

DUBUQUE, IOWA

My Brother's Keeper Action Plan



Thank you

Dubuque's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge Action Plan could not have been completed without the input and dedication of the following organizations:

Dubuque MBK Network

Boys and Girls Club
Clarke University
Dubuque Black Men Coalition
Dubuque Branch N.A.A.C.P
Loras College
Multicultural Family Center
Northeast Iowa Community College
St. Mark Youth Enrichment
The Dubuque Dream Center
University of Dubuque

Inclusive Dubuque Network

365 Ink
4 the People, Inc.
Alliant Energy
Children of Abraham
City of Dubuque
Clarke University
Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
Diamond Jo Casino
Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce
Dubuque Area Congregations United
Dubuque Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Dubuque Area Labor Management Council
Dubuque Community School District
Dubuque Community YMCA/YWCA
Dubuque Franciscans
Dubuque Racing Association
Extreme Body Shaping
UnityPoint Health Finley Hospital
Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
Hillcrest Family Services
IBM
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
John Deere Dubuque Works
Julien's Journal
Kendall Hunt Publishing Company
Loras College
Medical Associates

Mercy Medical Center
Multicultural Family Center
Mystique Casino
NAACP – Dubuque Chapter
NAMI Dubuque
Northeast Iowa Community College
Progressive Processing LLC
Proudly Accessible Dubuque
Prudential
Sisters of Charity, BVM
St. Mark Youth Enrichment
TH Media
Tri-State Independent Physicians
United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States
University of Dubuque
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

2014-2015 Progress



The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge

On the path to adulthood, there is no single moment that defines or determines future success. Recent research suggests positive impacts result from evidence-based interventions at multiple critical junctures along the way. Promise Neighborhoods grantees and other organizations are implementing cradle-to-college-and-career strategies that are increasing school attendance, improving academic performance, and raising high school completion and college enrollment rates.¹

The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge encourages communities across the nation to connect within their communities, identify local disparities, look to research based practices, and leverage existing assets in order to address these six milestones in the lives of young people in their respective community:

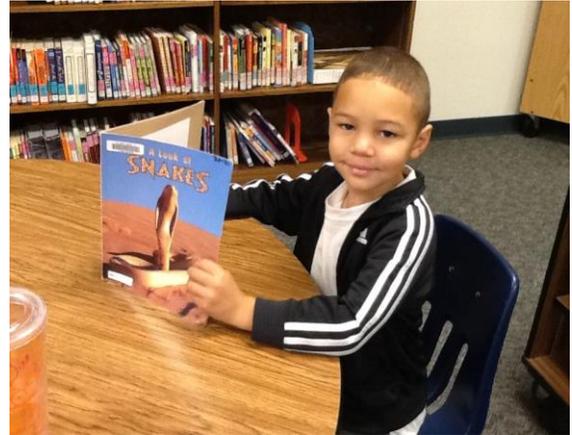
1. Ensure all children enter school ready to learn
2. Ensure all children read at grade level by 3rd grade
3. Ensure all youth graduate from high school
4. Ensure all youth complete post-secondary education or training
5. Ensure all youth out of school are employed
6. Ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime and receive second chances

The MBK Community Challenge also explicitly recognizes that, nationally, youth of color and youth in low-income families continue to fall behind in many areas, and Dubuque is not unlike the rest of the nation in terms of the existence of the disparities. We have joined over 100 communities in committing to the MBK Community Challenge.

¹ *My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report, May 2014.*

A Message from Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol

I signed on to the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge because we are a community that cares about all of our youth and that recognizes that their future is our future. Recent findings from the Equality of Opportunity Project show that children raised in the greater Dubuque area are among the most likely in the nation to move upwards into a higher income class.



National statistics, however, indicate that low income youth and youth of color do not always experience positive life outcomes. The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge is focused on identifying and acting to remove gaps faced by boys and young men of color from cradle to college to career, and I signed on to insure that our community continues to deliver on upward mobility for all of our children.

The Challenge is not about creating a government program or allocating additional government funds – it is about calling our community to take the resources and the networks that we already have and determine how to work together strategically and collectively to remove the barriers that are getting in the way of youth meeting their potential so that our youth have a fair shot at becoming happy, healthy, productive members of our community – not only for each youth as an individual but for all of us because our futures are interconnected.

