GREATER together

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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:

Foundation donor Fred Geilfuss at Versiti on King

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In our collective pursuit of a thriving region, one of greater Milwaukee's most distinguishing assets has to be its passion for community involvement. We live in a place where a Midwestern work ethic meets a call to serve with compassion.

The different ways that people express their generosity speaks to how broad the definition of philanthropy really is, and it signals the gratitude we owe those who authentically give of their time, talent, ties and treasure.

This issue of the Greater Together magazine shines brightly with the spirit of community connection to which the Greater Milwaukee Foundation bears witness regularly. Our cover feature shares the experiences of local leaders whose personal and professional interests drive their philanthropic involvement as they build bridges between sectors to strengthen the region.

We also pay tribute to this year's recipients of the Foundation's annual Greater Together Awards. Each honoree's unique story is a testament to their love of community and a sterling example of how to translate personal passion into tangible action and results.

What's more, this deeply rooted sense of community purpose represents our competitive edge. While other regions are currently outpacing our population growth, we have an opportunity to leverage the strengths of our service mindset and our capacity for collaboration to turn the tide. By working together to increase academic excellence, talent retention, economic mobility and overall quality of life, greater Milwaukee can be the best of both worlds – a growing region that retains its close-knit fabric.

2-8

Gregory M. Wesley, J.D.
President & CEO
Greater Milwaukee Foundation

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Philanthropy's many facets

Greater Milwaukee Foundation values connections with community-focused leaders

Philanthropy in the greater Milwaukee region seldom looks onedimensional. Most people who give to the community do so in a variety of ways – through financial support, through volunteer leadership, through professional roles and through the connections they help forge.

Each person in this generous region has unique personal interests and motivations driving why and how they give, but they share a mindset as philanthropists that serving community builds community.

As a convener, a connector and a catalyst, the Foundation engages with people across the region who deeply value community involvement and find further value in their relationship with the Foundation. Here are some of their stories.



Milwaukee felt like home

For Ian Abston, community is a living organism that needs to be nurtured. Over the years, Abston has become a champion for Milwaukee and its community, but it wasn't always that way.

As a kid growing up in Elkhart Lake, Abston equated Milwaukee with Admirals games, Summerfest and high crime. After graduating from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, he ventured west, but when he returned to Wisconsin, he moved to the Riverwest neighborhood and gave the city a chance.

Riding his bike down the Oak Leaf Trail led Abston to the Urban Ecology Center, where he soon became a member.

Within three months, Abston realized Milwaukee wasn't the intimidating city he recalled from his childhood, but an urban environment where great people can make great things happen. These days, Abston, founder of Newaukee, director of the Hoan Group, founder of Forward 48 and co-founder and emeritus director of Light the Hoan, considers himself a "Milwauk-IAN."

"If you don't like something, you can change it and fix it,"
Abston said. "Milwaukee is small enough where you can impact change, but also big enough where that change could be viewed on a national or international level, because Milwaukee's a pretty big city. The more you meet the great people in it, the more you find the people like yourself who are creators or makers or solvers or whatever that might be."

Abston has served on several boards, including the Urban Ecology Center, 88.9 Radio Milwaukee, Salvation Army's Echelon and Joy Engine. Abston views his role as a connector and injector of ideas. His goal is to elevate the voices and ideas of young people, which motivated him to start the Forward Fund at the Foundation in 2025.

The Foundation was integral to helping the Hoan Group light the Hoan Bridge, which built trust and connections, but it was the ThriveOn Collaboration that convinced Abston to house the fund at the Foundation. Seeing how the Foundation, the Medical College of Wisconsin and Royal Capital set ego aside to create ThriveOn King was inspiring, he said. The fund will support the implementation of ideas, opportunities and solutions that help Milwaukee grow.

"I think the fund will be an opportunity for those people [Hoan Group and Forward 48 members] to roll up their sleeves and participate and fund ideas that might be more true to where they want to see Milwaukee grow," Abston said.

