



**Education  
Partnerships  
Coalition**  
*Minnesota*

# 2020 REPORT

**Austin Aspires - Austin**

**Cradle 2 Career - Rochester**

**Every Hand Joined - Red Wing**

**Generation Next - Twin Cities**

**Northfield Promise - Northfield**

**Northside Achievement Zone - Minneapolis**

**Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood - Saint Paul**

**United Way Partner For Student Success - Saint Cloud Area**



# About the Education Partnerships Coalition

*The Education Partnerships Coalition (EPC) engages more than 120,000 youth and their families across Minnesota.*

Coalition members take a birth-to-career approach to eliminating Minnesota's worst-in-the-nation opportunity gaps. All Coalition members are locally-controlled, data-driven public-private partnerships. This collective impact focus brings communities together to enact solutions that improve outcomes for children and families. Additionally, all EPC members are affiliated with either the Promise Neighborhood Institute or StriveTogether, the leading national collective impact networks.

## Vision Statement

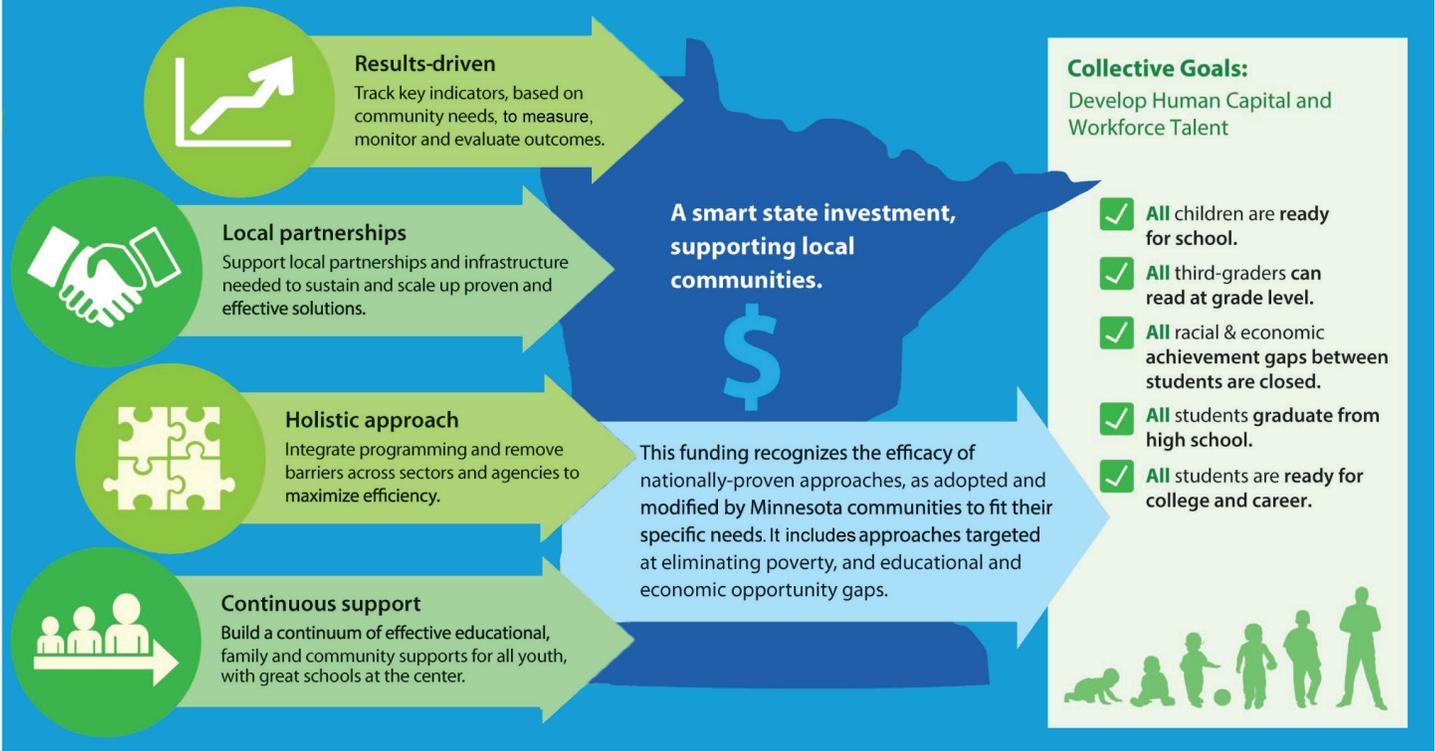
Our children succeed in school and in life.  
Our communities thrive.  
Our state is equitable and prosperous for ALL.

## Mission Statement

The Education Partnerships Coalition is uniting Minnesota cradle-to-career community initiatives to ensure all children and youth succeed.

## Education Partnerships Fund | Aligning Efforts. Multiplying Impact.

Establishing a statewide network of comprehensive educational partnerships that emphasize local solutions and results-based accountability to close the opportunity gap



# Serving Families During Unprecedented Hardships

The Education Partnerships Coalition takes a birth-to-career approach to eliminating Minnesota's worst-in-the-nation opportunity gaps. All Coalition members are locally-controlled, data-driven public-private partnerships. This collective impact focus brings communities together to enact solutions that improve outcomes for children and families. The Coalition partners with more than 120,000 youth and their families across Minnesota. The EPC members are Austin Aspires, Cradle 2 Career (Rochester), Every Hand Joined (Red Wing), Generation Next (Twin Cities), Northfield Promise, Northside Achievement Zone (Minneapolis), United Way of Central Minnesota (St. Cloud area), and Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood.

