



# UMCS Summer Newsletter

UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF WI, INC.

## An Update from Milwaukee's Beautiful Washington Park Neighborhood

AUGUST 2023

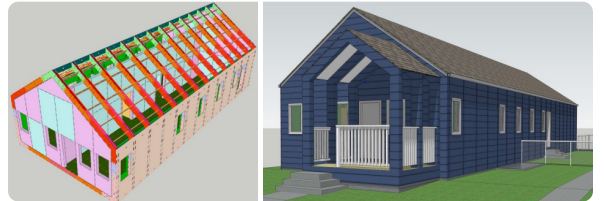
### A New Era for the UMCS Housing Program

For those of us who have been blessed to live most or all of our lives with safe, quality, and stable housing, it is difficult to fully comprehend the magnitude of the city's multi-faceted housing crisis and the myriad ways in which it undermines the pursuit of health, happiness and progress for far too many Milwaukee residents. Among the biggest challenges is an overwhelming shortage of adequate housing inventory, particularly in northside neighborhoods like Washington Park, which enables all sorts of bad behavior by unscrupulous landlords and significantly diminishes the pathways to homeownership for working families.

Throughout its 60-year history, UMCS's housing program, in all its iterations, has sought to provide safe, quality and dignified housing options to those we serve, and this summer we are thrilled to announce an exciting new phase in the evolution of our work. With

support from the State Department of Workforce Development, the City of Milwaukee, LISC-Milwaukee, and the Community Development Alliance, UMCS will partner with our friends at VIA CDC to construct nine new single-family homes on vacant lots in Washington Park. These homes will be marketed and sold to early childhood educators who desire to become homeowners and who, to this point, have had few, if any, opportunities to pursue those dreams.

It is our sincere hope that this project will be just the beginning of a longer-term, collaborative effort by UMCS and our partners to continue to develop new housing models for both aspiring homeowners and renting families. In many ways this new project represents both the realization of a



dream and just the beginning of a journey that will no doubt be filled with unexpected twists and turns. As always, we invite you to join us on this journey, and we'll look forward to seeing you at the **60th Anniversary Open House in September** and the **4th Annual Chili Fest and Resource Fair in October!**

### The Growing Tree Children's Center New Nature-Inspired Playscape

#### The Growing Tree Children's Center has a vision for the future...

Giving our children more opportunities to explore the natural world around them, enabling them to develop at their own pace and gain empathy & curiosity for new and different things.

***We need your support to complete these critical early childhood education program changes! Your investment in high-quality early childhood education for the Washington Park community is greatly appreciated.***

These playscape renderings show what our outdoor space *could* look like.



**"AND THEY BOTH BEGAN TO LAUGH OVER NOTHING AS CHILDREN WILL WHEN THEY ARE HAPPY TOGETHER"**  
**THE SECRET GARDEN**

## UMCS Community Food Center Renovation: Phase 3 Update

UMCS is excited to complete Phase 3 of our Community Food Center Renovation that began last summer. This renovation's third and final phase includes a new staff office and an expanded area for our fresh food offerings.

**Phase 1:** Community Kitchen Renovation – Completed Fall 2022

**Phase 2:** Food Pantry to Choice Shopping Program with Expanded Fresh Food Sections – Completed Fall 2022

**Phase 3:** Staff Office Addition and Fresh Food Expansion – Estimated Completion Summer 2023

*Thank you to our supporters for investing in this vital program conversion and expansion.*



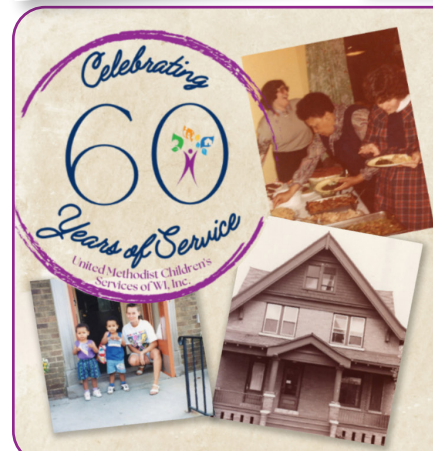
## That's a Wrap! 3RD Annual A Day of Celebration Block Party 2023

On June 23, UMCS held the 3rd Annual Day of Celebration Community Block Party, which was attended by more than 300 residents, community members, and friends. The event was filled with fun activities such as entertainment from The Style Band, delicious food, a dunk tank, a bounce house, face painting, and exciting games for kids. We are grateful for the support of our Board of Directors, UMCS staff, and most especially the 40+ volunteers who helped us make the event a huge success.

*Don't forget to save the date for our 4th Annual Chili Fest and Resource Fair happening on Friday, October 13, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Get ready for some delicious chili, valuable resources, and friendly competition!*



### Thank you to our 2023 Community Event Sponsors



## Save the Date! 60th Anniversary Open House Thursday, September 21, 2023 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Our 60th Anniversary Open House will be a joyful gathering of friends, supporters, and wellwishers, where we can reflect on our remarkable journey and express our gratitude

for the continued support that has propelled us forward throughout the years. It will be an evening filled with nostalgia, camaraderie, and a glimpse into our future endeavors.