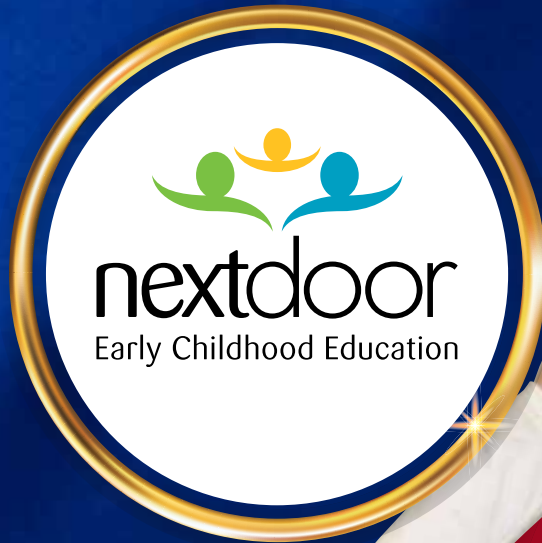


Report to the Community 2025



Superhero
★ Edition ★

Welcome to our celebration
of Next Door Superheroes!



In our 2025 Report to the Community, we invite you to reflect on an extraordinary year at Next Door – one defined by resilience, partnership, and the remarkable potential of the children we serve. Every day, we are reminded that the true heroes of our story are our children, each building the foundation to shape their own bright and boundless future.

Yet, no hero’s journey is taken alone. Surrounding each child is a powerful network of families, teachers, home visitors, student support team members, community partners, donors, and volunteers – each playing a vital role in helping our children learn, thrive, and grow. Together, we are creating strong starts in life and opening doors to opportunities that will last a lifetime.

This past year brought significant challenges for early childhood providers nationwide, including disruptions and delays in federal funding and administrative support. In the face of these obstacles, our community rose to the occasion. Your generosity, advocacy, and unwavering commitment ensured that our work continued without interruption. For that, we are deeply grateful.

Because of you, we achieved powerful outcomes during the 2024–2025 school year. Within these pages, you will see the impact of what happens when a community comes together with purpose: children thriving, families empowered, and futures forever shaped.

The stories our families and children are writing reflect their strength, resilience, power, and hope – and it is far from finished. With your continued support and investment in our city’s smallest heroes, there is no limit to what they will achieve – for themselves, their families and communities, and the awesome City of Milwaukee!

With gratitude,

Heather Mehring Grams

Heather Mehring Grams
Next Door President



1,257

Children served
across our
programming

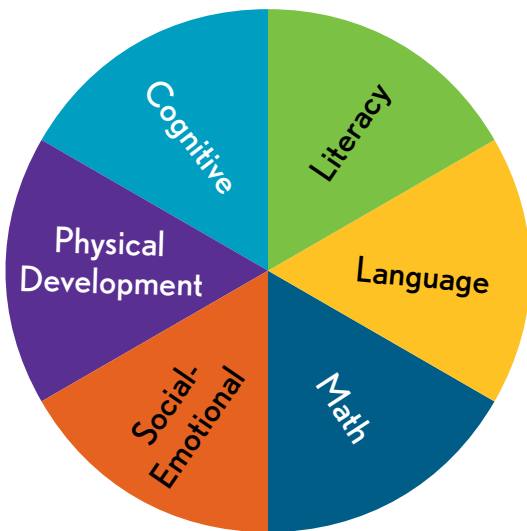
Our Superhero Outcomes

Student Performance

Next Door students show growth every year with resilience and great pride. It is exciting to watch up close!

We recognize that children learn on a continuum, and we work to ensure each one of our little learners make continuous gains toward individualized educational goals.

Our students experienced growth across all areas assessed during the 2024-2025 school year – with the largest improvement evident in literacy.



By year's end, of our students:

- At our centers, **93%** mastered literacy (up from 77% at the start of the school year)
- At our partnership sites, **97%** mastered literacy (up from 77% at the start of the school year)
- In our home visitation program, **50%** met the most advanced developmental stages in a combined literacy and language category (up from 35% at the start of the school year)



Student Supportive Services

In order to deliver on our core mission of providing the best early childhood education for children, we integrate various early intervention services into our programming. This empowers our students to gain the support they need to thrive in their early learning experiences at Next Door.

Over the 2024-2025 school year, our robust Student Support Services team provided critical resources in speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, special education instruction, mental health support, and social-emotional regulation for any child in need of services.

