

Letter from our CEO

In our July newsletter, I talked about our high school program, LifeWise Academy, which provides scholars with the support needed to graduate and excel in their post-secondary endeavors. I would like to share more about our Freedom School summer literacy camp.

We finished our six-week literacy program at the end of July. We hosted six sites and enrolled 120 scholars. The need was greater than ever as kids had come out of a tough academic year that was mostly virtual. Normally, many scholars lose 1½ to 3 months of learning over the summer. Sadly, many had lost even more than that over the past year.

Our literacy-rich program helps overcome those losses as well as build self-esteem and social skills. Additionally, scholars learn how to take action on societal issues. This year's theme was youth gun violence. Our program also created employment for 14 college-age individuals and 12 teens in addition to our year-round staff.

Individuals, foundations, churches and Nestlé Purina supported our supported our efforts by providing building space, funding and volunteers to read aloud to our scholars each morning. We are very thankful for all the support and for the opportunity to impact and change these young lives.

We're now focused on continuing our high-impact after school programs in person this fall, in addition to the rest of our ongoing programs.

Scott E. Walker
President/CEO

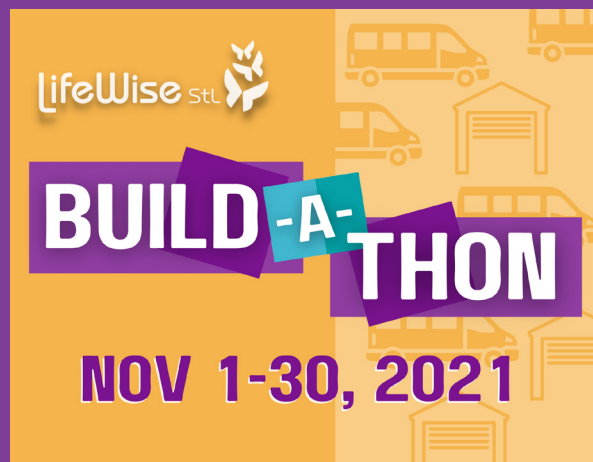
“What an incredible experience Freedom School has been for us as a family. After the past year, Freedom School was just what the kids needed. My children loved it so much they still say cheers and chants at home.”

November Build-A-Thon

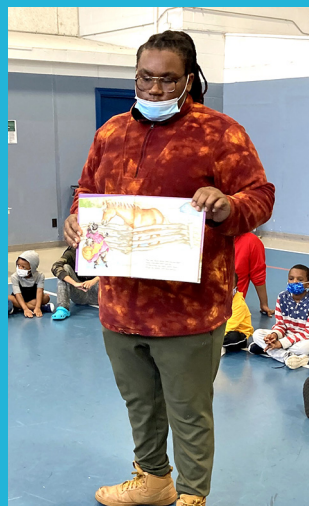
The LifeWise StL Build-a-Thon is a month-long campaign to help us BUILD a brighter future for youth in St. Louis! Our goal is to raise funds to BUILD a garage and BUY vans for our youth programming.

Why is this important? Vans are used to transport youth to and from our Young Scholars Program and are vital for the success of our daily operations. Our current vans are in dire need of replacement. The children and youth we serve need a safe way to travel and we need a secure place to house our vehicles.

How can you support? Mark your calendar for November 1-30, a month full of fundraising opportunities, a fun design contest, raffle, and more! Learn more at lifewisestl.org.



We ♥ Our Freedom School Readers!



Summer Camp Success!