In previous annual reports, we have shared data on how we are closing Minnesota's worst-in-the-nation opportunity gap. We have provided information on how we are enabling two-generations of Minnesotans to thrive by providing wraparound support services.

This report looks different because we were compelled to meet the immediate needs of our communities in the midst of a myriad of crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustice. This year has exacerbated Minnesota's educational inequities and highlighted the State's vast racial disparities. The challenges of this year compelled us to step up in new and innovative ways.

In addition to meeting the urgent needs of our families, Coalition members shared best practices on how collective impact organizations across the county can effectively support their communities. Moreover, we have continued to focus on empowering parents and core caregivers through trainings and staff support. The Coalition also recently launched a fellowship program to provide resources and intensive support to parents and caregivers in order to further their leadership development. This fellowship is made possible by funding from the McKnight Foundation and StriveTogether.

As our families continue to struggle, we seek to expand our partnerships with government, businesses, and nonprofits in order to continue helping impacted families. We invite you to join us in the critically important work of eliminating Minnesota's opportunity gaps and ensuring all families have the ability to succeed.

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

StriveTogether

***Please contact Sarah Clarke, EPC Project Manager, to discuss how we can collaborate at [sclarke@hyldenlaw.com](mailto:sclarke@hyldenlaw.com) or 952-201-4654.***





## About Northfield Promise

Formed in 2012, Northfield Promise is a collective impact initiative designed to achieve community-level change for children and youth. Northfield Promise seeks to build a culture of collaboration and shared accountability among community partners to ensure ALL children achieve their full potential. As a data-driven initiative, Northfield Promise is not about just creating new programs, but instead about aligning partners and resources to expand efforts that are seeing results. The Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) provides the backbone support for Northfield Promise, recruiting and convening the partners and helping ensure the implementation of the action steps.

## COVID-19 Response

### Creating Safety Nets for Families

#### *Food Access*

Recognizing the food insecurity brought on by COVID-19, Northfield Promise made food access a priority in 2020. Since the start of the pandemic, Northfield Promise's bilingual outreach staff have distributed **more than 8,000 boxes of food** in local low-income neighborhoods and mobile home communities.

#### *Early Childhood Navigation*

Bilingual early childhood navigators work with families to connect them to high-quality preschool programs and early childhood screenings. They also help families access additional community resources, like food and housing. Last year the navigators provided more than 700 contacts, **connecting 155 children ages 0-5 with high-quality preschool**, early childhood opportunities, and other community resources.

### Supporting Distance Learning

#### *Digital Divide*

Northfield Promise has served as the community hub for family internet access in the pandemic. Aligning resources from the Northfield Public Schools, City of Northfield, and Rice County, Northfield Promise has connected families with hotspots or broadband internet, as well as devices. Bilingual staff then assist families in understanding the devices and internet access—as well as navigating online portals for the schools, social services, and medical arenas.

#### *Literacy Support*

The Northfield Promise-led “Move 5 Kids” initiative provides resources to classroom teachers in grades K-5 to implement targeted strategies and innovative ideas that support students at risk of not being at grade level in reading. Last year, **166 students in grades 1-3 met their reading growth goals** (these students had been at risk of not being proficient at the start of the school year), and **90 moved up at least a full grade level in reading!**

#### *Tutoring & Academic Advising*

Focusing particularly on middle and high school youth who are low-income or students of color, Northfield Promise has helped lead ongoing tutoring and academic advising to help young people be successful in school during the pandemic, utilizing a combination of school-based contacts, Zoom sessions, and tutoring in community locations.



Northfield

*“Northfield Promise carries the school district work beyond the school walls and creates a synergy in the community focused on supporting students all the time, not just when at school. It is this kind of community partnership that truly supports every student.”*

**- Matt Hillmann, Northfield Public Schools Superintendent**

### ***Post-High School Navigation***

Recognizing the challenges faced by the untraditional end to the 2019-20 school year, Northfield Promise asked all Northfield High School Class of 2020 graduates to name a school staff member with whom they had a strong connection. Northfield Promise then supported these staff in **making monthly check-ins with 278 graduates from June through October**. The aim was to ensure the graduates felt supported in their transition and that the staff and Northfield Promise could help troubleshoot obstacles that emerged in their post-high school plans.

### ***Academic & Social-Emotional Enrichment***

Northfield Promise has helped distribute **3,477 activity bags** (with educational and enrichment opportunities for kids) during the COVID-19 pandemic through front door drop-offs and distribution at school district meal sites. These activity bags—coupled with corresponding Zoom programming sessions—are intended to help constructively fill some of the out-of-school-time hours created by the pandemic.

