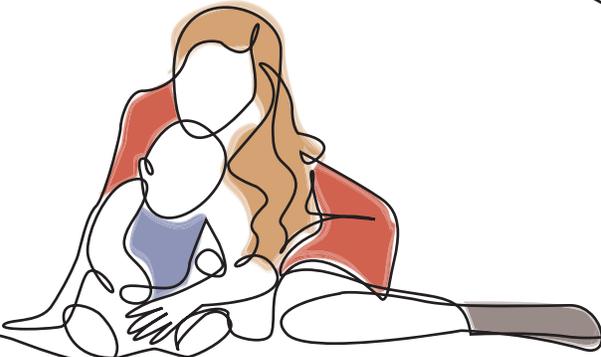
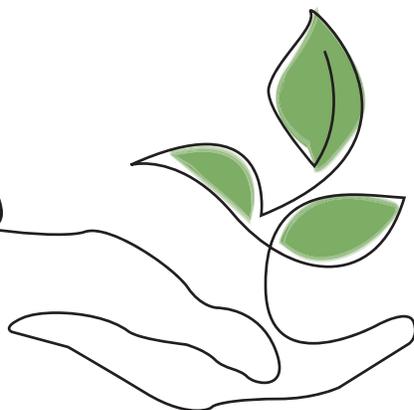


*Transforming Ourselves*



**2021  
IMPACT REPORT**

*Transforming Systems*



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## GET INVOLVED!

### INVEST IN THIS WORK

Whether you're an individual donor or an institutional partner, your contribution will help ensure organizations in Kenosha County work better together and make the necessary systems change to ensure that every child thrives in school and in life.

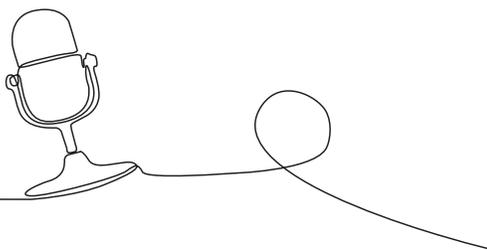
### PARTNER WITH US

Join the partnership, a group of community organizations and individuals that share responsibility and use the collective impact framework to shape systems that will help all students reach their full potential, cradle to career. You can join an action team, partner with us to bring coaching and new frameworks to your organization, or provide data advising and support.

### LEARN ABOUT THE WORK

Building Our Future's podcast, **Together, We're Better**, showcases our collaborative work to improve educational, economic, and social mobility outcomes for Kenosha County youth and families! Find it where you get your podcasts.

IF ANY OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES SOUND RIGHT FOR YOU, CONTACT US AT [INFO@BUILDINGOURFUTUREKC.ORG](mailto:INFO@BUILDINGOURFUTUREKC.ORG).



Dear Friends,

At Building Our Future, we share our partners' enthusiasm when they tell us how they have been reflecting on their work, who they serve, and the action they have taken to transform systems within their organization to better serve every individual. This year my excitement has reached new heights as partners shared their knowledge gained in activating others around the work to achieve real impact. And of course, my team was thrilled to have bestselling author Dan Heath speak to the importance of heading UPSTREAM to an audience of over 500 local leaders, which included more than 50 students from the Kenosha Unified School District.

In the pages that follow, you'll see how members of the CommUNITY Conversations rolled up their sleeves and got to work identifying neighborhood priorities. You'll read about how four parents used their lived experience with the child care system to advocate for change at local and state levels to better meet the needs of families. You'll learn about how an additional layer of early-literacy support boosted literacy skills at two elementary schools. And, you'll read about a \$5.6 million grant for our region to expand a successful model for adult learners to earn their high school equivalency diploma.

You'll also see how three of our partners—KAC, Kenosha Public Library and Kenosha County Public Health's Health Equity Task Force made deliberate changes to their organizations' policies, practices, resources and power structures to achieve better outcomes.

When it comes to transforming ourselves, you'll hear from five of our partners on how their involvement with BOF has made a significant impact on how they show up and do the work. In the words of James Clear, "Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become." There is no surprise our theme this year is **Transforming Ourselves, Transforming Systems.**

We are grateful to all of you for the hard work you do every day. If you are not already a partner of BOF, we encourage you to join us. Together, we're better!

Tatjana Bicanin

# 7 QUESTIONS FOR UPSTREAM LEADERS

1. How will you unite the right people?
2. How will you change the system?
3. How will you avoid doing harm?
4. Who will pay for what does not happen?
5. Where can you find a point of leverage?
6. How will you get early warning of the problem?
7. How will you know you're succeeding?

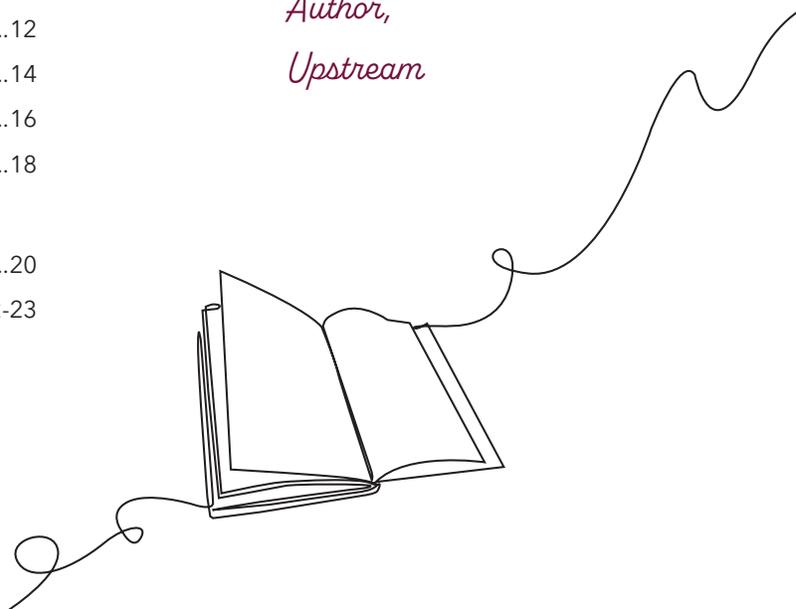


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“ Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. ”

– Dan Heath,  
Author,  
*Upstream*



# DATA SNAPSHOT



Outcome	Network	Indicator	Change from Baseline	Current Value
KINDERGARTEN READINESS	SMART BEGINNINGS	Social Problem Solving	Baseline	89%
		Persistence	Baseline	94%
		Attends and Engages	Baseline	92%
		Managing Emotions	Baseline	95%
		Children Living w/ Food Insecurity	+2%	18%
		Clinical Care Ranking	+2	54 out of 72 counties
SCHOOL SUCCESS	EARLY GRADE READING	Percent of third-graders proficient in reading	-18%	27%
	FUTURE FOCUS	Percent of eighth-graders proficient in math	-15%	19%
HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION	EDUCATION, CAREER, AND COLLEGE READINESS	4-year high school graduation rate	+1%	89%
POST-SECONDARY ACCESS & COMPLETION	FUTURE FOCUS	Enrollment in first fall after high school*	-25%	29%
	LUMINA TALENT HUB, HERA	Percent of population ages 25-64 with a post-secondary credential	+1%	36%
EMPLOYMENT	FUTURE FOCUS	Unemployment rate in Kenosha County	+2%	7.1%

> The above indicators are used to speak to the health of Kenosha County's systems. For each, there are many other data points that we capture that contribute to these indicators, which can be found on the dashboards at [www.BuildingOurFutureKC.org/Data](http://www.BuildingOurFutureKC.org/Data).