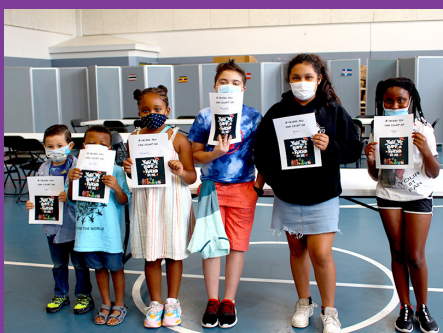
Six Freedom School sites



14 youth jobs



120 Scholars



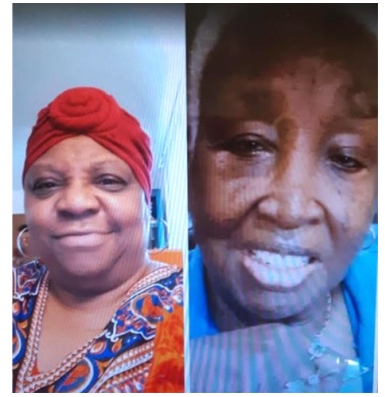
Senior Companions

For the past year, Senior Companion volunteers have been creative in ways to interact with their clients and make them smile while still keeping their distance! Ms. Janice has helped her clients use video chat, while others have made delicious desserts and meals to drop off at their client's front doors. Some have also dropped off PPE items like masks, hand sanitizer, and information on local COVID-related resources.

One of our Senior Companions, Ms. Sharon, dropped off PPE items to her clients, including a new client who just started the program. She was so thankful for her thoughtfulness, "It was so nice of her to do!"

Ms. Shirley called our office recently to share how grateful she is for our services. Ms. Shirley connected with our program last November, and she has a Senior Companion, Ms. Cody, who calls her a few times during the week. Ms. Shirley said, "Me and her hit it off real good. We talk about all kinds of stuff – church, grandkids, and stuff like that. It gives me more support. I'm home by myself and it gives me someone to talk to. I'm so glad to have a Senior Companion during this time."

Our Senior Programming staff are incredibly thankful for our volunteers and their dedication to staying connected with their clients during the pandemic!



Senior Companion, Ms. Janice, and her client have been enjoying video chatting together.

Youth Mental Health Services

As part of our comprehensive services, we offer mental health counseling to youth who participate in our Young Scholars (YSP) and LifeWise Academy Programs. Our Youth Mental Health Therapist, Meg Terranova, is a member of the Youth Development Department and is able to focus on our middle and high school aged youth. Meg has a master's degree in counseling from Ball State University and is a Licensed Professional Counselor certified by the state of Missouri.

Counseling provides scholars with a chance to develop increased self-awareness and understanding of how to deal with life's challenges while having a safe space for personal and emotional growth. We offer individual and small therapy group counseling. Counseling topics include stress from school and peer relationships, trauma, grief or loss, violence and bullying, communication and relationship skills, managing and expressing anger, managing depression and anxiety, and managing thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm.

We also provide virtual mental health services to our LifeWise Academy Alumni as part of their continued participation in LifeWise programming.

A weekly Self-Awareness enrichment class integrates the principles of Social and Emotional Learning while being specifically tailored to the needs and ability levels of each age group. Classes help youth learn about themselves and build valuable inter and intrapersonal skills.

The Youth Mental Health Therapist is one of two youth therapists at LifeWise. Our Bilingual Youth Therapist focuses on children ages 3-13, providing services in both English and Spanish.

Youth Mental Health services at LifeWise have continued to grow and adapt with the ever-changing needs of our youth during the pandemic. Both of our therapists offer services in person and virtually, through the provision of "tele-therapy." This flexibility has allowed mental health services to continue uninterrupted over the past year.

The Holiday Market

For over 50 years, LifeWise StL has celebrated the spirit of the holiday season through our Holiday Market (formerly known as The Christmas Shop). The Market is our way of saying "Keep up the good work!" to our program participants who have been working hard over the past year. Serving hundreds of participants, the Market provides carefully curated NEW household and clothing items, as well as age-appropriate toys. Our aim is to strengthen families while connecting them with the generosity of our donors.

The Holiday Market is inclusive of the participants we serve and offers low-cost and choice items to match our City Harvest Market (food) and our Bodega (thrift shop) models.

Donations of NEW items are accepted year-round.

The 2021 Market will run from December 3-10 (including set-up and take-down).

