



**SEEDS OF  
HEALTH, INC.**

# EDUCATIONAL REPORT

Cultivating  
Future-Ready Minds  
2024-2025

# A Message from the CEO

For nearly four decades, Seeds of Health has been a leader and trailblazer in education in Milwaukee, quietly innovating and adapting to meet the changing needs of our city's young people.

Though we've long been Milwaukee's "best kept secret," Seeds of Health's history is remarkable, defined by a series of "firsts." In 1987, Seeds of Health was the first to open a non-instrumentality charter school through MPS. In 1996, amid a burgeoning charter school movement, Seeds of Health was among the first to open a 2R independent charter through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We were the very first K-12 charter school agency in the State of Wisconsin. And Seeds of Health was the first to create a groundbreaking dual certification program in partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College at Tenor High School. Innovation and adaptability are in Seeds of Health's DNA.

Seeds of Health embodies the very intention of the charter school movement as it was originally conceived: to serve the community as public school alternatives that offer the promise of more innovative education, to be creative and nimble in order to pivot and discover what works for kids and their families, to be autonomous and highly accountable, and to drive high student expectations in caring, individualized environments.

Seeds of Health has a long history that will always inform our present and our future. Relationships will always sit at the heart of a Seeds of Health education. Our schools will always remain small, because we know small schools work. And we will always focus on helping students find and build their future vision – their why.

Yet, true to our history, our future will be defined by innovation, adaptation, and growth. I'm energized by the future that lies ahead for Seeds of Health and our continued leadership in building the effective educational landscape in Milwaukee that our young people deserve. I hope you'll join us in our mission.



Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodi Weber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Jodi Weber  
Chief Executive Officer  
Seeds of Health, Inc.



# History of Seeds of Health, Inc.

Seeds of Health was founded in 1983 as a Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Clinic. Recognizing the educational needs of our clients, many of whom were school-age parents, we established our first school, Grandview High School, in 1987. We continued growing the Seeds of Health school network in response to Milwaukee families' calls for high-quality, relationship-based, small-school environments offering multiple pathways toward successful futures for a full range of students.

Today, in addition to the WIC Clinic, Seeds of Health operates five public schools through charter and partnership agreements, now educating more than 1,500 students annually. Schools include Seeds of Health K4-8 Elementary, Grandview High School, Veritas High School, and two Tenor High School campuses - Cathedral Square and Journal Square. We also operate a Job Corps satellite program, helping Job Corps students earn their high school diploma.

## SEEDS TIMELINE



**Grandview High School** is established as an alternative high school under the children at-risk statute, through a partnership agreement with Milwaukee Public Schools. Today, Grandview can serve 220 students.

1987

**Seeds of Health, Inc.** is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and operates a Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program.



1983

**Seeds of Health Elementary** (SOHE) opens as a K4-8th grade elementary school. SOHE is a 2r charter school authorized by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (UWM) and can currently serve up to 400 students.



1996



**Veritas High School** is established as a college preparatory high school. Veritas is authorized by UWM as a 2r charter school and now educates 250 9th-12th graders.

2001

**Tenor High School** opens. Tenor operates a dual certification program in partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College through which students receive a free year of college at MATC during their senior year of high school. Tenor is a 2r charter school authorized by UWM that also provides online instruction to 100 students enrolled in Job Corps.



2005



**Tenor Journal Square** (TJS) opens as a second Tenor campus, now serving 300 students. Tenor Cathedral Square educates 265 students. With planned expansion, TJS enrollment will grow to 350 next year and to 500 when complete.

2020

2024

# About Seeds of Health, Inc.

## Mission

Seeds of Health is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that runs a K-12 network of schools in Milwaukee, guided by our mission to meet the unique needs of urban children through small schools in a caring, personal environment.