One hundred percent of the 1,257 children served received access to important early childhood health screenings, including hearing, vision, lead, and dental care.

To help fuel strong bodies for our superheroes, our creative nutrition team prepared healthy meals and

snacks daily, and delivered hands-on experiences for children to cook, grow, and sample healthy foods through our Kids Kitchen.

Next Door is committed to ensuring that we provide or connect families with necessary resources to support the needs of all children in our care.

- **144** children received services for special education plans
- **291** children were tested for lead
- **800** children received vision screenings
- **8,505** lbs. of produce incorporated in meals/snacks

**Data from 2024-2025 school year*



Our center-based superheroes soared in learning at

2

campuses: 29th Street and Capitol Drive.

Our Superhero Outcomes

Family Satisfaction

Data captured in 2025 showed our families value Next Door as a safe and enriching environment for their children to learn and develop the foundational skills they need for school. Below is a sampling of survey data collected in our 2025 Community Needs Assessment report.

Of our families surveyed:

- **95%** feel Next Door gives their child a safe place to learn.
- **93%** feel Next Door is helping their child get ready for school.
- **92%** feel school communication is easy to understand.



Family Engagement

From the first day of school to K4 graduation, our parents are there to partner with Next Door in teaching their little ones, celebrating their milestones, and having fun learning together.

Our families demonstrated impressive learning engagement at home, logging a total of **47,437 hours in at-home learning for the 2024-2025 school year**. Our superheroes learned and played at home through interactive activities from teachers, reading challenges, and building healthy habits with their families.



Our home-based superheroes soared in learning at their homes and at Next Door family events through Wisconsin's largest home visitation program.

Check out their stats!

Meet some of our amazing Student Superheroes!

Nova Lynn

Age
3
Learning Locale
Next Door's 29th Street campus
Favorite Book
Our Beautiful Colors
Superpowers
Communication
Self-expression
Good friend



Mouhamad

Age
2
Learning Locale
Next Door's Home-Based program
Favorite Book
Poke-A-Dot! An Alphabet Eye Spy
Superpowers
Resilience
Joyful spirit
Attendance at family events



Tristan

Age
2
Learning Locale
YMCA Northside (partnership site)
Favorite Book
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Superpowers
Book worm
Singing & Dancing
Loving personality



Osaze

Age
5
Learning Locale
Next Door's Capitol Dr. Campus
Favorite Book
Boys Like Me
Superpowers
Master of letter and sounds
Math wizard
Peacemaker



*Partners with two locations

Our superheroes at
our partnership sites
soared in learning at
11
locations across
Milwaukee.

Check out their stats!

Meet part of our Superhero Critical Training Team!

Debra

Team Role

Teacher

Tenure

21 years at Next Door

Favorite Childhood Book

Green Eggs and Ham

Superpowers

Builds strong student relationships

Compassion Mentor for staff

Earned Associate's degree in 2025!



Hashimiah

Team Role

Family Advocate

Tenure

2.5 years at Next Door

Favorite Childhood Book

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

Superpowers

Calming presence for families

Flexibility to meet families' needs

Passion for positive impact



Yi Yi

Team Role

Parent Educator

Tenure

9 years at Next Door

Favorite Childhood Book

The Giving Tree

Superpowers

Trilingual to support families

Relatable to her families

Builds strong parent engagement



Lucretia

Team Role

Human Resources Director

Tenure

20 years at Next Door

Favorite Childhood Book

Corduroy

Superpowers

Always looking out for staff

Strong connector to resources

Loves to have fun and boost morale



195

staff helped our
superheroes soar
in learning!



Meet some of our amazing
Parent Superheroes!



**Brittany and Lendraia
Next Door Parent Leaders**

Lendraia Hughlett and Brittany Gowie, leaders of Next Door’s Parent Policy Council, traveled to Washington D.C., in February 2025 with Next Door senior leadership team members.

They attended a conference that helped prepare them for meetings with federal legislators to advocate for Head Start early childhood education programs, like Next Door. They met with Wisconsin Congresswoman Gwen Moore and staff from Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson’s office.

“When offered the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C., I was a bit nervous. However, I feel so lucky to have been a part of something so amazing. Overall, the trip was life changing.”
– Lendraia Hughlett

“The information I learned boosted me to speak more. We should know the power of our voices so we can represent the kids that we are fighting for.”
– Brittany Gowie

**Pictured above L-R: Lendraia Hughlett, Congresswoman Gwen Moore, Brittany Gowie, and Donna Morris, Next Door’s Director of Family Engagement and Enrollment*



**Literacy
Superheroes Nafeshia and
Shabazz**

It has become a ritual most every Thursday at Next Door for Nafeshia and her son, Shabazz – a stop at our Community Library that is part of Next Door’s Books for Kids program.

