



# Bright Futures

Volume 6 • Number 1

Spring 2022

## 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  
414.999.2529  
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.

## Letter from the President

We are excited to share that a new and important program underway at Next Door is receiving national attention. A journalist with The Hechinger Report – an in-depth publication covering inequality and innovation in education – visited Next Door in February to profile our Pathways Program. The story was published on April 13, 2022.

Pathways is an innovative workforce development initiative aiming to recruit more early childhood educators amid the national teacher shortage and build credentials of our current staff. The reporter spent two days at Next Door interviewing Pathways participants, staff and community partners. Read more at [hechingerreport.org](https://hechingerreport.org).

Pathways includes an Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship led by Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. The DWD is producing a TV commercial about the apprenticeship and it will feature one of our Next Door teachers, Courtney Calhoun and Pathways Instructor, Tanisha Johnson.

Our team continues to support our children with in-person learning across our center-based and home-based programming. They are addressing increased academic, social-emotional and physical health needs as part of our Accelerating Equity Initiative. See more inside about this initiative and programming happening right now.

I want to give a special shout-out to our volunteers visiting us this year to read with our children, support our classrooms, and process books for Books for Kids. You are all helping Next Door do the most important work in Milwaukee today!

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



## Register now for the 2022 Walk for Children!

Join us for a virtual event May 20-27 and help us reach our goal of raising \$75,000 for high quality early childhood education.

- Walk, run or ride on your own or with a team
- Free registration (includes tips on pledging miles and fundraising)
- Participants who raise \$100+ receive an event t-shirt
- Sponsors at the \$2,500 level can receive a kit to host a Pop-Up walk at their location

For more information or to register, scan the QR code or visit [NextDoorMKE.org/WalkForChildren2022](https://NextDoorMKE.org/WalkForChildren2022)

Register today!



# Next Door Celebrations!

## Black History Month



Messiah dressed up as Frederick Douglass as part of our Black History Month Spirit Week.



Our children celebrated Black authors during story time in the library. Here, they are reading "Hands Up!" by Breanna J. McDaniel.



TrueMan McGee, owner of Funky Fresh Spring Rolls in Milwaukee, joined our virtual family celebration for Black History Month. He is a former Next Door parent who shared his rise to success with his popular business.

## Week of the Young Child



We joined the National Association for the Education of Young Children in its annual celebration of Week of the Young Child. There were different themes each day, like "Music Monday" that featured a parade.



For "Work Together Wednesday," parents joined their children for science experiments. Here, Bella and her mom created a volcanic eruption!



For "Artsy Thursday," our students explored different artistic tools like string for a canvas painting activity. Pictured is two-year-old, Miyles, fully engaged in her masterpiece!



# Accelerating Equity in Education at Next Door

Next Door is working hard to ensure our children have the resources they need to make strong gains and meet developmental benchmarks.

A hallmark of our work right now is our Accelerating Equity Initiative. We are maintaining the high quality early childhood education we have always provided and enhancing it with a comprehensive support system to meet our students' needs. Below is a closer look at some of the programming happening this spring.

## Wisconsin Conservatory of Music



Ms. Natasha visits Next Door weekly to work with some of our infant and toddler classrooms. Through the Smart Start™ program, she uses singing, movement and sensory play to help the children build important cognitive skills.

## LENA (Language Environment Analysis)



We are using LENA technology to measure student-teacher conversational interactions during daily activities to build language development. Here, Ms. Octavia engages with Skylar and LeVar, who are wearing special vests with the LENA device.

## Art Education



We have a new Art Education Coordinator at Next Door – Ms. Tail. She engages our older students in our art studios and brings art lessons to our younger children in their classrooms.

## Traveling the World



Ms. Ann takes one of our classrooms on a trip to Australia in one of our indoor play spaces. This renovated area features a global village with prominent landmarks from around the world.

## Special Needs Support



We have a new partner at Next Door supporting our children with autism and behavioral issues. Specialists with Ignite Child Development Services serve students daily with one-on-one sessions to help them thrive in the classroom.

## Dental Day



We partner with DentaMed Healthcare to help our families gain access to oral care for their children. Pictured is a mobile clinic at Next Door offering free screenings, cleanings and referrals for further dental issues.





Next Door Foundation  
2545 N. 29th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53210

## Governor Evers Visits Next Door



Governor Tony Evers held a press conference at Next Door on February 8, 2022 to recognize one of our community partners – The Literacy Lab. He presented a \$1 million check to the Literacy Lab to expand its Leading Men Fellowship in Milwaukee and bring more young men of color into early childhood classrooms as literacy tutors and positive male role models. We have worked with this program since 2018 and are proud to employ several graduates.