

Building Connections...With STRONG D.C. Families

Every parent knows that the first few years of a child's life can be *overwhelming*.

From long, sleepless nights...to budgeting for baby expenses like diapers and formula...to tracking every developmental milestone...**it's no easy task.**

For many caregivers in our community, that's where the **Martha's Table Family Visiting program** comes in.

Meet Ms. Isaac, strong mom to three and an important member of our Martha's Table family. Shortly after her youngest arrived, she found her way to Martha's Table. A former coworker happened to be on our Family Visiting team, and reached out to her with a life changing opportunity.

"Ms. Ida introduced me to Ms. Cara and all of the team," Ms. Isaac recalled. **"They were really nice, and really supportive. Since then, there's been so much support."**

Like Ms. Isaac, every caregiver enrolled in our Family Visiting Program receives the full slate of Martha's Table supports. Our dedicated team provides child development activities and screenings...helps prepare children for school...and supports parents in achieving their personal and family goals.

"If you need food, you know you can go there and get food," Ms. Isaac emphasized. **"If your baby needs diapers, you can go there and get diapers."**

On top of that, your support means that every child in our Family Visiting program will receive a \$1,000 child savings account!

(Read more on Page 4)



"You know how you have to worry about certain things? You don't have to worry when you have these people on your side because they've got your back!"

*-Ms. Isaac,
Family Visiting Parent*

Take Action: D.C. families can turn to Martha's Table for support, 365 days a year. Set up a monthly gift today to join the Martha's Table Apple Corps and ensure every family can feel that caring support when they need it most.

www.marthastable.org/monthly

Building Connections... Meet Our Lobby Ladies

Caring neighbors like Ms. Pege, Ms. Earnestine, and Ms. Canada are part of the heart and soul of Martha's Table.

They started volunteering in our markets during the pandemic. Soon, *the bonds they formed with our neighbors and each other would be unbreakable.*

Spending their afternoons handing out groceries together at our front door, this trio quickly became known as **"the Lobby Ladies."**

"In the beginning, I was actually putting the bags of food together because I thought that was safer," Ms. Pege remembered. **"And then one day they asked me if I could go out to the lobby [to distribute the groceries]. I just loved it so much. And then I met these two!"**

For the Lobby Ladies, volunteering at Martha's Table goes so far beyond the healthy food they distribute when they're here. The smiles and stories they share with our D.C. neighbors makes a big difference!

"We give food but if we give them a part of our personalities too," Ms. Earnestine explained. **"Then they get more than the food and it's what keeps them coming back!"**

(Read more on Page 3)



Ms. Pege takes a break from the market to serve delicious meals and warm smiles at our annual Harvest Dinner in November.

Building Connections... Reading and Growing Together

For Kamala, it all started with a casual morning chat between neighbors.

Working in her garden, she struck up a conversation with Annette, a member of Martha's Table's Changemakers book club.

Little did Annette know, Kamala had been looking for a space to both read new books and get to know other neighbors in the community. When Annette mentioned the weekly gatherings she attended with Martha's Table, Kamala couldn't believe her luck.

For herself and many in the group, being connected with others in the community provides a source of togetherness that they'd desperately missed during quarantine.

"We were and are still in a pandemic," Kamala emphasized. **"So this is definitely a way to help me normalize my existence in the world. I'm excited about just sitting and being with people!"**

Since its creation in 2021, the Changemakers Book Club has read stories like *Between the World and Me* by Ta-naheesi Coates, *The Black Side of the River* by Jessica Grieser, and *All About Love* by Bell Hooks.

Julie, another longtime member of the book club, found her way to the group shortly after moving to the Historic Anacostia neighborhood.

Combining her love for reading and her desire to get to know her new community felt like a no brainer.

"I was eager to get to know my neighbors a little bit more and make connections in the community," Julie recalled. **"Then also, I was eager to read books and get perspectives from people who, until that point, were not a part of my day-to-day life."**

For her, the conversations shared during book club play a powerful role in reshaping what it means to be a strong community of neighbors.

"We discuss topics, especially when it comes to self-improvement, resilience, trauma, racial injustice...that are so deeply woven in the fabric of our everyday lives," she emphasized. **"I feel like the book club allows us to kind of re-educate ourselves about the world that we're in, and what our role in that world can be!"**

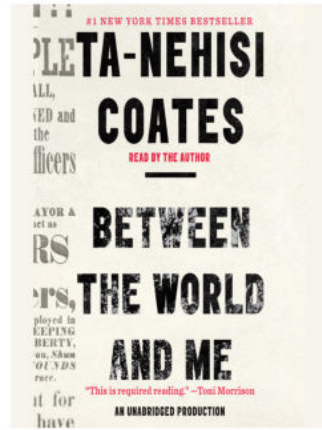
With your help, neighbors are able to come together as strangers and build a lasting community, together.