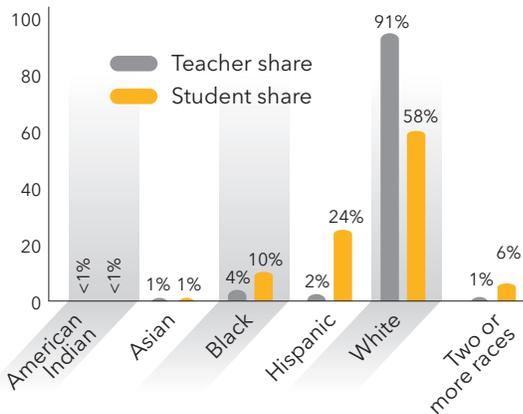
> Both the baselines and current values are from varying years—baselines are from when the networks began forming, and the current value is from the most recent data reports. More on data sources can be found on page 23.

\*Data is from the 2019-20 school year on Postsecondary enrollment. Data has not yet been released for the 2020-21 year.

# WHY SYSTEMS LEVEL INDICATORS?

This year, we took a comprehensive look at the systemic variables contributing to the health of the communities in which our youth and families live, learn, and grow. Since its inception, BOF has tracked individual level outcomes around education, the workforce, and economy. By focusing only on these individual outcomes, we don't always see how the institutions, organizations, and systems in our community contribute to the success and economic mobility of our youth and families. These complex structures can create disparities in outcomes based on race, ethnicity, and economic status, despite the system owner's best efforts to support individuals. Without this data, it becomes easier to place blame on the individuals, while ignoring the multitude of factors that create barriers to success.

## Race/Ethnicity of teachers relative to student body



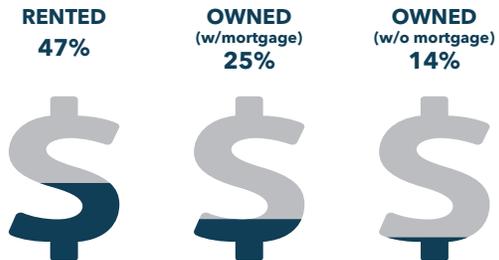
# CRADLE-TO-CAREER SYSTEMS INDICATORS

Cradle-to-Career systems indicators are related to education and workforce and can be tracked to promote equitable outcomes for students of color and those experiencing poverty. Based on the data available, input from our Leadership Table, and recommendations from StriveTogether, BOF chose to begin tracking the race/ethnicity of teachers relative to the student body this year. Looking at all school districts in Kenosha County, we found the baseline data points to the left.

# ADJACENT SECTOR SYSTEMS INDICATORS

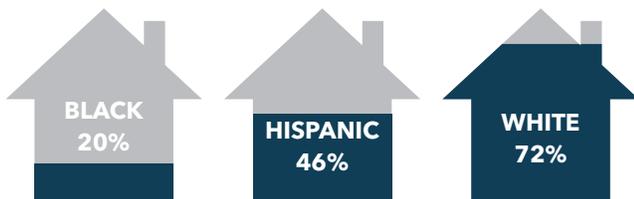
Adjacent sector systems are those that youth interact with daily but are outside of the education sector. Like the Cradle-to-Career systems indicators, BOF looked at the available data and input from our Leadership Table and chose to begin tracking indicators in the housing sector. Below and at right are our baseline data points for Kenosha County:

## Cost-burden by household status\*



\*Percent of households experiencing cost-burden (households paying 30% or more of their monthly income in housing costs - 2019)

## Homeownership rate by race/ethnicity (2019)

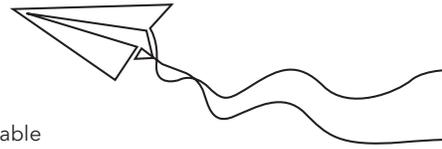


## Students experiencing homelessness\*



- > The Teacher/Student comparisons and percent of Students Experiencing Homelessness were derived from aggregate calculations across all 12 districts and grade levels in Kenosha County.
- > KUSD teachers included all staff who are part of the educators' bargaining group. County totals were calculated with a weighted average comparing KUSD teachers to the other 11 districts.
- > Homeownership rate refers to the percent of all housing units occupied by that race/ethnicity in Kenosha County that are owner-occupied.
- > The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as housing in which the occupant is paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

# WHAT IS BUILDING OUR FUTURE?



In partnership with StriveTogether, a model in nearly 70 communities nationwide, we seek better, more equitable educational and economic mobility opportunities for students from cradle to career by uniting partners from every sector—community members, education, nonprofit, business, faith, government, and philanthropy—toward systems transformation. Using data, we support and build the capability of our partners to address root-cause issues with powerful strategies, implement continuous improvement, and hold one another accountable. By agreeing on a shared goal, we align partners to move each outcome area, shown below.



## VISION

*Everyone achieving personal potential from cradle to career.*

## MISSION

*Together we will engage our community to provide an environment in which all contribute and excel.*

## WHAT IS SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION?

In Systems Transformation communities, the civic infrastructure exists where all students, including students of color and those experiencing poverty, have the opportunity to reach their full potential, from cradle to career. This is a result of partnership with system leaders in making fundamental and institutionalized shifts in policies, practices, resources, and power structures to advance equitable outcomes.



### POLICIES

In transformed systems, policies are aligned with the interest of everyone.



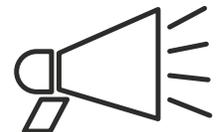
### PRACTICES

Everyday actions and decisions of individuals and institutions. In transformed systems, these actions are informed by everyone to address the root causes of structural inequities.



### POWER STRUCTURES

The ability to make things happen. In transformed systems everyone has a role and/or are central to decision making about how policies get developed, how practices get implemented and how resources are allocated in the community.



### RESOURCES

In transformed systems, asset use is guided by and responds to the interest of everyone.



