

Greater Milwaukee Foundation: Convening aims for needed change in early childhood education system

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 31, 2021

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Milwaukee, Wis., Aug. 31, 2021 – Quality early childhood care and education is essential for the long-term success of young people in our region and for today’s workforce to effectively function, but the sector is in crisis. Lack of access to quality, affordable services for children 0-3 has chronically plagued Milwaukee – especially Black and Brown families – and the pandemic has compounded inequities and pushed the system to a breaking point.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is inviting everyone who cares about our littlest learners, the economic prosperity of our communities and the future of our region to participate in part two of its virtual **A Milwaukee for All** series on Sept. 17. National experts will join local changemakers and people throughout the community to learn and take action on solutions to transform the early care and education system so it works for everyone.

[REGISTRATION IS OPEN](#)

9 - 10:30 a.m.

Friday, Sept. 17

Cost = FREE

“Quality, affordable early childhood education is one of the Foundation’s top

priorities. Its positive impact on a child's development lasts a lifetime, and it also allows parents to work, creating economic benefit that spans two generations," said Foundation president and CEO Ellen Gilligan. "That's why everyone should care that half of Milwaukee children are without access to the quality early care and education they need. In the last two years, the Foundation has accelerated investment in efforts to stabilize and strengthen the sector alongside our [Milwaukee Succeeds](#) education partners and civic collaborators across the region. Our upcoming convening gives us an opportunity to learn more, invest more and do more together to remake the system into the one we need for families and providers to thrive."

Dialogue with national experts

At the heart of the virtual convening, Gilligan will lead a vital dialogue about the state of the sector and the steps we need to take together now to enact meaningful change. Her special guests are two women whose leadership and contributions are shaping the latest approaches to workforce challenges and equity-focused solutions in early care and education:

- **Rhian Evans Allvin**, CEO, National Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Sherri Killins Stewart**, Director of State Systems Alignment & Integration, Co-Director of State Services, BUILD Initiative

Interact with *On the Table MKE*

Immediately following the central dialogue, all attendees will be able to join the discussion through a selection of participatory *On the Table MKE* conversations, the Foundation's unique platform for community connection and collective action. Local leaders will team up to facilitate discussions on a range of topics designed to advance community solutions in early childhood education. Guests can choose from one of eight breakout rooms:

- **Educating our youngest learners**
 - Hosts: Tamara Johnson (Malaika Early Learning Center), Tracey Sparrow

(Next Door Milwaukee) & Tim Balke (United Community Center)

- **The early childhood education workforce: Vital and in distress**
 - Hosts: Emilie Amundson (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families), Tanya Johnson (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association) & Lisa Coombs-Gerou (YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee)
- **Attracting men of color into the early childhood education workforce**
 - Hosts: Calvin Lewis (Milwaukee Rising – Common Ground) & Bernard Rahming (Leading Men Fellowship)
- **Families as partners in early childhood education**
 - Hosts: Synovia Moss (Moving Families Forward) & Jessica Namaste (COA Youth & Family Centers)
- **Early childhood education: A vital economic development strategy**
 - Hosts: Tracy Luber (Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation), Nancy Hernandez (Hispanic Collaborative) & Chytania Brown (Employ Milwaukee)
- **For the love of our little ones & our future: Why reimaging philanthropy matters**
 - Hosts: Jeannie Fenceroy (Rockwell Automation), JoAnne Anton (Herb Kohl Philanthropies) & Leah Fiasca (Greater Milwaukee Foundation)
- **Local coalition building for early childhood education**
 - Hosts: Danae Davis (Milwaukee Succeeds), Daria Hall (Milwaukee Succeeds) & Jackie Anderson (Wisconsin Infant Toddler Policy Project at the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)
- **The business of child care**
 - Hosts: Yimma Davila-Castro (Proveedoras Unidas/Yimma's Bright Beginnings Daycare), Paula Drew (Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network at the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association) & Willie Smith (Northwest Side Community Development Corporation)

Participants will leave their sessions with ideas for individual and collective action.

A long-term commitment to children, families and community

The Foundation's work and investments in the early childhood education space are informed by deep community relationships and through local research, including a seminal study of the sector commissioned by the Foundation called [A Seat at the Table](#), which detailed the gaps in access in Milwaukee and why they are occurring.

The Sept. 17 convening will build on this knowledge base.

This special event series overall is an extension of the Foundation's [strategic vision](#) of A Milwaukee for All and presents an opportunity to work collectively toward a thriving, inclusive region. With racial equity and inclusion as its North Star, the Foundation is playing a catalytic role by bringing community and philanthropy together, particularly around early childhood education, matters of equitable economic opportunity and the collective work of the [ThriveOn Collaboration](#).

The first event in the series – focused on equitable economic opportunity – took place June 25 and featured Dr. Andre Perry, senior fellow with the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program and author of “Know Your Price: Valuing Black Lives and Property in America’s Black Cities.” View the full [Community Summary Report](#) for videos, key take-aways and [resources](#) for change.

About the Greater Milwaukee Foundation

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is Wisconsin’s largest community foundation and was among the first established in the world. For more than a century, the Foundation has been at the heart of the civic community, helping donors achieve the greatest philanthropic impact, elevating the work of changemakers across neighborhoods, and bringing people and organizations together to help our region thrive. Racial equity is the Foundation’s North Star, guiding its investments and strategies for social and economic change. Leveraging generations of community knowledge, cross-sector partnerships and more than \$1 billion in financial assets, the Foundation is committed to reimagining philanthropy, recentering communities and remaking systems to transform our region into a Milwaukee for all.

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