

The Detroit News

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

detroitnews.com

SERVING MICHIGAN SINCE 1873

KINTSUGI VILLAGE MAKES IMPACT

Corktown community hub off to promising start

‘Child-led’ curriculum sets new venture apart

BY LOUIS AGUILAR

The Detroit News

Detroit — Kintsugi Village co-founder Paul Spiegelman ran into a parent of twins who are among the first 27 children taking classes at the new early education center located in the shadow of the Michigan Central Station.

“I just said, ‘How’s it going so far?’ and she said ‘Amazing,’” Spiegelman said, recalling the conversation that took place last week. The first group of 3-year-olds to 5-year-olds started being instructed at Kintsugi in mid-October.

When Spiegelman asked the parent why she was so pleased, she said that within two weeks of her twins being instructed at Kintsugi Village, “her kids are now listening at home and they’re helping. They’re actually helping,” Spiegelman said.

“The fact that we’re impacting them when they get home and we’re hearing that feedback is really heartening,” he said.

Spiegelman and Kintsugi Village co-founder Hamsa Yaqo have been on a two-year journey to earn such a ringing endorsement from a parent. It was June 2023 that the pair began to think about forming a new

venture based on four key areas: early childhood education, the arts, mindfulness and culinary experiences, they said Saturday.

They started the nonprofit Kintsugi Village, bought an empty former Catholic school in Corktown for \$3.3 million and completely renovated the 40,000-square-foot building at 2020 14th Street. The building and nonprofit are named after a traditional Japanese art form in which broken pottery is repaired with lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. The idea celebrates the imperfections and highlights the beauty of the broken pieces.

The curriculum of the early education center is based on the Reggio Emilia approach. The philosophy views children as curious learners who thrive through exploration and collaboration. The curriculum is “child-led,” emphasizing hands-on experiences, creative expression and social-emotional development, Yaqo said. Kintsugi Village may be the only early childhood center in the city using the Reggio Emilia approach, Yaqo said.

Yaqo described the first month of classes this way. “The teacher spent time really focusing on teaching the basics. They call it ‘how to people?’” she said.



Katy Kildee / The Detroit News

Kintsugi Village co-founders Hamsa Yaqo, left, and Paul Spiegelman at the early childhood education center at Kintsugi Village on Saturday.

“It’s about how to talk to each other, how to share, how to ask for things. They’re providing structure and organization.”

Next is “really chasing the kids’ curiosities,” she said. “As opposed to just having something really set, where half the classroom is into it, and the other half is not into it. You introduce some themes, and then you see who is really interested in that. They may spend a whole month, for example, learning about insects and dirt and leaves, and, you know, being in nature, because they’re showing you that they’re interested.”

In January, Kintsugi Village intends to expand its early childhood center to up to 100 children. Parents can sign up their children from two days a week to five days a week. They are targeting Corktown and five surrounding ZIP codes, but others are welcome to apply. There are financial subsidies offered that can reduce the cost by hundreds of dollars.

The early childhood center is just the start. Next year, the plan is to open the other three floors of the building for an artist residency program, community meeting space, a culinary kitchen and an event space.