## **Other Highlights from Northfield Promise’s Work in 2020**

- Provided **rides to 5,574 children** in 12 different early childhood and youth programs through the new “Bus for Us: Together We Roll” transportation co-op with the Northfield Area Family YMCA. The co-op helps to overcome the transportation gap preventing children from taking part in programs.
- Distributed **2,285 books** through the Reach Out & Read program, where medical professionals provide books and reading coaching tips to families during their well-child checks. Every Northfield medical establishment is now participating in this evidence-based early childhood program, making Northfield Reach Out & Read’s first “Bookend Community” in Minnesota.
- Distributed **5,548 books** through 22 free libraries in waiting rooms and neighborhoods across the community.



***In 2019, Northfield Promise was named as the 12<sup>th</sup> Proof Point Community in the nation by StriveTogether. The recognition is given to communities seeing measurable change in community-level outcomes for children and improving systems.***



## About Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)

NAZ is a collaborative of more than 36 non-profits and schools, partnering with families to lift themselves from poverty through education and multi-generation, whole family support.

## What does NAZ do and How does it Work?

Using a place-based, two-generation approach, NAZ and its partners create the holistic infrastructure and real-time opportunities needed for children and families to succeed and flourish.

Through family achievement coaches and family support specialist embedded at our partner sites, NAZ surrounds Northside children and parents with:

- support and resources in early childhood development
- parenting education through the NAZ Family Academy
- school-based learning
- after-school and summer programs; college readiness; and housing, health, finance, and career pathways

NAZ utilizes a community wellness framework focused on the adults who work with children – teachers, paraprofessionals, and early childhood providers – to effectively address the racialized trauma being experienced disproportionately by Northside scholars.

## Our Comprehensive COVID-19 Response

In March of 2020 NAZ saw the immediate needs of our families and scholars change radically. In response, we earmarked funds for emergency response, and collaborated with our partners weekly to respond to the new reality of distance learning and loss of stability as a result of COVID–19. In the following months: NAZ found new partnerships and funding options to create a comprehensive emergency response. Thus far, NAZ has distributed Chromebooks and laptops for distance learning and college-ready scholars. Additionally, NAZ has delivered fresh, packaged, and prepared foods to families' homes, provided housing funds, and given away hundreds of thousands of masks. Our staff and leadership have pivoted to meet these new needs while maintaining our preexisting commitments to academic achievement and ending the opportunity gap for families and children in North Minneapolis.

## Maintaining our Commitments to Children and Families

The emergency of COVID–19 has created new challenges but NAZ has maintained our commitments to closing the achievement gap and ending multi-generational poverty in North Minneapolis. Our early childhood education scholarship program awarded **72 families with funds** to keep the littlest learners on track during the pandemic. NAZ has also continued to teach Family Academy classes, our parent empowerment offerings, moving them all to a virtual space within 30 days of the first series of closures in Minnesota.

By the end of 2020, **150 families** are projected to have been to at least one Family Academy online class. We have kept all of our staff, many of whom are residents of North Minneapolis, fully employed. Our family achievement coaches continue to prioritize family and scholar goal setting by phone and virtually. We are maintaining a high-level of supports while overlaying these new projects with all of the logistical challenges that they present.



### Direct Cash Relief to Our Most Vulnerable Families

As of this writing, NAZ has **distributed \$265,000 in direct cash relief** in the form of Visa gift cards to NAZ families. The intention of this distribution of direct funds was to fill the gap of other relief funds for gas, telephone bills, Internet payments, etc. Though NAZ families are typically low-income, many are employed in the service industry, retail economy, child care, and health care. These funds allowed many to continue working and offset the expenses of keeping their children home while continuing to keep the economy in Minnesota running. NAZ is on pace to distribute an additional **\$125,000 in direct funds** in FY 2021.



### Mitigating the Housing Crisis for Low-Income Families

In collaboration with our housing partners, Urban Homeworks and Project for Pride in Living, NAZ has provided **\$300,000 in rental relief**. NAZ is predicting the end of the eviction moratorium in Minnesota will adversely affect the North Minneapolis community so we have proactively supported our families by helping them keep up-to-date on their rental payments and keep their housing stable during a time when housing mobility could not only effect their scholars achievement but the overall health of the entire family unit.

### Safely Feeding Those in Greatest Need

Appetite for Change, Northpoint Health and Wellness, Second Harvest Heartland, and NAZ have collaborated to create a food delivery program funded through NAZ to provide safe home delivery of groceries and prepared meals to **130 North Minneapolis families**. The main grocery hub in North Minneapolis, Cub Foods, was destroyed by fire in early summer. Prioritizing families with health conditions and transportation challenges that preclude them from going to traditional food shelves or traveling long distances for healthy food, we've delivered approximately **43,200 meals and 36,000 pounds of groceries**. In fiscal year 2021, we will add another 170-180 families to the food delivery program.

### Addressing the Digital Divide

NAZ has received funding and sought out partnerships to alleviate the digital divide in our community. Before the pandemic NAZ families' access to technology was a major concern, during the pandemic it became an emergency. We have distributed 726 Chromebooks and iPads, 719 noise canceling headphones to families with multiple children in active distance learning. We are in the process of providing 1,000 families with access to free broadband internet service.





## Narrowing the Tutoring Gap

Middle- and upper-class families in Minnesota have access to tutoring and paid out-of-school programming that low-income North Minneapolis families do not. To narrow that gap, we have established a virtual literacy tutoring program to deliver culturally relevant individualized tutoring opportunities to **400+ kindergarten-fifth grade scholars** in conjunction with our corporate partners and Minnesota Reading Corps and Reading Partners. We are providing both a source of funding and a pool of well-educated volunteers for this program.

