

MILWAUKEE BUCKS

How Mariah Antetokounmpo showed up for Milwaukee and helped families



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Sometime between starting [an apparel brand all about spreading positivity](#) and becoming [a mom times four](#), Mariah Antetokounmpo turned into a matriarch of Milwaukee.

Giving back has always just been a part of who Mariah is, she told the Journal Sentinel in [a 2025 interview](#):

"I find joy in helping others and uplifting others."

That's looked like helping families get what they need; providing kids, who may be growing up too fast, spaces to just be kids; putting on events that spread joy; and shining a light on causes and organizations that lift families.

Supporting families is the throughline of the social-impact work Mariah has done across the area, said Erin LeMoine, who has worked closely with her on the past two local CAFF Family Days.

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[CAFF – the Charles Antetokounmpo Family Foundation](#) – was launched by the [Antetokounmpo family a few years back](#). It's a multi-cause nonprofit with the mission of supporting a wide array of needs and causes, from Milwaukee to Greece to Nigeria.

In the Milwaukee area, Family Days – which LeMoine said are truly Mariah's vision – are the culmination of April Showers of Love, an annual maternity, baby and toddler gear donation drive. Community organizations help identify families who are expecting or growing, and in need. The donations get transformed into a makeshift boutique, which attendees shop as part of the Family Day celebration.

"She carries her motherhood very close to her heart, and it has transformed her life experience," said LeMoine, who's the vice president of project management for [Kids Impact Community](#), which coordinates year-round volunteer service opportunities for kids and their caregivers. They're a volunteer force behind the donation drive and Family Days.

"She recognizes and sees the challenges that come with an expanding family," LeMoine said.

Mariah also has become a champion of [Milwaukee Diaper Mission](#); [Fostering Community](#), which puts on events to help foster, adoptive, kinship and biological families; and [Babbling Babes](#), which aims to connect and uplift local moms while cultivating community; among other organizations.

"Being a mom, you also just have a heartbeat for people in the community that are parents," said Natalie Anderson, founder and executive director of [Fostering Community](#). "I feel like that really like shines through a lot of what she does."

For the past five years, Mariah has spearheaded [Fostering Community Christmas](#), a party for foster families, where parents can also pick out Christmas presents for their kids.

"I'm blessed to be able to provide my kids with meals and with diapers and with what they need," [Mariah told us in 2023](#). "I just want to help bless other people do the same thing. ... It's important to help other people just provide for their family and to take one worry off their plate."

Not only has Mariah been a cheerleader for the diaper mission – increasing awareness of the organization, and diaper need as a whole, through social media – but she's also been a vital volunteer and a critical part of the organization's growth, according to [Meagan Johnson, MDM's co-founder and executive director](#).

"Having someone, not only with a public image and influence, but also with a huge heart and depth of kindness that is truly unmatched, having someone like that on my side, cheering me on while doing this work with my team has been a huge part of our growth and of the success of our organization," Johnson said.

Mariah doesn't sit on the sidelines. Her involvement was characterized as hands-on by several organizations. She volunteers in the MDM warehouse with her own kids, sorts through drive donations and wraps presents for foster children, who, she previously told us, have always been on her heart.

"They really do care about the community," Anderson said of Giannis and Mariah. "They're not just throwing dollars at something. They're actually showing up, taking part, volunteering and getting to know the people they're serving."

With [the news that the Milwaukee Bucks have traded Giannis to the Miami Heat](#), here's a look at some of the work Mariah and the Antetokounmpo family have done locally and beyond:

Mariah's passion for Milwaukee Diaper Mission

When Giannis and Mariah welcomed their second child, son Maverick, in 2021, they quickly realized how expensive it is to have two kids in diapers.

Nearly half of U.S. families with young children can't afford enough diapers to keep their infant or child clean, dry and healthy, according to [the National Diaper Bank Network](#).

Milwaukee Diaper Mission collects disposable and cloth diapers, wipes and period products, as well as financial contributions that help the organization purchase

those products. The diaper mission works with 29 partners, who relay the donations to their clients. Since its beginnings, the diaper mission has distributed 4.5 million diapers and just over 2 million period products, according to Johnson.

With [how Giannis grew up](#), this cause especially hit close to home for the couple.

"There's a lot of families out there that are in need over diapers," [Giannis said at a 2023 diaper mission event](#). "My family was one of them."

He said his mom needed to ask for help from neighbors, the church, organizations and the community.

"It was hard," he said. "Growing up, I didn't understand all the sacrifices people have to make in order for them to raise their kids."

To help local families in need and celebrate Maverick's birth, Giannis and Mariah [teamed with MDM to put on a diaper drive](#), called Maverick's Diaper Mission, along with the Bucks and Nuna. This would turn out to be a turning point for the organization, which was already growing at a remarkable rate, said Johnson, who had co-founded it about a year earlier.