Community is reciprocal

For Francesca Mayca Wegner, community is "an action, it's a noun, it's people, it's place. It's something that you pour into and that also pours into you. I see it as very reciprocal."

The Illinois native found a home at Marquette University and has been living in Milwaukee ever since.

"Community is everything about my role," said Wegner, president and chief possibilities officer for Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee. "We've kind of coined this term of giving voice to dreams, and that's really for us what community is all about. We're not here to dictate what prosperity or success looks like to you, but we're there to hold the mirror so that you can discover those things and then unlock the potential and power that's already within you."

leaders and professionals to attain their full economic and educational potential. This support includes workforce development grants that help expand access to jobs, internships, scholarships, leadership development and mentoring opportunities.

The Foundation was a founding funder of HPGM's Board Pipeline Initiative, aimed at training Latino professionals and other underrepresented professionals to be effective board members.

"That five-week program started because of funding from the Foundation," Wegner said. "It used to be held at the Foundation until COVID, when we went virtual, but we held our BPI graduation at ThriveOn King this year, and we were able to bring in almost 15 nonprofits to meet the graduates and hopefully match them with committees and boards."

Beyond engaging the community through her work, Wegner is committed to empowering and engaging community through her service. This includes serving as a mentor for graduates of Nativity Jesuit Academy and as a board member for groups such as My Way Out, Marquette University's Institute for Women's Leadership, National Alliance for Latino Leadership (Lideramos) and more.

"All my commitments have been related to helping people step into their power," she said.

"We've kind of coined this term of giving voice to dreams, and that's really for us what community is all about."

Francesca Mayca Wegner, president and chief possibilities officer for Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee



An enjoyable aspect of life

Fred Geilfuss comes from a long line of Milwaukeeans.

"I always thought Milwaukee was a great place to raise a family and to live," he said. "It has such a wonderful balance of cultural activities, sports, education and family life, and it's just an easy place to live. Community is the fabric of the city."

Growing up, Geilfuss recalled his father instilling in him the importance of being involved in community. His father, John C. Geilfuss, served on the Foundation Board from 1979-1986.

Geilfuss currently serves on Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin's board and donates blood every couple months.

"Versiti serves every hospital in southeastern Wisconsin," Geilfuss said. "The blood really stays here, and it helps your family and friends and community members who need it."

He previously served on the board for Marcus Performing Arts Center, Grand Avenue Club and his alma mater, University School, where he served as board president and where he now sits on the endowment fund.

"I always found serving on boards was a really enjoyable aspect of my life," he said. "You meet people that you didn't know and wouldn't know otherwise. It was a great balance to both my family life, raising my kids and my professional life. It got me out of the office to learn what was going on in the city."

As a corporate health care lawyer, it made sense for Geilfuss to get involved with boards of that nature, such as Grand Avenue Club, that focus on mental health. But he also credited Foley & Lardner's board match committee, which aimed to involve lawyers in the community.

"Community service is valuable," he said. "It's personally rewarding and it's rewarding for the community.

Milwaukee is small enough that when you serve on a board, you can see that impact."

Beyond making an impact through his board work, Geilfuss is the fund adviser for two Foundation funds; each was started by relatives who selected him as a successor adviser.

"It's another way to make a difference," he said.

The Foundation does all the work, he said, from managing the funds to timely publications that keep him informed about community happenings that help him decide where to give.

"They are very helpful in advising on lots of topics," he said. "It's that function of knowing the community and knowing what's important in the community, knowing what the challenges are in the community that need addressing. The funds grow every year, and we've been lucky to have more to give away. It's an easy way to provide a lasting legacy."



Foundation donor and Versiti board member Fred Geilfuss with members of Versiti's team: Lawana Love, team lead blood operations; Joylene Lewis, technical specialist donor services, and Kristen Harris, senior manager, community education.

My Milwaukee

People are the essence of community for Corry Joe Biddle, vice president of talent and community affairs for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce.