## Minding the Health and Safety of North Minneapolis

Thus far, NAZ has provided **100,000 disposable face masks** and **10,000 reusable face masks** to NAZ families and beyond. It is our responsibility to ensure that the neighborhoods that our scholars live and learn in have the resources to flatten the curve of COVID-19 transmissions. We have distributed these masks to partner organizations and the general public as well as direct home delivery to families in the NAZ collaborative. In early 2021, in partnership with the Urban League and the African American Leadership Forum we will be distributing 30,000 masks door-to-door in the most vulnerable neighborhoods in North Minneapolis.

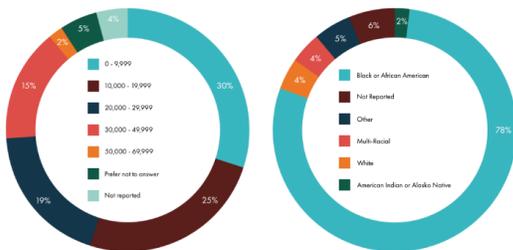
### NAZ BY THE NUMBERS\*

- 990 Families
- 2182 Scholars
- 605 Scholars in Academic Achievement Plans
- 97 Graduates of Family Empowerment Classes
- 145 Families in Housing Strategies

### WHO IS NAZ?

**74%** Of NAZ Families make less than \$30,000/yr

**90%** Of NAZ Families are families of color



\* 2019 data





## About the Partner for Student Success Initiative

Partner for Student Success began in the St. Cloud Area School District in 2010. Sartell-St. Stephen School District and Sauk Rapids-Rice School District joined soon after, alongside St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce, and over 50 other organizations in the Greater St. Cloud area. The partnership serves over 19,000 students in grades prekindergarten to 12 with 13 communities in a tri-county area. In 2019, Partner for Student Success merged with the United Way of Central Minnesota. The organization is now known as United Way Partner for Student Success (UWPFSS).

During this time like no other in history, UWPFSS sprung into action with funding, support, connections, advocacy and facilitation to respond to the unique and immediate needs of our learners and families. UWPFSS has responded to emerging needs, as well as crises and opportunities.

***“UWPFSS removes the barriers of transportation, access to Wi-Fi, food scarcity, language support needs and partners with the 742 School District to create best learning environments in response to COVID.”***

***– Becky Estrada, Principal, Discovery Elementary Community School***

## Innovative Community Partnerships

Responding to affinity group listening sessions in the community, UWPFSS has developed and supported a variety of **distance learning support sites** across the community, including:

- Unique rental opportunities of open apartment buildings and commercial real estate spaces vacated by COVID.
- Sites in partnership at Boys and Girls Club and Kidstop locations.
- Sites at culturally-welcoming locations, including churches, faith centers, and community agencies such as The Promise Neighborhood, Too Much Talent, Higher Works Collaborative, EAGLE, and St. Cloud Islamic Center.

These sites provide scholars with:

- consistent internet access,
- two or three meals per day for students who regularly depend on free and reduced lunch at school,
- school district connections for learning distance learning platforms, and
- resource navigators to provide whole-family supports in accessing health and social services.



Saint Cloud Area

*“We are incredibly thankful for the responsiveness, creativity and flexibility that UWPFSS has provided as we continue to pivot based on the ever-changing needs of our youth and community, including emergency employee childcare, virtual programming, virtual tutoring, America Reads, Resource Navigators, and the Winter United program. The UWPFSS team is incredibly supportive when challenges arise and are a great partner to brainstorm and creatively find solutions.”* – Mary Swingle, President, Boys & Girls Club of Central MN.

## COVID-19 Awareness

UWPFSS has utilized its vast, diverse network of program partners and community leaders to provide emergency public health awareness to meet the needs of St. Cloud’s immigrant communities in need of tailored, culturally-specific messaging. Funding, coordination, and partnerships included:

- CentraCare Health community outreach specialists,
- Somali radio and television broadcasters,
- Islamic Center of St. Cloud,
- Spanish-speaking UWPFSS resource navigators, and
- Nonprofits such as Fe Y Justicia, Promise Neighborhood, Hands Across The World, and many more!

The focus on COVID-19 education was on reaching families and individuals where they are at, helping them learn of the prevalent dangers and available resources, and reaching communities through safe, in-person contact for communities not frequently connected to mainstream media channels.

## Emergency Resources

UWPFSS has utilized and leveraged foundational funding from the legislature to develop emergency support funds for area agencies best responding to emerging needs and developing opportunities for efficiencies in helping Central Minnesota families and students:

- **COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS:** Over \$230,000 has been raised and granted to-date to support education and basic needs through nonprofits seeing increased demand for services or meeting new needs in the community.
- **LEARNING CRISIS RESPONSE FUNDS:** UWPFSS has raised over \$120,000 to-date for specific education programs and partnerships, such as distance learning support sites, Internet access and technology, and tutoring.