The couple's diaper drive evolved into an annual campaign, [The BIG Give Back](#), a diaper and fund drive, put on in part by CAFF. From Day 1, Mariah's been very involved with its planning and execution, Johnson said.

With Giannis' and Mariah's influence and support, along with donations from sponsors and individual community members, the campaign has raised more than \$865,000 since 2021, according to Johnson.

The couple and their kids have volunteered at MDM's warehouse, and [have handed out supplies and engaged with families at community distribution events](#). Mariah was even on MDM's board of directors for about three years, Johnson said.

And, when Giannis and Huggies [teamed up for an ad campaign](#), the diaper company donated \$100,000 worth of diapers to the organization.

Since Giannis and Mariah joined MDM, it has grown to four full-time staff, and from an 800-square-foot office to a 12,000-square-foot facility. It's supporting 5,500 local individuals' diapers, wipes and period products needs each month. In 2020, it was helping 800.

"A lot of that is due to the fact that Giannis and Mariah saw something in our little organization and wanted to be a part of it," Johnson said.

"It's just crazy to think, like, how far we've come," [Mariah said in 2024](#). "It's just grown every year.

"And just being able to watch Milwaukee Diaper Mission grow and just being able to see them expand firsthand is amazing. I'm very happy that we've been able to go on this journey."

Johnson believes that the Antetokounmpo's foundational support will continue to help MDM grow.

"We're forever grateful for these early years and them being a part of the fabric of our history as an organization, because it will help us continue to do this important work. Hopefully, far into the future," she said.

Huge holiday party and presents for foster families

Years ago, when Anderson saw the kind of work Mariah was already doing in the community, she contacted Mariah via Instagram about working with Fostering Community.

Ever since, Mariah has led the charge for "Fostering Community Christmas."

"Even if I would've mentioned Christmas, I never would've been able to even dream up what she created it to be, and the impact that it's had and how it's grown," Anderson said.

When Mariah has a vision, Anderson said, she knows what she wants and how to bring it to life. Just ahead of this year's event, Mariah described it to us as a "mini-Christmas carnival," with food, bounce houses, games, art activities, balloon artists, a DJ, Santa, characters and more. It's brought to life by several event partners, including Kacmarcik Enterprises, the Bucks, [KIC](#), [Babbling Babes](#), Friend Like Me and others.

During the event, foster parents can sneak away to "Santa's Workshop" to pick out Christmas presents for their kids – all of their kids. More than 1,000 gifts were available to choose from, broken up by category, from "everything Barbie" to "Legos and building." The gifts and funds for gifts were donated by individuals, organizations, businesses and churches, Anderson told us in December. Gift-wrapping stations are in the workshop, too, where volunteers take care of that for the parents. The presents are placed in a big bag, which parents can discreetly place in their trunks.

The event has created "favorite memories" for families that they'll "carry with them forever," Anderson said. A few foster parents have included their kids' biological parents, so everyone can celebrate the holiday together. For some foster siblings, who are living with different families, the event is a reunion.

"Anytime that we have the space to bring everyone together like that is so important just for kids to be around kids who get it, and parents to be around other parents who get it," Anderson said. "Christmas can be such a hard time for these kids."

For some, it can bring up trauma, Anderson said, whether that's from missing their loved ones, or in some cases, having just been removed from a home.

"To have a space where they can have fun, where they can create joy, where they can look back at Christmas with fond memories instead of hopeless memories, I think is so important," Anderson said.

"These kids have really been through a lot. And so, creating this for them is just really special, and a lasting impact for them."

Within 10 minutes of the event's sign-up opening to families, capacity is reached, according to Anderson. The 2025 event was capped at about 600 people spread across multiple sessions. The community was so generous with donations that additional foster parents could come toward the end of last December's event to also pick out gifts for their kids.

One of Anderson's favorite Mariah memories is of her sitting on the floor, wrapping presents.

"I just thought that was so cool that she just wanted to be right in there with all the action, just supporting and helping out however she could," Anderson said.

At the event, Mariah has held babies so parents can go pick out gifts for their kids, and carried toddlers' plates in the line to help them get food.

A couple of years ago, a foster family who had just lost their mom attended the event. One of the things that has stuck with Anderson was the sympathy and empathy Mariah showed them and the time she spent with them there.

This year, Mariah asked Anderson if that family was going to be coming to the event again.

"For our families, it just means so much for them to just feel like someone sees them and then cares about them and wants to do something," Anderson said.

Giannis, too, has attended the event several times. The first year he did, Anderson remembers how the kids' jaws dropped. He was right in there with them, getting his face painted, playing basketball and signing autographs.

