

a magazine for friends of the GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION

GREATER together

Meet the
changemakers
building a
Milwaukee
for all



Greater Milwaukee
FOUNDATION
greater together

Volume 6 Issue 1 Summer 2021

GREATER together

A MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS OF THE
GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION
VOLUME 6 :: ISSUE 1 :: SUMMER 2021

VISION Greater Milwaukee becomes a vibrant, economically thriving region comprised of welcoming and inclusive communities that provide opportunity, prosperity and a high quality of life for all.

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ON THE COVER:



Terron Edwards, founder of Fathers Making Progress, in front of a community garden that his organization helps care for around the corner from Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For all our differences as people, what we need to thrive is universal. We need a home we can depend on and afford, the opportunity to build wealth through work or investment, connections that keep us healthy and well, and, for the younger among us, a quality education that sets us on a path to future success.

Not only are these necessities vital for individuals and families, but our whole community also becomes stronger as access to them grows.

Expanding opportunity, however, has not often been the value written into our society's policies and practices in areas such as housing, finance, development and education. And far too frequently, it is racism's persistent presence in our everyday systems that keeps people from the lives they deserve.

Despite this flawed history, it's not too late for change. For all the unwelcome surprises of the last year, there is one revelation I was happy to learn – that we are capable of adaptation, of forging new paths forward and of working together in new ways for the greater good.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is ready to lead that change in our community. We're starting with ourselves and reimagining the role and practice of philanthropy for deeper, more equitable impact. We are honoring the priorities of residents and making decisions together as we recenter communities. And we are taking on the difficult, long-term work of remaking the systems that shape life in our region to be more beneficial and just.

We are not alone in this work, and the more who join us, the greater the outcome will be. I hope you'll find inspiration in these pages to learn more, bring your own voice to the conversation and give of your time, talent and treasure so that together we can build a Milwaukee for all.



Ellen M. Gilligan
President & CEO
Greater Milwaukee Foundation



President and CEO Ellen Gilligan welcomes attendees at a ThriveOn Collaboration visioning session in 2020, held at The Retreat in Milwaukee's Harambee neighborhood.

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Carrying
through on
our promise
to build

**A MILWAUKEE
FOR ALL**

Philanthropy has led to phenomenal advancements and innovations over the past century. Yet for all the steps forward we've taken as a community, far too many of our neighbors are still left behind. The changes made in housing, education, neighborhood development and economic investment have been too incremental. The accomplishments have been too exclusive. The focus has been too narrow.

If 2020 taught us anything, it is that we cannot go back to the way things used to be. COVID-19 has laid bare for all to see how racism has shaped systems and led to disparities in our community.

Racism affects everyone and holds our region back from reaching our potential. It will take all of us to move our community forward. The following stories demonstrate ways in which we are carrying through on our strategic vision to build a Milwaukee for all ... together. In the process you'll meet some of the changemakers we are collaborating with in this generational undertaking.

REIMAGINING PHILANTHROPY

Shaping the direction of philanthropy through more racially diverse donors and new approaches to collective impact

RECENTERING COMMUNITIES

Investing in solutions that neighborhoods define for themselves

REMAKING SYSTEMS

Reshaping the systems that shape lives in Milwaukee

Read the Community Summary Report from our June 25 convening with Dr. Andre Perry, including themes from On the Table MKE conversations, on our website.

Building a new era of more INCLUSIVE PHILA

African American philanthropists lead bold fundraising effort to support health disparities research



When COVID-19 first began to impact Milwaukee County in spring 2020, the first eight deaths reported were all African Americans.

That statistic, while sobering, was an important conversation starter for Jackie Herd-Barber and Cory Nettles when talking with other philanthropists. The statistic shed a spotlight on the urgency to address racial inequity and health disparities in Milwaukee.

Last fall, the two spearheaded an initiative of the ThriveOn Collaboration, a partnership between the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Medical College of Wisconsin and Royal Capital, that raised \$2 million in three months to endow a chair at MCW. The funds support work by Leonard Egede, M.D., M.S., that aims to reduce the burden of chronic disease and eliminate health disparities in high-risk communities of color.

“Health disparities are a major roadblock to communities of color

surviving, thriving and succeeding,” said Herd-Barber, who contributed, along with her husband, Michael. “We are not going to let anything stop us to make sure [communities of color] have the resources to truly make a difference in the community.”

The collective investment, fronted by African American leaders, predominantly supported by African American philanthropists and supporting the work of an African researcher, it is reimagining the way philanthropy is done in Milwaukee.