## Supporting Whole Families

While focused on education, UWPFSS knows that to support students, now more than ever, means supporting their families as well. No student can be successful when they don't know where they're going to sleep, where their next meal is coming from, or which adults will be available to support them. UWPFSS supports whole families by providing resource navigators for virtual support as well as in-person connection times at 10 community learning centers across the region, by publicizing United Way 2-1-1 emergency support lines, creating training for parents to understand online education platforms, and providing funding to secure Internet access and devices.

### Device Drive

We responded to a call from school district leaders to support families unconnected to their student learning and services. **Over 400 computers, monitors, tablets and phones** were donated to UWPFSS's device drive to provide access for families to health updates, social and human services, job opportunities and more.

### Affinity Groups

UWPFSS supported and funded both positive identity leaders and parent engagement and empowerment specialists to bring together groups of students, parents, caregivers, and others to connect, relate and find relief and support in community during this time.

### Mental Health

We have increased funding to the Central Minnesota Mental Health Center to provide additional services, trained community navigators working with families to improve mental health, and support Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota in individualized outreach to students. We also partner with CentraCare and local organizations that lead mental health initiatives.





## About Austin Aspires

Austin Aspires is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization that launched in 2014 to improve educational outcomes for all students in Austin, Minnesota. Austin Aspires is directed by a board of community volunteers. The organization is funded by Hormel Foods Corporation, the Hormel Foundation, and Mayo Clinic Health System - Albert Lea Austin, as well as a direct legislative appropriation. The Austin Public Schools, Pacelli Catholic Schools, and Riverland Community College are all educational partners of Austin Aspires.

Austin Aspires' approach aligns existing resources to increase impact by using data to determine what works best for children. Austin Aspires brought the community together to develop shared outcomes and indicators of success to use across programs and systems. These shared outcomes identify promising practices and allow for meaningful dialogue on local disparities and solutions to close opportunity gaps.

## Stopping the Spread of COVID-19

It was important to work together to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our community. We are fortunate to have Mayo Clinic Health System as a community partner. They took the lead in providing accurate information for us to use with our families and community members. We were able to support Mayo Clinic Health System in the efforts of sharing that information, translating it as needed for the families that we work most closely with.

Additionally, we were able to get important information from our families regarding the virus, the impact it is having, and other challenges it was creating. That information was shared with our community partners, including Mayo Clinic Health System and our county health officials, and used to continually adjust our local preparedness plan.

## Creating Safety Nets

Austin Aspires partnered with Hormel Foods, United Way, Salvation Army, Women's Leadership Initiative and other community partners to provide **more than 2,700 boxes of food** to families in need during the months of April and May. These boxes contained proteins, fruits, snacks, breakfast items and more to support the family for a weekend. Additionally, information about other food supports and staff representing those programs were available at distribution to ensure families and community members were connected to the level of support they needed.

When the local school districts moved to full distance learning during the late fall, once again Austin Aspires and community partners teamed up with a local church and Palmer Bus Company to prepare boxes of food for distribution to students and families.

During the month of December, more than **1,800 boxes** were assembled for distribution.

***"Please thank your team for the support they are providing during distance learning. Incredible to have such a good community partner. Recommended your team to one of my teachers and she was thrilled you could support. What a blessing! Please let them know it is a big deal and matters so much!"***  
**-Austin Aspires community partner**

## Supporting Distance Learning

With the support of grants from the Hormel Foundation, the Office of Justice Programs, and Connected MN, we were able to **purchase 200 additional hotspots with data plans** through August 2021 to support students in the distance or hybrid learning models. Additional laptops were purchased and provided to families, home daycares, and daycare centers to provide further support.

These dollars and further partnerships were used to establish a tutoring program for students in grades 4 through 12. Tutors with the language and content skills needed were hired to provide academic and emotional support to students as they navigated their way through distance or hybrid learning.

A partnership with Austin Public Schools allowed us to hire a community technology navigator. This multi-lingual staff member works closely with the parents and community members to ensure they are prepared to lead their child in learning. Helping these important individuals understand the software, websites, and how to contact school staff has proven to make a significant difference in the learning environment for the student.

## Partnering with the Community

The role of childcare providers and childcare centers in our community changed drastically through this pandemic. Aspires has provided cleaning and educational materials, as well as devices and hotspots, to eight local daycares/centers to support the work they are now being asked to do.

Project Show Your Gratitude was accomplished through the support of community partners including the United Way, HyVee, Austin Area Arts Center, First Congregational Church, APEX Austin, Parenting Resource Center, Mayo Clinic Health System and others. Every staff member in the public and private school districts in our community received a note card as an expression of the community's appreciation for all they are doing. Additionally, students, families and community members were encouraged to write a note of thanks and Austin Aspires ensured that it got delivered with care to the intended recipient.





Twin Cities

## About Generation Next

Generation Next impacts over 75,000 students through the direct engagement with both superintendents from Minneapolis Public Schools and Saint Paul Public Schools. The only cradle-to-career backbone organization addressing systemic disparities in the Twin Cities, Generation Next convenes a coalition of partners to create collective impact that aims to close the opportunity and achievement gaps facing students of color and lower-income students.

These gaps have persisted largely due to a lack of coordination and shared accountability across the major practice, policy, and funding leaders in our community. In short, mixed strategies lead to mixed results. Generation Next was founded to unify cross-sector leaders around shared goals. To this end, Generation Next's collective impact approach uses the nationally recognized StriveTogether model that includes partners agreeing on common goals, analyzing data to track progress, and directing resources toward what works best for kids.

