

PRESS RELEASE

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UCC Opens Early Learning Academy & Celebrates 51 Years of Serving the Community

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN (April 6, 2021) After months of careful planning, fundraising, and construction, the state-of-the-art UCC Early Learning Academy is welcoming its youngest learners! Timed perfectly with the 51st Anniversary of the United Community Center (UCC) serving Milwaukee's Hispanic community, the opening of the Early Learning Academy (ELA) will provide bright futures to children 6 weeks to 4 years old in one of the most underserved zip codes in the city.

Much more than a physical building, the Early Learning Academy will transform the lives of children and families. At the new Becher Street campus, more than 300 children from primarily low-income families will receive the promising educational foundation they deserve. The center's Kindergarten readiness curriculum, focused on language literacy, social and emotional development, cognitive and fine motor skills, will ensure students are on the path to lifelong success.

On Friday June 4th, 2021 from 10:30am-1:30pm, UCC will host a Grand Opening for the new Early Learning Academy. All will be welcomed to the \$12 million center to preview the space, learn about the project, and celebrate 51 years of UCC providing bright futures to those they serve.

Along with the opening of the ELA, the UCC 51st Virtual Anniversary Celebration will go live at **6:00pm on Thursday, April 29th, 2021**. The program can be accessed from the comfort of your own home. All who register will get access to a virtual celebration kit, premiere viewing of the event, and an automatic entry into our *Staycation* raffle which includes tickets to fun activities around Milwaukee. The 51st Anniversary Celebration will feature performances by the Latino Arts Strings Program, highlight the five recipients of the Badger Mutual Wall of Fame, and share successes and future plans for the agency. Registration for the event can be found at:

- [UCC 51st Anniversary Celebration: Making 2021 One of Kind](#)

Badger Mutual Wall of Fame

These five young leaders were selected for the 2021 Wall of Fame for their excellence in academics, community service, and leadership. They will be recognized for their accomplishments in the virtual celebration, and their photographs will be permanently placed in the halls of the United Community Center. UCC is proud to recognize the following students:



Perla Maritza Cerda, an 8th grader at UCC Acosta Middle School, came from Mexico, knowing little English, and immersed herself into a new culture in Milwaukee. Since then Perla has not let any obstacle stop her, overcoming academic and social challenges. She has career aspirations to help others, and is considering working as a nurse or lawyer. Perla hopes to attend St. Augustine Prep next year, where she will continue to shoot for the stars and achieve all of her goals. Perla explains that she, “wants other students to know that if they follow the rules and work hard they can achieve anything.” Perla is a dreamer, and she wants to inspire other dreamers to work hard too!



Samantha Flores, a junior at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School, and an alumna of Bruce-Guadalupe Middle School, has a 3.72 GPA and is enrolled in many Advanced Placement courses. She is a very active student as proven by her widespread involvement including Cross Country, Basketball, Best Buddies, Furia Latina, Entrepreneur Club, and Campus Ministry. Samantha has goals to study business and psychology in college, and is considering schools such as UW-Madison and the University of Minnesota. “Through my life experiences I model and encourage others to succeed in school, take risks, and learn from successes and failures” shared Samantha, who hopes to one day make the world a better place.



Saul Flores, an 8th grader at Bruce-Guadalupe Middle School, currently holds a 4.0 GPA and is involved in the Triathlon & Mountain Biking Team. Saul plans to attend the University School of Milwaukee, and post high school would like to attend Stanford University to study Aerospace Engineering. Saul’s nominator explains that, “Saul’s positivity, generosity, and caring nature make him a student others look up to, and he is a positive light for all of those around him.” As a leader in his community, Saul is determined to succeed even though he knows his path to NASA will not be easy.



Anissa Hernandez, junior at Divine Savior Holy Angels, is enrolled in many Advanced Placement courses and still maintains a 3.6 GPA. Anissa is also highly involved in sports and volunteers at fundraisers to support her school and community. Anissa is excited for college and her future endeavors, and has plans to study either Law Enforcement or Forensics. Her options are wide open though she is staying focused to pursue college, including UW-Madison and UW-Whitewater. Anissa looks forward to a future filled with possibilities as she shared “I am excited to live life to the fullest and find my purpose in this world.”



Elizabeth Herrera, a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is majoring in Communications and also hopes to pursue her Real Estate License in the near future. Elizabeth aims to use her degree to help families find homes, and is inspired to rehabilitate homes so the community can become stronger. Elizabeth worked hard in middle school and high school to overcome academic and social challenges, but shared “I believe there is so much more to life. I want to inspire others to strive for bigger and better things, because I know what it feels like to be stuck and afraid to try new things.” As a mentor and active participant in UCC’s Pre-College Programs, Elizabeth wants to motivate others through her example and leadership.

About the United Community Center:

The United Community Center provides programs to Hispanics and near South side residents of all races and ages in education, cultural arts, recreation, community development, and health and human services in an effort to help individuals achieve their potential by focusing on cultural heritage as a means of personal development.