# PARTNERS INVOLVED IN KENOSHA COUNTY COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Throughout this report, we highlight transformed systems and individuals that demonstrate the continued success and momentum of this partnership. More than 500 partners make our tagline a true reality: **COMMUNITY UNITES, STUDENTS SUCCEED, EVERYONE PROSPERS.**

## EDUCATION

4C For Children  
A Place to Grow  
African American Youth Initiative  
Bright From the Start  
Carthage College  
Dream Catcher's Child Care  
Gateway Technical College  
Growing Green Academy  
Herzing University  
Kenosha Unified School District  
Kids World Bilingual  
Silver Lake School District  
University of Wisconsin-Parkside  
UW-Madison Division of Extension  
Kenosha County  
Westosha Head Start  
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

## FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

1Hope  
Acts Church  
Congregations United to Serve  
Humanity (CUSH)  
Daybreak Church  
Great Lakes Church

## PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

The Callahan-Palmer Trust  
The Kloss Foundation  
Linda Faye Foundation  
Sharon-Kay and Emmie Louise Spears  
Foundation

## GOVERNMENT & CIVIC

City of Kenosha  
Kenosha County Division of Children  
and Family Services  
Kenosha County District Attorney  
Kenosha County Public Health  
Kenosha County Division of Workforce  
Development  
Kenosha Fire Department  
Kenosha Police Department  
Kenosha Public Library  
Kenosha Area Transit  
Southeastern Wisconsin Workforce  
Development Board

## COMMUNITY-BASED & NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

African American Club  
Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha

Coalition for Dismantling Racism  
Doers of Kenosha  
Education Youth Development  
Outreach  
EquiTeens  
ELCA Outreach Center  
Hope Council  
KAC  
Kenosha Coalition Organizing  
Resolution (K-COR)  
Kenosha Literacy Council  
Kenosha YMCA  
Leaders of Kenosha  
My Sister's House  
Prevention Services Network  
Professional Services Group  
Community Impact Programs  
Public Allies  
Racine Kenosha Community Action  
Agency  
Safe Families for Children Wisconsin  
Shalom Center  
The Sharing Center  
Succeed Beyond High School  
Sunrise Clinical Service  
UMOS  
United Way of Kenosha County  
Urban League of Racine & Kenosha

## HEALTHCARE

Advocate Aurora Health  
Froedtert South  
Kenosha Community Health Center

## BUSINESS

ADC Law Office, LLC  
Armando's Collision Center  
Bellissima's Boutique  
Beloved Wellness Center  
Chef David's  
The Daily Dose Cafe  
DeRango's "The Pizza King"  
Doctors of Physical Therapy  
Dooley & Associates  
Educators Credit Union  
Fade City Barbershop  
First American Bank  
Five Star (RE)Moving Company  
Franks Diner  
Frontida Management Group  
Green Bay Packers  
The Green Team Junk Removal  
Hallum Enterprises, Inc.



Harper Tax & Financial Literacy Group  
Hit Your Potential Boxing & Fitness  
Hot Mess Studios  
ImagineU  
Jockey International, Inc.  
Johnson Financial Group  
Kenosha.com  
Kenosha Area Business Alliance  
Kenosha Beauty Supply  
Kenosha News  
Leeward Business Advisors  
LMI Packaging Solutions  
Los Margaritas  
Regimen Barber Collective  
S'Lush Daiquiri Lounge  
Snap-on Incorporated  
Strobbe's Flower Cart  
Uptown Kenosha Inc.  
U.S. Bank  
The Vault Kenosha  
Woods Can Do It

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Through 2021, 400+ different individuals have participated in our CommUNITY Conversations in the Lincoln Park and Wilson Heights neighborhoods. These individuals are residents, parents, students, neighborhood business leaders, educational professionals, nonprofit organizers, and healthcare and family support advocates.

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## Todd Battle

President, Kenosha Area Business Alliance and KUSD School Board Member

## Crystal Callahan

Co-Trustee, The Callahan-Palmer Trust and Social Worker, Kenosha Unified School District

## Tamarra Coleman

Executive Director, Shalom Center

## John Jansen

Director, Kenosha County Department of Human Services

## Beth Ormseth

Interim Superintendent of Schools, Kenosha Unified School District

## John Swallow

President, Carthage College

# LEADERSHIP TABLE

## Bryan Albrecht

President and CEO, Gateway Technical College

## John Antaramian

Mayor, City of Kenosha

## Barbara Brattin

Director, Kenosha Public Library System

## Alana Carmickle

Student, Indian Trail High School and Academy

## Alan L. Clark

Executive President, Wisconsin Region, First American Bank

## Tom Duncan

Vice President and COO, Froedtert South

## Crystal Egbo

Student, University of Wisconsin-Parkside

## Deborah Ford

Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Parkside

## Jen Freiheit

Health Officer/Director, Kenosha County Public Health

## Carolynn Friesch

CEO, United Way of Kenosha County

## Michael Graveley

District Attorney, Kenosha County

## Jeff Hill

Regional President, Herzing University Kenosha & Madison Campuses

## Penny Hupp

Human Resources Manager, Advocate Aurora Health

## Yolanda Jackson-Lewis

Coordinator of Diversity/Student & Family Engagement, Kenosha Unified School District

## Karla Krehbiel

Regional President, Johnson Financial Group

## Jim Kreuser

County Executive, Kenosha County

## Patrick Langston II

Owner, Hit Your Potential Boxing & Fitness and Kenosha Beauty Supply



## Jake McGhee

Vice President, Chief Philanthropy Officer, Jockey International, Inc.

## Crystal Miller

Chief Executive Officer, Frontida Management Group

## Jean Moran

Retired CEO, LMI Packaging Solutions

## JP Moran

President/CEO, LMI Packaging Solutions

## Jacqueline Morris

Vice President of Human Resources, Gateway Technical College

## Tara Panasewicz

CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha

## Beverly Stoops

Organizer, Congregations United to Serve Humanity (CUSH)

## Nina Taylor

Director, Kenosha County Division of Workforce Development

## Robert Terwall

Founder, Hallum Enterprises, Inc.

