LIFELONG LEARNERS

Community News & Insights **Fall 2025**

Intergenerational SCHOOLS

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Celebrating Every Learner's Journey

This fall, as we reflect on our 25th anniversary year and share the release of last year's state report cards, we're celebrating what makes each student's learning journey distinct.

At the Intergenerational Schools, growth doesn't follow a single path. Some students find their confidence leading the Near West Tea Shop. Others discover their voice presenting climate research at TIS–East's Earth Day Fair. What connects these moments is our shared belief that every learner deserves space to progress at their own pace, in a community that sees and supports them.

This year brought remarkable academic progress alongside the joy and curiosity that define our classrooms. Near West sustained its high performance while TIS–East made meaningful gains in gap closing and overall ratings. These outcomes reflect the dedication of our students, families, and educators working together, but they certainly don't tell the whole story. Here are some highlights of that story.

Thank you for being part of our learning community. Your partnership makes these countless moments possible.

Brooke King, CEO
Intergenerational Schools

This Quarter's Focus

Nurturing Individuality

At the Intergenerational Schools, nurturing individuality means recognizing that learning is personal. Every student brings unique gifts, experiences, and goals. Our role is to create space for them to reach their personal best in a joyful environment.

Throughout this issue, you'll see how our model supports individual growth: from academic progress measured in meaningful ways to student-led clubs that honor diverse interests to intergenerational relationships that teach us we all have something to offer.

Because when individuality is nurtured, learning becomes limitless.

FEATURE STORY

When students feel seen, supported, and free to learn at their own pace, they succeed in the classroom and beyond.

By the Numbers: 2024–2025

Academic Achievement

- 4.5 stars at Near West (2nd consecutive year), ranking #3 of 107 Cleveland K–8 public schools
- 1 → 3 star jump in Gap Closing at TIS–East
- Chronic absenteeism reduced by 15.8% at TIS–East

Community & Engagement

- 140 intergenerational visits
- 27 Learning Partners volunteered weekly
- 13 senior service partner orgs hosted visits
- 9 out of 10 eligible students re-enrolled for 2025–2026

25 Years of Growth:

Academic Excellence Meets Whole-Child Learning

Our 2024–2025 Annual Report captures a year of meaningful progress across both campuses and celebrates the unique model and intergenerational community that makes it possible.

This year brought strong academic outcomes alongside the joy, curiosity, and connection that have defined our schools for twenty-five years. Students didn't just meet standards; they led Earth Day Fairs, ran the Near West Tea Shop, showed up more consistently since the pandemic, and expanded their capabilities in new and authentic ways.

Individualized Model of Education Continues to Yield Academic Results

The numbers tell an important part of the story:

Near West Intergenerational School earned 4.5 stars overall, out of 5, for the 2nd consecutive year, ranking #3 among Cleveland's 107 public K–8 schools. They outperformed all nearby non-selective public schools in Achievement with a Performance Index score of 90.1 and earned 5 stars in the Gap Closing measure.

The Intergenerational School–East made significant gains, jumping from 1 to 3 stars in Gap Closing, which is a measure of how well we support students across all sub-groups (race, economics, special education). The campus also reduced chronic absenteeism by 15.8%, nearly five times Ohio's improvement target.

These outcomes reflect more than test preparation. They show what happens when students feel they belong: they want to come to school, engage deeply, and reach for their personal best.

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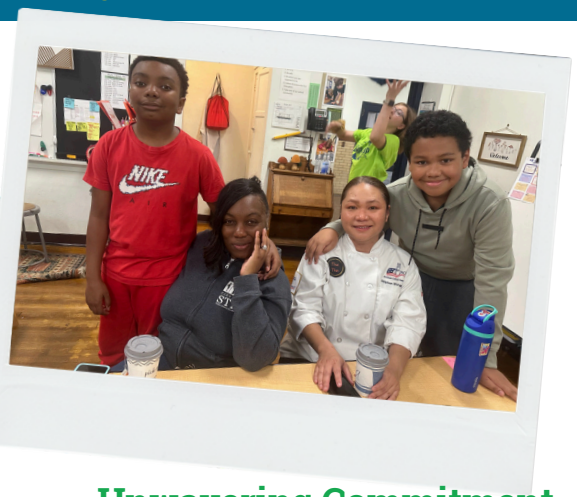