"There are grandmothers in the group, there are mothers in the group, mothers of small children, married women, there are divorced women, there are single mothers," Kamala reflected. **"It defines us as a community. Everyone knows that we're here for each other."**

Your Martha's Table support creates meaningful connections for neighbors, and helps strengthen communities all across D.C. *Thank you!*

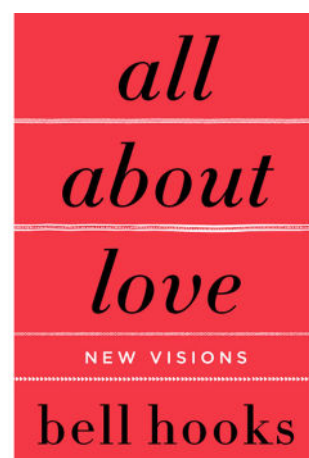
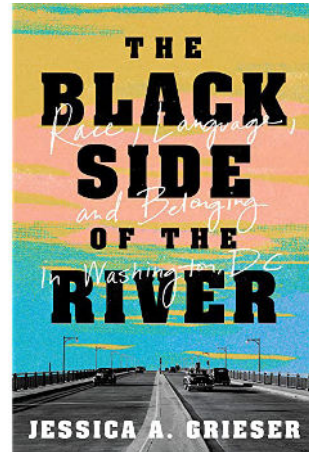
Take Action: We love supporting our neighbors as they build meaningful connections with Martha's Table. Your gift today will ensure even more D.C. neighbors can experience the strength that comes from communities like the Changemakers Book Club!

Give today at www.marthastable.org/donate



"We're all there to listen and hold space for others. I think that's what being in a community is. It defines us as a community."

-Kamala, Book Club Member



Building Connections... One Quilt at a Time

If you walk through Martha's Table on a Tuesday afternoon, you may hear the faint whirl of sewing machines, fabric shears, and laughter coming from upstairs. Your support helps continue the work of our **Quilter's Corner** group!

Each week, these ladies build connections through the art of quilting, **and create pieces that truly tell the story of the Anacostia community.** Their first completed quilt was created with the Log Cabin pattern...which was once used to share important messages along the Underground Railroad.

We are amazed by the beautiful work our quilters do, and by their commitment to preserving the art of quilting for future generations of Washingtonians!



Take Action: Our programs wouldn't run without the support of our passionate volunteers! Will you join us for a volunteer opportunity this spring to see the meaningful impact of your support in action?

Sign-up today at www.marthastable.org/volunteer

Did you know?

Martha's Table has over 15,000 volunteer opportunities every single year!



Volunteers fuel our programs 365 days a year!

Our Lobby Ladies... continued

For Ms. Canada, getting to show up for her D.C. community is the best part of volunteering.

"You never know how we can brighten somebody's day," she emphasized. **"You never know what people are going through."**

Ms. Pege remembers a time when a neighbor stopped by the market as she prepared for her father's funeral. After talking with her a bit, the Lobby Ladies realized she didn't have any clothes to wear to the service, and knew just how to help.

They were able to find our neighbor a nice outfit to wear, showing just how strong their commitment is to making sure everyone leaves Martha's Table feeling better than they came.

With your support, volunteers like the Lobby Ladies help us deliver on our mission every single day.

From working in our healthy markets...to helping shoppers at our no-cost clothing boutique...to sharing hot evening meals with neighbors visiting McKenna's Wagon...**every volunteer is a critical part of the Martha's Table family.**

STRONG D.C. Families... *continued*

At Martha's Table, we know that a child's parent is their first and best teacher. We know that pouring love and support into every caregiver we meet matters.

"When I have my one-on-ones with Ms. Ida, she sits and asks me what support I need," Ms. Isaac shared. **"She asks what help I need...am I okay? How's my mental health?"**

Ms. Isaac emphasized just how impactful the Family Visiting Program has been for her entire family, including her older children who aren't at Martha's Table.

"They have a mobile van that comes to Martha's Table, if your kids need hearing exams, vision exams, or their shots...I love that!" Ms. Isaac expressed.

Throughout the week, Ms. Isaac is even able to attend workshops like our Martha's Table Parent Cafes, where she can open up to other moms experiencing similar challenges.

"You know how you have to worry about certain things?" Ms. Isaac asked. **"You don't have to worry when you have these people on your side, because they've got your back."**

Thank you for making Martha's Table a place where parents can focus on what truly matters most...being strong and loving caregivers for their children!



Take Action: Did you know...our no-cost clothing boutique relies on year-round donations to ensure D.C. families have the professional and baby clothing they need to thrive in every season.

Learn more at www.marthastable.org/clothing-donations

Martha's  Table
EDUCATION • FOOD • OPPORTUNITY



Where families receive caring support... *All under one roof!*

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