## Chris Weyker

CEO, KAC

## Terri Wruck

Manager, Charitable Contributions and Community Relations, Snap-on Incorporated



*Building Our Future brings a network of community partners together with a common goal. Success for every child. Our shared motivation is to achieve lasting change individually and by redesigning systems. Together, everything is possible.*



*— Terri Wruck, Snap-On / 2022 Susan B. Anthony – Women of Influence Lifetime Achievement Award Winner*

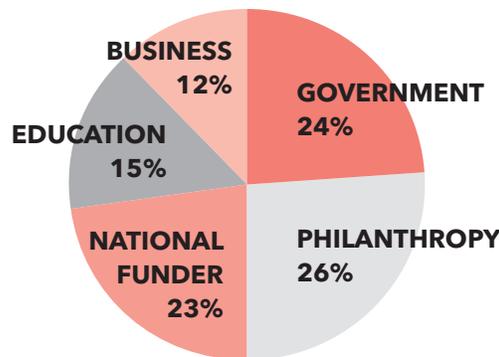
# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

## WHY HAVE MAJOR FUNDERS INVESTED IN BUILDING OUR FUTURE?

- When they support Building Our Future, they want to support an all-in partnership that unites the community – education, business, government, nonprofit, philanthropy, community members, faith leaders – across Kenosha County, all working together in pursuit of high levels of academic success for ALL children in Kenosha.
- Investors understand that long-term, sustainable community impact comes only from thoughtful and forward-looking planning, led by a strong backbone team. This partnership is using local research and data to drive community action for continuous improvement.
- They want to advance social and economic mobility, anchored in countywide academic achievement, cradle through career.



2020-2021 Funding by Sector



*Building Our Future is making a huge difference in our county, and it was one of the first groups that we made a donation to in my new role at Jockey. If we can get the many great organizations working together toward a common goal in our community, our impact will be that much greater.*

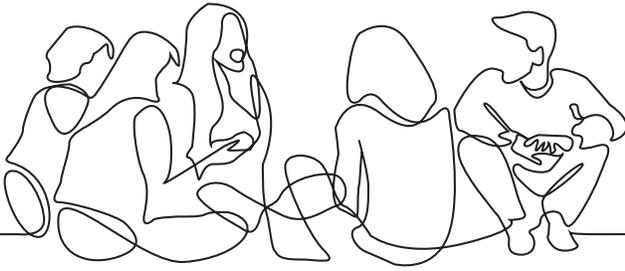


*– Jake McGhee,  
Vice President, Chief  
Philanthropy Officer,  
Jockey International, Inc.*

## BUILDING OUR FUTURE LEVELS OF GIVING

BOF could not do this work without our generous funding partners. A list of our investors is on the last page of this report. If you would like to support the work of BOF, please reach out to Executive Director Tatjana Bicanin at [tbicanin@buildingourfuturekc.org](mailto:tbicanin@buildingourfuturekc.org). An investment in BOF makes a vital contribution to the long-term success of our community and its residents.





# Transforming Systems

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

### WHAT ARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS?

When Building Our Future was formed, the Kenosha community emphasized that this collective impact work would only go as fast as the community's trust would let it. To this end, BOF staff and partners have convened community members on a monthly basis for the past four years. These efforts have built social capital, space, and momentum for the community to take action in supporting schools and improving educational outcomes.

- Wilson Heights CommUNITY Conversations take place every third Wednesday of the month
- Lincoln Park CommUNITY Conversations take place every third Thursday of the month



*As a resident, an Uptown business owner who just lost their business in August 2020, and president of UKI, I wanted to bridge Kenosha community and the suffering business district in Uptown Kenosha. Through weekly meetings, idea forming, and lots of listening, we set forth to make history with an intentional focus to highlight Lincoln-Brass-Uptown Neighborhood and its greatest assets!*



*— Krista Maurer, Owner, Bellissima Boutique; President, Uptown Kenosha Inc. (UKI)*

### VISION

*To be a model community that builds partnerships through awareness, trust, and relationships to support the success of children and families.*

**so-cial cap-i-tal**  
/'sōSHəl/ /'kəpəd/

noun

1. the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.



## SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

In 2021, members of CommUNITY Conversations rolled up their sleeves and got to work identifying neighborhood priorities, setting goals, and organizing community members toward achieving those goals. Of the many actions that were taken, three priorities stand out to be highlighted:

**OPERATION NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY (ONC):** The ONC was created to bring community members from all walks of life together in the spirit of beautifying the neighborhood and highlighting local businesses in the Lincoln Park/Uptown Brass area. Particularly important after the civil unrest in 2020, this group wanted to remind Kenosha County residents about Uptown’s assets. This partnership, led by a small group of CommUNITY Conversations members, brought together over 50 businesses, nonprofits, government entities, child care centers, educators, law enforcement, and youth at six neighborhood cleanups and community events in 2021. Businesses contributed space, supplies, and meals to bring the community together. Complementing the Uptown-focused cleanups, activities included face painting, Halloween costume giveaways, movie nights, and other family-friendly attractions.

**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS:** Stemming from Lincoln Park CommUNITY Conversations, this action team was created through the lens of a high school student who wanted to make the conversation around mental and behavioral health more common for students. The awareness sparked an energy that motivated adults within the CommUNITY Conversations to support this student in her efforts, but also inspired broader action, including:

- An opportunity to partner with Dr. Dominique Pritchett—licensed therapist, speaker, and consultant—on her citywide tour, resulting in the Ask A Therapist About Therapy™ event at the Boys & Girls Club Teen Center
- Partnering with Youth In Governance, a program through UW-Extension, to champion a project with Harborside Academy that would make the conversation around mental health a part of the everyday school schedule
- The formation of a small group of community members focused on supporting one another and finding ways to elevate the mental health discussion to the community

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING / KENOSHA INNOVATION NEIGHBORHOOD:** Wilson Heights CommUNITY Conversations created a space for community members to voice their concerns about affordable housing, particularly as it relates to the stability of families and students. As a result of housing being raised as a significant challenge in the community, BOF convened a joint CommUNITY Conversation and invited City of Kenosha officials to hear residents’ feedback and share more about the work around the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood (KIN). Because of existing relationships and social capital within the Lincoln Park and Wilson Heights neighborhoods, BOF was able to create an accessible and welcoming space for a multiracial group of community advocates—including youth and parents, small businesses, educators and youth sports coaches, law enforcement, and child care providers—to share their concerns, experiences, and feedback with City officials.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD

## WHY?

- Every child deserves a strong start in life, no matter their ZIP code, race, income, or circumstance. The foundation provided to Kenosha County's children shapes their future and the future of our community. From birth to 5 years old, the brains and bodies of children are developing faster than at any other point in their lives.
- To ensure optimal child development, access to quality, affordable early care and education is vital to our community. It allows parents to participate in the workforce and employers to attract a sufficient workforce. Yet for far too long, families in Kenosha County and statewide have struggled to access quality, affordable care. The data shows:
  - > Kenosha County is home to nearly 10,000 children under 5 but only roughly 5,000 licensed child care slots.
  - > The average Kenosha County family has to pay 20% of their annual income to afford care for one infant, compared to the national recommendation of 7%.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges for families, the child care sector, and the workforce. Our community is at its best when we recognize that children, particularly our youngest, are our greatest resource. We cannot expect a healthier, more resilient, more prosperous Kenosha County in the future if we don't invest in our children now.



