

CHILDREN MATTER MOST

Children Matter Most is a missional initiative of the INUMC to equip and resource local churches in the ministry to and with children. We focus on helping leaders by addressing partnerships with schools, food insecurity, and nonviolence. We want to support the work that God has already begun and encourage and inspire leaders and churches to continue in their commitment to Children Matter Most.

Children Matter Most - 2022 Celebrations and Accomplishments

We are grateful for the opportunities we have had to share and invite others into the mission of Children Matter Most at Annual Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, and through updating our website presence.

We hosted the All In! Event on October 1, 2022, where lay and clergy ministry leaders were able to be informed, inspired, and equipped about the needs of children and our response as the UMC churches of Indiana. Over 80 participants gathered for worship, training, and valuable conversations.

Children Matter Most has worked within the conference to address church safety through child and youth protection, nonviolence efforts, and gun violence awareness. Our hope is that churches will invest in updating their policies and take action to address violence as it appears in our communities.

There are two districts who have representation for Children Matter Most within their Operational Teams and beyond. We celebrate the work of the North and Southwest Districts to create intentional space for the continued work of Children Matter Most.

The Dream and Do Award was created and became available for applications. The Dream and Do Award provides an opportunity for children and young people to receive a grant to help further the ideas young leaders have around mission, justice, and community.

A Children Matter Most Internship was implemented with great success. We are grateful for the work of Emma Bennett and her continued commitment to help the message of Children Matter Most thrive.

Children Matter Most - 2023 Goals

We are asking everyone to consider “Who are our Children?” this year with the hope that churches will recognize they are a part of the movement of Children Matter Most by seeing children in their communities who need their support and care. We will provide resources to help churches consider their next steps in this mission. We believe partnering with schools is a valuable way to live out our commitment to children and will emphasize ways churches can make these connections.

We will focus on how we can support the work of District Operational teams in facilitating ongoing conversations about Children Matter Most. We hope to see additional Districts offering representation for Children Matter Most.

We will continue to value partnerships and collaboration with organizations and movements furthering the care of children. We will engage in cooperative ministry, including with the United Women in Faith and in efforts to help promote Child Safety and Gun Violence Awareness. We will continue to walk with and expand our relationships with our Indiana Children’s homes.

1 Children Matter Most is working to expand our communication by providing informative and
2 inspiring stories and learning experiences. We will offer articles for publication and challenge
3 other conference ministry areas to create resources relevant to children.
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5 **Children Matter Most Team**

6 Jen Huff, Chair

7 Angelo Mante, Edna May, Lennie Hawkins, Susan Bennett, Sara Daniels, Christy Huston, Ramie
8 Cooney, Zachary Manton, Stacy Downing, Lori Gratsy, Harriet Wilkin, Meadow Mertz, Gary McRae,
9 Tina McAninch, Lisa Brown, Bishop Trimble, Shannon Stringer, Lore Gibson, Emily Krach

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11 *Submitted by Emily Krach*