Unwavering Commitment to Student Success

Behind every milestone are educators creating the conditions for students to thrive. Our principals reflect on what this year's outcomes represent:

April Maimone, Principal, Near West: ***"Maintaining 4.5 stars two years in a row shows we're sustaining academic excellence while continuing to grow and providing each student with what they need to succeed, year after year."***

Aziz Ahmad, Principal, TIS–East: ***"I'm most excited about jumping from 1 star to 3 stars in Gap Closing and reducing chronic absenteeism by 15.8% in one year, proof our students want to be here. Together, we've created a school where they feel that they belong."***

This progress is especially remarkable given the challenging transitions both campuses navigated this year:

Near West sustained high performance while implementing new K-6 curriculum, and TIS–East made these gains after a major school merger, with new students, staff and a principal in his first year of leadership.

Beyond the Numbers: Stories of Authentic Learning Experiences

The Annual Report also features stories of authentic learning that capture what makes our model distinctive:

At Near West, the student-run Tea Shop celebrated its fifth year. Each week, Developing Stage students manage every aspect of the business, from interviewing applicants to preparing orders. They're learning collaboration, responsibility, and the joy of meaningful work. Teacher Beth McAllister, who launched the Tea Shop, turned it into a master's-level course project, sharing her approach with colleagues and demonstrating how student-driven enterprises teach literacy, math, and social-emotional skills.

At TIS–East, students led an Earth Day Fair in April, teaching families and community partners about climate justice and renewable energy. They made their presentation boards, student book boxes, and T-shirt bags out of recycled materials.

Refining and Applying Stage students (5th-8th grades) presented to their K-4th peers and then took what they knew to a Case Western Reserve University fair, demonstrating that when students learn with purpose, they're ready to lead.

These moments show what scores alone cannot: when students feel seen, supported, and challenged, they don't just learn, they thrive.

Read the full 2024–2025 Annual Report: igschools.org/reports

Want to Learn More?

Curious about how our developmental, mastery-based approach to grading works? Wondering what "Gap Closing" measures? Read CEO Brooke King's blog post on this year's Ohio School Report Cards at igschools.org/blog

Intergenerational SCHOOLS

Take a Moment to Share a Moment

This anniversary year, we're gathering stories that capture what makes the Intergenerational Schools meaningful, from alumni reflections to parent perspectives to Learning Partner memories. Your story helps us celebrate our impact and inspires others to join this community. **Share your story at igschools.org/25years**

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Nurturing individuality means creating space for students to discover what they love and then giving them opportunities to share those passions with others. Everyone can be both a learner and a teacher.

After-School Clubs: Where Passions Take Root

Beyond the school day, students explore interests, build skills, and connect across ages. This fall's after-school programs show what happens when students have space to pursue what matters to them: they discover new talents, teach one another, and grow into confident, curious learners.

From Intergenerational Visit to Student-Led Club

When Laila Simone Kendrick, Applying Stage (7th grade) student at TIS–East learned to crochet from a resident during her class's intergenerational visit, she didn't just pick up a new skill, she discovered a passion worth sharing.

Now, she's passing that knowledge forward. Last year, Laila launched the Crochet Club at TIS–East, welcoming students in the Developing, Refining, and Applying Stages (3rd-8th grades) to learn the art of crochet together. The club's first meeting this school year was October 15, and will continue throughout the school year. Laila leads weekly sessions where students learn the basics, practice new stitches, share techniques, and build community through conversation. Her mom, Dionne Waggoner, serves as the staff advisor to the club (as well as being the school's yoga teacher). Beginners and experienced crocheters alike are welcome; no prior experience necessary for lifelong learning.

Laila, founder of the Crochet Club at TIS–East

Laila's advice for anyone starting to learn this skill: "Practice, practice, practice," she encouraged. "When I started, I was horrible, but now I can work on a project and barely notice I'm doing it."

Crochet Club meets Wednesdays from 3:30–4:45 p.m. All supplies are provided. Adult crocheters are welcome to join, just call 721-0120!

The Thread that Connects Us

The Crochet Club represents something central to the Intergenerational Schools model: learning doesn't stop at the classroom door, and it doesn't move in just one direction. When a student learns from an older adult during a community visit and then teaches her peers, everyone grows. One student's curiosity becomes a shared experience, and that's how we nurture both individuality and community.