## Campuses

- Tenor High School - Cathedral Square Campus**, 840 North Jackson Street
- Satellite Program at Milwaukee Job Corps Center**, 6665 North 60th Street
- Tenor High School - Journal Square Campus**, 918 Vel R. Phillips Avenue
- Seeds of Health Elementary**, 1445 South 32nd Street
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**, 1445 South 32nd Street
- Veritas High School**, 3025 West Oklahoma Avenue
- Grandview High School**, 2745 South 13th Street

**TENOR**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
CATHEDRAL SQUARE CAMPUS  
SATELLITE PROGRAM AT  
MILWAUKEE JOB CORPS

**TENOR**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
JOURNAL SQUARE CAMPUS

**SEEDS OF  
HEALTH**  
ELEMENTARY

**wic**  
WOMEN, INFANTS,  
& CHILDREN

**VERITAS**  
HIGH SCHOOL

**GRANDVIEW**  
HIGH SCHOOL



**SEEDS OF  
HEALTH, INC.**

# Strategic Areas of Focus

Seeds of Health has identified three agency-wide strategic areas of focus to guide the network's continued growth and development.

## 1. RIGOROUS INSTRUCTION

Every Seeds of Health student deserves to be challenged with grade-level work so they can prepare for the future they want to build for themselves.

Pages 6 - 7

## 2. ENHANCING COMMUNITY & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Education is most effective when schools, families, and the community are working together to benefit students.

Pages 8 - 11

## 3. DEEPENING SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE

It's not only curriculum and instruction that matter. Seeds of Health builds relationships and initiatives that support the student - whatever their interest, strength, challenge, or opportunity to grow.

Pages 12-15

# 1. Rigorous Instruction

## A Path to Success for *Every* Seeds of Health Student

Nationwide, the spiraling effects of COVID-19 continue to impact students years after school closures. These deep and profound effects compounded challenges our students were already facing due to well-documented systemic inequities. We've taken a data-driven approach to better understand how we can ensure all Seeds of Health students not only continue to recover from COVID learning loss and mitigate the effects of inequity, but to flourish.

Seeds of Health engaged with UnboundEd, a national organization focused on supporting educators, to ensure every student thrives in school through GLEAM™ (Grade Level, Engaging, Affirming, Meaningful) Instruction.

At the heart of GLEAM™ sits the expectation that all students interact with rigorous instruction and grade-level material, so that every child, regardless of the challenges they face in life, has just as much opportunity to succeed as any of their peers. When students are exposed to grade-level instruction and the focus on achievement that comes with it, they're more prepared to advance to each next milestone with the skills they need to be successful. Eventual career-readiness hinges on the rigor we're injecting into students' education at the earliest stages.

Through UnboundEd's GLEAM™, rigorous instruction is also responsive to students' cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds so they can see their own experiences in the material they're engaging with, making that learning all the more relevant. When bolstered by appropriate scaffolds of support, every student is better able to meet their full potential.

To fully adopt GLEAM™ at Seeds of Health, we're working through UnboundEd's best-in-class professional development program, with network Principals and Department Chairs participating in the organization's Standards Institute. Their continued work includes aligning agency-wide goals, plans, and professional development with GLEAM™ to support meaningful gains in student achievement at Seeds of Health.

UnboundEd's Valery Dragon spoke at Seeds' all-staff agency kick-off at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. Dragon reminded our educators: "What you believe about kids and what they believe about themselves as learners form the culture of your classroom....Kids love seeing other people believe."



UnboundEd's Valery Dragon speaks at Seeds of Health's all-staff agency kick-off in 2024.

## Literacy: The Roots of Academic Success

Students' ability to read proficiently by 3rd grade has a significant impact on their long-term achievement, so we're laser-focused on reading proficiency at Seeds of Health Elementary. Though literacy has always been a major focus, our new comprehensive Early Literacy Initiative, based in the science of reading, includes extensive professional development for teachers, reading intervention resources for students (including our multi-language learners), and our new Early Literacy Library, where children can grow into a love of reading with increased access to high-quality, grade-level texts.





