

Letter from our CEO

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader." Margaret Fuller

Reading is a core component of education, and reading proficiency is a leading indicator of one's ability to graduate. For every year of high school a student completes, their lifetime wealth increases by 15%. We believe that education is key to overcoming generational poverty.

Less than one third of St. Louis scholars are reading at grade level. The stress of Covid and the limitations of virtual learning have made the situation even worse. The number of scholars reading at grade level has dipped as low as 15% over the past two years.

While most kids lose knowledge in reading and math over summer break—a phenomenon known as the "summer slide"—children from low-income families are disproportionately affected. The summer slide for our kids is cumulative, impacting them for years into their education.

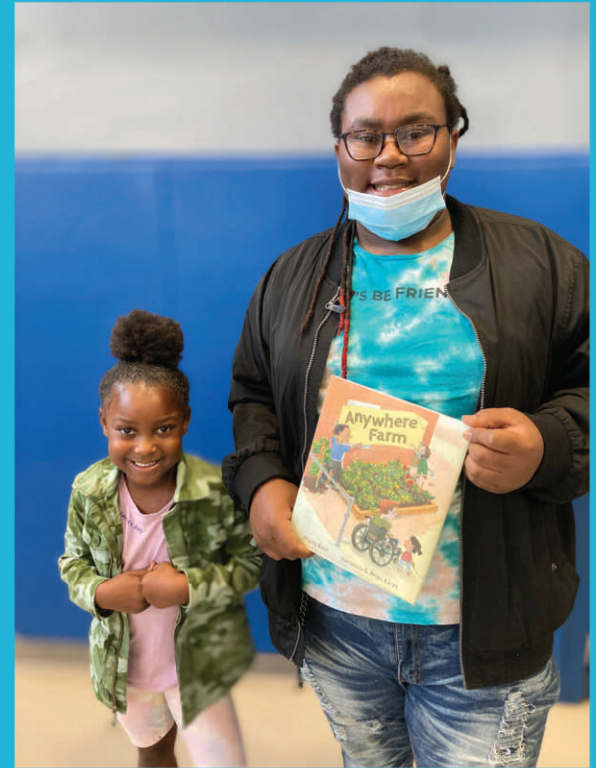
To overcome the 1½ to 3 months of reading loss our kids experience, we'll operate six Freedom School sites this summer. We're increasing our impact by adding 60 spots, bringing our total to 180 scholars. We're proud of our record of success. Last summer, after comparing pre- and post-test results, 85% of our scholars had no summer reading loss!

Financial support is crucial and enables us to continue providing this program to under-served youth. High-impact programs like Freedom School are substantially more expensive to operate than a traditional summer camp. We spend over \$1,300 per scholar for the six-week program. We also employ college students and recent grads as Servant Leader Interns, which helps them earn money for their own education. An investment in LifeWise StL is an investment in our future leaders.

Another way you can help our scholars succeed is by volunteering as a Freedom School Reader. Volunteers join us each morning from 9:00 to 9:30 for activities, including a read-aloud. We need 180 volunteers to cover the 30 days of camp at six locations. Many of our past volunteers have told us that their reading experience was the highlight of their summer! Sign-up today at lifewisestl.org.

We appreciate your support, and we look forward to partnering with you to create better futures for our young scholars.

Scott E. Walker
President/CEO



Student Intern Leader sharing a book with a Freedom School Scholar.

120
YEARS



Our Golf Tournament & Dinner Auction is Back!



Use your phone's camera to follow this QR code for more information!

Our annual Golf Tournament is back, and it's all about the kids! Join us Monday, June 6 at Forest Hills Country Club in Chesterfield, Missouri. Participating golfers will enjoy 18 holes of golf on a premier course, cart, lunch, food and drinks on course, and dinner auction. Golfers will also receive a special player's gift. There will be opportunities to compete for prizes, including a \$10,000 hole-in-one contest.

Registration opens at 10:30 a.m. with a 12:00 p.m. shotgun start. Scramble play will consist of teams of four. The high-energy dinner auction begins with a social at 5:00 p.m. Both the silent and live auctions will include a wide variety of entertainment packages, autographed sports memorabilia and once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Golf registration costs \$325 per person and includes the dinner auction. Tickets for only the dinner auction cost \$85 per person. Tickets can be purchased at lifewisestl.org.

