

Great Expectations: Where the community connects for kids

Messan Agbemadon and his wife Kokoe raised their four boys in Wayzata schools. They are amazing parents with big dreams for their children, including a stellar education and college degrees. Their family has participated in Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners' Caring for Kids, Homework Club, summer camp and other programs. The couple feels a deep calling to give back.



Messan Agbemadon, Brad Sleeper and dozens of volunteers and partners have worked to identify the unique needs of local youth.

Messan says, "Interfaith helped our kids from elementary school through high school, so it is very easy for us to give back. We are ready to help - to bring people together to find ways to help kids. Our first goal is to have our kids educated. That is our motivation."

Over this last year Messan worked with Brad Sleeper on a Great Expectations Action Team, where they spent hours together working on the unique needs of youth ages 14-18. Brad, a retired professor and current Orono STRIVE program mentor, leads this group and is inspired by what is happening through Great Expectations Action Teams. "Relationships have turned out to be critical to everything - bridging cultures, ages and families." These relationships that have formed, in a very deliberate way, are making strong connections for kids. Teachers, city officials, community members, parents and others are coming together to

“ One of the things I have learned from Messan is purity of heart and passion for his family. ”

*- Brad Sleeper,
Action Team leader*

identify existing community assets, discover barriers to kids' success and engage the community to find solutions.

"Great Expectations is very critical for our kids' education and our kids' future," Messan says. Brad adds, "And we've only just begun!"

Great Expectations campaign goal: raise \$200,000 for youth and education efforts

Double your impact! Thanks to a generous donor, individual gifts made before Aug. 31 will be matched up to \$20,000.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Attend the Great Expectations Breakfast Aug. 23
- Lifelong relationships form during Action Team planning
- Rima and Erik Torgerson give from the heart - for our kids

Education is the pathway out of poverty

Heartfelt thanks to the super Great Expectations Action Team members who, over the past five months, have taken a deep dive into discovering what's working and what's getting in the way of success in school for kids of our community.

These amazing folks have spent mega time, energy and heart gathering invaluable insights and perspectives that promise to help move the initiative forward. They've conducted listening sessions with parents, teachers, school administrators, principals, achievement interventionists, literacy specialists, English language teachers, social workers, case managers, property managers, child care providers, high school

counselors, homework helpers, youth social and recreational leaders – and kids.

The wisdom and ideas generated in these sessions have been prioritized and distilled into creative ways to engage school and community in closing opportunity and achievement gaps for kids who are arriving at kindergarten behind and/or are not meeting critical educational benchmarks along the way. They surfaced new opportunities for an informed, engaged and invested community to bring what's working to scale and to go after – with all the heart and will we can muster – what's getting in the way for our kids.



*LaDonna Hoy,
Executive Director, Interfaith
Outreach & Community Partners*

Action Team members came away with ideas, both for early wins and for addressing the more complex opportunities that school and community need to pursue if we hope to meet the great expectations we have for all of our kids. These opportunities will be shared at the Aug. 23 Great Expectations Breakfast. Be sure to come. Bring your friends. For our kids.

DONATE TODAY TO CHANGE THE FUTURE FOR OUR KIDS!

The Great Expectations movement is afoot, but it needs YOUR contribution to build strength and momentum. Your donation today will provide kids with valuable early childhood education, out-of-school learning opportunities, backpacks and supplies needed for the new school year, and mentoring relationships with caring adults.

- **Great Expectations campaign goal is to raise \$200,000 by Aug. 31**
- **Your gift will be matched up to \$20,000**
- **Donate TODAY at iocp.org/donate**



The Torgersons give from the heart – for our kids

Community leaders Rima and Erik Torgerson are passionate supporters of the Great Expectations Initiative. We asked them what fuels their commitment to setting all our kids on a path to success.

Childhood mentors and memories

Erik remembers having role models shape his thinking as a child. “My high school basketball coach had a big impression on me. He taught me how to set goals and stay focused on them. With the help of Great Expectations, that opportunity – to set and achieve goals – can be available for everyone.”

During her youth, Rima was active in theater, track, choir and student government. “All of those things contributed to a real sense of community,” she reflects. “Being able to participate in those groups was supportive of my self-esteem, self-worth and sense of connection.