## Tenor's Journal Square Continues to Grow

Seeds of Health is expanding Milwaukee students' access to our trailblazing Tenor High School model. Seeds opened Tenor High School in 2005, instituting a first-of-its-kind "3+1" dual certification model in partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). Through this model, students complete all their required high school credits in three years, then attend MATC their fourth year, at no cost to families, all while receiving continued support from Tenor faculty and staff. Upon high school graduation, students can leave with their certificate in a trade, continue their studies at MATC in pursuit of an associate degree, or transfer credits earned at MATC to a four-year university. The Tenor model helps students identify a future career path and the steps to achieve that path, provides them a support system during their first year at MATC while they're still Tenor students, and prepares them for their next steps. The Tenor Journal Square campus opened in November 2021 to complement our original Tenor Cathedral Square Campus. At the time, we had renovated one of the two buildings we purchased for the Journal Square campus and made plans to complete renovations of the second (North) building in subsequent years. In Fall 2023, we opened the Innovation Lab on the renovated ground floor of the North building. Now, we're moving ahead with

the next three phases of renovations, which are scheduled to be completed by Fall 2027.

Tenor Journal Square's total enrollment will increase in stages up to 500 students by Fall 2027. With every Tenor senior class learning on campus at MATC each year, the maximum number of Tenor students onsite at Tenor Journal Square will top out at 375 students, allowing the school to retain its small-school environment, while still providing more Milwaukee students access to the model.

Plans include:

1. By Fall 2025: Complete **cafeteria expansion**, build-out of the North building's **second floor**, and creation of a **student-run coffee cafe** focusing on entrepreneurship. When this phase of work is complete, enrollment is scheduled to increase by 50 students.
2. By Fall 2026: Build out the **third floor** in the North building and open a new **Career Lab**. We will accommodate an additional 75 students.
3. By Fall 2027: Renovate the **fourth floor** of the North building to welcome 75 more students.

*Tenor Journal Square*



## 2. Enhancing Community & Family Engagement

### The Coffee Cafe @ Tenor Cathedral Square

What began in Fall 2023 as a special project to help one young person in Tenor Cathedral Square's Special Education program engage more meaningfully during the school day has evolved to become a major agency initiative aiming to motivate and equip students with real-world skills and foster collaborations with the community in a whole new way.

At the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, Academic Resource Teacher Zac Blum was working with a student who needed something more to make school as relevant and hands-on as possible. Together, they came up with the idea to develop some kind of shop, where the student could focus on developing important soft skills. The student, along with the Director of Student Services Elizabeth Simpson, Zac, and a few additional young people who were interested in the project, set up folding tables in the school gym and made coffee drinks for the Tenor Cathedral Square staff.

As the project picked up steam, more students wanted to jump in and help. With students so eager to participate, Elizabeth and Zac saw an opportunity to "say yes" and keep growing. By the end of the 2023-24 school year, the students realized they needed a space of their own



to develop their fledgling venture. Seeds of Health's Buildings & Grounds Department answered the call and built out a kitchen space in the school gym that even included a door with a serving window.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth and Zac were exploring partnerships and seeking out resources to make the Coffee Cafe initiative an even more meaningful learning experience for Tenor Cathedral Square students. Most notably, they connected with the Milwaukee-based Stone Creek Coffee, ultimately developing a partnership through which the company provided equipment for the newly

renovated Coffee Cafe and now sells Tenor Cathedral Square Stone Creek Coffee beans for use in student-made coffee beverages. To provide students with even more real-world insight into the coffee business, Stone Creek Coffee is offering learning experiences that have already included a student visit to the company's downtown coffee factory and bakehouse, where they explored the history of coffee and coffee roasting and learned more about career paths in the coffee industry.

