

"In a radical change from the traditional view of public education, a unique partnership is helping revitalize a central city Milwaukee neighborhood."

Garden Homes Community of SCHOOLS



GARDEN HOMES LUTHERAN SCHOOL • 2475 W. Roosevelt Dr.



- **School type:** Parochial, in Milwaukee Parental Choice Program
- **Grades served:** K3-8
- **Principal:** John Wesenberg
- **Student enrollment:** 101 in 2003-04

For over 50 years Garden Homes Lutheran School has provided quality Christian education for the Garden Homes community. The school boasts a 98% high school graduation rate for its 8th grade graduates. Currently enrolling 101 students, 66 of whom participate in the MPCP, Garden Homes Lutheran plans to increase enrollment to 250 students in its new state-of-the-art facility in 2004-05.

GARDEN HOMES COMMUNITY SCHOOL • 4456 N. Teutonia Ave.



- **School type:** Milwaukee Public Schools neighborhood school
- **Grades served:** K4-5
- **Principal:** Terry McKissick
- **Student enrollment:** 350 in 2002-03

Recognized as an MPS High Achieving School and recipient of the 1995 Title I National Recognition Award, Garden Homes works closely with parents and maintains academic excellence through a rigorous student centered curriculum. The school promotes parental involvement through on-going community events and partners with the YMCA to provide before- and after-school recreational programs for children.

GARDEN HOMES MONTESSORI SCHOOL • 2475 W. Roosevelt Dr.



- **School type:** Milwaukee Public Schools contract school
- **Grades served:** K5-3
- **Director:** Mark Johnson
- **Enrollment:** 70 in 2003-04

Having opened in the Fall of 2002, Garden Homes Montessori adds an innovative specialty school to the Garden Homes Community of Schools. Garden Homes Montessori creates an environment that fosters interactive learning and individual discovery through the exploration of manipulative math, language and science materials in multi-age classrooms.

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The Garden Homes Community of Schools is a partnership between the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and Garden Homes Lutheran School. Garden Homes Lutheran participates in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), the nation's oldest and largest educational voucher program for low-income families.

The partnership between Garden Homes Lutheran and MPS has expanded high quality neighborhood education options and reduced school busing. In so doing, it has helped to rejuvenate the local community.

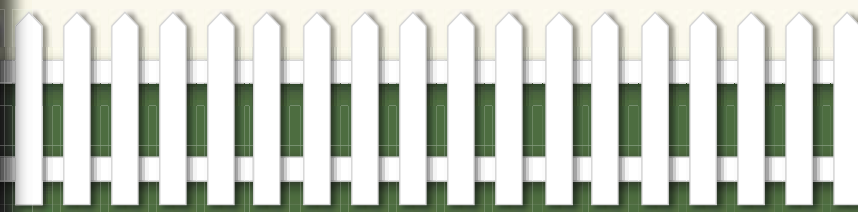
The partnership is anchored by three high quality educational institutions: Garden Homes Lutheran, a K-8 parochial school; Garden Homes Community School, a K-5 MPS school; and Garden Homes Montessori School, an innovative early childhood MPS contract school.



The new \$4.5 million Garden Homes Lutheran School under construction.

The fundamental premise of the Garden Homes Community of Schools is that strong local schools can help turn around a neighborhood in decline. For this to work, high quality educational choices must exist and parents must know about them. As this vision takes hold in the Garden Homes neighborhood, more families are choosing to stay there and parents are becoming more involved in their children's education. Ultimately, this provides a solid foundation for the community's well being.

Much of the initial impetus for this initiative came from Garden Homes Lutheran Church leaders. The positive attitude on the part of MPS helped make the partnership a reality.





A Garden Homes parent picks up her child after school.

In response to a wave of young families moving out of the neighborhood, and more than 400 neighborhood children being bused to dozens of schools elsewhere in Milwaukee, church leaders and MPS approached families and posed one important question: "What would it take for you to send your child to a school in this neighborhood?" The responses helped formulate the vision that has become the Garden Homes Community of Schools.

The families of the Garden Homes community wanted local alternatives to the lengthy busing that many of their children faced. Leaders quickly realized that more and better local educational choices were crucial. This led to the uncommon partnership between a public school district and a parochial school, with MPS renting classroom space in Garden Homes Lutheran to house its new early childhood Montessori program.



Mark Johnson, Director of Garden Homes Montessori, and John Wesenberg, Principal of Garden Homes Lutheran, are partners in the Garden Homes Community of Schools.

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The leadership and commitment of the founders of the Garden Homes Community of Schools "... have generated ... new opportunities in public, Montessori, and youth development programs to restore hope in an entire community. They are a shining hope for every challenged urban neighborhood in America."

John Gardner

*At-large School Board Member 1995-2003,
Milwaukee Public Schools*



"With the rising cost of busing, Garden Homes Lutheran Church recently partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools to offer a unique relationship—the Garden Homes Community of Schools—to capture transportation dollars to create a neighborhood Montessori school. Funding to create the Montessori school comes from parents choosing to have their children walk to their excellent neighborhood choices instead of busing their children out of their neighborhood. This public/private partnership is now a national model of efficient use of existing funds to address the needs of the entire community."