Event proceeds will fund our literacy-focused youth programming that provides children in St. Louis with social-emotional support, academic enrichment, life skills, and job readiness.



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Thanks to all of our board members for their ongoing dedication and leadership!

Volunteer Spotlight - Sherrie Kight

How did you first hear about/get involved with volunteering at LifeWise StL? I heard about LifeWise from my son, Ryan Kight, who began volunteering for LifeWise several years ago. He currently sits on the LifeWise Board. His belief in LifeWise and its mission to serve is contagious.

How long have you been volunteering with us and what keeps you coming back to volunteer at LifeWise StL? I have read for the LifeWise Freedom School Reader Program twice. I have also brought a couple groups of friends to tour the facility. Everyone has been impressed by the vast and rich programs LifeWise offers the community. The welcoming, kind staff and the real love and joy I feel from the students while I share my favorite books makes me long to return.

What would you say to others considering volunteering at LifeWise StL? Do not hesitate to volunteer a piece of your day to read to the LifeWise students. You will get as much, if not more, from your experience as the children do. They are so excited and very attentive!

In your opinion, what is the greatest impact that LifeWise StL provides in the community?

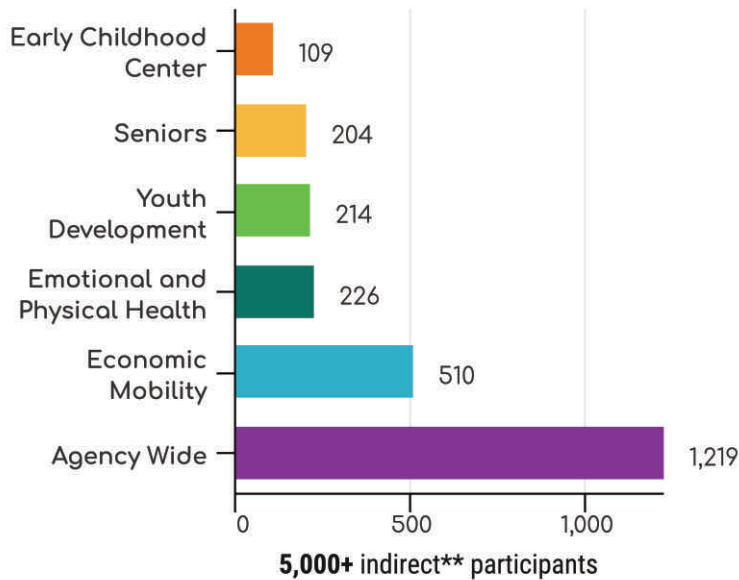
The greatest impact LifeWise provides the community is acceptance of the community it serves, along with a relentless drive to positively change and affect the community where needed.



2021 Recap

Despite COVID-related challenges, LifeWise StL impacted over **6200** individuals.







Direct* Participants by Department



Our Volunteer Engagement & Service Learning Department supports all departments and facilitates Urban Forum, an immersive service learning program:

-  **50 volunteers** read aloud at our 6 Freedom School locations
-  **6176 volunteer hours** were provided by 1383 volunteers (decrease from previous years due to COVID)
-  **23 groups** participated in Urban Forum

The Year at a Glance:

-  **217 participants** engaged in 2+ programs
-  **Over 700** households participated in direct programming
-  **480 children** participated in direct programming and supportive services
-  **840 individuals** accessed supportive services: City Market, Bodega, & ESOL
-  **\$201,000** raised for vans and a garage (Build-a-Thon)
-  **3,000+ people** received COVID-19 vaccines through community partnerships



*Direct Participants engage in meaningful relationship-based programming

**Indirect Participants utilize limited services

A Few of Many 2021 Program Stats

Economic Wellness



179 participants

reduced their debt balances



95% participants

increased income, savings, and/or assets



33 points

average credit score increase for Lending Circle participants with established credit scores



88 individuals

who were formerly credit invisible established a credit score

Youth Development



85% scholars

tested through Freedom School maintained or increased reading levels



37 scholars

participated in both after school and summer programming

Emotional & Physical Wellness



100% women

who participated in maternal mental health groups gained knowledge about mental health



83% perinatal

mental health participants experienced fewer symptoms



92% graduates

were accepted into higher learning institutions (One graduate has job training planned)



2324 attendance

responses recorded for 1 hour exercise classes (averaging 29 classes per participant)

Senior Programming



100% companions

(volunteers) reported feeling a sense of belonging and increased knowledge of community resources



97% participants

in the Senior Companion Program remained in their homes thanks to the support of more than 40 companions

Early Childhood Center



82% children

assessed met social/emotional development milestones



99% participants

received age-appropriate vaccinations (One child was exempt)

Celebrating 120 Years of History

As we celebrate our 120th year, we're looking back on our history and appreciating the people and major milestones that have shaped our path. LifeWise StL has always had a strong sense of the community it serves. The 1940s through the mid 60s brought many changes necessitated by shifts in demographics, society at large and even neighborhood restructuring.