Suggested Donations

Most Needed Items

Coats (all sizes)
Electronics
Gifts cards (Target, Walmart, Amazon, MC, Visa)
Gas cards
Metro passes
Cell phone chargers
Wireless headsets/earbuds

Clothing

Coats
Hats & gloves
Infant (not newborn)
Children
Adult (S-XL)

Household Items

Comforters
Sheet sets
Pots and pans
Dish & flatware sets
Kitchen Appliances
Space Heaters

Gifts for Teens

T-shirts with positive quotes
Jogger pants
Long john sets
Cozy & graphic socks

Scarf/glove/hat sets
Zipped jackets
Hooded sweatshirts
Bomber jackets
Bras/bralettes
Leggings
Fashionable belts
Shoulder/hobo/messenger bags
Jewelry/bracelets/watches
Hair styling Tools
Perfume (Bath & Body)
Cologne (Axe)
Makeup (no foundation)
Fingernail design items
Skincare box sets
Specialty haircare boxsets
Insulated water bottles
Gym bags
Hobby kits
Device hub/charging stations
Desktop mini-fridge
Bluetooth Keyboard
Funky lamps
Weighted blankets
Teen room décor
Lighted mirrors
Bluetooth speakers
Beanbags chairs

Travel pillows
Paint/drawing supplies
Karaoke machines
Tablets
Video games
Card games

Gifts for Children

Toys (ages 2-12)
Anything with these themes:
Cocomelon, Doc McStuffins, Fortnite, Frozen, Jurassic Park, Looney Tunes, Marvel, Minecraft, Miraculous Ladybug, Octonauts, Pete the Cat, PJ Masks, Pokémon, Roblox, Space Jam, Stitch
Dinosaurs
Hatchimals
Action figures/superheroes
African-American dolls
Hispanic/Latino dolls
Doll accessories
Educational games
Remote control vehicles
Scooters
Skateboards
Sports equipment
Imaginative play items
Toy musical instruments



Volunteer Updates

Our Volunteer Engagement and Service Learning department connects individuals and groups with the LifeWise StL community through a variety of meaningful service opportunities and social justice education.

We're excited to welcome back volunteers in person! On September 7, select departments started in-person programming and welcomed participants back into the building. More departments will do the same in the weeks to follow.

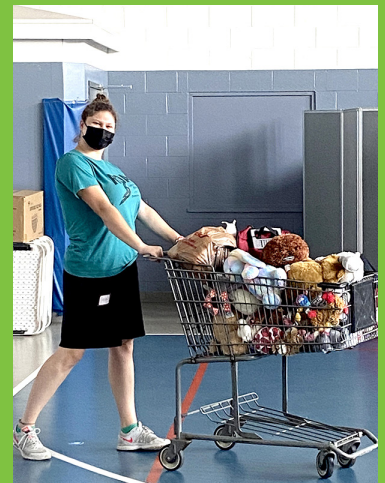
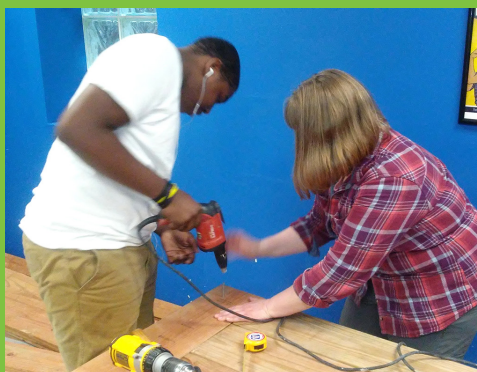
There are many ways to be involved as a volunteer with LifeWise. With the wide range of services we offer to the community, we have an equally wide range of volunteer opportunities. Whatever your skills, interests or schedule, you can make a valuable contribution to the mission of LifeWise!

Current Opportunities:

- Academy Tutors*
- After School Classroom Assistant*
- City Harvest Market Clerk*
- Educational gardener for our Young Scholars Program*
- City Harvest Shopper/Stocker
- Bodega Clerk*
- Fun Friday (group opportunity)*

If you are interested in volunteering for the first time or returning as a volunteer in person, please contact Alicia Somarriba at asomarriba@lifewisestl.org to learn more.