## Response to COVID-19

As an organization committed to bringing people together, one thing our team quickly learned is: when we can't convene and connect in person, we can still listen and support the people helping our children through these uncertain times.

What we have heard—and seen, through the screens on our laptops and phones—is heartening. We hear strong and creative leadership across the education landscape, from our district and city leaders rallying to make meals available for children, to the educators preparing for distance learning, to the parents and students who are turning their kitchens into classrooms.

Given our commitment to equity, we are also seeing the ways this crisis magnifies some of our community's racial and economic disparities, and we are even more driven with our coalition partners to knit systems together to address those gaps.

In that spirit, Generation Next created a comprehensive landing page on our website that compiled all of the COVID-19 resources from our partners - all in one place. **Our COVID-19 resource page garnered more than 11,000 unique page views** since its launch in April 2020.



### COVID-19 Resources

Here is a collection of resources our partners have put together to help families and children right now.

To share these resources, hover over the icons below and click "share".



[gennextmsp.org/covid-19-resources/](http://gennextmsp.org/covid-19-resources/)

## Generation Next's Priority Areas



### Early Childhood Quality & Access

***Each child enters kindergarten with the literacy, social and emotional strengths needed for successful learning.***

Building on our partner-driven progress in Early Childhood Screening, we continue to advocate for smart policy solutions to help solve the systemic problems that prevent all children from getting the highest quality opportunities and supports in their early years.



### Teacher Diversity & Teaching Diverse Learners

***Ensure successful transition of teachers of color and American Indian teachers from preparation programs into pre-kindergarten-12 school systems and ensure all teachers are better prepared to serve diverse learners.***

While continuing to connect resources and organizations across all stages of the teacher development process, our coalition will seek to fill a unique role in bridging teacher hiring and preparation, placement, on-boarding, and retention.



### Postsecondary Preparation & Persistence

***Each graduate of Minneapolis and Saint Paul has the skills and support needed for successful attainment of a postsecondary certificate or degree, in alignment with the statewide 70% postsecondary attainment goal.***

We are pursuing initiatives that drive persistence beyond the first year of college, given our data showing a clear drop in enrollment at this point, especially for students of color.



## About Every Hand Joined

On September 26, 2012, leaders from Red Wing Public Schools, businesses, nonprofits, local government agencies and foundations came together to focus on Red Wing's most important resource – its youth. Since that first meeting, Every Hand Joined (EHJ) has been a community-wide initiative building to over 250 volunteers committed to helping all children reach their full potential and be successful in life. This commitment runs from preschool through a young person's career.

As 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone, EHJ had to be flexible to adjust staffing and resources to be the most impactful for the youth, families, and organizations serving the youth during the pandemic and times of racial injustice.

## Partnering with Community

- EHJ served on the selection committee for the City of Red Wing Human Rights Commission and Police and Racial Equity Task Force.
- Virtually convened local leaders and the Red Wing Police Chief to cultivate courageous conversations around how community can support parents and children within businesses and organizations together to bring about equitable outcomes.

We launched a Data Mart, allowing schools, teachers, and community programs with appropriate data sharing agreements to share and use data to provide individualized strategies for students. The Data Mart helps stakeholders throughout the community to understand the relationships between factors such as student characteristics, participation in specific programming, assessment, and academic performance measures.

As of June 2020, EHJ had four different organizations/entities actively utilizing the Data Mart to **access data for over 500 students** being served by many programs, including:

- Hispanic Outreach (a Goodhue County program),
- Prairie Island Native American Indian Liaisons, and
- Red Wing Public School District programs.

Through a recent evaluation process, promising comments were shared from Data Mart users when asked the question, ***“How has the Data Mart helped you take action to help Red Wing kids?”***

- “We were able to see grades in real-time, which will be helpful when reaching out to kids with tutoring assistance and mentoring curriculum.”
- “Seeing students' test scores helped me identify cases where students could be excelling more in certain subjects, but needed help overcoming some type of barrier that wasn't allowing them to.”
- “We have been able to spend less time collecting data and more time working directly with kids to help them.”

EHJ is leading and supporting parent engagement programs and strategies in Red Wing. Our parent engagement team is helping connect families with resources, especially for lower-income and families that face other barriers to educational success. Listening to parents especially during the pandemic and distance learning shaped the priorities for the parent engagement program and the allocation of resources:

### Supporting Distance Learning

- Shifted parent engagement workshops to short online recorded sessions for parents to access online anytime to continue to participate during distance learning.
- Intentional collaboration with EHJ, Hispanic Outreach, and the school cultural liaison position to support parents and students of Spanish-speaking families.
- Created and hosting bi-monthly Hispanic parent council to allow parents' and caregivers' voices to be elevated and heard at the local level with inequities especially during distance learning.
- EHJ helped Red Wing Public School District map out student enrollment and COVID food distribution sites to ensure all students had food accessible during pandemic and distance learning.
- EHJ assisted Red Wing Public School District in distribution of electronic devices and hot spots to all students within the local school district.

### Addressing Family Mental Health Needs

EHJ facilitated meetings for the Goodhue County Mental Health Coalition to expand access to mental health services for high-need families.