Now, Tenor Cathedral Square has established an inclusive elective Coffee Cafe course, giving students the opportunity to work in a focused way on the Coffee Cafe project. Students rotate through four hands-on learning modules: Business, Marketing, Research & Development, and Production. The Coffee Cafe is open at Tenor Cathedral Square three days a week and serves a menu of beverages that is entirely student-created. Students gain extended, in-depth access to all aspects of an entrepreneurial endeavor – from studying revenues and expenses and building a brand to menu development



and production processes, giving them useful, real-world experience they can leverage in their future educational and career opportunities. At the same time, the Coffee Cafe offers students with disabilities the chance to practice and build real-world skills in a supportive environment.

The students involved in the Tenor Cathedral Square Coffee Cafe know they're part of something special. Derrick, a 10th grader, says, "I'm looking forward to really seeing the Coffee Cafe grow. I want to come back to Tenor in three years, after I graduate, and see a huge change. We have a legacy inside this school."



## Strengthening the Bond: School and Families Work Together at Seeds of Health Elementary



Parents are the driving force to strengthen family involvement through a revitalized PTO at Seeds of Health Elementary. After COVID, a historically strong PTO needed some rejuvenation, and a group of dedicated parents are already making a difference. Before the 2024-2025 school year even started, the PTO raised funds to purchase more books for the Elementary School's new Early Literacy Library and organized a free haircut event for 50 families at parent orientation. The group is developing a room parent program and an initiative to encourage more reading at home.



## Building Community Through Art

During the 2023-24 school year, Veritas High School formed a partnership with La Familia de Arte, a grassroots organization that helps communities build and install public art. With La Familia de Arte's help, Veritas created an art installation featuring tiles created by students and community members. Veritas hosted a Family Art Night where students and families designed tiles and enjoyed fresas con crema and elote cups made by Veritas' Cooking Club. In September 2024, Veritas unveiled the installation on the lawn along Oklahoma Avenue for the entire community to enjoy. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in conjunction with Veritas' annual Charity Walk, where students raised money in support of La Familia de Arte.



## 2. Enhancing Community & Family Engagement

### Growing Our Own

Seeds of Health was proud to welcome four new staff members to the team who were Seeds of Health graduates at the start of the 2024-25 school year. Oscar Ornelas, a Veritas graduate, is now an art teacher at his alma mater. Diana Lopez, also a Veritas alumna, joins us as an administrative assistant, while Erin Benson is Veritas' new Academic Resource Teacher. Dana Escobar, now a Social Studies teacher at Seeds of Health Elementary School, is Seeds of Health's first K-12 graduate to return to us as an employee. They join six additional former Seeds of Health students who are also current staff members. We're building a strong employee pipeline through our own Seeds graduates, a testament to our commitment to "growing our own."



Oscar Ornelas

Veritas High School, Class of 2019  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee,  
Bachelor of Arts, Studio Arts  
Current Veritas High School Art  
Teacher

*Oscar delivered this address to community members at an agency event in October 2024*

"I like to think that my journey with Seeds of Health is like finding a needle in a haystack, one in a thousand. Nine years ago, I remember walking into this little building located in Southside Milwaukee. What looked like a little church was actually a high school housing 250 students. It was what I like to think of as a hidden gem. As soon as I walked into the building, on the wall was 'Veritas: A Place of Distinction.' I went on about the open house excited and thrilled. This little high school I had no idea existed felt like it was my home. But what really got me was this big mural located in the multipurpose room: a gigantic eye with different hands representing diversity and the scales of justice, along with some other aspects. It was then and there where I realized that this did not feel like home – this was home.

Initially, however, I was waitlisted, and I remember being a bit devastated about that. But nonetheless, I was calling bi-weekly to check in on my progress, until the administrative assistant told me she would personally call me if I got accepted. And that she did. I was set to start at another school in a week, but I got that call, and the rest was history.