She grew up on Milwaukee's north side in the Berryland housing development, with Havenwoods as her backyard. Though she went on to attend college and live in other communities, Havenwoods remained her backdrop — the roots that shaped her connection to the city.

Biddle's professional journey with MMAC began when she became the managing director of FUEL Milwaukee, the organization's talent attraction and retention initiative designed to connect young and diverse professionals to Milwaukee's people, places and opportunities.

On her first day on the job, FUEL hosted an event in a bar across from Cathedral Square Park. New to the role, Biddle didn't know what to expect. She imagined a modest turnout of 20 to 40 people and was stunned when nearly 200 showed up. It was her first glimpse of the kind of energy and crowds FUEL regularly attracted.

"Coming to MMAC and working on those FUEL events completely shifted my perspective," she said. "I discovered a Milwaukee that was alive with arts and culture, beautiful architecture and the presence of major Fortune 500 headquarters. It felt like I was experiencing a different city — but it had been my Milwaukee all along. I just didn't realize I had access to it."

The moment sparked a fire in Biddle to show people what Milwaukee offers. Her intentionality is evident in the marketing, speakers, locations and music she chooses for each event.

While community and volunteering are built into Biddle's job, she serves on several boards as well, including United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County's Reducing Barriers to Employment and Advancement Taskforce, Froedtert Hospital Foundation and Ko-Thi Dance Company. When Biddle chooses to serve, it's often because of alignment with her work, her ability to help or her desire to understand. Relationships are usually at the center.

One relationship led her to serve on the Legacy
Foundation Fund, a Foundation fund established by the
late Deloris Sims, Margaret Henningsen and the late
Dr. Jeanette Mitchell, to support local businesses and
entrepreneurs following the closing of Legacy Bank.

At the time, the three were discussing the need to transition leadership to the next generation, and Mitchell asked Biddle to take her place.

During a recent board meeting, organizers of the event venue Uplifting Mansion came to the fund for support to enhance the venue's accessibility. Biddle, who had held her brother's celebration of life there, shared her personal experience to affirm the need. The event was beautiful, but without an accessibility ramp, one of her brother's friends in a wheelchair needed extra assistance to enter the building.

"When Uplifting Mansion came to the Foundation, I was able to share my story and help confirm why this investment matters," Biddle said.

Corry Joe Biddle and Foundation President and CEO Greg Wesley at a ThriveOn King block party.



"This venue offers a beautiful space at accessible prices for the community. Supporting their efforts to improve accessibility is exactly the kind of impact the Legacy Fund was created to make."

A 'both/and' city

Like Abston, Mary Ellen Stanek, Foundation Board chair, wasn't originally from Milwaukee. Stanek grew up in McHenry, Ill, before attending Marquette University. During her time at Marquette, Stanek learned the Jesuit way of servant leadership — a lesson that began in her childhood courtesy of her father, a community banker.

"He saw his role as an extension of the community," Stanek said. "It wasn't just about lending people money or gathering deposits; it was really about what he could do to help create vibrancy."

Her mother took a more grassroots approach, supporting her children's extracurricular activities. As an adult, Stanek applied both her parents' and her Marquette teachings to her work and her service. A mentor once told her to only say yes to things she's passionate about, and for Stanek, that includes kids, families, education and economic vibrancy and development.

As such, she has served on many boards, including the Betty Brinn Children's Museum, Children's Wisconsin and Marquette, where she and her husband co-chaired its recent campaign and raised over \$800 million.

"Milwaukee's an incredibly generous place," she said. "There are so many caring people who give incredible amounts of time and energy, but also their treasure. In a lot of other places, people will write a check, but they won't necessarily volunteer. In Milwaukee, it's a both/and."

Stanek sees the 'both/and' mentality play out at the Foundation, where she and her husband have a donor advised fund. She first heard about the Foundation



professionally as an investment manager at First Wisconsin Trust. She now serves as president of Baird Funds and chief investment officer emeritus at Baird Advisors, which she helped found. Stanek has since brought visionary leadership and expert perspective to the Foundation Board during a time of meaningful growth.

