the stuff that I do, so I have to make sure I watch what I do and make sure they are doing the right thing," Shine said.

Next Door's President, Dr. Tracey Sparrow, first reached out to the Literacy Lab in June of 2017. After a few conversations with leaders there, they came to Milwaukee last fall to give a presentation about the fellowship to Next Door and other local early childhood advocates.

"There was a lot of enthusiasm during that meeting about what positive outcomes this program could have in our community," Dr. Sparrow said. "It's exciting to see the program up and running now – we're already seeing these young men impacting our students."

Shine wants to take this experience a step further and enroll at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee this spring. He plans to double major in Education and Criminal Justice and take night classes while completing the fellowship.

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Save the Date!
November 27, 2018

**Celebrate Giving Tuesday
at Next Door**

Individual/group volunteer
opportunities available
To learn more, contact Martina
at 414.999.2529 or
mstevens@NextDoorMKE.org

“Home Run” visit from the Brewers!



Our students enjoyed a special visit this year from the Brewers Wives, the Brewers Community Foundation and team mascots, Bernie and Hank. They brought bats, balls, gloves, wristbands and T-shirts for the children, played baseball with them and visited their classrooms. We are so grateful for the team's generosity and support of our city's youngest learners!