

## Congratulations Graduates!

We're excited to announce that on May 29 we celebrated the graduation of our senior Academy scholars! Nearly all of them will be going on to post-secondary education, while one will be joining the Army Reserves. They received \$55,000 in LifeWise scholarships, in addition to many outside scholarships. We are so proud!

Our LifeWise Academy program provides academic enrichment, social-emotional support, life skills and job readiness activities to teens during a critical period of development so that they are better prepared for a post-secondary institution and/or the workforce. The relationships we build with our scholars are critical to their success.

We typically have 25 scholars and one full-time Teen Advisor at each grade level. Once scholars graduate, our Alumni Advisor takes over and supports them through their post-secondary journey.

Prior to starting our Academy, we were lucky to have one teen go off to college per year, and more times than not, they wouldn't last the first semester. Today, our program sends the majority of our scholars off to post-secondary education. We even have a number of scholars in graduate school!

Our program would not be the success it is today without your support. Our relationship with you is critical as you make our work possible. Thank you.

Scott E. Walker  
President/CEO

“We believe  
that education is  
the pathway out  
of poverty.”

## Back-to-School in Style

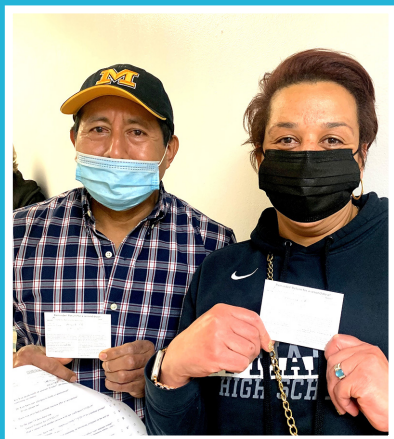
Since 2012, LifeWise has hosted a back-to-school event each year. We distribute new shoes, backpacks and school supplies to the families we serve throughout the year. Thanks to the generosity of donors, over 400 kids are able to start the school year prepared and excited! The event is a complement to our holistic programming that empowers families towards economic mobility.

This year's event will be held on Saturday, August 14. Please visit our website at [www.lifewisestl.org](http://www.lifewisestl.org) to learn more and/or to sign up to volunteer.

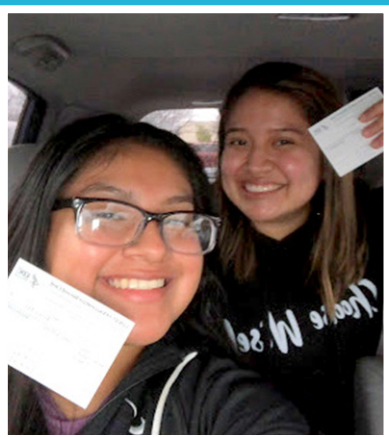


We ❤️ Our Supporters!

## Vaccinations Abound!



We're proud to announce that we helped get nearly 1,800 St. Louisans vaccinated over the past few months! Thanks to our partners at South City Hospital and Care STL Health, as well as our many volunteers, for helping us make this happen. It was truly a community effort!



## Children's Savings Accounts

Over the past several years, many states, cities and nonprofit organizations have started Children's Savings Account (CSA) programs. These programs all share a common goal—promoting savings and asset building opportunities for children, especially those from low and moderate-income families.

LifeWise is excited to announce that we will begin our very own Child Savings Accounts for children currently enrolled in our Early Childhood Center. CSAs at LifeWise are designed to specifically to address the racial wealth divide.

In August 2018, Prosperity Now authored a brief suggesting that while CSAs are an effective tool for increasing college expectations, they do not address the racial wealth divide as they were originally intended. They propose that in order for CSAs to have an identifiable impact on communities of color, CSAs need larger initial deposits or greater wealth transfers. Furthermore, they argue that CSAs should be eligible to be used for other asset purchases when the time comes, outside of just post-secondary education.

Our CSAs have larger initial deposits and are eligible, when the time comes, to be used for other long-term asset building purchases outside of just post-secondary education (other possible uses include entrepreneurship, homeownership and retirement). Each account starts with an initial LifeWise investment of \$1,000, and any additional savings by the family is matched 2:1 (up to \$100) for every year that that child participates in programming at LifeWise.

For more information, please contact Natalie Gemberling Webb, MSW, CFSW, Director of Economic Wellness, at [ngemberling@lifewisestl.org](mailto:ngemberling@lifewisestl.org) or 314-260-6371.