"The Foundation is not just one corner of the community; it's really all," she said. "Together, we can build ecosystems and bridges and relationships that hopefully all communities can thrive and benefit from."

"In a lot of other places, people will write a check, but they won't necessarily volunteer. In Milwaukee, it's a both/and."

Mary Ellen Stanek, Foundation Board chair, president of Baird Funds, chief investment officer emeritus – Baird Advisors

A firm footing in Philanthropy

For Tom Florsheim Jr., business is a family affair.

He's the chairman and CEO of Weyco Group, a Wisconsin-based shoe company that owns their namesake Florsheim brand as well as BOGS, Nunn Bush and Stacy Adams. Tom is the fifth generation of the family in the shoe business and worked for many years with his father, Thomas Sr.; his brother, John, is the company's president and COO.

"Our focus has always been organizations that make our local community and economy stronger."

Tom and Jennifer Florsheim, Foundation donors

Over the years, his philanthropy has followed suit. He and his brother run the company's private foundation. Florsheim and

his wife, Jennifer, started a fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, and over the past five years, he has recruited his brother, sister-in-law and his parents to start their own.

"The Foundation is on the forefront of understanding how to invest in communities in a way that creates sustainable change that can have a positive impact now but also on future generations," said Florsheim, who was one of



the committee members for the Foundation's Greater Together Campaign, a comprehensive fundraising campaign that raised \$726 million.

The Florsheims started their donor advised fund shortly after he joined the Foundation's Board in 2018. He appreciated the connections the Foundation had in the region and believed the impact it could have on any given issue would be greater than any one individual could have on his or her own.

Previously the couple had a fund with a national provider of donor advised funds that they used to support mostly social causes and education. The Florsheims are longtime supporters of Milwaukee College Prep and University School of Milwaukee, which Tom and their children attended. They also support College Possible and Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, where Jennifer was a board member.

"We both want to feel as though we have helped improve Milwaukee," said Jennifer, who added that their children will become successor advisers to the fund to help carry out their legacy.

As Florsheim became more involved with the Foundation as a donor and Board member, he talked to his family about his experience. He and Jennifer granted to many nonprofits through their fund, coinvested in the Foundation's strategic priorities and recently became legacy donors. They've also attended many Foundation events over the years. Tom was on the Foundation's Impact Investing Committee and Philanthropic Service Committee for several years and now

chairs its Investment Committee and is on the Nominating and Governance Committee.

"From being exposed to these different areas, your knowledge grows of what the Foundation is doing," he said. "The more that I've gotten involved with the Foundation, the more I really like what they are doing."

He specifically shared with his family the Foundation's vision of advancing a Milwaukee for all.

"My family is very on board with all of that," he said.

His parents, Thomas and Nancy, who also have an account at the same commercial firm of donor advised funds, created a Foundation fund in 2019.

They continue to add to it, supporting areas such as the Foundation's Early Childhood Education Fund, which fuels the work of the MKE ECE Coalition. The coalition is comprised of the Foundation and dozens of local experts, practitioners and parents who advocate for increased public investment, and systems change in early childhood education.

"There is a lot of info that you can gain from the Foundation, and I think my parents really like that aspect," said Florsheim, who added that his mom is an avid reader of the Foundation's publications.

Florsheim's brother, John, and his wife, Lindy, opened the Florsheim Yeager Family Fund in early 2024. They have a shared strong interest in early childhood education and impact investing – which provides access to capital for small businesses, community development and more – and have supported the Foundation's strategic priority funds in those two areas.

Tom said he and his brother's involvement as Foundation donors has influenced their work with the Weyco Group Charitable Trust, the company's philanthropic arm. It annually grants \$250,000 to organizations that focus on education, art, youth and vulnerable populations, among others.