“Engaging more diverse donors in collaborative philanthropy is part of our new era of philanthropy that is more inclusive, collaborative, anti-racist and impactful,” said Ellen Gilligan, Foundation president and CEO. “We are proud to serve the donors who gave to and through the Foundation in support of this effort.”

Neither Herd-Barber nor Nettles, both Foundation and MCW board members, had been involved in a fundraising

effort that raised such a large amount of money in a short period of time. Nettles was particularly inspired by contributions from the African American community.

“All the time I’ve been doing philanthropy in this community, never had African American families stepped up at this level for any one cause,” Nettles said.

Nettles knew the capacity was there but said that traditionally, African American philanthropists have not been strategically engaged around causes that have aligned with their personal philanthropic passions.

“It says to the community that this is a group of philanthropists who ought to be engaged and not ignored,” said Nettles, who contributed with his wife, Michelle.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

The structural inequities laid bare by COVID-19 and the call for racial justice following the killing of George Floyd

Pictured above: Jackie Herd-Barber, Cory Nettles, Kevin Newell, Derek Tyus and Greg Wesley.

ANTHROPY

Milwaukee's African American community was disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Free COVID-19 vaccines were given out at Milwaukee's Juneteenth Day celebration as a way to help boost vaccination rates.

REIMAGINING PHILANTHROPY

motivated philanthropists. So too did Egede's drive and commitment to ensure that the community thrives.

"He was willing to meet people where they are at and try to come up with interventions, solutions and prevention strategies to change some of the statistics," said Greg Wesley, a Foundation Board member and MCW

"To be able to participate in something I believe will have generational impact on the trajectory of our community means a lot because I don't just see numbers or names. I see faces."

Kevin Newell
President and CEO of Royal Capital

senior vice president who gave along with his wife, Lisa.

This marked the first time Derek Tyus, a senior executive at West Bend Mutual Insurance Company and Foundation Board member, contributed to medical research. His philanthropy traditionally focuses on supporting education, children and young people. But after learning about Egede's work, he was convinced it was something he needed to support, particularly as he is from Milwaukee.

"We need to be invested in our own community to help to address and mitigate some of these various serious and systemic issues," said Tyus, who contributed with his wife, Dwanyell Thomas.

NEXT GEN PHILANTHROPY

Collaborative philanthropy dispels myths that an individual needs to be ultra-wealthy or wait until later in life to give, said Kevin Newell, 37, president and CEO of Royal Capital, who made his largest personal gift to the cause.

"To be able to participate in something I believe will have generational impact on the trajectory of our community means a lot because I don't just see numbers or names. I see faces," said Newell, born and raised in Milwaukee. "It is our responsibility to take some leadership and find ways to improve the community we come from and the Black community in particular."

Herd-Barber's children, Justin, 29, and Lauren, 31, also gave at a level in which they hadn't before. Their mother's passion had an influence, but they too believed in the potential impact Egede's research would have in helping create a Milwaukee for all to thrive. The fundraising effort by the African American philanthropists also conveys an important message to millennials like Justin.

"We can do something very similar on a smaller scale and in the future maybe surpass all the great things they have done," he said.



MCW researcher making a difference in MKE with support from community

Leonard Egede, M.D., M.S., Milwaukee Community Chair in Health Equity Research

Academic medicine elevates care in the region, the state and the nation. But to best support the overall health of the city of Milwaukee requires a commitment beyond education, research and patient care. It requires looking at health more holistically, including the impact of factors such as where someone lives and works.

With Milwaukee ranking second to last among Wisconsin counties for its health outcomes, the community engagement mission is clear.

Leonard Egede, M.D., M.S., has been addressing that mission head on since arriving in Milwaukee in 2017 from South Carolina.

“Part of the reason I came was because I felt like I had a chance to make a difference in Milwaukee,” said Egede, professor of medicine, chief of the division of general internal medicine

and director of the Center for Advancing Population Science at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Egede explores access to health care, quality and cost of care as well as the social determinants of health and how they intersect to create disparities and influence the overall health of the region. These efforts are helping inform and educate for a better health equity focus for MCW, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and Royal Capital’s ThriveOn Collaboration. The goal of these efforts is to eliminate disparities through community engagement, research, education and direct community investment.

“People are often dealing with circumstances out of their control, so we need to build programs that acknowledge this and bridge the siloed way of thinking about aid,” he said. “Health care, criminal justice,

housing, hunger, violence, education and faith-based initiatives need to all work together to address the stressors that lead to poor health outcomes.”