During my time at Veritas, I felt supported both in an educational capacity and an emotional capacity. All of the teachers made me feel like I belonged. They didn't look at me like I was just another number. They actually cared about me. When life at home wasn't the greatest, I knew I could go into teachers' rooms and vent to them. I knew all of the teachers had my back. Veritas' support and love went above and beyond the classroom. I even had staff members show up one time to my house during COVID to check in on my brother who was falling behind. At Veritas, I met my best friends Paola and Daisy, who went on to become my chosen family. Veritas became my happy place. They were able to do what not a lot of other schools in the city would do for you.

Even during college, when I fell to the lowest of low places any person can fall to, my support system was still there. When I got kicked out of home, Veritas was there. When I was struggling with college, Veritas



## Right At School

Since 2022-23, Seeds of Health Elementary has offered the Right At School after school program to 30 children, at no cost to families, in response to parents' urgent calls for an affordable, safe, engaging place for their children to spend their after school hours. Through Right At School, students benefit from structured homework time, learning activities, Social Emotional Learning experiences, and the opportunity to participate in games and sports every evening until 6pm. In the grateful words of one mother, whose children were enrolled in the program since its inception, "Right At School really gives me peace of mind as a parent."

was there. When I moved out on my own, Veritas was there, and when I graduated from college, Veritas was still there. They saw me grow, they saw me cry, they saw me during my bests and my worsts, and all of them supported me and uplifted me during my journey.

When Heather [the principal of Veritas High School] called me and asked if I would be interested in returning to Veritas as a High School Art Teacher, I did not give it a second thought. I applied, went through the application process, and got the position. I am thrilled and excited to be back to the place where it all started. Currently, I am teaching around 150 students on a daily basis. My proudest teaching moment is bringing in a Chicano Arts Course, which I developed in an attempt to showcase to fellow Southside students our origins and the movements that helped us establish ourselves. I am happy to be back in a place that is genuinely proud of its kids and genuinely cares about them. At Seeds of Health, student involvement goes beyond the classroom. It creates relationships and families, and I am happy that the Seeds of Health family has welcomed me back with open arms. I am proud to be one of those teachers to this generation of students. Veritas is not only a place of distinction: it's a place of love, support, and most importantly, encouragement."



# 3. Deepening School Culture & Climate

## Inclusion and Opportunity Through Seeds of Health Athletics

For many Seeds of Health athletes, participation on their school team marks the first time they've played an organized sport, often due to families' financial constraints. That's why Seeds of Health is working diligently to continue growing the athletics opportunities available to our students.



Tenor Cathedral Square, Tenor Journal Square, and Veritas High School participate collaboratively in WIAA (Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association) sports to offer boys and girls soccer, girls volleyball, boys and girls basketball, and co-ed track. New for the 2024-25 season, Seeds of Health Elementary is proud to offer 7th/8th grade girls volleyball for the first time.

"We're trying to build a culture through our athletics program at Seeds of Health, providing opportunities for our kids to play, and teaching them to be excellent representatives of our schools in the community," explains Rob Clark, Athletics Director.



Rosa Luna-Garcia

Veritas High School, Class of 2018  
Mount Mary University, BA Sociology  
Current Veritas High School  
Assistant Volleyball Coach

Rosa Luna-Garcia, a Veritas graduate of the class of 2018, played volleyball in high school and now gives back to Seeds as an assistant volleyball coach. Rosa sees the impact sports have on the young ladies she coaches. "Our players come from three different Seeds high schools [Tenor Cathedral Square, Tenor Journal Square, and Veritas], so they've built a lot of new connections, coming together to play on one team. Everyone is having fun, and everyone feels included." As a system, Seeds of Health nurtures small-school environments while still being able to offer students opportunities in athletics that can be so important to a young person's development and confidence.