"I think the Foundation will help anyone interested in philanthropy have a better understanding of it and therefore allow them to spend their dollars in a more meaningful way," Tom said.



The founders wanted to make their very positive experience widely available in their community – to guarantee that every youth's talents are discovered, cultivated and encouraged, on and off the field.

They also are especially focused on making soccer accessible to low-income families.

Unlike many clubs with high costs for equipment, uniforms and fees (for referees, team registration and tournaments), Street Dreams keeps costs low by keeping registration affordable, keeping practices local, training local rec league coaches to become club coaches and engaging families through family sessions and community events.

The academy has grown rapidly. In 2020, it had two teams, 36 players and five coaches. By 2025, there were 17 teams, 230 players and 19 coaches. This year, it formed its first girls' teams, Las Soñadoras (Lady Dreamers), to empower young girls to dream big. In the current season, there are five all-girls teams and 80 female players.

In 2024, the Foundation gave Street Dreams a \$10,000 Reasons for Hope MKE Fund grant to provide hourly wages for its coaches.

Azael Flores Guerrero, co-founder and director of development & strategy, talked about the impact of the Foundation's grant and Street Dreams' commitment to its community.

Street Dreams has exploded in a short amount of time, and coaches have risen to meet the need.

How has the Foundation grant impacted your ability to grow? Obviously,

coaches are key. They put in a lot of work; they don't just show up at game time. There are practices; games (developing a game plan, warmups and debriefings), sometimes six to eight per weekend; and professional development sessions.

Thanks to the Foundation's grant, the coaching stipends allow us to reward their hard work.



Street Dreams Soccer Academy founders Azael Flores Guerrero, David Pérez, César Castillo and Luis Flores

Why is the Las Soñadoras girls' program important? Despite soccer's deep roots in the Latino community, Latina girls remain significantly underrepresented in organized club soccer. At Street Dreams, we actively work to remove barriers like language, cost and transportation. We want to make sure the girls feel supported, especially by having female coaches.

Talk about Street Dreams' strong emphasis on both family engagement and future readiness. When you join Street Dreams, it's not just about you, it's about your whole family. We have family events such as Harvest Fest each October when families share food and cultural activities. We help players with the recruitment process for college teams, and we also help them explore other possibilities, such as trades

and the military. We want every kid to have options.

"We want every kid to have options."

Azael Flores Guerrero, co-founder and director of development & strategy, Street Dreams Soccer Academy



Nonprofit that fosters civic engagement chooses Foundation to help achieve growth and sustainability goals

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County share several tenets and goals. They are both nonpartisan and politically neutral, yet they both recognize and foster the value of civic engagement.

Thus, it is fitting that the local LWVMC leadership has also moved to ensure its future by setting up an agency endowment with the Foundation. A former board president and active Foundation donor referred the organization to the Foundation.

"Previously, we were very much a hand-to-mouth endeavor, existing on membership dues and donations," said David Schrader, the nonprofit's treasurer and a board member. "After receiving a bequest from a member, and wanting to be good shepherds of that bequest, we met with the Foundation about an endowment.

"Your organization impressed us," he said, "and gave us a roadmap as for moving forward."



Volunteers from the League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County held a mini-carnival event at the Mitchell Street library branch on Sept. 16, National Voter Registration Day, to answer the public's questions about voting, eligibility and access to the polls.

The LWVMC hopes to grow the initial endowment five-fold, with an eye toward eventual disbursements to sustain operating costs.

Since its inception nationally and locally in 1920, the league has been a grassroots organization that encourages citizens to advocate for better government and public policies that serve the common good. Its primary mission is to encourage informed and active citizen participation in government.

"We are passionate about democracy," said Peggy Creer, director of communications.

In partnership with the Foundation and nine other Milwaukee organizations, the league helped organize a community celebration on Aug. 6 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. This landmark 1965 legislation was designed to eliminate discriminatory practices that historically denied African Americans and other marginalized groups their right to vote.

