

NEWS RELEASE

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Dubuque Accepts ‘My Brother’s Keeper’ Challenge

DUBUQUE, Iowa -- Dubuque has joined over 100 cities across the nation in accepting the “My Brother’s Keeper” Community Challenge. The initiative, launched this fall by President Obama, challenges communities to ensure that efforts to support youth in meeting their potential are effectively reaching those youth most at risk, particularly young men of color.

Mayor Roy D. Buol noted that the challenge is consistent with Dubuque’s efforts to ensure a more livable, viable, and equitable community for all. Specifically, the challenge encourages communities to focus on efforts around these six goals:

- All children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready
- All children read at grade level by third grade
- All youth graduate from high school
- All youth complete post-secondary education or training
- All youth out of school are employed
- All youth remain safe from violent crime

“Our challenge as a community is to continue to deliver and create opportunities for measurable progress in these areas for all youth in our community,” said Mayor Roy D. Buol. “Anyone concerned with the economic future of our community, our families, our neighborhoods, or our country should know that empowering our youth, especially those most at risk, is an investment in our shared future, and our collective prosperity.” Buol added that the challenge aligns with Dubuque’s sustainability efforts to ensure a more livable, viable, and equitable community for all.

The initiative was first announced in February of 2014. In April, members of the Dubuque Black Men Coalition met at the White House to discuss the initiative and, in September, cities across the country began accepting the My Brother's Keeper Challenge and planning began.

For the past several months, Dubuque community partners have met to prepare for the Dec. 10 summit to convene stakeholders and assess needs and assets. Mayor Buol will host this local action summit in partnership with Inclusive Dubuque and Every Child Every Promise on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 9:45 a.m. at the McCarthy Center for Non-Profit Learning in the Roshek Building. A task force consisting of representatives from the Multicultural Family Center, the Black Men Coalition, St. Mark Youth Enrichment, the Boys and Girls Club, the Dream Center, and the Dubuque Branch N.A.A.C.P. is working with Mayor Buol to raise awareness of efforts currently underway to effectively reach young men of color. These groups are an example of many who are doing work in the Dubuque community, and organizers expect additional connections can be made to further strengthen this network. The purpose of the Dec. 10 forum will be to highlight these efforts and invite attendees to develop agreements and a work plan on how various organizations can align their efforts and leverage each other's services to make measurable progress in the focus areas.

The City also is partnering with Inclusive Dubuque to conduct a community-wide equity assessment. The assessment will include examination of local statistical data and data collected through community dialogue sessions regarding the following quality-of-life indicators: employment, healthcare, education, housing, and safety. The information will be used to assist in identifying programs that are working, where gaps in access and opportunity exist, and how best to measure progress in supporting programs that are effectively closing those gaps.

City of Dubuque Human Rights Director Kelly Larson is the local point of contact for the My Brother's Keeper Challenge and is working in tandem with local organizations serving youth in order to facilitate continuous communication. Contact her for additional information at 563-589-4190 or klarson@cityofdubuque.org. For additional background on the national program, visit www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper.

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