Egede and his team are tackling these social determinants by helping facilitate a coordinated strategy, forge partnerships and recruit experts with skills in community engagement and public health. Egede knows this is a long-term investment, but with 20 years of experience in health disparities research, he is committed to improving the health and well-being of people’s lives and our community.

“I don’t know how much time I have,” he admitted, “but with every breath in me, I want to leave a legacy of change.”



LOAN PROGRAM

provides lifeline to lifeblood of MKE community

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation has responded to a range of community challenges over the past year caused or deepened by COVID-19. But Foundation leaders knew grantmaking alone would not alleviate the acute needs caused by the pandemic. Nor would it help address an equitable economic recovery moving forward.

Only by deploying financial resources in innovative ways would things change.

“This is what philanthropy must do,” said Ken Robertson, the Foundation’s executive vice president, CFO and COO. “If we are saying we are going to reimagine philanthropy, we should not just dust off the same old tools we’ve always used.”

Enter impact investing, a strategic philanthropic practice whereby the Foundation provides capital to businesses with the dual goal of producing a positive social impact while also generating a financial return. The Foundation is mobilizing \$1 million in low-interest loans this summer through ThriveOn Small Business Loans, a relief funding round and part of its impact investing program, to help small businesses in Milwaukee.

The funding focuses on keeping small businesses open, particularly those owned by Black- and Brown entrepreneurs as they face greater barriers to traditional financing because of the lack of generational wealth. As the Small Business Administration recently ran out of funds for its Paycheck Protection Program, the Foundation’s loan program offers critical, timely support.

Businesses could apply for a loan of up to \$50,000 at 2 percent fixed interest with no payments or interest

through 2022. The Foundation also is working with entrepreneurs to access other local resources.

Small businesses such as the Rise and Grind Café are woven into the fabric of Milwaukee neighborhoods. The restaurant, which opened on MLK Drive in 2018, temporarily closed last July while continuing to operate out of its spot in the Sherman Phoenix. Its business manager thinks a low-interest loan could speed up the process in reopening its main location.

Several Foundation donors have been early ardent supporters of the program, believing that extending capital to entrepreneurs of color is critical in an economic recovery. Contributing more than \$400,000 from their donor advised funds and through personal contributions and commitments, these donors, some of whom were small business owners, hope their contributions inspire others to give.



“If we are saying we are going to reimagine philanthropy, we should not just dust off the same old tools we’ve always used.”

Kenneth Robertson
Executive vice president, CFO and COO,
Greater Milwaukee Foundation

“Capital is the key driver for change, and we ought not to be afraid to use it,” Robertson said. “Some loans will yield strong returns and some of them won’t, but we have to continue to try.”



RECENTERING COMMUNITIES

Changing how we make

CHANGE TOGETHER

"The power is with the people. As we get the word out and more people doing the work understand what they have to do, we are going to have an impact in our city."

Timothy Scott
Sherman Park resident and Thriving
Communities Community Advisory
Council member



Timothy Scott

While it has deep roots in Milwaukee stretching back 106 years, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation knows the true experts of the community are the residents themselves.

People like Terron Edwards from North Division, Timothy Scott from Sherman Park and Shelia Smith from Harambee know their neighborhoods' assets, challenges, priorities and opportunities. While the Foundation may have access to resources to help neighborhoods thrive, particularly those that have experienced historic disinvestment, the residents have the resolve to make change happen.

The Foundation is incorporating and following the ideas, elevating the work and sharing decision-making power with these neighborhood changemakers. Through visioning sessions, one-on-one interviews and resident-led advisory councils, the Foundation is prioritizing their voices and lived experiences to help strengthen the Sherman Park East, North Division, Harambee, Halyard Park and Brewers Hill neighborhoods.

"We are changing how we make change together," said Darlene C. Russell, the Foundation's director of

"There is a lot of energy and hardworking folks who live in the neighborhood and want to see the neighborhood improve in so many ways. I want them to have hope and know that they can sit at the table and can create a community they want to live in and it is possible.

Sheila Smith
Harambee resident and ThriveOn Community Advisory Council member

community engagement. "Only by bringing more people to the table in voice and power will we be able to drive the sustainable change we all want to see."

Last fall more than two dozen residents engaged in a comprehensive, two-day grantmaking training. They used their knowledge to launch and lead a small grants program, which has distributed \$65,000 to support the work of grassroots groups in serving neighborhood youth. This summer members will participate in advocacy training to further enhance their skills.

Scott appreciated the training and intends to share the knowledge with his neighborhood's grassroots groups so they can access Foundation funding to advance their work.

