

BBZ WESTLAWN

Working together to give every baby the best chance in life

The challenge

Babies born in and around Westlawn are more likely to be born early and less likely to survive to their first birthday than babies born elsewhere in Milwaukee.

% of babies born in 2016 that were

low birthweight

preterm

15.4%

Zip Code
53218

14.6%

Zip Code
53218

11.8%
Milwaukee

12%
Milwaukee

OUR APPROACH

1

BRING WESTLAWN RESIDENTS AND LEADERS TOGETHER

2

LISTEN TO THEIR VISION FOR MAKING WESTLAWN A COMMUNITY WHERE ALL BABIES AND FAMILIES CAN THRIVE

3

UNITE RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO MAKE THIS VISION A REALITY



PARKS, TRANSPORTATION,
AND HOUSING



EDUCATION



JOB AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY
SERVICES



HEALTHCARE





BBZ WESTLAWN PARTNERS WITH THE COMMUNITY



WHAT WE HAVE BEEN UP TO:

- Listening to resident feedback at the August Block Party, On the Table community discussion, & other partner events;
- Connecting with groups already doing this work in the community to collaborate and support expansion in the BBZ/Choice Neighborhood area;
- Secured \$65,000 from UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Greater Milwaukee Foundation and March of Dimes for community engagement and resident leadership development.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD:

- Increased **Youth Development:**
More youth support, recreation activities
- Increased **Environment Wellness:** Less exposed trash
- Increased **Peace**, Less Violence
- Better/Increased **Parking:** For SSNC & Westlawn Gardens
- Increased **Neighborhood Safety:**
Less crime and violence, and improved transportation/traffic
- Increased **Neighborliness**



WHAT'S NEXT:

- Ex Fabula Storytelling workshops to identify key champions
- Family Resource Fair with StorySlam on the topic of "Birth"
- Develop Health & Wellness Ambassadors/Advisory Team
- Partnerships with birth workers for community events
- Develop neighborhood strategy to address social determinants of health impacting birth outcomes



National BBZ Update

Best Babies Zone (BBZ) Initiative, which has been affiliated with the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley since 2012, will relocate to CityMatCH (the national association of urban Maternal & Child Health leaders) at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in May 2019. CityMatCH has received a \$1.4 million grant over 2 years from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to continue to spread the place-based, community-driven approach of BBZ under a new initiative—the Birth Equity Strategies Together (BEST) Cities Project. BBZ Westlawn is currently one of nine zones in the national network.

Best Babies Zone Initiative, pioneering neighborhood-based birth equity strategies, will move to University of Nebraska Medical Center (CityMatCH)

(BERKELEY, California, April 24, 2019) – The Best Babies Zone (BBZ) Initiative, currently affiliated with the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley, will relocate to CityMatCH at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in May 2019. CityMatCH is a national membership organization of urban maternal and child health leaders.

This institutional shift was prompted by the imminent retirement of BBZ Initiative Principal Investigator, Dr. Cheri Pies. A pioneering thought leader in the field of maternal and child health, Dr. Pies has led the Initiative since 2012. CityMatCH has received a \$1.4 million grant over 2 years from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to continue to spread the neighborhood-based, community-driven approach of BBZ under a new initiative—the Birth Equity Strategies Together (BEST) Cities Project. Dr. Chad Abresch, Executive Director of CityMatCH, will serve as Principal Investigator of the project.

“Speaking on behalf of the staff and board, we are excited and honored to welcome the BBZ Initiative to CityMatCH,” said Dr. Abresch. “We look forward to deepening our relationship with the local BBZ teams and bringing the BBZ approach to more communities across the country.”

Despite recent declines in national infant mortality rates, African American babies are still twice as likely to die in their first year of life compared to white babies. Moreover, while critically important, clinical interventions (like prenatal care) have not significantly reduced this gap. There is growing recognition that economic stability, educational opportunity, chronic exposure to stress, and racism all play a critical role in perpetuating this inequity. The BBZ approach takes each of these factors into account to address root causes and structural factors that contribute to racial inequities in infant mortality.

CityMatCH emerged as the clear choice for the next home of the BBZ Initiative due to its visibility, leadership, and deep commitment to addressing the social determinants of birth outcomes. CityMatCH promotes equity and improves the health of urban women, children, and communities by providing training and technical assistance to strengthen and support public health leaders and organizations.

“CityMatCH is poised to carry on the legacy of the BBZ Initiative. They share our commitment to addressing root causes of birth outcome inequities and have a long history as one of our national advisory partners,” said Dr. Pies. “We established the BBZ Initiative in 2012 in three pilot communities with the goals of addressing a range of social determinants of health identified by community residents in each community and ensuring that every baby born in those communities reaches their full potential. Seven years later, there are now eight Best Babies Zones across the country, each engaged in their own unique approach that constitutes the vital work of reducing racial inequities in birth outcomes. I am humbled by the progress that has taken place and am excited for the future of BBZ at CityMatCH.”

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has generously funded the BBZ Initiative since 2012, and the CityMatCH National Institute for Equity in Birth Outcomes (Equity Institute) since 2013. The \$1.4 million grant for BEST Cities demonstrates the Kellogg Foundation’s deep and ongoing commitment to addressing racial inequities in birth outcomes. BEST Cities will leverage the CityMatCH Equity Institute and the BBZ Initiative to create a comprehensive national birth equity project. BEST Cities will provide training and technical assistance to a cohort of Equity Institute teams and a cohort of BBZ teams, equipping public health professionals and community leaders with tools to improve birth outcomes and community health.

“By merging these two projects, this new entity will deepen and consolidate the aligned work of Equity Institute and BBZ,” said Caroline Brunton, Program Officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. “BEST Cities will leverage the momentum of each, and maximize the reach and strength of the initiative by creating a central clearinghouse for best practices in birth-equity work.”



Cohort 1 (Pilot Zones)

Castlemont, Oakland, CA
Hollygrove, New Orleans, LA
Price Hill, Cincinnati, OH

Cohort 2

Near Eastside, Indianapolis, IN
Northside, Kalamazoo, MI
Southeast, Portland, OR

Cohort 3

Central Harlem, New York City, NY
Hough, Cleveland, OH
Westlawn, Milwaukee, WI