

## For More Information on How to Get Involved

### Staff Team

- Rev. Alonzo Johnson, Convener (alonzo.johnson@pcusa.org)
- Rev. Ginna Bairby, Network Organizer (ginna.bairby@pcusa.org)
- Rev. Dr. Eileen Lindner, Consultant (eileen.lindner@pcusa.org)

### Wider Staff Team

- Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II (jherbert.nelsonII@pcusa.org)
- Bryce Wiebe (bryce.wiebe@pcusa.org)
- Rev. Rosemary Mitchell (rosemary.mitchell@pcusa.org)

*“In infant Baptism, the church acknowledges the beloved nature of children from their first days. Presbyterians in mission and ministry have a long tradition of serving all of God’s children with life’s blessings.”* – Heath Rada, Moderator of the 221st General Assembly

*“Literacy, theological knowledge, and spiritual growth go hand in hand.”*  
– Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle, Minister for Mission, Wayne Presbyterian Church and Pastor, The Common Place



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# Educate a Child, Transform the World



*“...Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry...thirsty...a stranger,  
....naked...sick....in prison? ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the  
least of these – you did it to me.’”* -Matthew 25:37-40 (NRSV)

[pcusa.org/child](https://pcusa.org/child)

## Lack of Education = Poverty

Children constitute the most poverty-stricken age group in the country at 17.7 million, while 6.5 million survive on less than half of the poverty line income. These children are at risk and find themselves mired in circumstances that thwart their hopes and dreams.

There is a direct correlation between educational inadequacies and poverty. A child that drops out of school has only a 12 percent chance of ever holding a job with benefits and pension.

In order to effectively end poverty in this country and around the world, children must have the basic skills that will allow them to emerge as strong, productive citizens. Schools cannot accomplish this alone.

## Childhood Education is in Crisis Mode

Only 18 percent of schools in the US meet basic reading standards.

The US Department of Education reports significant teacher shortages in math, science, special education and bilingual education.

High-quality early childhood education experiences make a difference in lifelong learning and social success.

25 percent of poor and minority children who enter high school will not earn a diploma.

The American high school dropout rate costs between \$320-350 billion annually in lost wages, taxable income, health, welfare and incarceration costs.

High school dropouts are not eligible for 90 percent of jobs available in the US.

## The Church Must Fill the Void

Presbyterians have always had a strong commitment to educational advocacy believing that “educating the human mind is the fulfillment of ‘life abundant’ promised in the scripture”.

Jesus, whose own attention to the well-being of children was a hallmark of His ministry, still calls the church to “remove the stumbling blocks” that cause little ones to stumble.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is working with partners in the US and worldwide to provide quality education to one million children by 2020 through:

- Strengthening communities’ capacity to provide quality education
- Elevating the quantity and quality of early childhood programs offered by and in Presbyterian congregations
- Engaging and training leaders as advocates for the education of children
- Giving voice to national public policy debates around educational issues
- Elevating and encouraging the replication of best congregationally-based strategies

## The Church is Making a Difference

### Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Children from the William Dick Elementary School in North Philadelphia come to Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church twice a week for a tutoring program focused on reading as well as enrichment programs in music, arts, yoga and nutrition. Students from 10 neighboring high schools are recruited as tutors; both congregation members and community residents are also welcome to participate. The program, now in its 50th year, is so popular among tutors and students that successive generations of the same family participate.

“This program has become a part of our family and part of the fabric of the Bryn Mawr congregation.”

Cackie Rogers, director of the Wednesday Tutoring Program

“Members from all of the participating congregations live their faith by their witness to the children. Together we make a difference for these children and our community.”

Diane Cook, executive director of the tutoring program

### Shelbyville, Kentucky

First Presbyterian Church in Shelbyville consulted with local teachers about the literacy and tutoring needs of children recently arrived from Central America. Four congregations now sponsor a tutoring program committed to the success of all of its children. Now those with language barriers are getting the help they need to complete school, go to college and find jobs.

### Greensboro, North Carolina

Starmount Presbyterian Church helps resettle families from sub-Saharan Africa and Syria and works to ensure that children have the basics to succeed in school: clothing, school supplies, calculators and backpacks. The church supports the work of the Black Child Development Institute, which has improved and protected the quality of life of children, youth and families in the Greater Greensboro community.

“Meeting their basic needs through this program ensures that all children are prepared for educational success.”

The Rev. John Odom, pastor of Starmount Presbyterian Church

## What Can Your Church Do?

- Adopt an elementary school in your area
- Organize an afterschool center
- Volunteer as a tutor/mentor
- Form or upgrade an early childhood center
- Learn about your community’s school dropout rate
- Support legislation for better schools
- Attend school functions
- Encourage members’ involvement in school boards
- Provide backpacks with school supplies
- Develop a summer lunch program