The other organizations in the coalition represented a broad spectrum: Black Leaders Organizing for Community, the Ho Chunk Nation, Interfaith Conference, Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, League of United Latin American Citizens, NAACP Milwaukee Branch 3254, Souls to the Polls, Voces de la Frontera and Hmong American Women's Association.

In 2024, through 300-plus in-person events, the LWVMC helped register over 3,000 people and provided over 13,000 with voter information. The league's online presence and its partnership with many community organizations expand its outreach and impact.

"All of this work you're hearing about is done by volunteers," said LWVMC President Peg Schrader. The LWVMC has one part-time staff person at its West Allis office to provide administrative support to its over 400 member volunteers.

Nonpartisan, however, does not mean non-activist. Nationally, statewide and locally, the league recently launched a new initiative, Unite and Rise 8.5, which aims to mobilize 8.5 million citizens between now and November 2026 to protect and preserve the nation's civil society.

"Your organization impressed us and gave us a roadmap as for moving forward."

David Schrader, League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County board member and treasurer

we are investing in the environment

A healthy environment is essential to a thriving community. Through the generosity of donors and the vision of our Board, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation has supported projects that protect natural resources, expand access to green spaces and promote sustainability. In 2024, the Foundation and its donors invested more than \$5.6 million in organizations focused on environmental causes. Here are three ways our community leadership and philanthropic grantmaking have helped care for the environment we all share:

From a lakebed of limestone debris to lakefront destination

Lakeshore State Park grew out of a pile of rubble.

Literally.

The 22-acre urban state park was born out of the construction of Milwaukee's Deep Tunnel project in the late 1990s. The site, located immediately south of Discovery World, originally was a repository for the limestone drilled to create underground tunnels as part of the city's stormwater management project. In 2007, it opened as a free park, and since that time, not only has become a destination for outdoor recreational opportunities but also a home for environmental and freshwater education.

Environmental education has long been a cornerstone of the park's programming, and Foundation grants have helped bolster the park's efforts to reach more diverse audiences, increase access and educate future stewards about the gift they have been given along the lakefront. For the past several years, more than \$63,000 in funding has helped support a seasonal park educator position that has created customized programming for Spanish speakers, people with disabilities and people facing mental health challenges. The educator has partnered with nearly 90 schools and nonprofits and in 2024 alone, ran 140 unique programs, which impacted 5,000 people.



Lakeshore State Park



Sharon Adams, co-developer of Adams Garden Park, located in Milwaukee's Lindsay Heights neighborhood.

Empowering the next generation of environmental leaders

The Environmental Youth Collaborative is proving that when organizations work together, young people and the environment both benefit.

Made up of 13 local nonprofits and supported by foundations and governmental agencies, the EYC offers internships to over 200 youth, with nine of the organizations providing active programming this past summer. The Foundation is a member of the Environmental Funders Group, which gave birth to the idea for the EYC, and since 2023 has granted \$185,000 toward the effort. The collaborative's organizations each have their own focus, from art

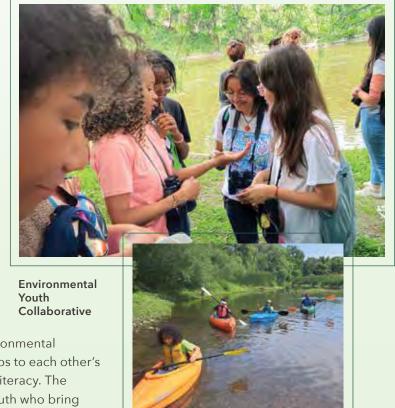
to water conservation to STEM, but all incorporate environmental teaching. Furthermore, participating youth take field trips to each other's sites and take group classes on topics such as financial literacy. The program's goal is to raise environmentally conscious youth who bring that consciousness into their future workforce, regardless of sector.

Transforming place into purpose

Once a blighted commercial space, Adams Garden Park has become a hub for environmental education, advocacy and action over the past five years.