- Mayor Roy D. Buol

Dubuque's Network Approach

Dubuque is a community that succeeds through people, planning, and partnerships, accomplishing our goals by weaving diverse networks. One such network, Inclusive Dubuque, consists of local leaders from education, business, non-profit, religious, and government institutions dedicated to advancing social equity in our community and fostering a community where all residents are able to connect to community assets and resources and to fully participate in the community's economic and cultural success.

Inclusive Dubuque currently is facilitating a process to develop a community equity profile to discover how diverse groups are affected by various systems in our community. Inclusive Dubuque began this process in February 2015 and will continue it throughout the year, collecting data and input from community members around the following areas: *economic well-being, housing, education, health, safe neighborhoods, transportation, and arts and culture.*

The basic approach of Dubuque's MBK Network will be to use data collected by the Equity Profile to improve alignment between MBK specific programming and these three established community initiatives:

- *Every Child, Every Promise* to help achieve the 3rd Grade Reading goal
- *Re-Engage Dubuque* to help achieve the goal of having all youth graduate
- *Opportunity Dubuque* to help achieve the goal of having all youth out of school become employed

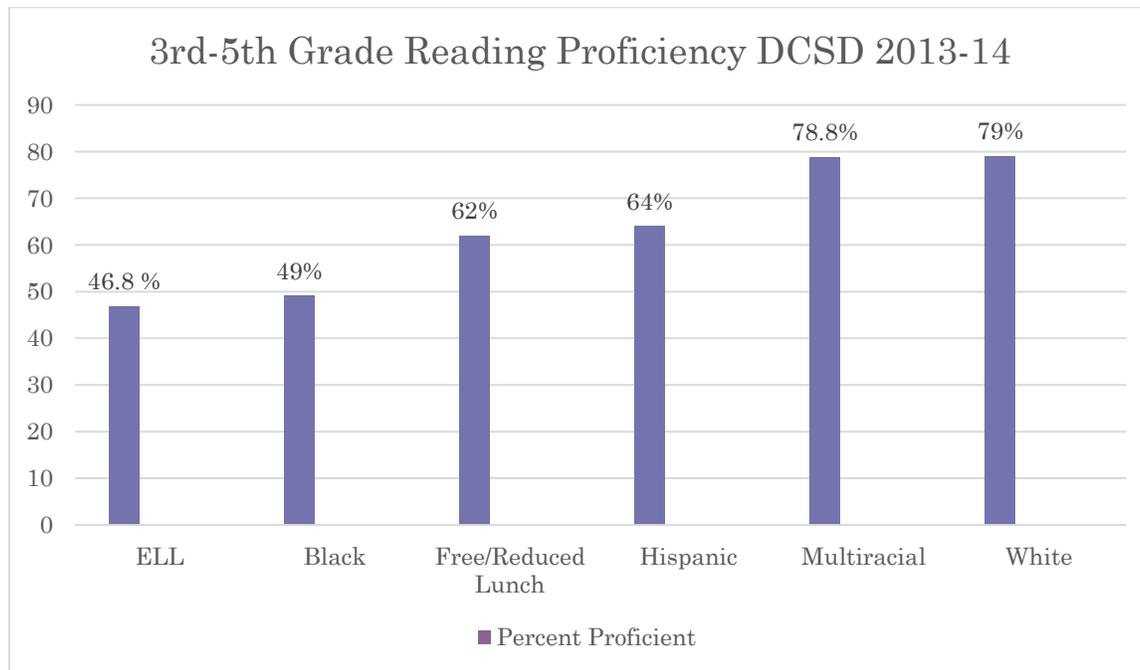
As set forth in this Action Plan, we will continue to develop our network connections and leverage MBK Network members' strengths. This plan is intended to be a living document that will adjust with the needs of the community. Examples of next steps include, but are not limited to:

- Enhancing awareness of academic programming and support available through the Dubuque Community School District
- Building on the *Road to Success for Teens* program offered by Dubuque Black Men Coalition volunteers
- Beginning to develop shared measures across MBK Network programs

This approach will best empower MBK Network partners to collaborate and move the needle on the three milestones that are the focus of our work together.

Priority Milestone: All Children Read at Grade Level by Third Grade

The Challenge: In Dubuque, children of color and children in poverty are disproportionately testing behind grade level.