"The power is with the people," Scott said. "As we get the word out and more people doing the work understand what they have to do, we are going to have an impact in our city."

Edwards, a community organizer in the North Division neighborhood, was energized by the grants program. His organization, Fathers Making Progress, received money to support its young men's leadership program, which works with 14 to 19 year olds. The grant supported youth to lead community service projects such as snow removal for area older adults.

A 17-year-old Shalom High School senior said while it was hard work, he learned more about himself and his skills through the program and is inspired to do more volunteering in the future.

"Giving people the opportunity to lead from where they live and select and develop things based on the relationships they already have and who they know is empowering," said Edwards. "Power discussions include serious resource sharing discussions. This is a start."



A grant recommended by the ThriveOn Community Advisory Council supported Collier's Training Institute's 5th Annual "Adopt Our Neighborhoods" Klean-Up in March.

Thanks to a \$7,500 grant, Collier's Training Institute expanded the frequency and reach of the neighborhood clean-ups it organizes with Harambee youth. The events help teach youth about teamwork, community building and self-love.

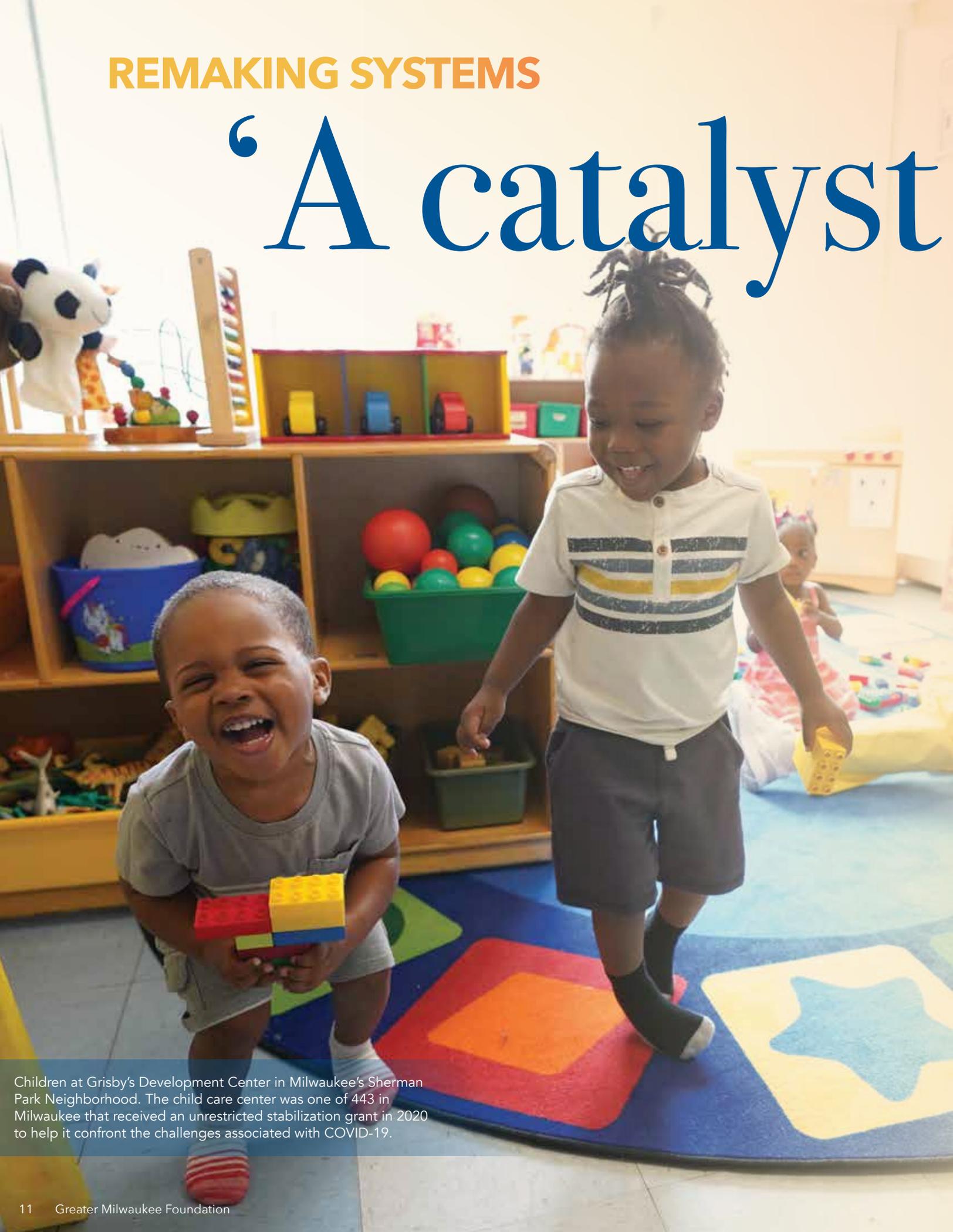
Resident voice also has been at the heart of the ThriveOn Collaboration, the partnership between the Foundation, Medical College of Wisconsin and Royal Capital. Their ongoing input has been instrumental in shaping the priorities, design and programming within ThriveOn King, the future home of the collaboration and the Foundation's offices.