1940-1949

By the beginning of the 1940s St. Louis had dropped to the 10th largest city in the U.S. and entered a new era of racial separateness. With the onset of World War II, St. Louis, like other major cities, had an urgent need for childcare as men left for the service and women were employed in the war effort.

1940—WPA (Works Progress Administration) workers were deployed at (then) Kingdom House as program leaders. Later, other organizational changes came when the resident deaconess role of the earlier decades was transformed into the Executive Directors and staff members of today.

1943—The health clinic services that Kingdom House offered became even more important in the community as migration due to the Depression and the Dust Bowl heightened needs for medical care.

1944—Largely known for its service to children and families, Kingdom House initiated senior citizen programs for the first time in response to shifting demographic trends that spawned an increasingly larger elderly population.

1948—The Community Chest (now United Way) helped to fund needed repairs on the aging main building. Two years later, the Women's Board raised funds to rebuild the boys' building after a fire made the building uninhabitable

1950-1960's

1950—Edward Hudson was hired as the second Executive Director. Mr. Hudson had been the former Director of Denison House in Boston, which was the third largest settlement house in the U.S.

1952—Kingdom House celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Among those sharing congratulations was sports announcer Harry Carey, who wrote, "It gives me a great deal of pride to congratulate Kingdom House. While in high school, I played on a Kingdom House team and appreciate in a personal way what these clubs mean to the youth in our community."

1955—The beginning of a new era for Kingdom House began with the hiring of the third Executive Director, Ralph Koeppe. The agency would place a greater emphasis on social justice and ameliorating the condition of inner-city poverty.

1962—The Christmas Gift Shop started, which provided material relief for struggling families and was a favorite project of the Kingdom House Women's Board. Its tradition continues today in the Holiday Shop.

1963—Major emphasis is placed on work with inner-city youth including the hiring of a MSW graduate from the Brown School of Social Work. That association continued with field work students from the school coming to Kingdom House to complete their studies.

Spring Bling Recap



As the saying goes, "empowered women empower women," and that is exactly what happened at the 2022 Spring Bling Bruch & Auction! On Saturday, April 2, the Missouri Athletic Club was filled with women who all shared one mission: making an impact on the women and girls served by LifeWise StL.

The brunch, hosted by long-time LifeWise supporter and author, Reshaunda Thornton, featured bubbling mimosas, a savory brunch, and world-class entertainment by violinist Bell Darris. Excitement was in the air during the Live Auction where we auctioned off exclusive items, such as Blues tickets and a private dining experience for 6!

Thank you to all of our sponsors, donors, and supporters who made this event possible. With your support, we can continue changing lives from the inside out.



Golf Tournament and Dinner Auction

June 6



**CELEBRATE
120 WITH
US!**

In celebration of the 120 years we have been serving the community, please consider giving a related amount. Perhaps \$120 every quarter? \$10 a month?

www.lifewisestl.org

or
use the enclosed
envelope



Become a SUMMER READER



**June 20-
July 29**

Each morning, we invite community members to read their favorite books to our scholars. This instills a love of reading and exposes students to new people and new stories. And it allows our community to see firsthand what the CDF Freedom Schools program is all about.

Read Aloud guests are a vital part of our program, as they demonstrate to our scholars that reading is important to everyone. We invite you to come and read your favorite children's book to our scholars. Our students are always excited to ask guests questions and are equally excited when the guest asks questions of them.

Volunteers will join our scholars for morning activities, which include cheers and chants, a time for quiet reflection, and a read aloud. Readers are needed every weekday from June 20 through July 29 from 8:50 to 9:30 a.m. at each of our six site locations. You have the option to bring your favorite age-appropriate book/poem/article with you to read, or one will be provided to you. Sign-up today at lifewisestl.org!

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