

Way to Grow and Urban Ventures announce partnership: Parent-child program for preschool-aged children

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In January 2014, Way to Grow will open a parent-child program for preschool-aged children and their families, called PALS (Parent-Child Activities Lead to School Readiness), on the campus of Urban Ventures, 2924 4th Ave S, Minneapolis.

Because Urban Ventures does not currently offer early childhood education, this partnership will close a gap in Urban Ventures' programming and allow Way to Grow to extend a continuum of services to children ages 3 to 18 and their parents.

Way to Grow aims to provide high quality preschool programming for preschool age children and their parents who have little or no preschool experience and who live in the underserved neighborhoods of south Minneapolis. This parent-child program pairs home visits with both preschool classroom experiences and family learning classes. The goal is to break the isolation that these families experience and improve both child and parent outcomes by allowing both to learn about school expectations and the kind of parent involvement required in the K-12 school system.

"By serving children during these critical early years, Way to Grow and Urban Ventures will lay the groundwork for success in school and life – ultimately helping to break the cycle of generational poverty in the city and create an educated work force," said Tim Clark, CEO of Urban Ventures.

"The Urban Ventures PALS program aims to support parent-child interactions and their teaching, learning and engagement skills by building on our home visiting curriculum and introducing families and children to groups and preschool classes in a community-based setting," explained Carrie Johnson, director of early education for Way to Grow.

Way to Grow is unique because its instructors meet families and children in their own homes and works to move them forward, providing outcome-based holistic, year-round, multi-year, language-to-language, culture-to-culture programming.

Way to Grow staff is collectively fluent in seven languages and culturally reflects the children and families it serves. By teaching parents and children in their home environment, with the help of classroom teachers, the program is able to tailor services and educational materials to the

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needs of each child and family.

Children and families can participate in Way to Grow home visits from prenatal through age 8. To learn more about the program, visit www.mplswtg.org.