

Letter from our CEO

As we pass the midpoint of our 120th year, I reflect and wonder, “Would our 1902 agency recognize our 2022 agency?” I believe our founders would be surprised to see the level of engagement we have today. In the last 11 years alone, individual participation levels have increased from an average of three days to 49 days per year! This frequency strengthens the partnerships we’ve made with our participants and gives them a greater chance of success.

Our Economic Wellness program is going strong. 124 participants enrolled in matched saving programs, 358 enrolled in lending circles to increase their credit scores, and five enrolled in the Healing Hearts loan program to build their credit. Participants of all ages – middle school through senior adults – attended 86 financial literacy classes. We were thrilled to see our participants work hard to purchase first homes and vehicles and start businesses.

Our Freedom School Summer Literacy Camp operated at six locations this summer. 120 scholars improved their reading skills and learned about advocacy, all while having fun! Additionally, 26 college and high school students gained summer employment as servant leader interns and site coordinators amongst our six Freedom School sites.

Our Senior Companion Program has picked up the pace after being impacted by the pandemic. In 2021, our Senior Companion volunteers served 19,949 hours! Some of the 72 clients that were visited this past year have been a part of our program for over 15 years. This longevity demonstrates one of the program’s primary goals of helping seniors maintain their independence longer.

Through our newest program for seniors, Senior Resiliency Fund, we engaged with 24 participants in the first six months of 2022. Participants set individual savings goals and attend financial literacy classes. They also engage in bi-weekly meetings with speakers on various topics, such as physical and emotional wellness, elder financial abuse, and end-of-life planning.

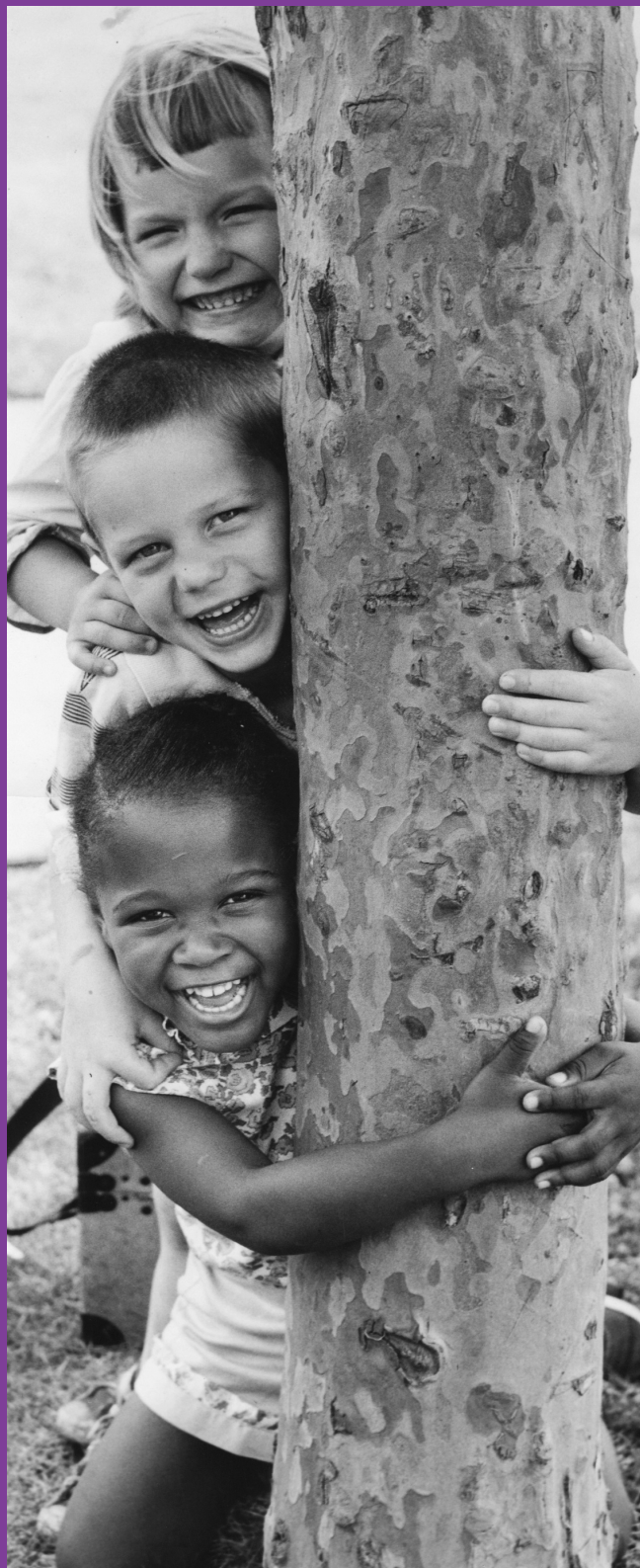
While these are only a few of our programs, it’s clear how hard our participants are working to achieve their personal wellness goals. Their efforts build on the legacy of our past 120 years. Our participants’ hard work and accomplishments motivate us every day to continue this vital work.