Before Mariah was involved with the organization, Anderson said, about 120 families were on their email list. Now, the organization has over 400.

"I think a lot of that just has to do with her," Anderson said.

Helping expecting and growing families in need

During her fourth pregnancy, Mariah came up with the idea to throw a [community baby shower](#), which would end up turning into a CAFF Family Day.

"I get wild ideas, I guess, when I'm pregnant and decide to take things on," [Mariah told us in April 2025](#).

That year, Mariah and CAFF teamed with KIC and Babbling Babes to bring to life April Showers of Love. Gently used and new items were collected at drop-off spots across the area.

At that Family Day, 75 recipient families had food, fun and were showered with the donated items. [The first CAFF Family Day](#), however, was held in Athens in summer 2024 at a gym where the Antetokounmpo brothers used to play basketball.

[The Milwaukee-area's second Family Day](#) was held this year, with a balloon artist, face painter, bounce houses, DJ, soccer, food trucks and a flower arrangement station, as well as cozy corners for parents to relax in. Eighty families were blessed this time around. And, this year's presenting sponsor, Joie, donated new travel systems and baby carriers.

Mariah worked with vendors, sorted through donated clothes and helped get everything set up, including the baby boutique, LeMoine said. During the event, she helped keep the flow for families doing their shopping.

"I just loved seeing her engage with everyone in such an authentic way," LeMoine said. "Just chatting with people as they're waiting in line. She's so approachable and so welcoming to everyone she works with."

On the day of the event, Giannis was there, too, along with the couple's kids.

There were so many donations that around a dozen nonprofits were invited to stop by the boutique the next day to get what they need for those they serve.

"The ripple effect of this project was just incredible," LeMoine said.

For the first time last year, CAFF also sponsored KIC's Martin Luther King Jr. Day event. The organization's biggest event of the year was able to expand even further with CAFF's support, LeMoine said.

Over 500 kids and their caregivers gathered at Congregation Shalom. After learning about King and the National Day of Service held in his honor, KIC had service project stations set up that participants rotated through – putting together snack packs for Boys & Girls Clubs and Our Next Generation, winter hygiene packs for Mr. Bob's Under the Bridge, care kits for Aurora's cancer clinics, and decorating reusable grocery bags for Kinship Community Food Center.

LeMoine credits Mariah for showing KIC what it's capable of and giving it the confidence to do larger events.

"We hope that what we're doing is creating new generations of engaged community members who understand the big challenges that are facing our community and know how and what they want to do to try and move the needle on some of those issues," she said.

That's important to Giannis and Mariah, too, who – as you've read – have been instilling hearts of service into their own kids, too.

"From an early age, me and my husband really want our kids to grow up to be kind and healthy and giving," Mariah told us in December. "It's never too early for them to learn to give back and be in the community and have a kind heart, and have a giving heart. I think they're only going to learn that through seeing us do it and for them doing it themselves. We just enjoy them being in the community when we're in the community. They enjoy it, they love it, they have fun."

'Continue on that legacy of giving back'

"Milwaukee's done so much for our family," [Mariah said in spring 2025](#), adding that it's [where Giannis basically grew up since age 18](#) and where the two have been growing their own family.

"We can't be everywhere and we can't help everyone, but we can start somewhere," she said at that time. "So, what better of a place than a place that means so much to us and a community that means so much to us."

Several of the organizations we spoke with are calling on the community to help them continue the work that Mariah and Giannis have done with them.

One of MDM's goals is to distribute over 1 million diapers a year. To make that happen, it has to buy around half of those. Even with the diaper mission's efforts, Milwaukee County is in need of an additional about 16 million diapers annually, according to Johnson.

"At the end of the day, their whole goal was to strengthen this city and the people who live here. And, they want everyone to have access to basic needs and be cared for," Johnson said. "If we as a city can continue in that spirit of generosity and continue on that legacy of giving back, we will accomplish that."

Other ways the Antetokounmpos have been helping Milwaukee and beyond

To learn more about CAFF's impact in the Milwaukee area and around the world, go to caff.foundation.

In 2024, for example, [it was announced that 10 Milwaukee-area nonprofits would receive a total of \\$1 million in grants](#) from a Powering Milwaukee Forward initiative, which was created by CAFF, GE HealthCare and GE HealthCare Foundation. The initiative funds programs at the nonprofits that improve access to basic needs, such as housing, food and education within Milwaukee's underserved communities.

"Giannis and Mariah, and the whole Antetokounmpo family have always been intent on pouring back into this city that has given them so much," Johnson said. "I've heard them say this time and time again. For them, their main goal was to always give back and support not just organizations like Milwaukee Diaper Mission, but individual families and people who were in need of their kindness and generosity.

"They leave a lasting legacy of giving back, of making sure that our city has as many resources as possible."