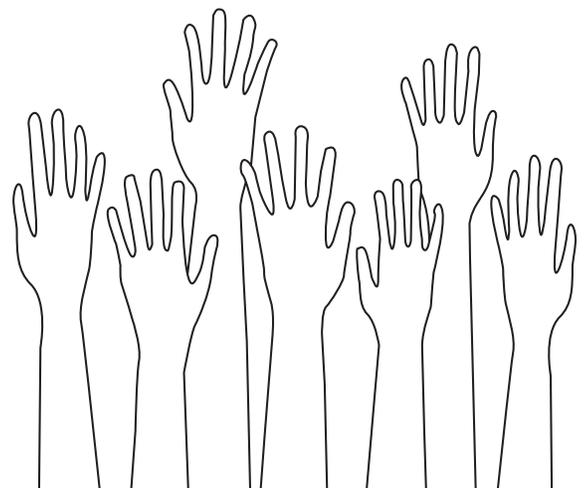
## POLICY WORK

**WISCONSIN PARTNERSHIP:** Through the Wisconsin Partnership, BOF joined with other local collective impact partnerships across the state—including Achieve Brown County, Higher Expectations for Racine County, and Milwaukee Succeeds—to identify and advocate for policy changes that will increase access to quality, affordable early childhood education for all children.

Through the paid, 8-month Parents Advocating for Child Care (PACC) Fellowship, four Kenosha parents used their lived experience with the child care system to identify changes they would like to see and learned how to advocate for those changes. Fellows learned key advocacy skills, met with local and state-level legislators, and advocated for more equitable policies. This advocacy contributed to meaningful investment in child care affordability in the 2021-23 state budget by way of a \$29 million increase in funding for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy for low-income working families. Prior to this increase, the maximum Shares rate was enough to cover the full cost of just 35% of child care slots statewide. With this increase, the maximum Shares rate now covers the full cost of 80% of child care slots statewide.

**WISCONSIN INFANT TODDLER POLICY PROJECT:** Building off previous community engagement work focused on early childhood, including five virtual screenings of the documentary “No Small Matter” in 2020, BOF partnered with the Wisconsin Partnership and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) to elevate the Wisconsin Infant Toddler Policy Project (WITPP) to community stakeholders through a State of Child Care event. At this event, Kenosha County community partners from multiple sectors—including healthcare, higher education, economic development, and others—heard from a PACC Fellow and learned about key policy actions they could take to urge state investment in child care. Follow-up action opportunities were offered to participants to take up to influence policy shifts.

**LEGISLATIVE VISITS:** BOF hosted an employer listening session with Congressman Bryan Steil, in partnership with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA). Kenosha County employers—including Frontida, the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, Jockey International, and Johnson Financial Group—leveraged local data on child care access and affordability compiled by BOF, shared how the child care shortage is impacting their ability to recruit and retain workers, and highlighted the current child care challenges that are hindering parents' ability to work.



# SMART BEGINNINGS

**EARLY LEARNING NATION:** The Smart Beginnings Network continued implementation of the Early Learning Nation plan, an ambitious, comprehensive 3-year plan using the Council for the Study of Social Policy's Early Learning Nation framework. This plan lays out the work needed for Kenosha County to become a true early learning community, supporting families in their role as a child's first teacher. Guided by a Core Team, the Network shares ownership of actions and accountability across member organizations. As part of this plan, partners are focusing on aligning language and measures, making their services more accessible, implementing continuous improvement practices, and exploring data sharing and family navigation models.

**CHILD CARE COALITION:** With support from KABA, the Southeastern Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, and Gateway Technical College, BOF began convening a collaborative group and spearheading work that would begin to address critical issues in the child care sector in southeast Wisconsin across Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties. This coalition lays the groundwork to invest in and align regional child care supports, expand the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESN) to the region, and significantly increase child care provider access to regional and state-level resources that would ensure thriving child care businesses, a high-quality child care workforce, and a strong network of support within the field.



*Access to safe, affordable, high-quality child care was a scarce resource prior to the pandemic and has become an even more difficult resource to access in the last two years. Higher, competitive labor participation rates are tied to Kenosha County's capacity to attract, grow, and retain new businesses. Improving accessibility to child care would increase our employers' ability to attract, secure and retain top talent in the region.*



*— Heather Wessling Grosz,  
Vice President, Kenosha Area  
Business Alliance*



# K-12

## WHY?

- Building Our Future was founded on the idea that critical milestones in the lives of children are key indicators to their future economic mobility, health, and contributions to the community. As an educational initiative, BOF's work focuses on systems change—partnering with school districts to identify root-cause issues, develop powerful strategies, and implement continuous improvement cycles to advance student outcomes. BOF works to create a safe space for educators to learn together, fail forward, and identify what works.



*The relationship between BOF and Brass has stayed strong throughout the pandemic. Whether it's the work happening during the Lincoln Park CommUNITY Conversations or the support offered through the Title I Cohort, BOF has stood as an amazing conduit between the community and Brass Community School.*



*— Joel Kaufmann, Principal, Brass Community School*

Despite pandemic-related challenges, the community has come together in new and different ways to support students and families. School districts and educators have demonstrated resilience, innovation, and commitment to students. In transformed systems, system leaders make fundamental and institutionalized shifts in policies, practices, resources, and power structures to advance equitable outcomes. BOF is working hand-in-hand with public schools to ensure that all young people, particularly students of color and those experiencing poverty, have access to the resources and support they need to reach their full potential.

## TITLE I COHORT

As a follow-on to BOF's participation in StriveTogether's Equitable Results Series—in partnership with KUSD and Kenosha Public Library—BOF launched a Title I Cohort in January 2021 that convened five Title I elementary schools. Using a cohort-based model, principals and instructional coaches from Brass Community School, Curtis Strange, Frank, Grant, and Wilson elementary schools met throughout the Spring 2021 semester to create more equitable, data-driven systems that improve early-grade reading outcomes and close disparity gaps. The cohort built capability around Results Count and worked toward a common result: supporting first-grade students in reading at grade level. Results of the Cohort were promising:

- One school increased its overall reading proficiency by 33 percentage points (6% to 39%) and its proficiency of Black students by 23 percentage points (0% to 23%). Eighty percent of this school's target students moved to proficient.
- Another school increased its overall reading proficiency by 30 percentage points (33% to 63%) and its proficiency of Black students by 43 percentage points (43% to 86%). One hundred percent of this school's target students moved to proficient.