MBK Strategic Objective: Leverage and Grow Every Child/Every Promise

Every Child/Every Promise is an initiative developed by a committee of dedicated partners from the Dubuque schools, non-profits, higher education, business, neighborhoods, and the faith community. It has developed a comprehensive, realistic and sustainable plan to improve the reading proficiency of Dubuque's students by the end of 3rd grade. It does this by engaging the Dubuque Community to promote collaboration among youth-serving agencies, eliminate duplication of services, gather effective data, and create a more efficient system to deliver the Five Promises to youth. The Five Promises are that every youth will have: 1) caring adults, 2) safe places to go, 3) a healthy start, 4) an effective education, and 5) opportunities to serve.

The Community Solutions Action Plan for 3rd grade Reading aims to drive progress in three areas: *School Readiness*, *School Attendance*, and *Summer Learning*.

School Readiness

The challenge: Children arrive at school not ready to learn. Childcare Pathways is a new education and training partnership between Dubuque's high schools and community college that will develop high quality preschool and childcare teachers. In addition, improved and coordinated before-school programs are now helping more students arrive ready to learn.

School Attendance

The challenge: Children in grades K-3 miss too many days of school. The improved use of attendance data and new strategies for responding to chronic absence (missing more than 10% of school days) have been found to be successful in reducing absences. These strategies are being implemented in 13 elementary schools.

Summer Learning

The challenge: Children, especially those who are low-income, experience learning loss over the summer. The Summer Academy provides additional reading supports for children who do not read proficiently through an all-day summer program to maintain reading skills.

MBK Network Commitments to the Milestone

Over the past six months, MBK Network partners have learned about one another's programs and have begun strategizing on the ways that various programs can support grade level reading. The MBK Network will leverage the programs detailed on the following page and data from the Inclusive Dubuque Equity Profile around the focus area of education to fuel stronger alignment.

Alignment actions in the coming year will include:

- Identifying strategies to ensure the students with the greatest need are being connected to MBK Network partner programs and/or other community resources
- Beginning to develop shared measurements across MBK Network programs

Mentoring & Tutoring

- Clarke University Education Department places education students in schools to support grade level reading
- Dubuque Dream Center academic support center uses club activities to incent academic achievement
- St. Mark Youth Enrichment offers before and after school academic support
- Loras College connects college students with mentees at Lincoln Elementary School

Summer Learning

- St. Mark Youth Enrichment offers a 7-week academic program
- Clarke University Education Department offers a Summer Reading Camp
- Multicultural Family Center hosts a Readers' Theater Program Camp
- Dubuque Dream Center hosts a Day Camp during the "gap" hours of 2-9 p.m.
- Leisure Services Summer Playground includes a reading component

Family Engagement

- Dubuque Dream Center "*In Your Life Mentoring*"
 - fosters full family engagement
 - intentionally connects families and teachers
- St. Mark Youth Enrichment hosts family reading nights

Impact Focused

- St. Mark Youth Enrichment measures impact through student/parent survey and state assessment
- Clarke University tracks student reading levels
- Dubuque Dream Center works with schools to track attendance, test scores, attitude and character

Any community member can assist in these efforts. Contact one of the MBK Network partners listed in the boxes above and ask about how you can volunteer to support grade level reading!

Dubuque Success Stories

St. Mark Youth Enrichment unlocks student potential and empowers youth in grades K-5 through its summer program – Heroes Academy.

Students served by St. Mark are more racially diverse and come from homes with low-socio-economic status compared to the rest of the county. During the seven-week program, learning is brought to life through character building, literacy, STEAMM enrichment; physical literacy, and collaborative projects. Each week, students participate in an exciting field trip or field experience with dynamic community partners. In 2015, students will embark upon learning with the following themes: personal everyday heroes; national worldwide heroes; animal heroes; community heroes; fiction heroes; kid heroes; and you're a hero!