Smith says being involved has accelerated connections she has been able to make with like-minded, passionate neighbors.

"There is a lot of energy and hardworking folks who live in the neighborhood and want to see the neighborhood improve in so many ways," Smith said. "I want them to have hope and know that they can sit at the table and can create a community they want to live in and it is possible."

REMAKING SYSTEMS

‘A catalyst



Children at Grisby's Development Center in Milwaukee's Sherman Park Neighborhood. The child care center was one of 443 in Milwaukee that received an unrestricted stabilization grant in 2020 to help it confront the challenges associated with COVID-19.

for change,

Foundation-led coalition works to stabilize, strengthen early childhood sector

During the height of the pandemic, one-third of child care providers in Milwaukee County closed temporarily.

Those owners who kept their centers open – such as Felicia Smith and Ruby Grisby – found it to be quite the herculean task to keep operating. Without assistance from groups such as the MKE Civic Response Team, they could easily have been forced to close their doors too.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation launched the cross-sector coalition in March 2020 to provide an aligned and strategic community response to COVID-19. The group provided a vital lifeline to these business owners through stabilization grants and other resources, made possible by the MKE Responds Fund and its donors. A year later, the group, now known as the MKE Civic Action Team, continues to advocate for systems change to improve the sector and improve equitable access for all families.

“The team has been an absolute blessing,” said Tamara Johnson, executive director of Malaika Early Learning Center in Milwaukee’s Harambee neighborhood and one of the team members. “We’ve been barking up the same trees for a very long time in this sector. To have a unified civic response team to go to, as the catalyst for change, as our convener, has been extremely helpful.”

Team members met weekly to address issues facing the sector. They relied upon the firsthand experiences of providers, who early on said they wouldn’t make it without additional funding, said Kelly Hook, director of donor and partner engagement at the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.

Shortened hours of operation and decreased enrollment led to decreased revenue. At the same time, providers incurred greater expenses due to the need for personal protective equipment and extra cleaning supplies.

“For a sector that survives on razor-thin margins, there was no extra cushion for this,” Hook said.

The response team awarded its first round of stabilization grants in May 2020, targeting ZIP codes that served primarily Black and Latinx families. The application process was straightforward and funding was unrestricted. Hook said continuous improvement was paramount to the team, and, as a result, each round was structured differently. Programs not funded in the first round were prioritized in the second. In round 3, the team reached out to remaining programs through phone calls, emails and targeted deliveries of flyers in English and Spanish. Ultimately between 75 and 85 percent of eligible providers received funding.

Smith had to cut staff hours at her center, Only God Can Children's Academy, due to decreased enrollment, which she said was "the most hurtful thing." Having taken out personal loans to pay staff, she used the grant toward payroll and appreciated that it came with no strings attached.

At Grisby's Development Center, the grant covered costs associated with additional unforeseen challenges. The roof of the building leaked, causing her to replace rugs and other damaged items.

"They listen to what the needs are and look for ways to make it happen," said Yimma Davila-Castro, who represents Proveedoras Unidas, a group of Latinx-owned providers. She brought providers' concerns directly to the team. In return, she shared resources, information and opportunities with providers.

Daria Hall, the response team's co-leader and early childhood education director for Milwaukee Succeeds, said members agreed it was a tremendous example of how philanthropy should work. The group's responsiveness, collaboration and collective expertise since has led city and state decision-makers to actively seek out the group's advice.

"We've been barking up the same trees for a very long time in this sector. To have a civic response team to go to, as the catalyst for change, as our convener, has been extremely helpful."

Tamara Johnson
Executive Director, Malaika Early Learning Center



Young children engage in art activities at Only God Can Children's Academy, located in Milwaukee's Silver Spring Neighborhood. The child care center was one of 443 in Milwaukee that received an unrestricted stabilization grant in 2020 to help it confront the challenges associated with COVID-19.