**EARLY-GRADE READING:  
THIRD-GRADE READING  
PROFICIENCY IS LINKED TO  
HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE,  
GRADUATION, AND COLLEGE  
ENROLLMENT FOR STUDENTS.**



## BRASS & WILSON SUPPORTS

In alignment with BOF's CommUNITY Conversations in the Lincoln Park and Wilson Heights neighborhoods, BOF continued to support Brass Community School and Wilson Elementary. In 2021, these supports included:

- Principals from both schools continued with BOF's Title I Cohort into the Fall 2021 semester, accessing thought partnership and coaching support.
- Partnering with United Way of Kenosha County to relaunch its Readers Are Leaders program in the 2021-22 school year, which provides one-on-one tutoring during the school day at Brass and during the YMCA's after-school Achievers program at Wilson.
- Connecting each school with an additional layer of early literacy support from Wisconsin Reading Corps, where trained tutors are placed in elementary schools to work one-on-one with students to provide individualized tutoring support to boost literacy skills. In 2021, three tutors provided 368 hours of personalized, data-driven literacy tutoring support to 40 students in kindergarten through third grade. After one semester, 62.1% of students receiving Reading Corps support are exceeding their target growth.

## EDUCATION, CAREER & COLLEGE READINESS

A high school diploma is not only the precursor to post-secondary enrollment; it sets youth up for better employment opportunities throughout their life. On average, high school graduates ages 25 and older earn \$17,000 more annually than individuals without a high school degree. In Kenosha County, this is especially pronounced, as the employment/population ratio for 25- to 64-year-olds with a high school diploma or higher is 79%, whereas the employment/population ratio for those without a high school diploma is only 55%.

### YOUTH VOICE, PARTICIPATION, AND POWER

BOF's Education, Career, & College Readiness work in 2021 focused on elevating student voice and inviting students to the table to provide valuable input. In Fall 2021, BOF worked with KABA and KUSD to secure spots at KABA's annual Inspire event for more than 50 students from the African American Youth Initiative. At this event, students heard directly from Kenosha-native Jahmal Cole—an entrepreneur, community organizer, and social justice leader—who encouraged students to take self-responsibility, work hard, and be disciplined to reach their goals.

BOF values the power and experience that youth voice can bring to decision-making tables. Systems transformation must be led by those closest to the results—the students and families served by our community systems. To that end, BOF is thrilled to launch new youth-focused initiatives in 2022, including Youth CommUNITY Conversations and a Youth Town Hall: School Board Candidate Forum.

# POST-SECONDARY

## WHY?

- In Kenosha County, 25- to 64-year-olds with a Bachelor's degree or more have a higher rate of employment and labor force participation than their counterparts without one. These effects are cumulative—median lifetime earnings rise with each additional level of education, from \$1.6 million for those with a high school diploma, to \$2 million for those with an Associate's degree, to \$2.8 million for those with a Bachelor's degree.
- While significant movement has been made to transform systems toward increased student retention and graduation rates, equity gaps remain between student groups. Additionally, COVID-19 led to a drastic decline in enrollment in post-secondary institutions the fall after high school, with only 29% of high school graduates enrolling after 2019-2020, as compared to 52% in 2018-2019. For more data, visit [BuildingOurFutureKC.org/data](https://www.buildingourfuturekc.org/data).

## LUMINA TALENT HUB

The Talent Hub—a partnership between UW-Parkside, Gateway Technical College, Building Our Future, and Higher Expectations for Racine County, focusing on increasing retention and graduation rates for traditional-age students—completed its fourth year of designation as a Lumina Foundation Talent Hub. The collaborative effort continues to focus on improving the K-16 math pipeline.



## HIGHER EDUCATION REGIONAL ALLIANCE (HERA)

Building off the Lumina Talent Hub, BOF worked alongside Higher Expectations for Racine County and Milwaukee Succeeds to support the creation of the Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA). HERA is a collaborative of all 18 southeastern Wisconsin public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities and a network of partner organizations who are dedicated to closing achievement gaps on each of their campuses, representing more than 150,000 students. In 2021, HERA continued to work with the 18 postsecondary institutions in the region to scale success strategies through monthly coaching, data, and action.

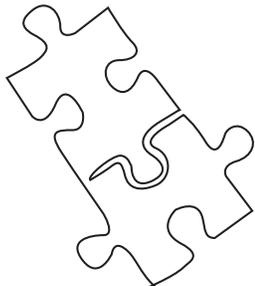
## MOON SHOT FOR EQUITY

- When institutions work together, they can improve outcomes for all Kenosha County residents. In 2020, two postsecondary institutions in the BOF partnership—UW-Parkside and Carthage College—joined together with Milwaukee Area Technical College and UW-Milwaukee to be the first regional consortium of colleges and universities to commit to Moon Shot for Equity.
- Moon Shot for Equity is a first-of-its-kind national initiative aimed at ending equity gaps in higher education by 2030. The four institutions will work together with education firm EAB to help more underrepresented students of color and other historically underserved populations graduate from college. To date, the institutions have created five work teams focused on: hold reform, holistic care, retention grants, transfer pathways, and equity mindedness. Each institution is also participating in a year-long equity-focused professional development series and is in the process of administering the University of Southern California Campus Climate Survey.



## WISCONSIN WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT

Gateway Technical College –in partnership with BOF, Higher Expectations for Racine County, the Southeast WI Workforce Development Board, and the YWCA Southeast Wisconsin– received a \$5.6 million grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to expand the successful model for adult learners to earn their high school equivalency diploma. There are currently 30,000 adults in Southeast Wisconsin without a high school credential. This partnership will increase the opportunity for adults to earn their high school equivalency credential through expanded program access, increased technology support, and regional career navigators to recruit and support student success.



## UW-PARKSIDE'S CALLAHAN SCHOLARS

In October 2021, UW-Parkside launched a new scholarship program to support students with financial need, with an emphasis on Kenosha County students and students of color. Thanks to a generous gift from The Callahan-Palmer Trust, the Callahan Scholars program will fund scholarships, provide success coaching, and offer engagement opportunities to support student success.

The creation of the Callahan Scholars program continues UW-Parkside's progress in strengthening student outcomes. UW-Parkside recently graduated its two largest classes in spring 2020 and spring 2021, keeping the university on track to achieve its key goal of increasing graduate numbers by 50% by 2025.