Your support is critical and empowers our participants to create better futures for themselves and their families. Thank you for believing in us and those we serve. We can’t do it without you!

Sincerely,

Scott E. Walker

President/CEO



Senior Resiliency Fund

Saving on a low, fixed income is incredibly challenging for older adults, especially with skyrocketing prices and decreased benefits such as food stamps. This is one of many reasons our Senior Resiliency Program (SRF) is vital. SRF is a four-part intervention for lower income older adults to gain access to valuable information and liquid assets for savings, and to grow relationships in the community.

Over a six-month period, participants engage in bi-weekly meetings with speakers on various topics including, but not limited to, productivity and goal-setting; physical, emotional and sexual wellness; elder financial abuse and scam avoidance; and conversations with family and friends about end-of-life planning.

They also participate in one-on-one financial coaching with our Certified Financial Social Worker to set individual savings goals, manage their budget on a fixed-income, credit repair or any other financial goal they have set for themselves. Through a collaboration with the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging (SLAAA), they also complete a Benefits Check-up to ensure they are enrolled and informed about national and local programs that could help them save needed funds.

Finally, at the end of the six-month period, participants who have successfully completed the above requirements for the program receive a 2 to 1 match on their savings goal (up to \$400 for \$200 saved) to use for the goal they set at the beginning for whatever they choose, such as emergency savings, paying down a debt or a major car repair. This program is generously funded through the St. Louis City Senior Fund and the East Missouri Foundation.

Over the last 6 months, our 24 SRF participants have saved more than \$5,400 toward their savings goals! With funds from our donors and grants from RRF and the St. Louis City Senior Tax Fund, we will match with an additional \$9,600 – making a total \$15,000 investment in community members that likely would not have happened without this program.

Additionally, all of the participants surveyed reported feeling close ties to more people, that they will continue to save, and most have shared resources and information gained from the program with their peers and family members.

When reflecting about our session on end-of-life planning, one participant said, "I had a family member pass away soon after that, and I was able to help my family with the information you gave and it really made a difference."

One participant said, "At 68, I didn't realize how important it was to set a goal. It was an eye opener for me. It felt so good to set it and achieve it. It got easier to save . . . even fun! Little by little, I changed how much I was saving and well exceeded my original goal."

Another said, "Ever since that day, it's really weighed on me to talk to my daughter about my wishes. I don't want to burden her with those decisions and I'm finally ready to talk to her about it."

LifeWise StL and the Settlement House Movement

LifeWise StL originated in the Settlement House movement in the United States and has been a member of Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. The following article was written by the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities and reprinted with permission. The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities + Council on Accreditation have joined to form Social Current.

History of the Settlement House Movement

America's settlement house movement was born in the late 19th century. The Industrial Revolution; dramatic advances in technology, transportation, and communication; and an influx in immigrants caused significant population swells in urban areas. City slums emerged where families lived in crowded, unsanitary housing. Health care was nonexistent; disease was rampant. There were few schools, and children were sent to work in factories.