ADVOCATING WITH ONE VOICE ON CRITICAL ISSUES FACING EARLY EDUCATION

Although largely focused on addressing the sector’s emergency needs brought about by the pandemic, the MKE Civic Response Team, led by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, also has addressed longstanding issues facing early childhood education. It has collectively advocated for greater local, state and federal investment and long-term policy changes related to accessibility and affordability with the knowledge that philanthropic dollars are but one means of improving outcomes.

“As generous, powerful and inspiring as the investment that the philanthropic community has made in the sector, we know it is not enough to sustain and truly stabilize what was before an already fragile sector,” said Kelly Hook, director of donor and partner engagement at the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association. “The fear is if there isn’t more state or federal investment in this sector, it will crumble.”

Key policy wins have included:

- Ensuring child care staff were prioritized in the second wave of COVID-19 vaccine eligibility
- Informing Wisconsin’s use of CARES Act funding, which brought \$33 million in stabilization grants to Milwaukee child care programs
- Advocating to the Milwaukee Congressional delegation on behalf of sector investment, resulting in \$148 million from the January 2021 federal stimulus and \$580 million from the American Rescue Plan for early childhood education in Wisconsin
- Pushing for additional state investment, leading to a 2021-23 budget that puts \$29 million more into the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program for low-income families, as well as an increased child care tax credits

STABILIZING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SECTOR

The MKE Civic Response Team’s early childhood education group distributed a total of \$1.2 million in grants in 2020 from the MKE Responds Fund and Home Grown Emergency Fund to help home- and center-based child care providers in Milwaukee confront the challenges associated with COVID-19.



443 Providers Supported



ZIP Codes Served:

53204 • 53206 • 53209 • 53210
53212 • 53215 • 53216 • 53218

7,157



Total Children Enrolled



94% of kids served were Black or Brown

Donor advised fund
helps make philanthropy a

family affair



"We're thrilled that at this age, our kids are getting these opportunities to follow their passions and make an impact."

Tina Jones

Donovan, Sydney, Paul, Tina and Ciara Jones

Photo by Staples Photography

Paul and Tina Jones of Fox Point recently established a donor advised fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, in part to help teach their children about strategic philanthropy. Their children – Ciara, a junior at Marquette University; Sydney, a first-year at Santa Clara University in California; and Donovan, a senior at University School of Milwaukee – serve as co-advisers on the family fund.

The Joneses chose to partner with the Foundation for their philanthropy for several reasons. First, Paul has been a Board member since 2015 and currently serves as vice chair, so he knows the work of the Foundation first hand.

“The Foundation just has so many connections in the community,” said Paul, Marquette University’s vice president and general counsel. “It is a wonderful resource to help our family figure out where there is the most need.”

When the Foundation recently unveiled its commitment to a new strategic vision, the Joneses decided now was the time to do something they had been considering for years.

“This is our opportunity to join with the Foundation to reimagine philanthropy for the next generation,” Paul said. “We know that no family can do this alone, but if we all work together, we can help build a better Milwaukee.”

In addition, Tina has been impressed with the Foundation’s support for her organization’s endowment fund. She is executive director of Girls on the Run, which helps girls become healthy, joyful and confident through a life-skills curriculum that creatively integrates running.

“The Foundation’s housekeeping functions are excellent,” said Tina, a marathon runner herself. “At Girls on the Run, we have a very small team, and the Foundation has expertise we don’t. Our partnership with them is critical to our success.”

Perhaps the No. 1 reason the Joneses chose the Foundation was that it works closely with donors to understand their goals and passions and to find fitting opportunities to give.

The Joneses’ fund has made its first grant recommendations, one to St. Augustine Prep, where Ciara has volunteered, and to the MKE Responds Fund, because of the urgent needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this point, the children are still figuring out what their interests are and matching those with nonprofits that need support.

“The donor advised fund is a cool way for me and my brother and sister to learn about the nonprofits out there,” Sydney said. “We come together and share what we’ve researched, then pitch ideas to each other. We are learning a lot about our community.”

Future grants might go to St. Francis Children’s Center or the Urban Ecology Center, where Sydney has volunteered, or America SCORES Milwaukee, a soccer program where Donovan volunteers.

“Paul and I grew up in a small community where volunteering was mostly through our church,” said Tina. “We’re thrilled that at this age, our kids are getting these opportunities to follow their passions and make an impact.”



Thanks in part to support from the Foundation’s MKE Responds Fund, UpStart Kitchen, a program in Milwaukee’s Sherman Park neighborhood, prepared meals for individuals and households experiencing food insecurity because of the pandemic. The Jones family was one of hundreds of donors who contributed to the fund.