*Being chosen as a Callahan Scholar has really enhanced my college experience. Not only am I able to pursue a higher education more easily because of it, but I am also inspired to engage in all that Parkside has to offer.*



*– Shawna Vermilyer,  
Callahan Scholar, Class of  
2025*



# PARTNER CASE STUDIES

## KAC

*KAC has served the Kenosha County community for over 50 years, creating opportunities for personal growth and success of people with special needs. In 2021, KAC transformed its system to be more results-centered and responsive to meeting parent needs.*

**PRACTICES:** In early 2021, KAC participated in Building Our Future's Continuous Improvement (CI) Cohort. A team of supervision and frontline workers came together to discuss the needs of their enrolled families and how they could better serve them. The team participating used parent voice to shift their early childhood programming to more fully focus on parent connections and addressing adult isolation from the pandemic, which ultimately affects child development. KAC was so pleased with the results from using the CI tools that it decided to use the methods learned as part of its annual program planning.

**POLICIES:** KAC shared that the most impactful tool was the Performance Measure table that answers the questions: How Much, How Well, Who is better off, What difference have we made? Although KAC has long held tracking of program outcomes as a necessary form of data management and a means to provide feedback about the work it does, the Performance Measure questions helped frame that work in a way that gained increased buy-in. Using the accreditation categories of Efficiency, Effectiveness, Access, and Satisfaction, each team developed performance measure questions for each category. The process shed new light on what was important to each service.

With a clearer picture of why each person does the work that they do, KAC has been able to shift practices more readily to ensure it is truly meeting the needs of community members.



## Kenosha Public Library

*For over 100 years, Kenosha Public Library (KPL) has served the City and County of Kenosha by providing an inclusive, welcoming community that strengthens neighborhoods, inspires shared learning, and nurtures curiosity. KPL has transformed its system to more fully and intentionally connect with the most under-resourced neighborhoods in Kenosha.*

**POLICIES:** KPL has shifted several internal policies to ensure equitable access to library and community resources for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian youth and families. They have expanded hours and services at the library location that's most accessible to communities of color and those living in poverty. The Uptown location was the first to open again after the Safer at Home order was lifted. Hours were expanded to Fridays, offering job skills training, assisting with navigating social services, and supporting virtual summer school for neighborhood children. KPL diversified its staff to create a more welcoming environment and expanded multilingual services for children and families at this location.

**RESOURCES:** During 2020-21, KPL and Building Our Future participated in the 18-month Wisconsin Libraries Transforming Communities fellowship. As 2020 progressed through the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice, the police shooting of Jacob Blake drew significant attention and unrest to Kenosha. "When Kenosha dealt with the shooting of Jacob Blake, we were talking to people who didn't feel that they were being heard," said KPL Librarian Zander Miller. "I thought, let's focus on that. How can we listen to people and share their stories?" The result was the 60 for 30 project, which captures and amplifies the stories of the Kenosha community. The 60 for 30 project's goal is to elevate community stories and voices to ultimately affect the policies and practices of Kenosha County institutions. Focused on Kenosha's culture, the 60 for 30 project, reflecting the \$60 each participant was paid for a 30-minute interview, acknowledged the value of the expertise shared by participants.

**POWER:** KCPH has worked hand-in-hand with Black and Latinx community members to develop organizational policies and strategies that will result in more equitable health outcomes and increased trust, such as leveraging a conversation from the Men's Health & Wealth Gathering at Regimen Barbershop to determine strategy development for the Task Force.

**PRACTICES:** In 2021, the Task Force facilitated dozens of mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics and educational sessions in underserved and undervaccinated communities of color. Mobile missions were one of the key strategies of the Task Force, as it helped to break down access barriers to the vaccine and build trust with communities. The mission sites were identified by Task

Force members—they are sites that were well known and frequented by communities of color, yet most were previously unfamiliar to KCPH. Since then, many sites have become essential partners in ensuring greater equity in vaccine distribution and potentially many other future public health issues.



## Health Equity Task Force

*Kenosha County Public Health (KCPH), a division of Kenosha County, is working toward an equitable, engaged, and healthy future. Beginning in January 2021, KCPH began convening the Kenosha County Health Equity Task Force, of which Building Our Future has a seat at the table, in response to the initiation of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. The Task Force has been working to shift KCPH services and practices to be more directly guided by those who are most burdened by the system.*



Without the Task Force, KCPH would not have been as successful in reaching communities of color with vaccine access and education. Building partnerships with communities of color and investing in the development of community-driven strategies is a shift in practice that KCPH has found to be invaluable in improving health outcomes in underserved communities.

“ *The overall experience in the Lincoln Park neighborhood was just amazing. I felt that we accomplished much more than we set out to. The neighbors were excited to see us and proud to know that we were there for them. Because of the Block to Block Mission, there is a new trust and respect for the Health Department.* ”

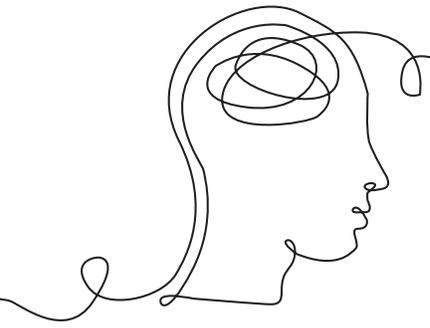
— Ardis Mahone, Board of Directors, Mary Lou & Arthur F. Mahone Fund; Parent Liaison, Lincoln Middle School

**RESOURCES:** KCPH leveraged state funding to reimagine how resources could be distributed in a more equitable way, including compensating community partners and leaders for their time, expertise, and willingness to leverage their deep connections within the community. KCPH has recognized the power of community members being compensated for their partnership and leadership in engaging in health equity work.

**POLICIES:** Although not a formal policy change, KCPH hopes to make compensation for lived experiences a more consistent practice and has already submitted two new grant applications that would allow for use of the majority of funding to contract with community leaders on various public health initiatives, including COVID-19



mobile missions and the creation of support networks for formerly incarcerated people in the process of re-entry.



## PATRICK LANGSTON

**OWNER, HIT YOUR POTENTIAL BOXING & FITNESS; KENOSHA BEAUTY SUPPLY | YEARS WORKING WITH BOF: 2**

### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH BUILDING OUR FUTURE CHANGED HOW YOU THINK?

The partnership reminds me of a phrase we used in the military: “One team, one fight.” That’s something BOF is doing that the military did—you’ve got the Navy, the Air Force, the Army, the special forces—it’s all one team and all for one fight. When I got introduced to BOF, and I see this organization, I see KABA, and I see Snap-on—you see all these organizations coming together to make one team, to fight this one fight. Seeing BOF pull all those resources and leaders and businesses all together is really eye-opening.



### WHAT WORK HAVE YOU BEEN INSPIRED TO TAKE UP BECAUSE OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP?

Working with BOF and seeing the impact that we could and do have, it makes me think of taking care of home first, but after I take care of home, now what can I give back to the community? My kids are doing well and are going to do well—but it’s not just about them doing well, it’s about the whole community doing well, because this is the community they’re going to be living in, that I’m going to be getting old in. What can I do to make the community better and the lives of my neighbors and friends and family better? That’s what we’re doing in the boxing gym—bringing in academic tutoring and combining it with fitness.

### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP CHANGED HOW YOU INTERACT WITH THE COMMUNITY?

It’s made me want to step more into a leadership position or be more of a real community activist, or a caring community member and businessman. I don’t want to just sit in my storefront or boxing gym; I want to get into the community and help some of the issues that are plaguing our community, or affecting families in our community.

## MER KAUFMANN

**CLASS OF 2022, INDIAN TRAIL ACADEMY; CO-FOUNDER, EQUITEENS | YEARS WORKING WITH BOF: 2**

### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH BUILDING OUR FUTURE CHANGED HOW YOU THINK?

I have more of a community mindset because of BOF. My involvement in the Groundwater workshop gave me some insight and new perspective and really impacted my thinking. Every meeting, I leave with more knowledge about what’s going on with the community, how can I help the community this week, and how I can be better as a person? I’ve become a better human working with Building Our Future.

### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP CHANGED HOW YOU INTERACT WITH THE COMMUNITY?

It’s given me a new outlook. Building Our Future has always said they want the youth voice to be heard. It’s been a huge platform within CommUNITY Conversations, so it’s given me a bigger voice to speak up.



## YOLANDA JACKSON-LEWIS

### COORDINATOR OF DIVERSITY/ STUDENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT, KUSD | YEARS WORKING WITH BOF: 4

#### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THIS WORK?

Being part of a community or network like Building Our Future that not only highlights, but takes action around the equity need in our community, is emboldening to me.

Knowing that I have 100 or more community partners out there working to achieve this common goal helps me in my work. This partnership has emboldened me to have conversations with people, both professionally and personally, all for the purpose of challenging one another and holding each other accountable for the sake of all of our students.



#### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP CHANGED HOW YOU INTERACT WITH THE COMMUNITY?

This has been an unforeseen treat. Born and raised in Kenosha, I thought I knew people. I thought I knew my community pretty well. Being part of the BOF network, I've had the pleasure to meet so many wonderful people doing amazing work in the community. Getting to know people on a personal level makes it easier to pick up the phone or send an email to ask for things. This partnership has opened doors to collaborate and network all for the benefit of our students.

## PENNY HUPP

### HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, ADVOCATE AURORA HEALTH | YEARS WORKING WITH BOF: 1.5

#### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH BUILDING OUR FUTURE CHANGED HOW YOU THINK?

I've gained some awareness of how our organization invests in caring for not only our patients, but also our community. We have the ability at Advocate Aurora Health to provide sustainable employment, financial equity, and career opportunities that make a difference in people's lives. I've seen through the work with BOF how that really has an impact.

#### WHAT WORK HAVE YOU BEEN INSPIRED TO TAKE UP BECAUSE OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP?

I've had an opportunity to talk to the leaders in my organization to promote youth programs within Advocate Aurora, and we've been able to build youth apprenticeship programs here in Kenosha. I've been working with and educating our leaders to advance this program for our youth. A lot of that came from hearing about the impact through BOF, so I'm appreciative of that involvement.

#### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP CHANGED HOW YOU INTERACT WITH THE COMMUNITY?

The partnership with BOF has allowed me to make connections within the community, and I feel like I have an opportunity to grow. Those partnerships and connections are really valuable. Someone who has had a different experience that you're trying to capitalize on—those first-hand experiences from another organization are incredible.



## CRYSTAL CALLAHAN

### CO-TRUSTEE, CALLAHAN-PALMER TRUST | YEARS WORKING WITH BOF: 6

#### HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH BUILDING OUR FUTURE CHANGED HOW YOU THINK?

Building Our Future has reinforced the way we think as philanthropists and given us an opportunity to be more involved and better stewards of our community. BOF has helped us think more on how our personal resources can support long-term results and really focus on the root causes and systemic social injustices and problems that exist. We all have a desire to do good, and BOF helps be that conduit that connects us and moves us in the same direction to not just do good but make an impact.

#### WHAT WORK HAVE YOU BEEN INSPIRED TO TAKE UP BECAUSE OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTNERSHIP?

I am inspired by the collective effort of many people in the community that have engaged with BOF to learn and understand how we can all put our energy and resources together and really create some change. I am most excited about the work we are doing in higher education and improving not only access for students but improving retention and graduation rates. We have been working with UW-Parkside and Chancellor Ford for the last 10 years on different programs and initiatives to support students and their growth and engagement in education. We recently have had the opportunity to support a program called "Callahan Scholars" that not just provides access to college but the support to navigate the system and the opportunity to fully engage in the college experience and graduate!!

# DATA REFERENCES & NOTES

For more information or more data, please visit our data dashboards at [www.BuildingOurFutureKC.org/data](http://www.BuildingOurFutureKC.org/data).

## PAGE 4-5: KENOSHA COUNTY COMMUNITY INDICATORS SNAPSHOT

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## BUILDING OUR FUTURE TEAM

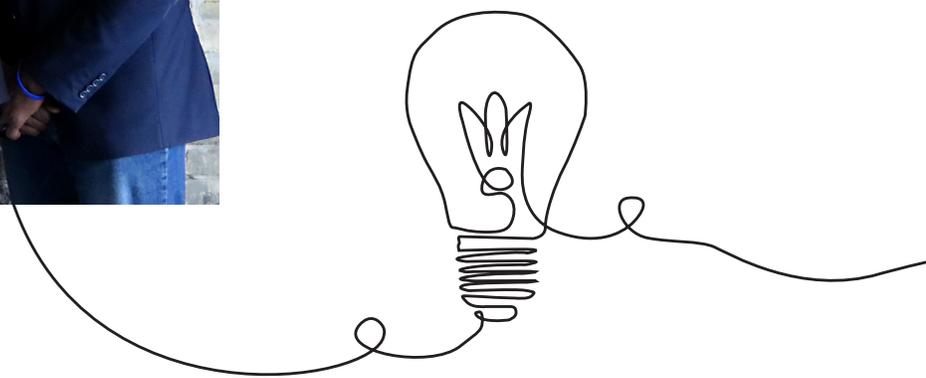
(pictured left to right)

**Tatjana Bicanin**, Executive Director

**Kevin Meagher**, Data Manager

**Lynn Debilzen**, Director of Impact & Strategy

**Brandon Morris**, Manager, Community Engagement/College Readiness



## THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Thank you to our generous funding partners and individual donors who are committed to ensuring economic vitality and prosperity for all children in Kenosha County. An investment in Building Our Future makes a vital contribution to the long-term success of our community and its residents.



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