



Bright Futures

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Fall 2020

Connect With Us

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NextDoorMKE.org



Get Involved

Volunteer or Host a Book Drive

Contact Martina at
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or mstevens@NextDoorMKE.org

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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.

Letter from the President

I am so grateful for the hard work that is happening at Next Door in the midst of such a challenging environment. We are now in Phase III of our reopening plan and our dedicated team continues to be positive, creative and flexible with our new ways of operating.

We launched Phase III with the start of the new school year based on input from employee work groups, family surveys and local and state health officials. We have 60% of our center-based children coming to our two locations five days a week and 40% of our students participating in daily, virtual programming. Our home visitation program is entirely virtual and we continue to work with our 11 early childhood partnership sites around Milwaukee with teacher and family support.

For our on-site programs, we have maintained a high level of student engagement coupled with extensive safety precautions. We are doing everything we can to ensure strong participation for our virtual learners, including technology/supplies support, Zoom tutorials to guide parents through online curriculum platforms and personal touches from teachers in their backgrounds to remind students of school. Read more inside about our plan for the fall.

We also marked the new school year with some exciting highlights.

- We kicked off the year with a virtual all-staff meeting with around 250 employees. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Barbara Stroud – a licensed psychologist and national consultant focusing on culturally informed clinical practice in early childhood development and mental health.
- We enjoyed significant community support through events including a literacy campaign with TMJ4 and Scripps Howard Foundation raising money for our Books for Kids program; book drives from Summerfest and Starbucks; a school supplies drive from Farmers Insurance and a Yelp Adventure Challenge benefitting Next Door.
- We hosted two virtual Community Conversations with donors, volunteers and other community members. Next Door department directors shared our approach and experiences serving children and families during the pandemic.

Finally, I am thrilled to announce that Next Door was named one of the 2020 “Best Places to Work” from Milwaukee Business Journal. Read more about the honor below.

Thanks for your interest and support, and I hope all is well with you and your loved ones.

Tracey Sparrow, Ed.D.
Next Door President

Milwaukee Business Journal honors Next Door in “Best Places to Work”

We're proud to announce that the Milwaukee Business Journal selected Next Door as one of its 2020 “Best Places to Work.” This program honors companies and organizations based on high rankings from employee surveys. Next Door earned its recognition in the Extra-Large Category (200 or more employees) and was the only non-profit organization in the category.

As part of a strategic goal for Next Door, our leadership team has worked to make Next Door an employer of choice



among early childhood providers. We have implemented a series of benefits over the past few years including: raising Next Door's minimum wage to \$15, prepaid tuition assistance, loans for unexpected life costs, and a Success Coach helping employees manage work and life challenges.

The New School Year at Next Door: Phase III Reopening



To plan a safe and effective new school year, the Next Door team spent the summer developing a strategy for the third phase of our reopening process - August 17, 2020 to January 3, 2021. We based our plan on the following guiding principles.

- Maintain and support staff to the extent possible and practicable
- Ensure safety and wellness of children and staff
- Focus on responsive, high quality learning experiences to prepare children for success in school
- Ensure that children and families' needs are met
- Innovate and be flexible
- Be careful stewards of our funding sources

A sample of our health & safety building precautions

- Limiting visitors
- Parent drop-off/pick-up outside the building
- Temperature checks
- Daily COVID-19 screening questions
- Onsite health services team for children with symptoms
- Masks required for staff and children 3-5
- Hands-free sanitizer stations
- Increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures
- Classroom practices to promote social distancing
- COVID-19 health education for students
- No intermingling of classrooms

On-site Learning

- Programming five days a week
- Language, math, science, art curriculum
- Behavioral, disability and mental health support services
- Medical/dental support
- Free books to build home libraries
- Weekly check-ins with parents/guardians from Family Advocates



Virtual Learning

- Daily interaction with teachers
- Language, math, science, art curriculum
- Technology and school supplies support
- Behavioral, disability and mental health support services
- Medical/dental support
- Free books to build home libraries
- Weekly check-ins with parents/guardians from Family Advocates



Home-based Family Education

- 100% virtual programming
- Prenatal and early childhood education
- Weekly sessions with Parent Educators
- Technology and school supplies support
- Behavioral, disability and mental health support services
- Medical/dental support
- Virtual socializations with families in small groups
- Free books to build home libraries



Partnership Sites

- 11 early childhood partner sites around Milwaukee
- Next Door instructional coaches for partner teachers
- Next Door Family Advocates supporting partner families
- Books for Kids Mobile Library visits with free books for kids



How You Can Help Next Door Right Now

<https://www.nextdoormke.org/get-involved/special-events/>

Donate Books

Purchase new books on our Amazon Wish List for Next Door students and help them build their home libraries. Over the next two months, we're interested in books reflecting "Thankful and Grateful" and "Giving and Receiving" themes. Suggestions are available on the wish list. You can also host a book drive for Next Door with your neighbors, school, workplace, congregation or other groups you're involved with.



Donate Holiday Gifts

Brighten the holiday season for Next Door children and families through our Holiday Gift Giving program. You can give presents for a family or a classroom. We will provide an age-appropriate list of gift ideas and arrange a time when you can deliver the gifts.



Donate Family Kits

Purchase hygiene items, household products and food to support the needs of Next Door families during this challenging time. Your donations will help parents/guardians provide a safe and healthy home for their children.



Donate Financial Gifts

Support Next Door with a monetary donation so we can continue to provide high quality early childhood education and critical family support services during this challenging time.



Next Door Volunteers Step Up During the Pandemic

Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, we haven't been able to welcome volunteers into our buildings to clean and repair the donated books we receive for Next Door's Books for Kids program. To keep up the support remotely, a crew of regular Next Door volunteers and their families are helping us from home and giving these books some "TLC."

We created safe, contact-free procedures to pick up boxes of books and cleaning supplies and drop them off later. **So far, these volunteers have cleaned and repaired more than 15,000 books!** This support has been critical in keeping up with the distribution of books to our students and children in the community to help them build their home libraries.

We thank you all for your dedication and generosity!





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Learning letters through art!



Meet Asiyah! She started K5 at Next Door this fall and took a quick break for a smile while working on a mosaic art project. She was decorating the first letter of her name. See inside for more back to school photos.