A committed partner on the journey toward racial equity, inclusion



The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's new chief diversity and inclusion officer, Kenyatta Sinclair, never set out to become a diversity, equity and inclusion expert. In fact, she first studied early childhood education.

But over the years, through time spent at such venerable nonprofits as Next Door, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee and SaintA, Sinclair organically grew into that space due to her passion and work in making sure that all people have a voice and learn how to express that voice.

In her new role, Sinclair is guiding the Foundation toward becoming an anti-racist organization through internal policies and practices. She also will inform its external strategies for dismantling systemic racism to expand opportunity, equity and inclusion, which she views as both exciting and challenging.

What drew you to this position?

I've known about the Foundation and always kept an eye on what it was doing in my community. I got the job announcement from six different people who were like, "You may just want to look at it. I feel like you would be good for this. Milwaukee needs this." I think there is an opportunity to have commonality around how we are pushing forward to see a better Milwaukee. For me, being a chief diversity and inclusion officer isn't an add on. I tell people it is not the icing on the cake. It is the flour to make the cake. You can't even make the cake without it. It must be embedded in everything you do.

What excites you most about the work and this new role in particular?

A Milwaukee for all excites me and the possibilities of what that will be. As much as the challenges in Milwaukee are highlighted, I know a different Milwaukee. I know this is a place where I have been able to thrive and grow in the face of challenges. It's not all Pollyanna, but I feel that narrative in Milwaukee isn't shared enough. It excites me to be a contributor to that, in whatever way that I can. Also, not having to start from ground zero – to know that there are people who have already started this work is a good thing. It excites me to build those relationships that I know will advance the work.

Why is it important for an organization like the Foundation to invest in this work?

As a community foundation, it is important to demonstrate actions that support a Milwaukee for all. When other large organizations see this, it encourages partnership. It is about being on the right side of history and truly advancing the generational commitment. When we talk about the Foundation's history 20 to 50 years from now, this work will be on the timeline as a pivotal moment when we shifted the organizational culture and contributed to community change. I think it is an opportunity to change philanthropy in a way where the Foundation can be a model, not just in Milwaukee but nationally.

To learn more about the Foundation's journey in racial equity and inclusion, visit the timeline on our website at greatermilwaukeefoundation.org/racial-equity-journey

MPS teacher's charitable fund leaves LEGACY OF IMPACT



Mary Ann Padol

One might call Mary Ann Padol a “stealth philanthropist” – seeking to address community needs while seeking no recognition for herself.

After graduating from Mount Mary College, Padol taught in Milwaukee Public Schools for 40 years. She began in 1963 at Allen Field Elementary School and retired in 2000 from IDEAL (Individual Developmental Educational Approaches to Learning) Charter School, of which she was one of the founders. She passed away in August 2020 at age 78, leaving a generous gift to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation through her estate plan.

Barbara Hall, Padol's first cousin and close friend, recalls that both of Padol's parents were generous, especially her father. Padol often told the story of walking down the street with her father one very cold day and coming upon a man with no gloves. Her father took off his gloves and gave them to the man.

“In the same way, Mary Ann wanted to make sure that the needy children in her classrooms had their basic needs met, so she would give them clothing and lunch money,” Barbara said. “She kept a stack of inexpensive winter gloves in her desk at school, and asked friends and family to help replenish the stack.”

“Mary Ann did this with no fanfare,” recalled Neal Hall, Barbara's husband. “It was just between the child and her.”

Added Kate Lewis, Mary Ann's financial adviser, “She was very civically aware and proud of the community in which she had worked. In her philanthropy, she was not searching for recognition – she was searching to do the right thing for those who were in need.”

When giving to organizations, Padol was very careful with her money and did not just hand it out, said Barbara Hall. “She took her time to do the background research.”

Padol named her field of interest fund at the Foundation the Stanley Padol Family Food Fund, after her father. The Foundation will honor Mary Ann's intent to support meal programs and/or food pantries in Milwaukee with distributions from the fund, leaving an ongoing Padol family legacy of impact in the community. This is an incredibly timely gift, given the food insecurity caused by COVID-19.

“Mary Ann's philosophy was that we need to make the world a better place,” Barbara said, “and she followed through on that philosophy with her gifts. The Foundation is an excellent vehicle to carry on her work.”



The Stanley Padol Family Food Fund, created by late donor Mary Ann Padol and named in honor of her father, will help support meal programs and food pantries in Milwaukee.



Sergio Gonzalez at his photography studio on Lincoln Avenue on Milwaukee's south side.