The 127-year-old building in Milwaukee's Lindsay Heights neighborhood, developed by Sharon and Larry Adams, the founders of Walnut Way Conservation Corp, served as an incubator for environmental nonprofits. Now its mission of environmental stewardship and sustainability is spilling outside its walls through a new capital project called Art at the Park, supported by a \$100,000 Greater Milwaukee Foundation grant.

The project will activate four surrounding vacant lots into a vibrant neighborhood gathering spot. A concrete art walk featuring perennials and poetry boxes with quotes from neighborhood residents will lead to a converted shipping container, which will serve as a year-round home for environmental workshops, events and community arts programming. A mini fruit tree orchard is already in bloom in an adjacent lot. A decorative art screen will further create a sense of place.



greater together

Every movement toward a stronger, more equitable Milwaukee begins with people who believe in possibility. The Greater Together Awards honor those who lead with vision and compassion, whose generosity lights the way toward a community where everyone can thrive.

Learn more about this year's award recipients by visiting our website: greatermilwaukeefoundation.org/gta



Ellen Gilligan Leadership in Racial Equity and Social Justice Award

Since 2019, this award recognizes those who have worked tirelessly to overcome the burdens of inequity and injustice to make our region truly welcoming and inclusive for all.

PARDEEP KALEKA

After tragedy struck his family in 2012, when a white supremacist killed his father during the mass shooting at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin, Pardeep Kaleka chose to dedicate his life to peace. A first-generation immigrant and longtime public servant, Kaleka has worked as an activist, educator and bridge builder, confronting hate and fostering understanding across divides. He has led organizations committed to dialogue, healing and inclusion. Guided by his Sikh faith and his belief in the power of resilience, Kaleka continues to show how communities can rise from trauma with courage, compassion and an unwavering commitment to peace.

William C. Frye Award

First bestowed in 1956, this award honors individuals who have contributed their time, efforts or talents to make Milwaukee a better community.

ROGER AND CINDY SCHAUS

Roger and Cindy Schaus have spent their lives building a legacy of compassion and service. From volunteering as teenagers to championing nonprofits that support individuals with disabilities, the couple has always centered their philanthropy on personal connection. Cindy's career as a special education teacher and decades of service with Life Navigators, combined with Roger's leadership on boards such as Easter Seals and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Impact Investment Committee, reflect their deep commitment to inclusion and equity. Together they have provided vital support for education, food security and disability services.



DR. VICTOR AMAYA

Victor Amaya believes data is the key to unlocking community potential. As president of Data You Can Use since 2021, he has championed the use of neighborhood-level information to drive equity, opportunity and advocacy. It's his vision to make Milwaukee a place where data sparks change and residents shape a more equitable future. Under his leadership, the nonprofit has grown its staff, revenue and reach, equipping residents and organizations with tools to influence policy and improve lives. Perhaps one of the most ambitious undertakings to date is the development of the Milwaukee Wealth Index, a forward-looking, groundbreaking tool designed to quantify the investments needed to close Milwaukee's wealth gap within two decades.

Frank Kirkpatrick Award

Since 1988, this award has honored individuals whose efforts helped change Milwaukee's built environment.

MELODY MCCURTIS AND DANELL CROSS

In Milwaukee's Metcalfe Park, signs of renewal are everywhere – from community gardens and murals to vibrant parks and gathering spaces. Behind much of this progress are Danell Cross and her daughter, Melody McCurtis, leaders of Metcalfe Park Community Bridges.

The duo has helped neighbors reclaim their community by centering resident voices and building capacity for lasting change. What began as a simple movie night in 2012 has grown into a grassroots movement, bringing in millions of dollars in investment and driving progress in safety, civic engagement, wellness and cultural vibrancy. From mutual aid efforts during the pandemic to new initiatives in housing and food security, their work ensures that Metcalfe Park's future is shaped by those who live there.



TTC YEARS
Rooted in Community
1915-2025

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