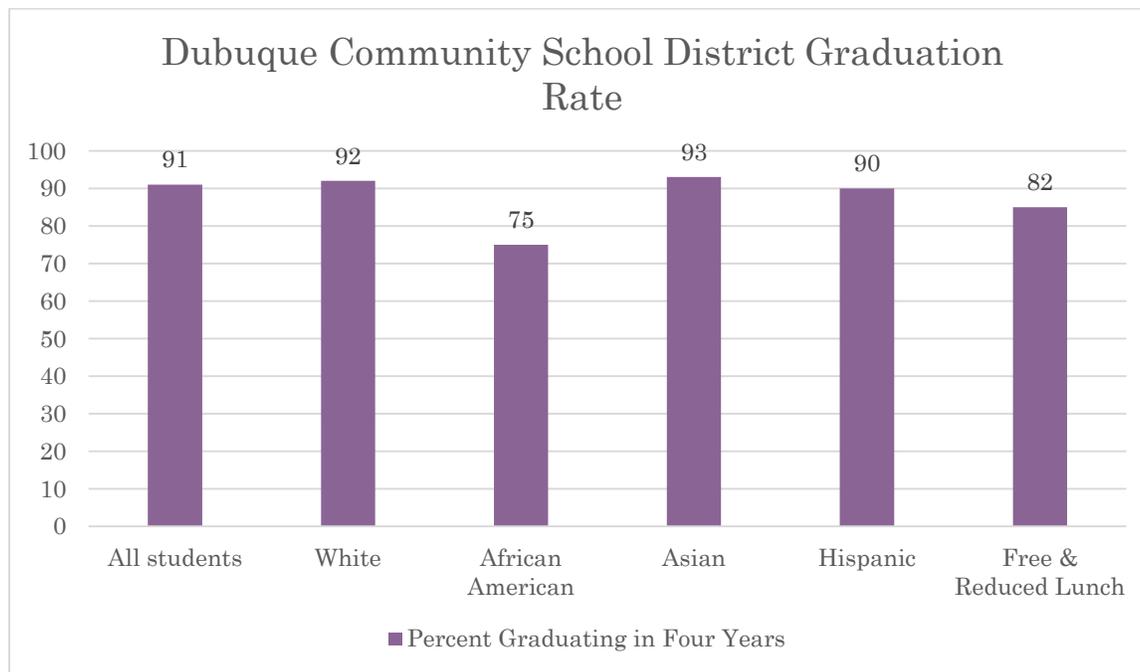
St. Mark is a partner in Dubuque's Campaign for Grade Level Reading, and a leading provider of innovative programs and services that cultivate the educational and social emotional growth of youth and families. Heroes Academy is a designated 21st Century Community Learning Center site and best practice program that works with certified educators to engage more than 200 students in Dubuque County. Based on pre/post tests, in 2014, 88% of students enrolled in the program maintained or increased literacy skills.



The Dubuque Dream Center works with each student to create an individual action plan for academic and behavioral success. Visit their website to learn more at <http://dubuquedreamcenter.com> or take a peek at this video showcasing student successes <http://youtu.be/sze4CcqlYdA>.

Priority Milestone: All Youth Graduate from High School

The Challenge: In Dubuque, youth in poverty and African American youth are graduating from high school at lower rates.



MBK Strategic Objective: Leverage and Grow Re-Engage Dubuque

Re-Engage Dubuque is a partnership between the Dubuque Community School District and Northeast Iowa Community College, with support from Project H.O.P.E., a collaborative that includes the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, the City of Dubuque, the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, East Central Intergovernmental Agency, IowaWorks, and the Circles Initiative.

The partnership works to:

- identify students who have recently dropped out of school,
- connect those students to alternative educational options and post-secondary education, and
- support students to develop a personalized plan for completing a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma.

MBK Network Commitments to the Milestone

Over the past six months, MBK Network partners have learned about one another's programs and have begun strategizing on the ways that various programs can support youth in reaching graduation. The MBK Network will leverage data from the Inclusive Dubuque Equity Profile around the focus area of education to fuel stronger alignment.

Actions over the coming year will focus on dropout prevention by creating awareness of opportunities available inside and outside schools to support students.

Mentoring & Tutoring

- **The Multicultural Family Center** works with local college students to mentor and tutor teens
- **The Dubuque Dream Center** offers academic support to prepare students for high school
- **Loras College** connects college students with mentees at Hempstead High School
- **The Dubuque Black Men Coalition volunteers**
 - offer group mentoring with high school youth
 - develop youth leadership through *The Manhood Project*

Engaging the Disengaged

- **The Dubuque Black Men Coalition** volunteers and local colleges provide campus tours, financial aid information, and connections with current college students
- **Future Talk** engages youth in summer work, service, and learning, in exchange for a stipend and a high school science credit.

Any community member can assist in these efforts. Contact one of the MBK Network partners listed in the boxes above and ask about how you can volunteer to support youth in reaching graduation!

A Dubuque Success Story

Future Talk is an 8 week summer program at the Multicultural Family Center offered to youth ages 13-18. Participants of Future Talk do meaningful work in a natural environment, learning to recognize and remove invasive plant species. Youth experience giving back to the Dubuque community through 28 hours of community service. Teens spend 10-15 hours constructing portfolios that reflect the skills and knowledge learned on worksites, and can potentially receive a high school science credit for their work.