Robert A. Woods founded Andover House, Boston's first settlement house, in 1891. Today it is United South End Settlements. Woods also served as the National Federation of Settlements' first executive secretary.

A group of enterprising settlement house movement leaders sought to achieve change by bridging the gaps between social classes. The middle-class leaders joined underserved urban neighborhoods and opened their homes to the local children, parents, families, and older adults. These houses served as gathering places for fostering relationships that would serve as the foundation for stronger, healthier communities. Middle- and working-class individuals lived side by side in fellowship. Rather than asking residents, "What can we do for you?" settlement workers asked, "What can we do together?"

Residents offered their unique skills and abilities to other neighbors. Through these strength-based contributions, each settlement house offered access to a variety of activities and programs. Child care, education for children and adults, health care, and cultural and recreational activities were common. In addition, the movement focused on reform through social justice. Settlement workers and other neighbors were pioneers in the fight against racial discrimination. Their advocacy efforts also contributed to progressive legislation on housing, child labor, work conditions, and health and sanitation. Pioneers in the movement gather for a meeting of the National Federation of Settlements.

The ideas and principles of the settlement house movement spread quickly, and by 1910, more than 400 settlements were established in the U.S. Most were centered in the nation's largest cities to serve new immigrants. In 1911, a group of settlement house movement pioneers founded the National Federation of Settlements, which was renamed United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA) in 1979.

Today, volunteer staff living in the settlement houses has given way to paid employees who live offsite; however, the settlement house movement's values of respect, reciprocity, and individual strengths live on in America's settlement houses and community centers. In January 2014, the Alliance united its national membership with the UNCA network and established the Center for Engagement and Neighborhood Building.

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 1960s through the end of the century brought many changes necessitated by shifts in demographics and community needs. The agency responded with expanded facilities and increased professional staffing.

1960-1969

1964—Kingdom House got major attention when the winter edition of Washington University Magazine featured a story on MSW graduate Joe Rulo who worked with Youth at Kingdom House. The article was shared with Sargent Shriver (founding director of the Peace Corps) in regard to the fight against poverty, and garnered donations from new locales, including Puerto Rico.

1970-1979

1965-69 —A neighborhood building boom:

65: The City of St. Louis purchased property to build a community center at 12th and Park.

67: Kingdom House was "bursting at the seams" as it served one-third of all residents from public housing. Bids went out for building a new Kingdom House.

68: The cornerstone at 1321 S. 11th St was laid—the dream that began in 1952 was finally being realized. The building was paid for with donations from UMC churches by the Annual Conference and individuals and KH Building and Endowment funds.

1980-1989

1970—Kingdom House celebrated its 75th anniversary with a renewed commitment to the neighborhood, embracing LaSalle Park amid a period of high crime and a large transient population. Executive Director Ralph Koeppe gained the commitment of several organizations in the area, most notably Ralston Purina Co.

1977—Long-time Executive Director Ralph Koeppe retired. That role was then filled by Rev. Eugene Morse, who had settlement house experience from London that suited him well for the challenges Kingdom House was facing at the time.

1990's

1979—Kingdom House hired its first full-time staff person for Youth programming. This move spawned an expansion of the childcare center; more after-school programs; an evening program for young children; and a youth jobs training program. This, in turn, laid a strong foundation for future iterations of Kingdom House.

1980-85—Kingdom House served as a distribution site for the USDA free cheese give-a-way. Roughly 12,000 pounds of cheese were shared in the 63104 zip code where Kingdom House is located.

1987—The Senior Companion Program was established to connect active, retired individuals with older adults and the disabled in housing complexes. That same year, the Annual Patchwork Auction and Bazaar began as the agency's first fundraising event.

1994—Kingdom House hired a full-time development staff member, and the Walk-A-Rama was initiated with sponsorship of the United Methodist Women of the North and South districts. The annual Golf Tournament followed two years later and became the agency's major fundraiser.

1999—While Kingdom House had been providing childcare for many years, the federal Head Start program for 3-5 year olds was initiated; Early Head Start for Infants to 3 years started the following year.



