

Date

[name]
[address]
[address]

Dear [name]:

I am writing to update or introduce you to One City Early Learning Centers, a nonprofit early childhood education center in South Madison. The goal of One City is to reduce Madison's persistent educational achievement gap between children of different races and income levels. We hope you will join us in supporting this important initiative.

We opened our first center in a temporary location in September 2015. We now are in the home-stretch of a campaign to renovate the permanent center, having already raised over \$1.5 million towards our \$2.2 million goal, thanks to more than 600 individual donors and 60 institutional supporters. We have come very far but we need your help to take the next steps.

The remainder of the needed funds will complete the renovation of the South Madison early learning center, support our first 18 months of operations and provide tuition assistance. The children who will attend One City are our neighbors and will be students in our local schools for years to come. We need to make an investment in them, early, which is now.

On Monday, May 16th UW School of Medicine and Public Health professor Dr. Dipesh Navsaria spoke about the importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life and the importance of programs, such as One City, for a child's development. I attended the event and left more convinced than ever that One City Early Learning Centers is essential in preparing out young children for future success by ensuring they are ready to enter grade school.

Below is a brief recap of the need in our community:

- In 2014, just 24 of 211 (11%) African American children and 16 of 266 (6%) Latino children attending South Madison elementary schools were reading at grade level. Nearly 90% of these children were living in poverty.
- At the same time, only 34% of children (out of 2,027) under the age of 5 in the 53713 zip code (South Madison) were enrolled in high quality early education programs, the lowest percentage of all zip codes in Dane County. More than half of the children attend preschools outside South Madison. One City Early Learning Center will serve this population.
- The achievement gap starts before children enter elementary school and widens as they move from elementary to secondary school.

- We have served 18 children at a temporary location at Fountain of Life Covenant Church. Another 40 children started when we moved into our permanent home at 2012 Fisher Street. At this larger home, we will eventually serve up to 110 children.

Many of the families in the area are working families who are not eligible for programs such as Head Start because they are not “poor enough.” They cannot afford or cannot find accessible preschool education. One City Early Learning Center enables and requires parental involvement in their children’s education.

You can find more information in the enclosed brochure and on the website www.onecityearlylearning.org.

As long time residents of Vilas, my husband, Karl, and I know and deeply appreciate how much our neighbors value education and are concerned about racial and economic disparities. As parents of three daughters who have succeeded in the Madison public schools, we also see the barriers that other students face. We have chosen to focus on a barrier that we truly believe can make a significant impact: quality care and education for ages birth to 5.

For many of us who gave our children a quality preschool experience, we know its costs and benefits. Beyond the monthly tuition, I lost count of the fundraising “opportunities” to supplement ongoing programs. I have many charming quilts and kids’ art in my basement to show for it! We know what is needed to make this work and we want all children to have an opportunity for a great start in school.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a positive impact. A pledge card is enclosed. Gifts should be sent to One City at One City Early Learning Centers, 2012 Fisher Street, Madison, WI 53713 or made online at <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/onecity>.

Please let me know if you have questions, would like a tour of the school, or would like to discuss a gift.

Thank you,

[your name, phone #, email and role with One City]