



(l to r) Olumide Aje, Interfaith Outreach Neighborhood Program Manager; Jolene Stanke-Krause, Meadow Ridge Elementary School Social Worker; and Samuel Blank, Student Support Specialist; teamed up with others to offer Cardinal Club for kids.

Once our kids, always our kids

Olumide Aje has worked with young people most of his career. Whether in a school or as the Interfaith Outreach Neighborhood Program Manager, Olumide tells kids, "Once you're my kid, you're always my kid." They know they can rely on him.

Young people and their families rely on Great Expectations (GE), too. GE is a collaborative school and community initiative designed to eliminate the educational opportunity and achievement disparities experienced by children and youth in our community. Anchor partners Orono and Wayzata schools and Interfaith Outreach work with community partners to help kids reach their highest potential.

GE has been working to listen, learn and effectively respond to emerging opportunities. One school, Meadow Ridge Elementary, created an out

of school time program called the Cardinal Club to better meet student need. It provides targeted academic and enrichment activities. Many of the kids invited to participate are living at Vicksburg Commons, one of the nine Neighborhood Program locations Olumide and Interfaith Outreach supports.

Jolene Stanke-Krause and Sam Blank are part of the Meadow Ridge student support team. Jolene says, "Interfaith's partnership in supporting kids and families has always been important. Two years ago, Meadow Ridge and Interfaith staff teamed up to create Cardinal Club. Having it housed at the school gave us the opportunity to extend the invitation to many Meadow Ridge students (45 signed up this year) regardless of where they lived. It was also a unique opportunity to have

licensed teachers provide support to students after school."

At Cardinal Club, students have the opportunity to work with licensed teachers who provide large and small group literacy and mathematics instruction targeted to specific student needs. Students also participate in social, emotional and community building activities. In addition to traditional instruction, the club integrates skills through cookie baking, coding lessons with robots, Lego activities and more.

This collaboration allows teachers to better understand student behaviors, which can sometimes stem from a deeper backstory. And, it gives Interfaith staff the ability to understand the school experience. The partnership helps parents best support their children both in school and in life.

“ In the end, it is the result of intentional relationships that build the whole puzzle, piecing it all together for kids. It's everybody coming together. ”

– Olumide Aje, Neighborhood Program Manager

Great Expectations Fundraising Goal: \$300,000. You can double your impact! Thanks to a generous donor, gifts received by Aug. 31 will be matched up to \$25,000.



Andrea Mac Arthur, back row, seventh from the left, GE Director, and school and community partners gathered for strategic planning sessions in early 2020.

Each and every child - All along the way - From cradle to career

Join the GE movement:

- Learn what our kids need to be successful in school and life (iocp.org/greatexpectations)
- Engage with our kids as a caring adult (iocp.org/volunteer)
- Invest in our kids to make a lifelong impact (iocp.org/givetokids)



GE helps families and kids, especially during COVID

Hello, friends!

My name is Andrea Mac Arthur and I am honored to serve as the Director of Great Expectations (GE). I have spent a year now getting to know this community and seeing firsthand how deeply we all care for children and families. I am privileged to meet with families who share their joys and hopes for their children's futures. Too many of those conversations, though, include stories of hardship and adversity. Nevertheless, families push forward.

I am struck by the resiliency of our kids and families. We see parents working second and third jobs trying to give their kids educational and personal enrichment opportunities. Our Black, Indigenous, and families of color have been surviving and thriving against a backdrop of racism and systemic oppression for generations. Many of us are just now waking up to it. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, which has exacerbated economic and academic achievement disparities.

Resiliency is not enough. It is unjust to act as if the onus for one to thrive is not the responsibility of all.

As you read through this newsletter, you'll glimpse the work of Great Expectations: of school and community coming together to envelop children and families in an ecosystem of education and support. I hope you will join us on this journey of listening, learning and taking action so all of our children and families can truly thrive.

In partnership,

Andrea Mac Arthur, MPP
Director, Great Expectations

Here are just a few of the innovative programs taking shape with GE:

- **Great Opportunities scholarship fund** - high quality out-of-school artistic, athletic, academic and personal development opportunities. Last year, over 200 youth were able to explore personal interests and develop new skills in more than 200 programs.
- **PEAK and Education: Our Best Legacy program** - strengthens the interaction and partnerships between parents and children, and parents and schools. Builds parents' self-efficacy to help their children succeed in school.
- **Mentoring and skills building programs** - fosters developmental relationships between high schools students and community mentors and builds life skills for young adults.

