



We Believe Alliance  
Partner Update  
January 2010

Since the last update in October the Initiative for Lasting Change has narrowed its focus to two elementary schools instead of three. The Initiative will serve 100 students from 4 years of age through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who are attending KinderPrep programs at Washburn Elementary and Westwood Elementary schools. Targeted students are below grade level in reading and living in poverty. Students will receive academic interventions as well as wrap-around services that will connect families to community resources to meet a variety of needs.

Community Liaisons Hard at Work:

In November we completed the hiring of our Community Liaisons who will provide wrap-around services to Initiative families. Sara Dunbar, Ken Clark and Barb Cruz have been hard at work meeting families, assessing needs and making connections. So far there are a total of 91 students identified. Liaisons have reported that the biggest needs for families are affordable housing, clothing, furniture and food. Liaisons have been connecting families to Alliance partners such as VEAP, PublicHealth, Bridging, Cornerstone and Pond Fairview Clinic.

When Liaisons meet families they bring with them a gift of a literacy pack. This pack includes books, flashcards, literacy games, crayons and paper. One of the goals of the Initiative is to increase parent involvement in supporting their children's learning at home. We feel that providing the literacy packs will assist them in achieving this goal. Parents and children have been very excited to get the packs.



Ken Clark

Sara Dunbar

Barb Cruz

The Faith Community helps meet the needs:

Last November I met with a group of Bloomington Clergy to discuss a possible partnership with the Alliance. As a result of that meeting the Initiative received a donation from Normandale Hylands United Methodist Church to assist us in covering the fees for families to visit Bridging. Also, members of two local congregations have donated a crib and a bed that have gone to families in the Initiative.

Thank you Bloomington Staff:

It has been amazing to see the generosity of our teachers and staff in Bloomington. Liaisons have shared the needs of the families and our staff responded in a big way. District staff donated a crib, furniture, clothes, books, toys and even a bike to Initiative families.

Initiative Funds Expand Academic Interventions:

Initiative funds have been used to start a new KinderPrep section at Westwood Elementary. Twelve preschool children who are considered academically at risk began attending KinderPrep in January. KinderPrep is a targeted kindergarten readiness program and meets Monday through Thursday mornings. This is a result of a collaboration between Pond Family Center, Westwood Elementary and the Initiative.

The Initiative has hired Judy Pittelkow, a retired Bloomington Special Education teacher to provide intensive academic support in our after school program at Westwood. Judy is working with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who are most at risk for not reading at grade level by the end of this year. Students in this program receive an hour of focused instruction two times per week.

Thank you to all of our partners in supporting the efforts of the Alliance and the Initiative. Our team is eager to strengthen our connection to our partners as we work together to meet the needs of families in our community.

Suzanne E. Kpowulu  
Program Manager