

Letter from our CEO

Happy New Year!

In 2022, LifeWise StL is thrilled to celebrate our 120th anniversary. We'll mark this milestone throughout the year with special events and giving challenges, and by sharing a few of our big dreams for the next 120 years. Stay tuned!

We'll also take some time to honor our past. As we welcome this momentous year, I can't help but reflect upon our beginnings. In 1902, St. Louis shoe manufacturing executive William Sloan founded a settlement house to invest in the people in his community. He and his team served them by providing a safe space for living, education and connection—resources that empowered these women and men to build better futures.

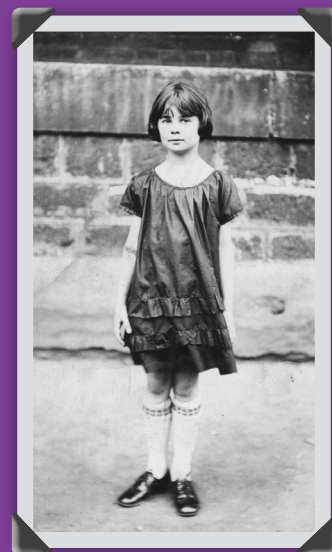
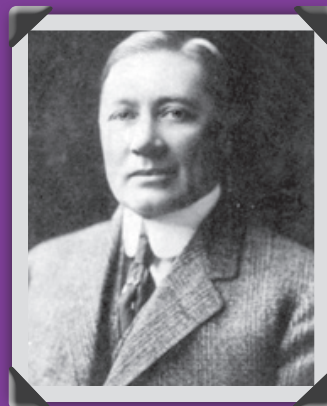
We are proud this simple yet powerful vision—life skills for better futures—is still our guiding purpose 120 years later.

A brighter future for our scholars and families is truly the biggest dream of all. To ensure this mission endures, our emphasis is on a higher quality to realize a bigger impact. Spending on partnership-based programming and professionally trained staff is how we make a difference.

So for this special anniversary, please consider how you can help us increase our impact. Volunteer with us for the first time, help spread the word about our mission and work, or donate 120% of what you have in the past. We need your help in whatever way works best for you.

Thank you for all you do—past, present and future—for LifeWise.

Scott E. Walker
President/CEO



Spring Bling is Coming Soon

We invite you to join us on Saturday, April 2 for our annual Spring Bling Brunch & Auction! Each year, Spring Bling is one of LifeWise StL's most highly anticipated events. Women can expect a morning filled with empowerment, entertainment, and more!

Browse and bid in our silent auction, which will feature an array of designer handbags, beautiful accessories, and creative gift sets. To donate a new or previously loved item, please contact Amanda at aandrews@lifewisestl.org or 314-260-6369.

This year's event will be held at the Missouri Athletic Club, located Downtown. Tickets will go on sale March 1.

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

Build-A-Thon Recap

The 2021 Build-a-Thon was a huge success! With your support, we raised over \$201,000 during the month-long campaign. We could not have done it without you!

Our LifeWise Academy, Academy Prep, and Young Scholars after-school programs support K-12 students. Many of these students depend on the programs' safe and reliable transportation to and from LifeWise StL daily. Thanks to you, we are well on our way to replacing the current fleet of 20-year-old vans and building a garage to protect and house them.

We're still hoping to reach our goal of \$250,000. Please contact Jennifer March at jmarch@lifewisestl.org if you would like to make a tax-deductible donation towards this campaign.



Volunteer Spotlight - Carol Smith

How did you first hear about/get involved with volunteering at LifeWise StL?

Through Manchester United Methodist Church

How long have you been volunteering with us and what keeps you coming back to volunteer at LifeWise StL?

I started volunteering in the Bodega in 2017. I keep coming back because I know I am purposely serving a need, and the people are wonderful to work with, including volunteers, staff, and clients.

What would you say to others considering volunteering at LifeWise StL?

This is a wonderful organization that has many different opportunities for volunteers. The clients and children served at LifeWise are some of the nicest people I have met.

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

Improving the education of the children in the area is a very important need being filled by LifeWise. It is also making an important impact by working with families in time of need. For example, teaching important life skills, including nutrition, exercise, and financial planning. Also LifeWise is filling a need for low-cost food and basic needs for community members.



Volunteer Opportunities

LifeWise Academy is seeking guest presenters to assist with two new enrichment classes: Career Exploration and Life Skills. Volunteer opportunities are available for both the spring and fall of 2022.

Career Explorations is an Academy enrichment class meant to help high school scholars understand how an individual's interests, skills, and education can help guide them to particular career fields. In this class, scholars will complete career assessments and inventories to research various careers and hear directly from individuals that work in various career fields. It is a goal that by the end of the semester, scholars will develop a personal mission to determine what they look for in their future career.