Building an ecosystem of support

Great Expectations (GE) partners challenge ourselves, and one another, to work in different ways and adapt to the changing needs of children and families. There is no better example of this than our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Orono and Wayzata schools transformed, delivering instruction in a distanced environment. They offered high quality care for the school-age children of essential workers, and provided more than 220,000 meals so students would have the nutrition they need to learn and grow.

Interfaith Outreach maintained a high level of service by meeting people curbside to deliver case management, employment services and a drive-up Food Shelf.

Interfaith continued funding early childhood education scholarships while helping families transition to different programs if their child's program closed.

We deeply value our diverse community, knit together by our strengths, cultural traditions and lived experiences. We know that, in many ways, distance learning

exacerbates educational inequities and that the trauma of the pandemic and ongoing racism will persist for years to come. Changing the trajectory of a person's life and changing complex systems requires a sustained approach. We celebrate the victories along the way, knowing that achieving our goals is still many years away. We are committed to this work for as long as it takes.



“ I am proud of the level of connection and sharing of best practices that Orono and Wayzata have been able to do through our work together for improving summer programs, offering *Education: Our Best Legacy* and more. I also appreciate the *Great Opportunities scholarship fund* that provides expanded resources to our youth. Together we have all elevated the conversation about the needs of our low income and diverse families. We are hopefully on the verge of expanding this

vision to the entire community to bring in more partners and resources to change the future for our youth. ”

– Melanie DeLuca,
Orono Schools Community
Education Director



“ I am very excited by three programs that are supported by Great Expectations. The Great Expectations Mentoring program pilot at Wayzata High School kicked off this past school year. This relational mentoring model provides strong foundational support for students to envision their future. The parent education models of PEAK and *Education: Our Best Legacy* offer the potential for parents to guide our work in family engagement across the district. And finally, the Great Opportunities scholarship fund provides assistance so students can participate in a wide range of out of school time activities—the building blocks of confidence! ”

– Jodi Olson, Wayzata Public
Schools, Community Engagement
& Partnerships Coordinator



Invest in Our Kids

Your gifts link kids to the resources they need

Despite our exceptional Orono and Wayzata schools, nearly 2,000 kids in these districts are not experiencing the same opportunities and achievement as their peers. Educational experts have confirmed that the pandemic has magnified existing academic achievement disparities between resourced and under-resourced students, and deepened the racial divide of advantages and disadvantages.

By aligning our efforts, programs and interventions, Great Expectations is creating a network of support to link kids to the resources they need in the community. The need could be school supplies, a child care scholarship, help paying for camps or extracurricular activities, or an adult mentor they can count on in their neighborhood. Kids can thrive when caring community members like you surround them with connection, support and opportunities that level their playing field.



Olumide Aje, the staff person you met on the front cover, along with the Neighborhood Program team, help kids like Keisha. During her recent struggles with stay at home orders, her mom's job loss, and distance learning with her brother, she leaned on Olumide for help. He reminded Keisha of her strengths, assuring her that he – along with the community that surrounds her – will not give up on her. Read Keisha's story at iocp.org/Keisha.

Your investment in the Great Expectations campaign will create life-changing opportunities like these:

\$63 provides school supplies for a fresh start back to school

\$95 helps a child experience a season of dance classes

\$515 provides a child the opportunity to attend four weeks of sports camps

\$1,313 staffs and supplies one Neighborhood Program site for a month

\$5,347 through CfK, gives a little learner four months of quality early childhood care



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Donate to help kids thrive at iocp.org/givetokids

Caring for Kids pilot offers connection, new skills for parents

In October 2019, Caring for Kids (CfK), a foundational program of the Great Expectations Initiative, launched an Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) pilot program at Interfaith Outreach.

Caring for Kids surveyed client families with young children and discovered that parents felt isolated and needed connection with other parents. They wanted to expand their knowledge of child development while gaining parenting tips and tools. Parents also identified barriers to attending traditional ECFE classes, such as work conflicts, the need for care for older siblings, and feeling intimidated by joining a class somewhere new.