The youth really take pride in giving back. It's their way of positively contributing to society. The program has a strong impact on the lives of the youth participants.

Marvelus Scott, a 15 year old high school sophomore said "Don't be a stereotype. I was a stereotype myself

because I thought people in the community wouldn't give us a chance, but then again they did. They let us go around the community and clean up the parks, raise money, and grow plants." After helping to raise enough money to pay for 83 meals at the Dubuque Rescue Mission, Nazaree Lambert, a 14 year old high school freshman said, "I feel good. I never knew doing that kind of stuff makes you feel good inside."

The transformation seen in the youth participants throughout their time in the program is amazing.



Priority Milestone: All Youth Out of School are Employed

The Challenge: According to the Opportunity Index, 6.51% of our youth in Dubuque aged 16-24 are not in school and not working. This compares to 8.9% of youth aged 16-24 in Iowa and 14.1% of youth aged 16-24 nationally. We were not able to obtain data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, but will seek to gather that data moving forward.

MBK Strategic Objective: Leverage and Grow Opportunity Dubuque

Opportunity Dubuque is a workforce collaborative supported by Northeast Iowa Community College, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, East Central Intergovernmental Agency, Iowa Works, Dubuque Community Schools, City of Dubuque, and the Community Foundation of greater Dubuque.

The collaborative is a job training effort developed in response to local employers' needs for a skilled workforce. Through the initiative, individuals are able to complete a short-term certification program to upgrade their skills. This program creates non-credit to credit career pathways in high-wage high-demand careers, eliminating financial barriers by providing individuals with scholarships. Recently, a partnership between Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, the City of Dubuque, and Northeast Iowa Community College funded an outreach coach who will work within one of our most racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods to identify and connect the underemployed to workforce opportunities.

MBK Network Commitments to the Milestone

Over the past six months, MBK Network partners have learned about one another's programs and have begun strategizing on the ways that various programs can support moving youth who are out of school toward employment. The MBK Network will leverage data from the Inclusive Dubuque Equity Profile around the focus area of economic wellbeing to fuel stronger alignment.

Actions over the coming year will focus on connecting youth to employers who are hiring youth and/or providing internships as a pathway to employment opportunities.

*Preparation for
Employment*

- The Dubuque Black Men Coalition volunteers and partners offer *Road to Success for Teens*, providing teens skills to navigate the employment cycle

*Summer
Opportunities*

- The Multicultural Family Center's *Future Talk* program allows youth to earn a stipend while instilling a work ethic, a service ethic, and a learning ethic
- Partners in *Road to Success for Teens* connected participants with summer jobs

Any community member can assist in these efforts. Contact one of the MBK Network partners listed in the boxes above and ask about how you can volunteer to support youth employment!

A Dubuque Success Story

Since 2013 over 100 students have participated in Road to Success for Teens, a program designed to provide students between the ages of 13 and 18 with the skills needed to navigate the employment cycle. Professional leaders in Dubuque team up with the Multicultural Family Center and the Dubuque Black Men Coalition volunteers to offer students the opportunity to create a resume, participate in mock interviews, learn about professional appearance, identify their leadership skills, and learn about business start-up.

In 2015, students had the chance to interview for summer employment through the partnerships between the City of Dubuque Leisure Services and the Dubuque Community YMCA/YWCA.



Youth learning how to
“dress for success.”



Youth learning to identify
their leadership skills.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Dubuque's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge Action Plan will focus on leveraging existing resources in the community in order to strategically and collectively work together to remove the barriers that are interfering with youth of color meeting their potential.

The basic approach of Dubuque's MBK Network will be to use data collected by the Equity Profile to improve alignment between MBK specific programming and these three established community initiatives:

- *Every Child, Every Promise* to help achieve the 3rd Grade Reading goal
- *Re-Engage Dubuque* to help achieve the goal of having all youth graduate
- *Opportunity Dubuque* to help achieve the goal of having all youth out of school become employed

As set forth in this Action Plan, we will continue to develop our network connections and leverage MBK Network members' strengths. This plan is intended to be a living document that will adjust with the needs of the community. Examples of next steps include, but are not limited to:

- Enhancing awareness of academic programming and support available through the Dubuque Community School District
- Building on the *Road to Success for Teens* program offered by Black Men Coalition volunteers
- Beginning to develop shared measures across MBK Network programs

This approach will best empower MBK Network partners to collaborate and move the needle on the three milestones that are the focus of our work together.