Each year, the Intergenerational Schools partner with more than a dozen senior service organizations to create these meaningful connections. Interested in bringing intergenerational programming to your organization? Contact Seamus O'Hara at sohara@igschools.org

After-School Clubs & Activities, Fall 2025

Across both schools, students are discovering new passions through after-school clubs that honor their unique interests and talents. From journalism and theater to upcycling and health leadership, each program offers students a chance to explore what excites them, connect with peers across stages, and grow as confident, curious learners. New clubs emerge throughout the school year.

These clubs also provide working families with convenient, safe, and FREE after-school activities for their children, another way the Intergenerational Schools support the whole family, not just the student. ***Parents: For more information about joining a club at your school, check the Bloomz App message feed or contact your principal. Community Members: we would love to have you drop in, or even start a club based on your interest. Call Seamus at 216-721-0120 or email SOHara@igschools.org.***

TIS–East

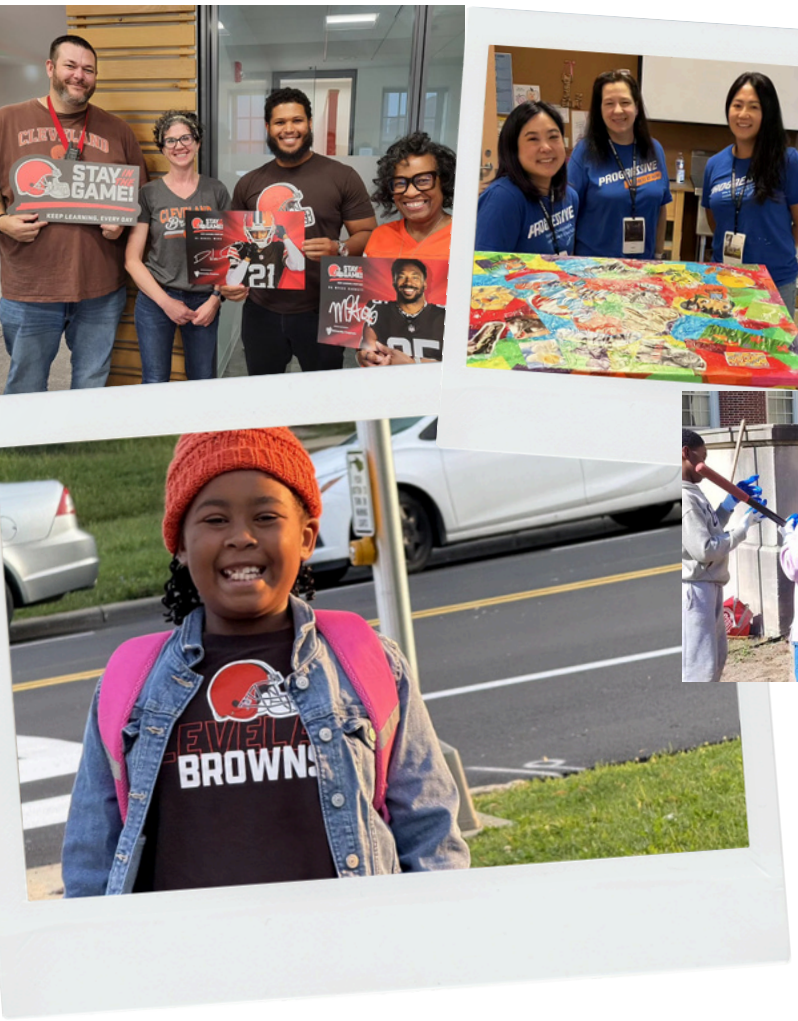
- **The Creationarium** – A creative storytelling and comic design club where students explore world-building and visual storytelling. All stages/ages welcome (Primary–Applying) | Meets Mondays, 3:30–4:45 PM
- **Journalism Club** – Students report on school news, host announcements, and contribute to a student newspaper. Refining & Applying Stages | Meets Mondays & Thursdays, 3:30–4:45 PM
- **Theater Club** – In partnership with **Playhouse Square**, students learn acting, set design, and stage management for a spring performance. Developing–Refining Stages (performers); all stages/ages welcome for crew roles | Meets Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30–4:45 PM
- **Teens Make Health Happen (HealthCorps)** – A leadership and wellness program focused on community health and student-led projects. Grades 6–8 | Meets Tuesdays, 3:30–4:45 PM
- **Upcycling Lab** – Students repurpose everyday materials into useful or artistic creations while learning about sustainability. All stages/ages welcome (Primary–Applying) | Meets Thursdays, 3:30–4:45 PM
- **Crochet Club** –This club brings students together to learn and practice crochet as an intergenerational art form. Developing–Applying Stages | Meets Wednesdays, 3:30–4:45 PM