The CfK ECFE pilot met for five weeks. The structure followed a traditional ECFE model of

parent-child time, then parent time with a licensed parent educator. Meanwhile, children engage in meaningful play and activities with a licensed early childhood educator and volunteers. The community-building dinner provided the opportunity for families, teachers and volunteers to get to know each other as they shared a meal.

Post-pilot survey results reveal unanimous participant feelings of connection with other parents, feeling supported in their parenting journey and being thankful for their new “parenting toolkit.” Many indicated they would now consider attending ECFE through their school district, too.

The 20-year-old Caring for Kids (CfK) program provides parents of young children with holistic family support services, parent education and



While the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted plans for a spring 2020 ECFE session, plans are in place to offer the CfK ECFE program sometime in the 2020-2021 school year.

scholarships to 14 top-quality early childhood development programs.

View a message from Caring for Kids Director, Rachel Boettcher at iocp.org/CfK.

Caring for Kids Fundraising Breakfast

A virtual event

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 19, 8:00 A.M.

The Great Expectations anchor partners invite you to attend the 2020 Caring for Kids Fundraising Breakfast – a virtual event.

Caring for Kids (CfK), in alignment with Great Expectations, supports our community's youngest learners. CfK provides resources and interventions for young children and their families, including holistic family support services, parent education, and scholarships to 14 top-quality early childhood care and education programs. Help children in our community start strong and thrive all along from cradle to career. Donate and learn more at iocp.org/caringforkids.

Caring
for Kids
Breakfast



LEARN. REFLECT. ACT.

Learn. Reflect. Act. is a series of opportunities for our entire community – families, neighborhoods, groups of friends, businesses and faith communities – to learn, reflect and take action together in service of our community becoming the best version of itself. Led by Interfaith Outreach, the series acknowledges the impacts of the current pandemic on our work, and offers ways to dismantle racism and inequities. We know that no single day, no single action can address systemic racism by itself, but we are confident that when we engage in meaningful activities, reflecting both as individuals and as a collective, we can make change. Join us! www.iocp.org/volunteer.

Buy and donate school supplies for local kids!

Donations collected at Interfaith Outreach Mondays & Fridays, Aug. 1-17, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Learn more at iocp.org/backtoschool.



MEMORIALS March – May 2020

Herbert Anderson / Kathleen Anderson / Gene Aumann / Susan Bach / Marilyn Davison / Justin Ellis
Earl & Ginny Geiger / Joseph Hackenmueller / Marilyn Hanson / Irene Hatcher / Patricia Hazard / Earl Hebeisen
Lory Holbeck / Dr. Robert Jensen / Mary Johnson / Russell Johnson / Susan Johnson / Trudy Kotila / Geraldine Krohn
Stephen Lammers / Chuck Long / Nettie Lynch / Jim McNamara / Sheryl MengevGerry Monskey
Bernard Parrington / Gertrude Patterson / Carolyn Peterson / Nancy Pohtilla / John Reed / Sharon Lee Ritchie
Andi & Phil Rosenthal / Steven Rudoy / Darold Schulte / Tammy Schulz / Art Skantz / Verne Sperry / Nadine Storms
Ruth Stricker / Grace Vavrichek / Bob Wiczorek / Louise Wierschem

GRANTS March – May 2020

American Family Dreams Foundation

Education & Youth

Cargill

General Operations

City of Plymouth Community Development Block Grant

Housing & Neighborhoods

Edina Realty Foundation

Food

Emergency Food and Shelter Program

Food, Housing & Neighborhoods

Hennepin County Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus Emergency Funds

Housing & Neighborhoods

OPUS Foundation

General Operating

RBC-USA Foundation

Education & Youth

Target Foundation

General Operating

Wayzata Community Church

Housing & Neighborhoods

Wayzata Public Schools-Partners for Healthy Kids

Education & Youth

Wayzata Public Schools – Partners for Healthy Kids

Housing & Neighborhoods

Wright Hennepin Electrical Trust

Food

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.

Subscribe to our e-newsletter at iocp.org/getconnected



Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners

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

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