They come and select free books to expand their home library and enjoy more time at home reading together.

“I do consider it quality time that we have together, especially with him being able to select books on his own and really gravitating toward things that he’s learning about and exploring in the world,” Nafeshia said.

“Books for Kids is definitely a great resource for us and something we are very thankful for.”



Fueling literacy powers with
52,167
books distributed
through Books for Kids

Superhero Generosity

Next Door Donors

We are grateful for the generous financial contributions of our donors, including individuals, families, community foundations, and corporations. Your gifts supported our high-quality early childhood education programming, family support services, and workforce development initiatives. Here we recognize all new gifts and pledge installments made between January 1 and December 31, 2025.

\$250,000+

Buffett Early Childhood Fund
United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County
William Stark Jones Foundation

\$100,000 - \$249,999

Brady Corporation Foundation
Herb Kohl Philanthropies
Red Nose Day Fund at Comic Relief US

\$75,000 - \$99,999

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\$50,000 - \$74,999

Herzfeld Foundation

\$25,000 - \$49,999

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\$10,000 - \$24,999

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Florence Steinberger
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Vertex Inc
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Linda Yeager and John Florsheim
Zurn Elkay Water Solutions

\$1,000 - \$2,499

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A Friend of Next Door
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A.J. Star
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Ann and George Whyte
Dr. James and Gracia Willis

\$500 - \$999

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Walter and Aleta Chossek
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Elizabeth Thuli
Lynn Tolcott
Beverly Wenzel
Joseph and Ann Wenzler
William and Gwendolyn Werner
Robert and Lana Wiese
Elaine Willis
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
Nancy Yttre



30+ community partners added fuel to our impact

Superhero Dedication Next Door Volunteers



Thank you, Richard

Richard "Rich" Teerlink championed for Next Door in many special ways.

As CEO of Harley-Davidson Motor Company, Rich launched the company's long-time support of Next Door. He was a Next Door board member and generous philanthropist with his wife, Ann.

Today, the Teerlink's daughter and one of their grandchildren volunteer, continuing the family's legacy of service. We are grateful for the generational support and for the beautiful tribute gifts to Next Door following Rich's passing in April 2025.



Thank you, Roger

Roger Schroeder dedicated more than 40 years of service and philanthropy to Next Door.

Roger served on our board and committees, providing expertise as an accountant. He volunteered for Read with Me, and with his family, supported our holiday gift drive.

We extend our gratitude to his family for designating Next Door as a place to give memorial gifts in Roger's honor after he passed in September 2025. We will fondly remember this gesture and Roger's loyalty.



Thank you, Ian

With his wife, Kathryn, Ian Lambert generously supported Next Door for 20 years. We are grateful to his family who selected Next Door as a place to make memorial gifts in Ian's honor after his passing in April 2025. We celebrate Ian's life and legacy of philanthropy.

500+ volunteers helped expand our children's learning

Next Door Financials
Fiscal Year 2025

2024-2025
Operating Revenue

Year Ended June 30, 2025

Operating Revenues	Amount	Percentage
Federal & State	\$19,872,146	81%
Private Contributions	\$2,501,017	10%
Other	\$482,501	2%
In-Kind Goods & Services	\$1,655,769	7%
Total Revenues	\$24,511,433	100%

2024-2025
Operating Expenses

Year Ended June 30, 2025

Operating Expenses	Amount	Percentage
Personnel	\$11,252,163	46%
Fringe Benefits	\$3,073,011	13%
Travel & Training	\$308,951	1%
Occupancy	\$1,763,421	7%
Equipment & Supplies	\$674,730	3%
Contractual	\$3,593,797	15%
Support Services	\$780,359	3%
Depreciation	\$762,807	3%
Interest	\$253,943	1%
In-Kind Goods & Services	\$1,655,769	7%
Other	\$92,169	0%
Total Expenditures	\$24,211,120	100%



Superhero expertise & support
Next Door's Board of Directors

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Our Nutrition team fueled
our superheroes with
197,412
healthy meals.





Get Involved!



Scan the QR code or visit:
NextDoorMKE.org/support-next-door



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Our Superheroes
★ thank you ★
for your support!