We are seeking volunteers to serve as one-time guest speakers to inform scholars about their career and the path they took to get where they are now. We are looking for individuals with a variety of educational backgrounds, including higher education degrees, vocational/trade school training, apprenticeships, certificates, etc. Individuals may work in education, the military, construction, the medical field, the judicial system, law enforcement, automotive trade, sales, financial management, culinary/food services, just to name a few. If interested, please contact Shannon at sgriffin@lifewisestl.org.

Life Skills is an Academy enrichment class meant to prepare teens for managing adult responsibilities after high school graduation. In this class, scholars will learn about and practice various life skills, including basic hand sewing, laundry, cleaning, managing personal finances (accounts, credit, budgeting, etc.), catching public transit, addressing and mailing small parcels, resume-writing, professionalism, basic manners, vehicle and home maintenance, preparing for natural disasters, and more!

We are seeking volunteers to teach one or more 1-hour life skills classes of their choosing, either selecting from a list of suggested life skills topics or proposing a life skill they feel proficient in. Volunteer instructors should be available to commit to at least one Thursday from 4 to 5 PM and be comfortable delivering a hands-on lesson to a class of 15 teens across grade levels (9th-12th). If interested, please contact Kallie at kclyde@lifewisestl.org.

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. It's amazing to see that LifeWise StL has been helping people of all ages create better futures for more than 100 years. We'll start with our first thirty years—a busy, but prosperous time that set the foundation for the future when community and city connections were established. Both have been essential to our long-term success.

At the turn of the century, St. Louis was the fourth largest city in the U.S. and faced challenges in its overcrowded urban center. 20% of its residents were born outside the U.S. and 42% had foreign-born parents.

1900-1910

1902—Sloan Mission was founded as a settlement house at 7th and Hickory Streets by a local women's home missionary society group with the support of local businessman, William Sloan. Sloan wanted to improve the neighborhood where his shoe factory and employees resided. From the beginning, the new concept of kindergarten was offered to "elevate the children in every possible way." Other programs were added, including a day nursery, sewing school and mothers' club.

1903—Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught to children who worked in the factory.

1904—A savings bank was started.

1907—Sloan Mission changed its name to Kingdom House in recognition of the "kingdom-type" work being done, which was philanthropic, social, evangelical, and educational.

1909—Kingdom House moved into two buildings on 8th Street. 1031 8th Street housed the nursery and girls' activities, while 1033 8th Street was where the clinic and boys' activities were held. A milk clinic was created for infants, and children were regularly screened for infectious disease, including tuberculosis.

1911—Kingdom House joined the St. Louis Central Committee of Social Services Agencies as a founding member.

1910 - 1939

1914—Special programming was offered for Syrian participants.

1922—Kingdom House is described by an onlooker as "a veritable house of children." That same year it became the first church institution supported by the Community Fund (later the United Way).

The 1929 stock market crash and ensuing depression drove the need for services at Kingdom House even higher. The organization survived because of generous donations from churches and community groups.

1932—With support from the St. Louis Church Extension and City Mission Society, Kingdom House purchased property at 1102 Morrison St., which became its new location.

1933—Kingdom House became the site of the third clinic of the Maternal Health Association.

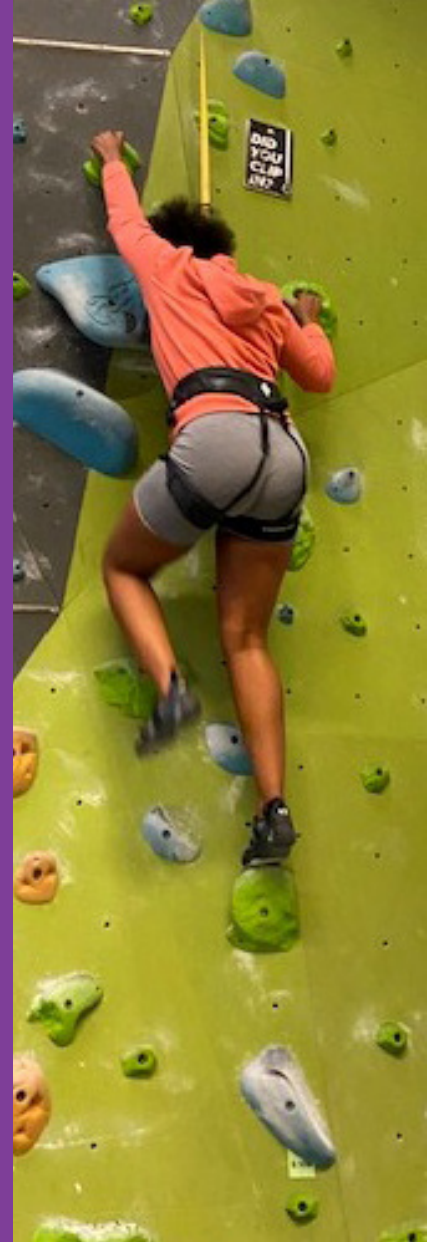
Academy Rock Climbing

Last semester, LifeWise Academy kicked off a new rock climbing enrichment class in partnership with Climb So iLL, an indoor rock climbing gym located a few blocks from LifeWise StL. The pilot group of climbers comprised seven scholars, only one of whom had ever gone rock climbing before.