**Please note: In light of ongoing concerns associated with COVID-19, all volunteers who have direct, in-person contact with participants (clients) are required to submit proof of their COVID-19 vaccination prior to serving at LifeWise StL.*



2021 LifeWise Champions

On Tuesday, September 28 at Busch Stadium we recognized our 2021 Champions and enjoyed the Cardinals vs. Brewers game. Our 2021 Champions and their guests joined us for an evening of celebration. It was a historic night as the Cardinals had their 17th win, ensuring them a wild card spot in the playoffs!

The LifeWise StL Champion's Event recognizes our partners (individuals, corporate and faith communities) who exhibit a passion for our mission, invest their time and talents as volunteers, support our work financially, and connect others to the work of helping people achieve a better life.

LifeWise Champions receive an artist-crafted plaque with faces and flowers made with fimo clay. St. Louis artist and longtime friend of LifeWise, Andrea "Kahrizma" Hughes, has been creating these works of art for our LifeWise Champions for 20 years!

2021 Champions:

- Tom and Barb Becherer
- Brian and Nina Murphy
- Tim and Betsy Vicente
- Hands That Serve:
Tom and Julie Preis
- Jacobs (St. Louis)
- Webster Hills United
Methodist Church



Meet the Artist

Andrea "Kahrizma" Hughes lives, creates and works in St. Louis. In accordance with the "In Six Words or Less" movement, her motto is "Born an artist, drew upon life!" She produces oil and acrylic portraits, found object pieces, scratchboards, and collage/assemblages.

Her artwork has been displayed in the galleries of Yeyo Arts Collective/GYA ("AllAboutMe"), Regional Arts Commission ("Just Jazz"), Governor French Academy (with the Zuka Arts Guild), and Vaughn Cultural Center ("Generation to Generation"). Traveling exhibitions include "Urban Nomads" shown at St. Louis University, Forest Park Community College, Urban League of St. Louis, and Southwest Art Center in Atlanta, Ga.

Andrea is the President of the Zuka Arts founded by artist Kenneth Calvert and has been a member since 2007. She is an alum of the Regional Arts Commission's Community Artists in Training (CAT).

In 2011, she became a member of the Yeyo Arts Collective operating GYA Art Gallery, the first collective of African American Women to open an art gallery in the St. Louis region serving many St. Louis neighborhoods through art-based programs. The "Windows Project" placed decorative boards on derelict houses, to brighten the community.

The Zuka Arts Guild seeks to promote knowledge of and participation in the visual arts through exhibitions, teaching programs, workshops, seminars, and selected public art projects.



 **The LifeLine**

Build-A-Thon November

Tax Credits are Back!

We're pleased to announce that LifeWise StL has received Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) and Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) state tax credits in a Special Cycle (June 2021-May 2022).

The credit amount is equal to 50% of your donation. Credits allow you to save on both your federal and state tax liabilities. As an example, your \$5,000 gift will cost you approximately \$1,815, and a \$1,000 gift will cost you approximately \$363 using credits.

Who is eligible to receive tax credits? YOP credits are available to any individual or business with a Missouri tax liability. NAP credits are available to any person, firm or corporation in business in the State of Missouri.

What kind of donations are eligible? Gifts of stock or cash/monetary donations are accepted. The donation may not originate from a tax-exempt trust or foundation.

How do I apply? Individuals or businesses who donate \$500 or more will be mailed a tax credit application.

When may the credits be claimed? The credit may first be claimed on taxes due for the year the contribution was made, and extends for four additional tax years. The tax credit is only to be claimed on taxes due for that period, and any credit not claimed in that time will automatically be forfeited. The credit may not be used to offset taxes due for periods prior to the year of contribution.

May credits be transferred or sold? No, tax credits are not transferable or sellable.

Distribution of credits: Tax credits are limited. Therefore, they will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information: Visit lifewisestl.org/tax-credits or contact Jennifer March at jmarch@lifewisestl.org or 314-627-1228.

We thank you for your continued financial support to meet our participants' crucial needs.

Please consider giving monthly!

Did you know that \$100 provides
one week of LifeWise Academy
for one teen?

Our
community
needs us
and
**WE NEED
YOU!**

www.lifewisestl.org
or
use the enclosed
envelope

LifeWise StL
1321 South 11th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104
lifewisestl.org
314.421.0400

