

Wanda J. Montgomery Bio

Wanda Montgomery has dedicated her life to the pursuit of excellence in the fields of child education, child welfare, and community engagement. She received an MS in Educational Policy and Leadership, a BS in Community Education, and has spent decades putting knowledge into action in her professional career, community involvement, and committee work.

Community and Professional Associations

Wanda has been an active member of the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) for over 25 years and is a Founding and Charter Member of the Black Child Development Institute – Milwaukee Affiliate (BCDI-Milwaukee), which was chartered in November of 1997. As a member of the NBCDI Board of Directors, she has held various positions throughout the years as President, Vice President, and Program Chair for the Affiliate. Currently, she serves as the President of BCDI-Milwaukee and was re-elected to that position in October of 2013. As a result of her continued work in Milwaukee and her commitment to Black children and their families, Wanda was elected to the NBCDI Board of Directors in 2010, re-elected to the board in 2012 and in September of 2016 Wanda was re-elected to the position of First Vice-Chairperson of the Board for the second year in row.

In April of 2013, BCDI-Milwaukee was recognized as the #1 Affiliate in the country, based on fifteen criteria that were established by the National Office.

As a member of BCDI-Milwaukee, Wanda has played an active role in the program operations of the Affiliate, and in 2007 developed the First BCDI-Milwaukee Affiliate Annual Excellence in the Community Recognition Celebration, a banquet recognizing Black members of the community who have been instrumental in influencing the lives of Black children. The inaugural event generated \$25,000 for Affiliate programming. In November 2014, BCDI-Milwaukee hosted the 8th Annual Recognition Celebration and the event continues to provide financial resources for BCDI-Milwaukee to implement programs throughout the year for children and their families, at no cost to them. This year BCDI-Milwaukee was able to increase the number of sponsorships for the banquet. As a result, they were able to provide sponsorship for approximately 50 childcare professionals to attend the banquet at a significantly reduced cost. Wanda has been crucial to BCDI-Milwaukee increasing their overall funding from approximately \$5,000 to \$50,000 annually. The funding has allowed BCDI-Milwaukee to continue the programs that were identified as a part of their annual Affiliate plan.

Under Wanda's tenure, BCDI-Milwaukee has been involved in several community programs detailed below:

- **Healthy Start Grant:** BCDI-Milwaukee partnered with Children's Hospital of Wisconsin to secure a HRSA Federal grant to works to reduce infant mortality. It's a 5-year, \$5 million grant.

- **Family Engagement Project:** A parenting curriculum to promote a strength approach to parenting.
- **Brunch of Books:** Promoting Literacy with children and their families during a luncheon which features an African American author who has written positive books for black children.
- **State of the Black Child: Being Black is Not a Risk Factor:** Released the first report in Detroit, Michigan in October of 2014. This report provides information relative to Wisconsin as it relates to early childhood education, health infant mortality. Included in this report were “Points of Proof” which are real life experiences on what is working well in these areas.
- **Annual Children’s Health Fair:** Provides immunizations, screenings and social service resources to children and families in the Milwaukee community.
- **Annual Book Giveaway:** BCDI-Milwaukee participated in the first Book Giveaway in response to First Lady Michelle Obama’s Literacy Initiative in conjunction with the Dr. Martin Luther King Community Center, which has now expanded for the past 3 years at African World Festival at Henry Maier Festival Park. During the past two years, we have collected and distributed over 20,000 books to children from birth to 18 years of age.
- **Raising a Reader:** BCDI-Milwaukee has also been awarded a grant to implement a program called “Raising a Reader.” This is a program to encourage parents to read to their children (generally children in a K5 classroom). The program provides a book bag of books rotated throughout a nine-week program. At the end of the program the child receives a new book bag with books that they are able to keep.
- **Entering the College Zone:** This program was designed to help children consider a college career and has continued as one of their flagship programs. In May of 2014 BCDI-Milwaukee partnered with Junior Achievement and Journey House to expand the program to include middle and high school students and their parents.