The class met weekly for 10 weeks, during which scholars learned about proper use of equipment, basic terminology, and different types of climbing. Scholars engaged in three different types of climbing, including bouldering, auto-belay, and top rope. A few students even learned how to belay—or secure the rope—for top rope climbers. LifeWise Academy is especially proud of the four scholars who repeatedly faced their fear of heights, progressing higher up the wall with each successive week!

LifeWise Academy just kicked off a new semester of rock climbing. We could not provide this exciting enrichment without the support of our generous sponsors, including Dean and Theresa Coble, Jessie and Ryan Gray, Steven Gray, Jim and Bethany Sherman, and Jacob Waro.

We are still looking for sponsors for this semester. If you are interested in supporting the growth of our climbing team, please contact Kallie at kclyde@lifewisestl.org.



The Pandemic's Impact

The pandemic as a collective trauma

At the beginning of the pandemic, mental health professionals were already referring to what was happening as a collective trauma. We were all in an unknown situation where our own safety and the safety of our loved ones were in question. We all defined safety differently, and our ability or inability to isolate created differing mental obstacles. As we struggled to meet basic needs for social connection and normality, we risked coming into conflict with how others were meeting their needs. Our safety was in question, and once typical situations had the potential to feel dangerous. This is trauma.

For some, this was the first time we grappled with this level of uncertainty and lack of safety. For others, like many of those participating at LifeWise StL, the pandemic was merely another layer of trauma thrown on top of a lifetime of uncertainty, lack of safety, and an inability to meet basic needs.

Impact on children and adults LifeWise StL serves

Our Emotional and Physical Wellness Department heard from parents that this additional layer of trauma was affecting their children in new ways. They were hearing their children talk about suicide for the first time and wanted their children to enter therapy immediately.

We saw children take on more caregiving roles to their siblings because parents could not assist with virtual schooling. We saw the increased stress this placed on them. Children reported increased difficulty keeping up with schoolwork virtually and described being less interested in school.

Children with social anxiety disorders may have felt relief during the isolation of 2020. But once schools reopened, they faced much greater social anxiety, panic attacks, separation anxiety, and a need for support to learn and relearn coping skills. Some children did not want to talk about the pandemic in therapy sessions because the trauma already present in their life far outweighed the stress of COVID-19.

This pandemic has required a new level of coping, understanding, patience, grit, and resilience from all children, but children of color have carried the heaviest burden. This has had a disproportionate impact on their mental health.

Parents saw their roles stretch as they dealt with their own increasing stress levels, supported their children emotionally, struggled to adapt to foreign technology, and sought new ways to provide for their family. Society asked the impossible from them — to act as if they knew their way out of an ever-evolving maze and to fulfill the roles of multiple people in their children's lives (e.g., parent, friend, teacher, therapist, social worker), all while having more stress and less support than ever before. Unfortunately, this burden has not ended. Parents continue to navigate ever-changing rules, decision exhaustion and changed relationships, while attempting to manage not only their own triggers but those of their children.



The Holiday Market was a wonderful success with 215 families shopping for NEW clothing, household items, toys and books. We are delighted to continue this 50+ year tradition and are grateful to the donors and the volunteers who made this event possible for the families we serve.





 The Lifeline

Spring Bling
April 2

In celebration of the 120 years we have been serving the community, please consider giving a related amount. Perhaps \$10 every month? A gift of \$120 every quarter? We believe there is much to celebrate!



As we celebrate our long and rich history this year, we're also introducing a new tagline. A tagline is the short phrase that accompanies our logo, which tells people what we're about. You may have noticed our previous ones, but not given them much thought. We're updating ours to better reflect who we are today.

It's hard to squeeze 120 years of history into one short phrase. As we examined who we are and what we do, we recognized that our organization's goal has always been to help people have better lives. Our high-impact, relationship-based programs help individuals of all ages develop fundamental life skills. These skills include literacy, fitness and health education, financial literacy, emotional wellness, and much more.

In a phrase, what we're about today is **Life Skills for Better Futures**. It's short and memorable, and very fitting for LifeWise StL. So, the next time you want to describe LifeWise StL to someone, we hope that "life skills for better futures" springs to mind!

**CELEBRATE
120 WITH
US!**

www.lifewisestl.org
or
use the enclosed
envelope

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