## About Cradle 2 Career

Cradle 2 Career started with a simple question: *“Are Rochester’s education investments making a difference in kids’ lives?”* Rochester Rotary and the United Way of Olmsted County decided the answer could be better. Cradle 2 Career is an emerging StriveTogether community that is making a collective impact on the lives of Rochester’s youth.

## Responses to COVID-19

Cradle 2 Career worked diligently with network partners and the community at large to ensure children and their families had access to the resources they needed as we entered the pandemic without understanding how long it would last.

COVID-19 unearthed disparities we already knew existed. When over 18,000 students were sent home from school, we learned at least **8,500 students did not have a device at home** to do schoolwork and many more indicated they did not have reliable Internet access. The digital divide wasn’t new; it was just highlighted when the state was asked to stay at home.

In each phase of the pandemic, Cradle 2 Career responded to the needs of the network partners and to the community.

### RESPOND PHASE: (MARCH – JUNE)

- Network partners needed to focus efforts internally, so we responded by helping with their grant and data requests.
- Information was needed for parents and partners, so we hosted a series of webinars that addressed youth mental health, digital learning, and other relevant pandemic issues.
- Cradle 2 Career staff supported efforts to share information on safe and reliable food sources for the community. In partnership with Channel One Food Bank, Cradle 2 Career helped distribute over **3,000 boxes of food** to families in need.
- Distributed **\$4,000 to support families in need** of household essentials.
- Provided fabric to community members to create masks for high-risk individuals.
- Partnered with the Nonprofit Consortium and Inter-cultural Mutual Assistance Association to create trusted resources cards in three languages.
- Facilitated cross-sectored community response calls to coordinate efforts to serve residents in need.

### RECOVER PHASE: (JULY – SEPTEMBER)

- Network partners re-prioritized strategies based on new information that came through COVID19.
- Provided data reporting to network partners to inform programmatic decision making.
- Convened partners who signed the Nonprofit Consortium Commitment to create the evaluation process and performance measures for the other 65+ community organizations who signed the commitment.
- Co-created Research Code of Ethics with parent and student stakeholders to guide our research practices across the initiative.

## RECALIBRATE PHASE: (OCTOBER – DECEMBER)

- Assessed network partners for new and emerging needs and responded with workshops at the October 5th Convening.
- Support Your Local Learner videos launched in three languages to help parents and caregivers guide their children in distance learning.
- High School Network established trainings to get more culturally responsive adults interacting with youth across the community.
- Kindergarten Readiness Network established learning cards to get in the hands of caregivers to provide guidance for getting their learners ready for kindergarten.
- Cradle 2 Career created surveys with support from the City of Rochester's CARES funding to address the digital divide. Through the surveys aimed at identifying the top needs, we learned that:
  - 28% of families report not having access to the technology (laptop, Chromebook, or tablet) needed to support their children in distance learning,
  - 26% of families report lack of reliable or consistent internet access,
  - 48% of the organizations in both high school graduation and kindergarten readiness networks report not having the technology they would need to support youth in distance learning, and
  - The organizations that answered the survey report 70% to 100% of the youth they serve are from low-income families.
- With the CARES funding, we were able to put 13 laptops and 26 hotspots (with one year of service) in the hands of families in need.

As we close out 2020, Cradle 2 Career is focused on understanding how to best serve our local students in an unprecedented learning environment. Network partners are dedicated to ensuring we leave no child without the resources they need to succeed in school and beyond.





**Saint Paul**

## About the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood

The Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) is a transformative education initiative that puts children in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods on the pathway from cradle to college, career and community.

SPPN partners with parents and caregivers, early learning providers, four elementary schools, and a wealth of community-based organizations located in the Promise Neighborhood boundaries to deliver programming and reach families.

## Civic Engagement + Mutual Aid Resources: 2,000 Families + Community Members

Stopping the spread: SPPN created virtual models to support community members.

- SPPN has partnered with Ramsey County to bring people together for a virtual community conversation about COVID-19. We aim to understand the perception of COVID-19 for residents of Ramsey County, how it has impacted parents and caregivers, and what is needed to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- In November, we launched in partnership with the EPC, No Data about Us without Us Fellowship, and a seven-month online and in-person learning opportunity for parents/caregivers. The fellowship will strengthen the capacity of 25 parents and caregivers to feel rooted in their power to engage in authentic partnerships with people in the community and public systems towards designing new systems. This virtual model has allowed SPPN to continue providing transformative spaces that empower everyday people and equip them with the necessary tools and knowledge to create change within their community.

Creating Safety Nets: With the impact of COVID-19 and civil unrest within the Saint Paul (Midway, Frogtown, Rondo) community, families in St. Paul have been left with a trail of burned-out buildings, smashed windows, and looted stores across the city. Hallie Q Brown received numerous donations on behalf of SPPN.

- *Funding Opportunities:* SPPN secured funds from the Minnesota Disaster Relief Funds (MDRF) to support Promise Neighborhood partners. SPPN distributed this funding opportunity to partners who provide holistic services that close the education opportunity gap and promote family and student self-efficacy and stability. Also, these funds helped ensure that children in Saint Paul can build a positive future through wraparound supports even amid our current pandemics.