Rosa Luna-Garcia chose to attend Veritas High School because she knew the small-school environment would allow her to build relationships with her teachers and school staff. "They were authoritative figures, of course, but the connections I was able to make with my teachers were different than I would have made anywhere else. Even after graduation, I still have those relationships." Rosa attended Mount Mary University with tuition 85% covered and graduated in 2022 with a major in Sociology and a minor in Business Administration. Rosa immediately began working as an Admissions Counselor with the University and even gets to return every year to Tenor Cathedral Square, Tenor Journal Square, and Veritas High School, which are all in her territory. Rosa is impressed when she visits. "Seeds has developed so much even since I've been a student there. It's wonderful to see how successful Seeds is." Currently, Rosa is pursuing her master's degree in Leadership and Organizational Development at Lakeland University.



## Beyond the Classroom, Into the World



### Travel Club

The high school travel club has taken Seeds of Health students around the world to destinations including London, France, and Barcelona. Coming up in 2026, students will travel to Japan.



### Washington, D.C.

Thanks to the longtime generosity of Herb Kohl Philanthropies, groups of Seeds of Health high schoolers have been able to visit the nation's capitol to tour historic sites and learn about the inner workings of government. Students will once again be traveling to Washington, D.C. in 2025.



### Rainbow Camp & Camp Manito-wish

Seeds of Health high schoolers experience the peaceful benefits of nature while developing leadership and teamwork skills at the JCC Rainbow Camp in Fredonia and at Camp Manito-wish in Boulder Junction.



### Swim Lessons with the JCC

The Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center provides swim lessons for groups of interested Seeds of Health Elementary School 2nd-4th graders, providing them access to swim teachers certified to teach this vital, life-saving skill.



### Urban Ecology Center

Students discover the beauty of the natural world in their own city through Urban Ecology Center's Neighborhood Environmental Education Program.



### Trees for Tomorrow

At the Trees for Tomorrow Nature Center in Eagle, Wisconsin, students are immersed for three days in the north woods, exploring the science and beauty of the natural world.

# 3. Deepening School Culture & Climate

## A Comprehensive System of Mental Health Support

Youth mental health is at a crisis point nationwide, and Seeds of Health realized this early on. Addressing our students' mental wellbeing was a priority well before COVID brought the issue to the headlines. We understood our young people didn't have equitable access to the mental health resources they needed, so in 2018, Jodi Weber, then Assistant Executive Director, led Seeds of Health in building a comprehensive system of mental health supports, including onsite therapy for students and training for teachers through our longstanding partnership with Wellpoint Care Network. Six years later, Seeds succeeds in proactively supporting students' mental health through a series of continually evolving programs and initiatives designed to address specific needs:

- Veritas and both Tenor campuses launched REDgen chapters driving peer-to-peer awareness-building, stigma reduction, resilience, and suicide prevention
- In partnership with Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, Seeds offered LGBTQ+ staff training focused on mental health challenges for LGBTQ+ youth
- Agency-wide, Seeds continues to train staff in the Trauma Sensitive Schools approach, which is now deeply rooted in our culture
- Additional partners support broad-based social emotional learning agency-wide

*"The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health."*

*The Day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide."*

*-World Health Organization (WHO)*



Seeds of Health high school students and staff participated in World Mental Health Day.



REDgen was launched for Veritas and both Tenor campuses



## Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee: A Partner in Relationship-Building

Since 2014, Seeds of Health has partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee to offer the Mentor 2.0 program to our high school students, beginning with Veritas, then extending to Tenor Cathedral Square and Tenor Journal Square. Through Mentor 2.0, mentor relationships and group/facilitated learning help students think about their futures, identify their strengths, and develop essential tools for success, like time management, social skills, and how to advocate for themselves.