Ken Johnson

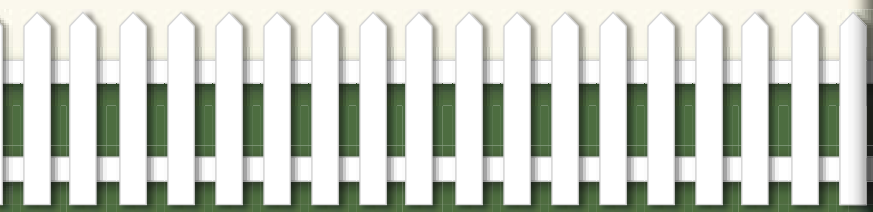
Milwaukee Public Schools Board Member



"Schools are a key building block for good neighborhoods. Good neighborhoods are key building blocks for great cities. Garden Homes Lutheran School is a great example of how you build not only good neighborhoods in a great city, but prepare young people to participate in this community and give them potential to create an even better economic prosperity for themselves and their neighbors."

Tim Sheehy

*President of Metropolitan Milwaukee
Association of Commerce*



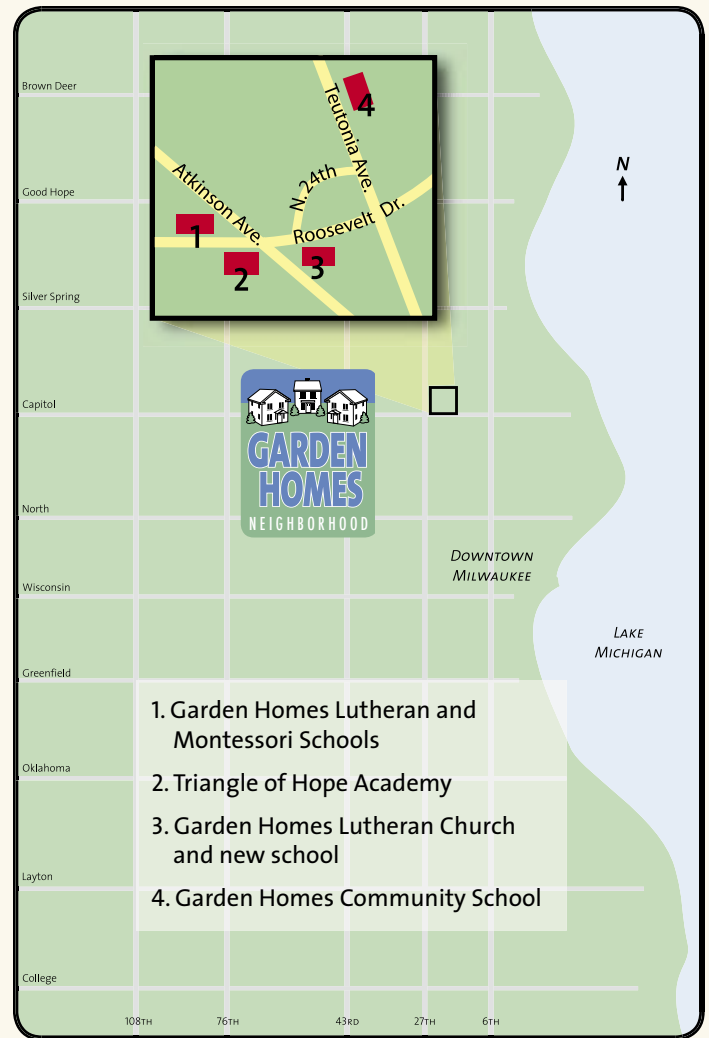
This partnership is expanding, with construction now underway on a new \$4.5 million facility for Garden Homes Lutheran School. When the facility is completed in January 2005, MPS' Garden Homes Montessori will expand to fill the current Lutheran school building.

To add still more choices in the community, a new Christian high school — CEO Leadership Academy — is scheduled for opening in Fall 2004. This project of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church plans to participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and will contribute a high school option to the local elementary schools.

Working together, these public and private schools serve as a crucial community resource link. The new Garden Homes Lutheran School will offer before-and after-school services for children in the neighborhood. Other services available to the community will include health and dental care, adult education, and exercise and wellness sessions.

The Garden Homes Community of Schools vision already is stabilizing the neighborhood and creating realistic expectations for a more vibrant, revitalized area. Parents are choosing not to bus their children out of the neighborhood, instead sending them to one of the excellent neighborhood schools where they can find time to be more involved. Children are walking with their parents to and from school. Neighbors and businesses are watching their properties knowing that discerning parents now care more deeply about neighborhood safety.

Real educational choice is the key to the success of the Garden Homes Community of Schools. While each school is based on a different educational philosophy, the commitment to providing high quality educational choices to parents is the same. Working together, the schools are able to respond completely to the educational needs of the neighborhood's children. The schools do not see themselves as competing with one another, but rather, as competing against the problems in the community. Together they work to reverse the problems and cultivate in students a sense of hope.



The Garden Homes Community of Schools is an exceptional prototype for future inner-city schools. Work already is under way to replicate the partnership in other Milwaukee neighborhoods. The project has also drawn interest from more than 200 visiting educators and elected officials from 11 states. Other cities can learn from the Milwaukee experience, where schools from varying sectors work together to provide the best options to educate the city's children. 🚲