I feel a sense of belief in myself today partly thanks to those opportunities.”

Working together – school and community

Rima has volunteered countless hours on behalf of young people at Interfaith Outreach and in Wayzata Public Schools. “We don’t want any kids to be forgotten and left out. We are so fortunate to be in school districts that are really prioritizing excellence for each and every kid. Having the support of the whole family and the whole community puts it on a different level. Therefore, to the extent that we can support parents, other caregivers, coaches and everyone who’s involved in kids’ lives, that’s really important to me.”

Erik says, “It’s in all of our best interest to make sure all kids in our community have access to resources so they can set goals and have the



Erik and Rima Torgerson

best chance possible of achieving them. We hope and believe that Great Expectations is bringing these resources to kids and can reach as many young people as possible.”

“The importance of cradle-to-career support is based in research and outcome studies,” Rima reminds us. “What we do for kids today pays off for the entire community, and it pays off in big ways.”

Watch more of the interview at iocp.org/ourstories.

“ We’re all in this together, and as much as we can support each other...that is going to be the game-changer for our kids, which is then the game-changer for our community. ” - Rima Torgerson

GRANTS March - May 2017

Edina Realty Foundation
General Operating

General Mills Foundation
Prevent Hunger

Grainger Foundation
Neighborhood Program Van

The Mosaic Company
Prevent Hunger

St. Martins by-the-Lake Foundation
General Operating

Village Automotive Group
General Operating

Wayzata Public Schools and Partners for Healthy Kids
Caring for Kids

Wayzata Public Schools and Partners for Healthy Kids
Neighborhood Program Summer Leaders

MEMORIALS March - May 2017

Pam Ahrens / Kathleen Anderson / Ann Argento / Ruth Bagne Hanson / Ida Beltrand / Robert Bulger
David K. Cosler / Granville Dedrick / Hazel Farnham / George Faue / Calvin Flaig / Kip Frantz
Shirley Harder / Clare Humphrey / Leroy Lilly / Beverly Martin / Jean Mitchell / Gerry Monskey
William “Bill” Munsell / Roy Norum / Donald Omodt / Richard “Dick” Reed / John Rehkamp
Betty Rheaume / Jim Root / Darrell Sohn / Verne Sperry / Karen Stewart / Richard Tuff / John Waterloo

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Building relationships that benefit kids

Relationships formed through the Great Expectations Initiative will serve this community for decades to come. People who may never have otherwise met are gathering and talking about the new frontier – this big idea that each and every kid can and must experience success in school and life from cradle to career.



Rev. Dr. Carol Reed, Pastor of Calvin Presbyterian Church, Long Lake, one of the SPARKS homework help after-school program sites

“ The strong relationships that have been formed between volunteers and students are invaluable. We were thankful to have had the program at our church this past year. ”



Brad Sleeper, retired professor, Orono STRIVE mentor and current Great Expectations Action Team Leader

“ I've learned to see poverty and racial barriers up close. There are so many people who are heroes and are working in the schools to help these kids – and the parents are heroes, too. They so deeply want their kids to succeed. ”



Messan Agbemadon, Wayzata Public Schools parent and Great Expectations Action Team Member

“ I have this characteristic from my mom: we love to help people. We love to give things to people without expecting they would give anything back to us. ”



Judy Hanson, Wayzata Public Schools Chemical Health Coordinator and Great Expectations Action Team Member

“ The bridges built through Great Expectations will be long lasting. If something comes up and I am looking to help a family, I now have broadened my toolbox. ”

Check out video interviews at iocp.org/GEstories

YOU'RE INVITED!

GREAT Expectations

Great Expectations Breakfast

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 7:30-9 a.m.

Wayzata Community Church, Mithun Hall
125 Wayzata Blvd East, Wayzata

Be informed

Get engaged

Invest in our kids

Come to the Great Expectations Breakfast and learn what community-based Action Teams have discovered could change the odds for struggling kids ... and how YOU can help.