*In 2023, Alfredo, now a Tenor Cathedral Square alumnus, and his mentor were named Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee's match of the year.*

In 2022, Seeds of Health's relationship with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee expanded to include our Elementary School in response to an identified need to address some behaviors that began to emerge among students coming out of the pandemic.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee went right to work, building MentorYou, a Social Emotional Learning program intentionally targeting specific behaviors and equipping students with the ability to manage them. Big Brothers Big Sisters researched SEL models, identifying

inclusive, bilingual, and evidence-based strategies to inform a new program for Seeds of Health Elementary addressing topics like "Listening to Others" and "How to Get Along." Big Brothers Big Sisters incorporated mental health indicator assessments into the SEL program in order to identify students who might need additional support. The program Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee developed for Seeds of Health Elementary is the first and only of its kind in the nation.

"We get to be an extra support for students, building parallel relationships with students alongside Seeds of Health staff," explains Zoe Lord, Director of Education at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee. "We hope to help students build their confidence, to see themselves in a new way, to be active members of the community, to take on the world."

## Playworks

New for the 2024-25 school year, Seeds of Health Elementary is partnering with Playworks, a national organization that helps schools achieve physically and emotionally safe recesses where students are included, have fun, and return to class ready to learn. Playworks visits the Elementary School monthly to train our Recess Supervisors and "Junior Coaches," 4th-8th graders selected to lead games, resolve conflicts, and serve as role models at recess. Playworks is helping Seeds of Health create a more inclusive recess environment in which all students, regardless of their interests or abilities, can maximize their outside and classroom learning time.



# Seeds of Health's WIC Clinic Awarded USDA Recognition

In Fall 2024, the Seeds of Health WIC Program was awarded the USDA Loving Support Award of Excellence for performance in demonstrating model practices of implementing exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support. The Seeds WIC Clinic was one of just two awardees in the State of Wisconsin!

Seeds is especially proud of Jenny Rogers and Laura Cruz for the services they provide to our breastfeeding moms. In 2004, Laura Cruz was one of the first peer counselors in the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program in Wisconsin. Laura is a Grandview graduate who began working in the WIC Clinic as an intern when she was a student there.

The Peer Counseling Program uses an evidence-based peer-to-peer model that connects pregnant and postpartum women with breastfeeding peer counselors who come from the same neighborhoods and speak the same language as WIC families. WIC peer counselors have experience breastfeeding their own children, providing counseling services in person, in groups, over the phone, via video call, through texting, or chatting. Studies show WIC moms with access to a peer counselor highly value the program, and are especially appreciative of peer counselors' warmth and accessibility.



# The Dennis and Deborah Conta Tenor Scholarship Fund

As one of the driving influencers behind the creation of Tenor High School in 2005, Dennis Conta has been a beacon, a collaborator, and most of all, a great friend to the entire Tenor High School community. Continuing with his deep commitment to the advancement of equitable education opportunities to Milwaukee students, Dennis and Deborah Conta have created the Dennis and Deborah Conta Tenor Scholarship Fund. The Fund, established in 2020, provides financial support for students continuing their education at MATC in pursuit of an associate's degree. Students receiving these funds are selected based on financial need and academic merit. Funds may be used for any educational expenses. We're grateful for the visionary leadership the Contas continue to provide.





# Alumni Spotlight

Jayden Easley transferred to Tenor High School from a much larger school for his sophomore year. The smaller environment helped Jayden thrive, allowing him to focus on his classes and responsibilities. "I was very proud of my academic success at Tenor, compared to my previous school," Jayden says. "I could talk to any of the teachers and the principal, whenever I needed anything. They were there to support me." Athletics made Jayden's experience at Tenor even richer. He played varsity basketball and ran track, even qualifying for WIAA sectionals.

As a student at Tenor Journal Square, Jayden also appreciated the opportunity to take courses at MATC during his senior year of high school. "That experience really helped me get the feel of what college would be like, to help me understand the responsibilities I would have, like getting to class on time, having my books and supplies ready to go, and advocating for myself," Jayden says. "I was really grateful to take courses at MATC while I was a Tenor student, to see what college would be like."

