**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**   
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Neighborhood House Early Childhood Program Earns YoungStar 4 Rating**

**Milwaukee, Feb. 19, 2015** --- Neighborhood House Early Childhood Program officially passed state inspections for YoungStar 4 status on February 13th, 2015. The agency’s overall scores were good enough for the top YoungStar 5 rating, and it hopes to be formally reviewed for YoungStar 5 in the coming months.

YoungStar is a program of the **WI Department of Children and Families** that evaluates the quality of care given by regulated child care providers, and provides ratings from 1 to 5 stars, with 5 stars being the highest. Ratings are reviewed annually, and are based on Education Qualifications and Training, Learning Environment and Curriculum, Professional and Business Practices, Child Health and Well-Being Practices. A higher rating improves an agency’s reputation, and increases its reimbursement rates for Wisconsin Shares.

Neighborhood House’s high rating is the result of coordinated efforts by Early Childhood staff, and by facilities and business office staff. “Teachers are proud of their classrooms, proud of the important work we do, and it shows,” said Phan Sanford, Early Childhood Services Manager. “Everyone who works here contributes to making this a first-rate environment for early childhood education,” added Neighborhood House Executive Director Jeff Martinka, “from the classroom teachers to the people who keep the sidewalks shoveled, the floors spotless, the kitchen clean, and the books in good order– it’s all connected.”   
  
The YoungStar 4 status comes as Neighborhood House begins a new **Early Head Start** partnership with **Next Door**, providing extra support for families in need, part of a $4.8 million federal effort to improve access to high-quality infant and toddler care in high-need communities.

LINKS

* [Early Childhood Program Shines](http://nh-milw.org/2015/02/19/early-childhood-program-shines/)
* [Early childhood staff and kids share their stories](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001_M4U-UK21MLIIxIz8fGUQ9a6ST72M5r1L3IaYfrb2vd1_tguYdoii3-Of4UhVP2LWQUi9oYvAEOewL9jkyNCwbF-IIh8UuerQksJZ3A1YLszWqxndYNAIbbjFDK9jSMzKBzTKHRzahUKTgfPCUN7Tu0qRLX3wrR1kMmpQtwHK9ZXjyh6BaB0qlsCBn0aOceSkcFyTpDk3--Y-hm8yuIC1NCx6s7YbdtP_iWq6MOFBhPQl641j1jscTSTLpOPCud8mv69RyVdrtUvCkrLm1uyzt9Za94HKl1Wwuv3g5bvgRvGbpfMUc_p78OHXiJYCxFhwfXl8J8gs8EMBW6vBVswDkCXD8ZrBzLyq2mqELgGnadKVQ0NlDv22LLzUddNwmHPP_IIFrIg62U=&c=YavM0qo1gtGFaV42wCiPE6abCKkchFOx1KWY8nPNTq_6zja2hqsoMw==&ch=JGoTlWsGWpZYKyVJjnNTXPdvLvSjBMlsVW6AB4APrFlWINK6rf4ntQ==) on Radio 88.9
* [Neighborhood House of Milwaukee selected to partner in $4.8 million early head start child care grant](http://fox6now.com/2014/12/11/neighborhood-house-of-milwaukee-selected-to-partner-in-4-8-million-early-head-start-child-care-grant/)
* WUWM’s LaToya Dennis interviews Phan Sanford about [Efforts Underway in Wisconsin to Help Black Children Beat Odds Against Them in early childhood](http://wuwm.com/post/efforts-underway-wisconsin-help-black-children-beat-odds-against-them)

**ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE:***Neighborhood House of Milwaukee is a community center in the settlement house tradition now in its 70th year, founded to help strengthen children and families in some of the city’s most under-served neighborhoods. The agency has touched the lives of nearly a million children and adults since 1945. Its highly regarded, award-winning programs serve infants and toddlers, school-age and teen youth, adults and families, refugees and immigrants. More at* [***www.nh-milw.org***](http://www.nh-milw.org)