RSVP today at iocp.ejoinme.org/GE2017



Action Team members call their research in preparation for the Aug. 23 community event

GREAT Expectations

It takes a village to raise a child

The Need

There is an unacceptable opportunity and achievement gap in our community. Nearly 44% of the people Interfaith Outreach served last year were children. Hundreds of preschool children and more than 1,600 school-age kids are not achieving critical educational benchmarks that set them on the path to success in school and in life. Our exceptional school districts can't close the gap alone - it takes the whole village to surround kids and their families.

The Response

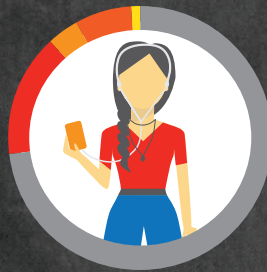
Great Expectations is an exciting, outcome-driven initiative that coordinates the efforts of the schools with the goodwill and resources of our community so that every single child has the necessary support, from cradle to career, to succeed in school and in life.

The Goals

- Every child is prepared for school
- Every child is nurtured at home, in school and by the community
- Every young person succeeds academically and attains life skills
- Every young person is given the opportunity to enter continuing education after high school
- Every young person pursues a future of choice



Each and Every Child - All Along the Way - Cradle to Career



You Can Help



Be Informed - Learn more at
iocp.org/greatexpectations

Get Engaged - Volunteer
at iocp.org/volunteer

Invest in our Kids - Donate at
iocp.org/donate



ANCHOR PARTNERS



Back to School

success means having the right tools!

Make a difference for local K-12 kids!

Drop off back-to-school donations at Interfaith Outreach Monday-Saturday, Aug. 1-19, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Or make a financial donation online at iocp.org/donate.

Hundreds of families' budgets are stretched so thin they can't afford age-appropriate school supplies. You can give kids the tools they need to succeed. It's just one more way to build Great Expectations in our community and support kids' success from cradle to career.

“ The back-to-school supplies were a blessing. I really appreciate everything you all do! ”
- an Interfaith Outreach mom

BACK TO SCHOOL DONATIONS LIST	
MOST NEEDED	ALSO NEEDED
Backpacks (large, solid colors)	Black Sharpie Markers
Wide/College Rule Spirals	Scissors - Pointed Tip
Pocket Folders	Crayola Markers, Wide Tip Classic Colors
Graphing Calculators (TI-83, TI-84)	Red Pens/Black Felt Tip Pens
Composition Notebooks	Erasers (large pink or white)
3-Ring Binders (1½-inch)	Pencil Pouches
Dry Erase Markers	Protractors
Wide/College Loose-leaf Paper	Highlighters - Yellow
Graph Paper (1/4 inch)	Book Covers
Colored Pencils	Pencil Sharpeners with Covers
Glue Sticks (no glue bottles)	Index Cards (3x5 inch)
Earbud Headphones	Post-it Notes (3x3 inch)
Pencils and Pens	Large Facial Tissues
Notebook Dividers	Clorox Wipes
Crayola Watercolor Paints	Hand Sanitizer

Thank You for Setting Kids up for Success!

Last year...

- 767 K-12 students (338 families) were provided with school supplies
- 98 volunteers contributed 447 hours of time to make it happen



Volunteer, Our Kids Need YOU!

Caring for Kids is foundational to the Great Expectations Initiative. Our Neighborhood Program provides on-site services to kids in nine multi-unit neighborhoods. Here are some ways you can help this fall:

Neighborhood Program Homework Club - Serve weekly as a mentor and homework helper for elementary students

Neighborhood Program Great Readers - Read with school-aged children and help strengthen literacy skills

Caring for Kids Storytime Matters - Read to preschool children and help strengthen foundational literacy skills

Children's Play Area - Supervise and play with children (ages 0-8) while their parents receive support

Back to School - Sort, organize and distribute back-to-school supplies for local families.

Contact Lynn Vettel (lvettel@iocp.org or 763-489-7505) or Liz Erstad-Hicks (lerstad-hicks@iocp.org or 763-489-7506) to learn more and get involved.



Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners
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MISSION - To engage the heart and will of the community to respond to emergency needs and create opportunities for all to thrive.

VISION - To build a vibrant community where everyone counts and all sectors and systems work together for the good of all.

SERVING THE CITIES OF HAMEL, LONG LAKE, MEDICINE LAKE, MEDINA, MINNETONKA BEACH, ORONO, PLYMOUTH & WAYZATA

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