Propelled by his success at Tenor, Jayden was driven to attend a high-quality university. Now a sophomore at Marquette University, Jayden is living on campus and working to be accepted into the College of Engineering. His dream is to become a NASA engineer who works on satellites that improve space exploration. In his first semester at Marquette, Jayden earned a spot on the Dean's List with a 3.8 GPA. He was recently accepted into



**Jayden Easley**

Tenor Journal Square, Class of 2023

Sophomore at Marquette University

Member, E-Lead Excellence in Leadership program

Marquette's E-Lead Excellence in Leadership program, which he hopes will help him build the skills he needs to eventually work for an organization like NASA. Jayden is also taking steps to prepare for success in graduate school.

"I really appreciate my experience at Tenor," Jayden says. "Whether it was competing in athletics or succeeding academically – I was pushed to be my best self. I was motivated to go into college to leave my mark."



# Alumni Spotlight



Alfredo Saavedra

Tenor Cathedral Square, Class of 2024

Freshman Honors Program Student at Marquette University

Marquette University Urban Scholar

*Alfredo's mother, Maritza Saavedra, shares their family's Seeds of Health story:*

"We first learned of Seeds of Health through a postcard in the mail. It said, 'a year of FREE college at MATC!' After one phone call, we knew Tenor was the school for our son. Still, we enrolled him with some fear. Alfredo has ADD.

Alfredo started 9th grade, learning from home during the pandemic...and he fell behind by 52 missing assignments. We then met with Principal Brenda. She asked us to trust the process, that they'd be able to help Alfredo turn things around when school started back up again in person in January.

Semester two, he met his teachers face-to-face. He would come home and go on and on about his math teacher, Mr. Jesse, and talk about how 'cool' his teachers were. Their message was simple yet empowering, 'You're going to college your senior year, so we have to get you ready.' And with the help of Brian, his Big Brothers Big Sisters 2.0 mentor, Alfredo was winning award after award! Alfredo and Brian were even selected as 2023's Mentor 2.0 Match of the Year.

This April, Alfredo was accepted into Marquette's Honors Program and was awarded a full-ride tuition scholarship via the University's Urban Scholars program.

We credit much of his success to Seeds of Health. The things he learned such as preparing for a JOG (Justification of Graduation) presentation, building relationships, and accountability completely turned Alfredo's life around. Seeds of Health and Principal Brenda had faith in Alfredo. As a result, this kid has gone above and beyond our wildest expectations, and the awesome team at Seeds of Health made this happen.

Now Alfredo is taking a double major in secondary education and history and is doing an internship at none other but Tenor Cathedral Square. I told Alfredo that he can study anything he wants – engineering, medicine, law – and he responded, 'Mom, I want to be a high school history teacher, and give back what Seeds of Health has given to me.'

In one of Alfredo's award winning essays, he wrote, '...teaching lies in the transformative power it holds; the power to inspire, to ignite curiosity, and to shape the future. It is the joy of witnessing minds bloom, the responsibility of molding characters, and the dynamic nature of the profession that keeps me enthralled. Teaching is not just a job; it is a profound and fulfilling vocation that allows me to contribute to the unfolding continuous revelation of knowledge to humanity. Encouraging paradigm shifts is not just a vocation, it's a calling and a privilege, one that I am going to answer.'"



*Marquette's Urban Scholars program "provides up to 45 full-tuition scholarships to high school seniors from the Milwaukee area with a focus on first-generation college students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds who show great academic promise and commitment to enhancing their community."*



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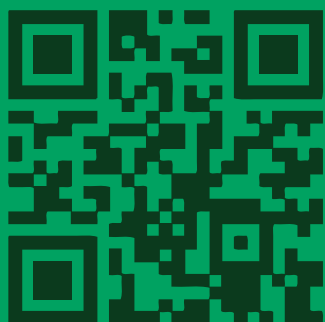
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"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy  
in creative expression and knowledge."

**- Albert Einstein**



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