

Unleashing Superheroes in Our Community

Superheroes are all around us. Whether we see them or not, they can ignite learning, spark curiosity, and inspire greatness. That's where Innocent Classroom and teachers come in. The [Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood](#) (SPPN) partners with Innocent Classroom to give teachers one of the tools they need to activate learning.

Innocent Classroom does this by helping teacher's undermine societal stereotypes, low expectations, and implicit bias to ensure their students are free of stereotyped expectations. Innocent Classroom rebuilds relationships between educators and students by uncovering a student's innate goodness and basic motivation to learn. The program can truly save the day for students and spur them on to greater things.

"Innocent Classroom helps us create the type of culture we want in our schools – one where all children are viewed as good, worthy, and capable of greatness," said Kirk Morris, Principal at Benjamin E. Mays IB World School, an SPPN Partner School and Innocent Classroom participant.

Changing How Students See the World

In Innocent Classroom, teachers discuss the power of the subconscious mind. With a focus on empathy, they try to understand how each student navigates the world. Together, educators and students recognize how they see the world now and how that can change.

Teachers, like everyone, possess blind spots. Unchecked, this can lead to bias. Research by Harvard University and the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia came to the same conclusion: Teachers are more likely to help students who they think will succeed, and there's a correlation between teacher expectations and student outcomes.

"We don't acknowledge how much our subconscious mind shapes our behavior, it could run counter to the values our conscious mind expresses," said Adebisi Wilson, Director of Community Development at Innocent Classroom.



In one exercise, instructors created a list of things that American society perpetuates about children of color. In just a few minutes, participants generated a list of horrible things. If teachers can generate this list, the students are also aware of it. The lesson: If teachers are not working to shift these perceptions, students will continue to internalize negative notions and they won't show up to learn.

Quick Links

- [Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood](#)
- [Story: Creating a Sense of Community](#)
- [Story: Keeping up with the Hodges](#)
- [Opportunities for Children and Families](#)
- [Our Impact](#)
- [SPPN Policy Agenda](#)
- [Story: Planting the Seeds of Success](#)

“Children consume the same media adults do, and they negatively internalize those things, too. A culture that has bias against, and low expectations of, black and brown children burdens the classrooms,” Wilson said. “Teachers can be liberators: They can make sure students don’t carry burdens society puts on them. They can uncover potential in powerful ways,” she added. “Innocent Classroom is cultural and energy shift. An innocent classroom is a space where students are thriving; they are bringing their best selves to the space. Teachers know and see students.”

Transforming Neighborhood Schools One Superhero at a Time

For the second year in a row, SPPN partnered with Innocent Classroom to bring this high-quality professional development program to SPPN Partner Schools, with notable results:

- 91% of educators have seen academic growth in some or most of their students as a result of their participation
- 93% of participants agree that the knowledge and skills they developed has improved relationships with students
- 88% of educators are better able to redirect student behavior in a positive direction because of the knowledge, skills, and practice gained

“Innocent Classroom is a strategic response to how teachers teach. It provides relationship building in a way that isn’t institutive and that doesn’t happen in colleges. We are grateful to partner with SPPN and these amazing schools,” said Matthew Brandt, Vice President of Innocent Classroom.

Together, teachers, SPPN, and Innocent Classroom are working together to make sure thousands of children are beginning to have the same life-changing experience.

By making sure that each individual child is engage in learning in a positive way, we can promote student achievement and close the education opportunity gap. We can inspire the next generation of real-world superheroes.

Programs and Services

Aging
Caregiving
Childcare and
Preschool
Parenting Classes
Housing
Kofi
Memory Loss

Mental Health
School Success
Social Healing
Center
Southeast Asian
Privacy Policy
Program Related
Policies

Resources

Community Projects
Events Calendar
Newsroom
Meeting Space
Minnesota Compass

Wilder Research

Collaboration Factors Inventory
Homeless Study
Program Evaluation
ROI Studies
Survey Center

Building Community

Achievement Plus
James P. Shannon Leadership Institute
Neighborhood Leadership Program
Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood
Serving Greater Saint Paul
Volunteer
Wilder Center
Youth Leadership Initiative

[Looking For Something Else?](#)



Like 0

Share

[Site Map](#)

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 451 Lexington Parkway North, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104 Phone: 651-280-2000

[Sign In](#)