**Saint Paul**

## Education Initiatives + Supports: Over 1,915 Students + Families

Creating Safety Nets: SPPN partners with elementary school Benjamin E. Mays to build a team that identifies scholars experiencing absenteeism, addresses barriers to distance learning, and addressing other concerns/issues the family is encountering. This work is in partnership with teachers as they play a critical role in identifying the children and our ability to provide community resources for families.

Supporting Distance Learning: SPPN has adapted to distance learning by supporting the excellent flow of passing resources to families via social media, teachers, and blackboard connect. At the beginning of each month, we share resources with families virtually through one-on-one calls, social media, and email. Providing immediate help to families is a top priority. So far, SPPN has **distributed 200 backpacks** and supplies to Jackson Elementary.

Supporting Distance Learning: SPPN was proud to serve as a partner and sponsor for the Freedoms Connect 2020 summer program. **Close to 6,000 families regularly attended the virtual model** and continued learning throughout the summer despite the pandemic. The plan featured live/recorded streams from Harambee Live that gained 500 views from families, and the program also featured live/recorded read-a-loud guests where 1,500 students tuned in.

## Wraparound Supports: Over 200 Families Served

Partnering with the Community: SPPN supports Community Partners, Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, Community Stabilization Project, Model Cities, and Cultural Wellness Center with programs that reach the entire family for students to achieve the highest rate of stability. These partnerships support SPPN families needing financial literacy, tenant rights & responsibilities training, rental advocacy, school attendance by addressing family stability, and parent engagement to over 100 families.

Creating Safety Nets: SPPN, in partnership with the Pohlad Foundation, provided COVID-19 support to People's Fellowship Alumni with housing assistance needs that have come up due to COVID-19. We have supported 11 fellows with past due rent, phone bills, storage units, and electricity bills.

Addressing Family Mental Health Needs: SPPN co-sponsored the first virtual Health and Wellness Fair, which took place via Zoom on July 28, 2020. Community members gathered in a virtual space and shared dialogue about different health and wellness strategies/resources to help navigate the pandemic. This year's focus was on the negative and lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the trauma of racism and resulting in sadness, fear, and civil unrest across our Twin Cities social-emotional healing families our communities. The author of "Breaking the Ice," Sean Stewart, was this year's facilitator and spoke to parents on how to break the ice with your children to have hard conversations around race.



**We believe that culture is the critical missing piece in the opportunity gap.**



**16,166**

INDIVIDUAL ADVISING & TUTORING SESSIONS

The Northfield Promise-led TORCH initiative provided **16,166 individual advising and tutoring sessions** last year to students in grades 6-12 who were low-income or students of color.



NORTHSIDE ACHIEVEMENT ZONE



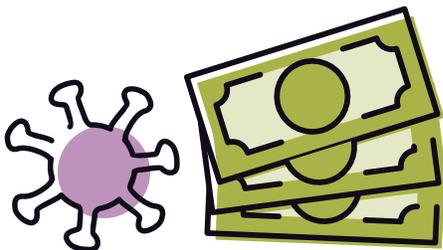
**140,000**

FACE MASKS

NAZ has provided **100,000 disposable face masks** and **10,000 reusable face masks** to NAZ families and beyond. In early 2021, in partnership with the Urban League and the African American Leadership Forum we **will be distributing 30,000 masks** door to door in the most vulnerable neighborhoods in North Minneapolis.



United Way of Central Minnesota



**\$230,000**

TO SUPPORT EDUCATION & BASIC NEEDS

United Way of Central Minnesota / Partner for Student Success **raised and granted over \$230,000** to support education and basic needs through nonprofits seeing increased demand for services related to the pandemic.



educational excellence from cradle to career



**2,700**

BOXES OF FOOD

Austin Aspires partnered with Hormel Foods, United Way, Salvation Army, Women's Leadership Initiative and other community partners to **provide more than 2,700 boxes of food to families** in April and May.



People of color and American Indian people make up **73% of students** in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, but **only 16% of teachers**. Generation Next engaged new and aspiring teachers and leaders from K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs to identify recurring root causes of teacher diversity challenges. Together, we began to address one of these: incomplete data and insufficient information about the transition.



**500** STUDENTS SERVED WITH FREE ONLINE DEMOGRAPHICS TO HELP IMPROVE

Every Hand Joined created and launched a **Community Wide Indicators Dashboard** to allow users to explore demographics of Red Wing schools, serving 5 organizations and **over 500 students**, to improve educational outcomes from cradle to career.



**100%** of Rochester High School Network Partners pivoted programming to be **entirely online** and **created new COVID-19 specific programming**.



**6,000**  
FAMILIES ATTENDED THE FREE VIRTUAL SUMMER PROGRAM

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood was a proud partner of the **Freedom Schools Connect** summer 2020 virtual learning program. **Nearly 6,000 families** attended the program through the summer that included culturally relevant, high-quality academics, resources and services, and fun and positive projects to do at home.





**Thank you for supporting the Education Partnerships Coalition to help youth and families across the state thrive. While the Coalition has accomplished so much with your support, there are more children and families in need.**

**The Coalition looks forward to continuing to work with you to eliminate Minnesota's opportunity gaps.**

This report fulfills the requirements outlined in Minnesota Statutes 2019, section 124D.99; subdivision 6.