Near West

- **Happy to Hang Club** – Young students learn valuable social skills playing games and making friends (Primary) | Meets Wednesdays, 3:30-4:45 PM
- **Awesome Possums Art Club** - and explore visual arts and creative expression through collaborative projects. (Primary, Developing, and Refining Stages) | Meets Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 PM
- **Gardening Club** – Hands-on gardening and sustainability education, in partnership with Kentucky Community Gardens. Primary Stage harvests in the fall and Developing Stage plants in the Spring. | Meets Tuesdays, 3:15-4:30 PM
- **Survivor Reading Club** – Read popular Young Adult books, discuss them and participate in fun group literacy activities. (4^{th}-8^{th} grades) | Meets Tuesdays, 3:15-4:30 PM
- **Food Strong Cooking Club** – In partnership with Food Strong Cle, students learn how to grow and cook their own healthy meals along with nutrition basics. (Developing, Refining, and Applying Stages) | Met Mondays in September
- **Girl Scouts (Troop 70103)** – Daisy, Brownie, and Junior levels for girls to explore leadership, service, and friendship through troop activities and community projects (Primary-Developing Stages) | Meets Wednesdays, 3:30–4:50 PM, plus occasional weekend events
- **Scouting America (Troop 440)** – A new program offering leadership, service, and skill-building opportunities for all students. All ages welcome | Meets Mondays 3:30-4:45 PM
- **High School Placement Test Study Group** - For 8^{th} graders Tuesdays and Thursday in September and October

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Our students thrive because they're part of a community that believes in them, from volunteers and staff to families to the students themselves.



See more photos from these events and more on our Facebook Page facebook.com/igschools

Event Recap: Progressive Day

On October 8, more than 60 volunteers from Progressive Insurance and HLM Property Management rolled up their sleeves to refresh both school campuses. With students, they landscaped and made art for outdoor spaces, built and stocked Little Free Libraries, and played enthusiastic games of "storm the castle" with newly donated gym equipment from Progressive.

Their energy and generosity transformed our campuses. Thank you to Progressive, HLM, and the families and staff who made this day so memorable and meaningful.

Attendance Collaboration: Stay in the Game! Initiative

Last fall, we joined the Stay in the Game! Attendance Network, a statewide initiative led by the Cleveland Browns that celebrates students for showing up every day. Attendance remains a critical issue for schools after the pandemic.

Throughout the season, students with strong attendance earned Browns-branded prizes and recognition including being invited onto the field before a game! (pictured above) At the Intergenerational Schools, showing up is about more than marking attendance. When students are consistently present they build strong relationships, gain confidence, and have more opportunities to discover what they're good at. It becomes the foundation for everything else.

A good day's work.
A lasting impact.

Corporate groups and community groups can make a tangible difference through one-time volunteer projects or matching giving opportunities. **Contact Melina Higbee at mhigbee@igschools.org to coordinate a group project or explore workplace giving.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Every season brings new opportunities to support our students' growth. Here's what's coming next.

November and December Event Highlights

Get Ready to Re-Enroll!
Re-Enrollment and Early Enrollment Begin in January
Current families will receive re-enrollment details soon. If you know a family searching for a free public school where their child can learn at their own pace in a supportive community, early enrollment gives them priority access to open seats for the 2026–2027 school year. Share this newsletter or send them to **igschools.org/enroll**

Year-End Giving
Your support makes it possible for students to thrive in small classrooms where individuality is celebrated and learning is limitless. Make a gift to the Annual Fund at **igschools.org/donate**

Intergenerational SCHOOLS

EAST
Buckeye-Woodhill

NEAR WEST
Ohio City

igschools.org

A Note on This Quarter's Theme

Throughout this issue, you've seen nurturing individuality in action: students leading their own learning in the Tea Shop and Earth Day Fair, Laila sharing her crochet skills across generations, and campuses creating conditions where every learner can thrive at their own pace.

These countless moments, big and small, are what make the Intergenerational Schools a place where students don't just succeed academically. They discover who they are and what they're capable of becoming. Thank you for being part of this community. Next quarter, we'll explore Innovating Education. Stay tuned.