## LifeWise Scholarships

LifeWise is fortunate to have three scholarship funds, set up by generous donors to assist our LifeWise Academy graduates with their post-secondary education. All Scholarship recipients are chosen because of past success and future promise. Scholarships totaling \$55,000 were distributed in May 2021!

**Albert R. Hamra Scholarship** – Inspired by Christ's example, the Albert R. Hamra family believes that each person has a right to the best possible chance to achieve his/her goals. This scholarship honoring Al, LifeWise Academy, its students, its staff, its supportive parents, and its friends puts our principles into action by helping young people reach their next level of education.

**Vicente Scholarship** – Donors of this need-based scholarship believe in the transformative programming of LifeWise Academy. They believe this scholarship will "walk the recipient home. . . to a new future." They want to ensure that every child has the resources and opportunities to succeed.

**Hands That Serve Scholarship** – Recipients of this service scholarship have the desire to serve others through their degree choice in the fields of allied health or helping profession (law enforcement, emergency medical professional, counselor, etc.)

For more information about these scholarships and contributing to the future of our LifeWise Academy Scholars, please contact Jennifer March at [jmarch@lifewisestl.org](mailto:jmarch@lifewisestl.org) or 314-627-1228.



## Early Childhood Center

The LifeWise Early Childhood Center provides quality services for up to 94 children at a time, ages 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Our target population is primarily low-income families needing childcare in order to work or attend school or training.

Some of the children we serve have mild disabilities. Enrollment comes from families currently enrolled in other LifeWise programs, canvassing the neighborhood, other Early Head Start/Head Start programs, United 4 Children, neighborhood agencies, and the Emotional & Physical Wellness Department at LifeWise.

Research shows that the most crucial and fruitful time to educate young children from low-income families is during their earliest years. Children in early childhood education settings are more likely to achieve higher grades, graduate from high school, and enroll in college.

We strive to provide a comfortable, secure, and happy environment for children to learn and grow, respect each other, and develop self-discipline and self-motivation skills. We promote developmentally appropriate practices through everyday learning activities. Our teaching materials and strategic planning involves the following domains: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science & Technology, Social Studies, the Arts, English Language Acquisitions, and Health & Nutrition with thirty-eight objectives.

Our center uses Creative Curriculum, which is a learning through play model to meet the basic needs of children. It offers strategies for building positive relationships, helping children develop self-help skills, responding to challenging behaviors, and guide children's learning through routines and experiences.

Internal and external services are provided for children who have been identified with special needs and/or families needing help with health events. Annual health screenings are provided, including lead and hemoglobin screenings, growth assessments, blood pressure, hearing and vision screenings, and dental exams.

Opportunities for parent involvement include attending regular monthly meetings, parent-teacher conferences, volunteering, and field trips. A monthly newsletter about parenting skills, child development, center events, and organizational news keep the parents informed.

## 2021 Scholar of Distinction

The Hamra Scholarship was set up in the memory of Albert R. Hamra, an educator and supporter of LifeWise StL who believed that each person should have the opportunity to the best possible education to achieve his/her goals. For the last six years, the family of Albert R. Hamra has been awarding yearly scholarships to two or more LifeWise Academy students to further their post-secondary education.



The Hamra Scholarship Advisory Group recognizes the following LifeWise Academy Alumnus as a graduating Scholar of Distinction in 2021.

Dazhanique N. Clay graduated in May 2021 from Harris-Stowe State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Healthcare Management. We congratulate Dazhanique, and we know she will continue to accomplish amazing things!



# LifeWise Academy

Our LifeWise Academy program provides academic support, enrichment opportunities, life skills and job readiness activities, and social-emotional support to teens during a critical period of development so that they are better prepared for a post-secondary institution and/or the workforce.