MÁS FUERTES

Program provides relief, empowerment to Latinx small businesses

In 2019, after 10 years of working out of his home, Sergio Gonzalez had grown his photography and event services business, Dreamers Films, to the point where he could move to a storefront.

“It was a big step,” said Gonzalez, “but we had a lot of excitement – and goals.”

Then the pandemic hit and his business trickled almost to nothing. He almost closed the studio because he couldn’t pay the rent.

To the rescue came the Latino Entrepreneurial Network of Southeastern Wisconsin. Since 2005, LEN has promoted entrepreneurial awareness and education to Latinx individuals and businesses through bilingual coaching, professional development and networking. In spring 2020, LEN received \$150,000 from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation to offer small grants and loans to businesses with 20 employees or less, businesses that were likely not eligible or not successful in applying for federal stimulus dollars.

In its relief phase, the program, called Más Fuertes (Even Stronger), disbursed \$3,000 each to 25 Latino businesses – typically enough to keep their doors open. Nelson Soler, LEN’s executive director, said Más Fuertes has been effective because LEN could act quickly.

“Most of government entities took three to four months to deploy funds,” he said.

“When the Foundation gave us the grant, we deployed all the funds in about 10 days.”

Gonzalez is deeply grateful for his grant. “It gave me the faith that I could keep going,” he said.

According to Ian Bautista, the Foundation’s senior director for civic engagement and

co-leader of its MKE Civic Response Team, which recommended the grant, small businesses are the economic foundation of the Latinx community. However, the federal and state relief programs designed to help them stay afloat during the pandemic often require business acumen – such as a business plan, collateral, even email, not to mention fluency in English – that these small business owners often do not have.

“When we look historically, those businesses are undercapitalized by virtue of our nation’s intimidating financial system,” he said. “Yet this sector outperforms other areas of the economy because of sheer commitment to hard work and creative use of resources.”

In its recovery phase, Más Fuertes is providing ongoing technical assistance in such areas as preparing applications, developing budgets, using a spreadsheet and using Zoom and other videoconferencing services.

LEN also offers an emergency hotline, one-on-one coaching and online seminars in English and Spanish. Seminars include business topics such as tax reduction strategies and personal topics such as handling home mortgage payments during COVID.

Soler said that LEN was especially pleased by the Foundation’s support because it helped them attract additional funding. Associated Bank, for example, gave \$7,500 to set up a computer lab at LEN for small business owners to use.

“Not only did the Foundation’s support help businesses threefold, it helped our credibility,” he said.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ADVISER COUNCIL

How can we, as a community, develop bold solutions to our region’s most deep-rooted issues? By developing partnerships with ardent ambassadors committed to advancing transformational social change.

Since 2017, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation has done that through its Young Professional Adviser Council. Aiming to amplify the voices of diverse and up-and-coming professionals in Milwaukee’s financial and legal sectors, industries traditionally lacking diversity, the program deepens their education in and engagement with the Foundation and helps the Foundation expand its philanthropic network. Members learn about the Foundation’s commitment to racial equity and inclusion, strategic priorities, charitable vehicles and community impact while connecting with staff, Board, nonprofit leaders and other impassioned leaders. To date, 40 alumni have completed the yearlong program.

Congratulations to this year’s cohort, who now are members of our Herbert J. Mueller Society, our honorary society of professional advisers.

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“I see these young professionals and know how much they want to change the game. Connecting with them, and making things happen, on this kind of level and with this kind of resource, is exciting.”

– Kelly Martyka, YPAC Member



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Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren



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Erica Wright
Northwestern Mutual

"I want to influence change in our community. It's time to discuss and implement comprehensive and sustainable solutions to address the inequities that Black and Brown people are facing. As a kid from Milwaukee, I used to take pride in "beating the odds." Now, I want to help eliminate those odds."

– Larry Whitley, YPAC Member

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FRESH FOOD, HOPE FOR OZAUKEE COUNTY FAMILIES

Food insecurity is an issue many in our region face. Yet in suburban communities such as Saukville, it's not often discussed openly.

"People don't talk about it here as they may in larger metro areas," said Mark Gierach, Saukville Community Food Pantry executive director. "The problem isn't staring you right in the face, but that doesn't mean the issue isn't here. It's here every day. COVID really amplified those situations."

The pantry saw the number of monthly visitors double compared to what it typically served in 2019. Grants from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's MKE Responds Fund and its partner foundation, the Greater Cedarburg Foundation, enabled the pantry to purchase personal protective equipment, increase its inventory of fresh produce and buy a cooler to store more fresh meat for families.