Also under Wanda’s leadership BCDI-Milwaukee has been awarded several grants to implement programs in local childcare and elementary schools as it relates to childhood obesity and literacy. For the second year in a row, BCDI-Milwaukee has also been awarded a grant from the Zero to 5 Birth–Ounce of Prevention Association a grant to increase advocacy among early care and education professionals in Milwaukee.

In October of 2013 the NBCDI released a report, “State of the Black Child: Being Black is Not a Risk Factor,” based on national data. This report has been endorsed by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans. BCDI-Milwaukee and BCDI-Detroit were selected as the two Affiliates to develop the first statewide reports which were formally released at the 2014 NBCDI National Conference in Detroit, Michigan in October of 2014. The following year Wanda was elected as Co-Chair for the NBCDI Affiliate President Advisory Committee.

Wanda has also been able to develop and sustain partnerships with many organizations locally and on the state level. Some of the organizations include: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 4C's, Fresh Start Family Services, Supporting Families Together Association, YoungStar Consortium, Wisconsin Head Start Association, UW-Milwaukee Extension, MacPyles-McDonalds, Acelero Early Learning Center, Next Door Foundation, COA Golden Center, Jo's Early Learning Center, Only God Can Child Care Center, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Celebrate Children Foundation and Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Under Wanda's leadership BCDI-Milwaukee co-sponsored the First Color of Child Welfare Conference on racial disparities with over 200 participants and local & national speakers. Wanda was instrumental in the development of this conference and bringing to the forefront the need to discuss and act on the disproportionate number of Black children in the child welfare system in Milwaukee. BCDI-Milwaukee received the NBCDI award for the largest Affiliate membership in the country in November of 2010 and continues to be a model Affiliate.

Wanda is committed to BCDI-Milwaukee, but more specifically she is committed to serving Black children and their families. This has been demonstrated through her continued volunteer work on the local, state and national levels.

Elected Office

- Elected as a Trustee in the Village of Brown Deer –April 2018
- Elected as Village of Brown Deer President – April 2019

Boards and Committees

- Appointed Co-Chair of Milwaukee LifeCourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF)
- Elected to Co-Chair for Quality Care and Education Committee for Milwaukee Succeeds
- Co-Chair of Operations Team and Advisory Committee for Milwaukee Succeeds
- Co-Chair for Program Committee for Local Initiative for Sustainable Communities (LISC)
- Co-Chair of the MATC Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee
- 1st Vice-Chairperson and President, African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
- Ministry Administrator, Ebenezer COGIC
- Board Member, Rite Hite YMCA
- Board Member, Black Women's Network
- Board Member, National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin

- Board Member, Supporting Families Together Association
- Board Member, Housing Resources of Wisconsin
- Member, Milwaukee Chapter of Links, Inc.
- Member, NAACP
- Member, Politique

Awards

- 2019 National Black Child Development Institute Family Engagement Award
- 2018 Community Journal “Year of the Child” Award
- 2017 Business Journal Woman of Influence
- 2017 Pastors United Community Service Award for Working with Youth
- 2017 United Way Gwen T. Jackson Award for Volunteer Service
- 2016 Community Brainstorming James Howard Baker Awardee of the Year
- 2015 AAWC Hat Luncheon Awardee
- 2014 Milwaukee Links Edith Finalayson Volunteer Service Award
- 2014 100 Women of Excellence-Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ
- 2014 Kamonie Slade Spirit of the Game Award (Riverside and Rufus King Alumni Award)
- 2014 Community Connection News, Cover Story February/March
- 2013 Black Excellence
- 2011 Who’s Who in Black Milwaukee
- 2010 Black Women’s Network
- 2009 Victorious Women’s Conference

Publications

- Blueprints for Excellence: The Guide to Creating a High-Quality Early Childcare Education Center (2002)
- Blueprints for Excellence: Curriculum Guidelines in a Childcare Center (2003)
- Blueprints for Excellence: Personal and Professional Development (2004)

- Featured in CCN Magazine, Spring Edition (2014)