## Academic Support

- Academic classes
- Education and support for SMART goal-setting
- Incentives for demonstrated academic improvement
- One-on-one academic advising sessions
- Tutoring
- Workshops on study skills



## Enrichment Activities

- ACT test preparation
- College visits
- Community service learning
- Dance
- Field trips
- Financial aid and scholarship application assistance
- Health and nutrition education
- Post-secondary institution application assistance
- Substance abuse education
- Violence and pregnancy prevention workshops
- Wyman© Teen Outreach Program workshops
- Yoga

## Life Skills and Job Readiness

- Career exploration workshops
- Employment application assistance
- Employment skills training
- Financial literacy education
- Mock interviews
- One-on-one career advising sessions
- Summer internship and employment opportunities

## Social-Emotional Support

- Connections with other LifeWise Scholars
- Empowerment programs that support the transition to adulthood
- Group and individual mental health sessions
- Individualized support from Teen Advisors
- Self-Awareness activities



## Service to Go

Service-to-Go Kits are a fun and easy way to give back to LifeWise from the comfort of your own home, office, church, or anywhere you prefer. Each department has developed affordable kit ideas that help support the mission of our programs. Kits consist of items that will help our participants succeed.

We have kits for all age groups and interests to choose from. Ideas include kits for new moms, youth first aid, self-care, financial coaching, and many more! Visit our website to view our Service-to-Go Kit Guide - just aim your cell phone camera at the QR code below! Please contact Alicia Somarriba, Coordinator of Group Volunteers, at [asomarriba@lifewisestl.org](mailto:asomarriba@lifewisestl.org) or 314-627-9826, prior to starting.

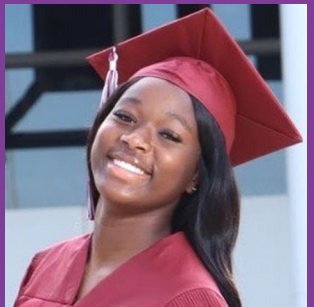
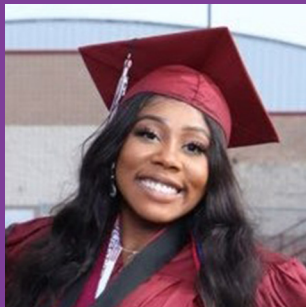
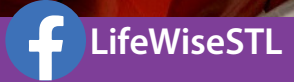
*"Self-care is an important value that we highlight with our participants. Self-care doesn't have to be grandiose. It can be finding small moments to remind yourself that you matter. These kits will be useful tools as we work with our participants on creating more space for self-care."*

*Sarah, LifeWise Staff Member*

*"I loved it! It was very useful stuff and fun to try new beauty things. It was simple enough stuff for anyone to enjoy."*  
A.O. age 13, LifeWise Participant



*"The bag was dropped off at my house because we are still doing virtual groups. It was such a cool surprise. I already tried everything in the bag!"*  
A.B. age 15, LifeWise Participant



## Volunteer Spotlight: Dan McCoy



*How did you first hear about/get involved with volunteering at LifeWise?* I first heard about LifeWise a few years ago when my office was looking for a place to volunteer for our annual community engagement project. We came to LifeWise to help with a painting project, got a tour, and heard all about the organizations mission and activities.

*How long have you been volunteering with LifeWise and what keeps you coming back to volunteer?* I think I have been a volunteer for about four years. The more I've learned about the organization and seen the great work that they do, the more I've wanted to stay involved. I've become more involved since the COVID-19 pandemic, as LifeWise has done a great job adapting and helping some of the most vulnerable get through these difficult times.

*What would you say to others considering volunteering at LifeWise?* Do it! You won't regret it. The staff are great to work with, and they help direct you toward meaningful engagement with those in need.

*What is your best memory from your time at LifeWise?* Helping set up for the back-to-school event. It was organized chaos and very impressive how quickly it all came together.



## Discovering and Understanding Your Relationship with Money\*

All relationships take work, time and effort – including your relationship with your money. When we think about money, we often think about finances (worrying about income, bills, or savings), not about the relationship we have with money. Your relationship with your money drives your financial behavior, and your financial behavior determines your financial circumstances. Is your relationship with money healthy or unhealthy?

To gain a better understanding of your own relationship with money, take a few moments to write down your responses to the questions below. This is one of the tools we use with our participants.

1. What are the first 8 words that come to mind when you think of the word "money."
2. Underline all of the words you have identified that you think have a negative connotation regarding money.
3. Write down 3 things that you are proud of in terms of your relationship with money.
4. Write down 3 things that you feel badly about in terms of your relationship with money.
5. Identify which list was easiest for you to complete.
6. Write down your most joyful experience with money.
7. Write down your most painful experience with money.
8. Identify which memory was easiest for you to recall.
9. Based on your answers, how would you describe your relationship with money?

\*Adapted from The Center for Financial Social Work



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