Meet the LifeWise StL Volunteer Department!

Dan Richter – Director of Volunteer Engagement & Service Learning

I'm husband to Kelsey and father to Liam and Julian. I'm a native St. Louisan and graduate of Creighton University in Omaha, NE (Go Bluejays!). Volunteerism has always been part of my life. It's no coincidence, then, that I have always worked in the area of volunteer engagement at various nonprofits at both the local and national level. I began my time at LifeWise as Coordinator of Individual Volunteers in 2014, and I assumed the role of Director in 2015.

When not at work or at home, you can find me going to concerts and arts fairs around town, heading out for a stand-up paddle at a nearby lake/park, enjoying food and drink at a local restaurant, or checking the next place off of the family travel list!



Maggie Lohmeyer – Coordinator of Group Volunteers

I'm originally from Washington, Missouri, but I have lived all over! After graduating from Mizzou in 2011, I worked for the St. Louis Zoo and then the Saint Louis Science Center as the internal coordinator of events. In 2016, I decided to leave the corporate world to work as a social justice missionary through the Methodist Church in San Francisco. My favorite organizations to work with were the SFSPCA and Glide Memorial's Harm Reduction Program. After returning to Missouri, I worked for the Methodist Conference in Columbia and then found my way back to St. Louis and LifeWise StL!

I live with my husband and our two cats, Finn and Sawyer. I enjoy listening to audio books, hiking, and trying new foods. I'll be (hopefully) training for another marathon this fall, and I'm planning our next trip to explore southern California for Christmas! I also have my 200 RYT and hope to find somewhere to teach in 2023.



Jasmen O'Hara, MA – Coordinator of Individual Volunteers

I grew up in a small town in northern Idaho surrounded by mountains and forest. I attended the University of Idaho and majored in Animal Science. When I realized that I had learned mostly about managing cattle, and I didn't necessarily want to work with cattle, I decided to go back to school. I pursued my Master's in Nonprofit Management at Washington University in St. Louis.

I love to spend time outdoors camping, hiking, and gardening. I am a member of Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, and I recently had the amazing opportunity to facilitate a leadership training where I got to work one-on-one with collegiate women to develop their passions and purpose in life. I've only been with LifeWise for two months, but it is clear the huge impact that this organization makes on people's lives, and I'm excited to be a part of it!



Immersive Service Learning & Social Justice Education

The Urban Forum at LifeWise StL provides professional guidance in social justice education through immersive service learning. We provide these opportunities to churches, schools, corporations and other organizations by offering two programs:

Programming held on location at LifeWise

Our foundational program – Urban Forum – provides volunteer groups with the opportunity to serve within our early childhood, youth development and family development programs. Service projects are paired with curriculum designed to help participants gain a greater understanding of issues facing those who live in poverty and on the margins of society. We offer programming ranging from a few hours to a full week. For groups present for more than one day, LifeWise provides accommodations so that they can reside in the community for the duration of the experience.

Programming held at your location

LifeWise expanded Urban Forum programming to include the Traveling Reflection & Immersion Program (TRIP). This allows our staff to come to your church, school, corporation, nonprofit or other organization to lead interactive workshops. Programming ranges from a few hours to full day workshops geared towards facilitating dialogue in order that participants gain a better understanding of issues such as poverty, food insecurity, racism and educational disparities, to name a few.

Ready to Learn More?

If your group is interested in learning more about an immersion experience with us, please contact Dan Richter, Director of Volunteer Engagement & Service Learning, at drichter@lifewisestl.org or 314-627-1233.

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Thanks to all of our board members for their ongoing



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Thanks to our Friends of LifeWise group who are raising awareness and promoting our mission!

2022 LifeWise Academy Graduates

Abbigail Leiba

Graduated: Clyde C. Miller Career Academy High School

Denia Adams

Graduated: Metro Academic and Classical High School

College: Clark Atlanta University

Major: Mathematical Engineer

Scholarship: Albert R. Hamra Scholarship

Hawo Ismail

Graduated: Bayless High School (Magna Cum Laude)

& South Technical High School (CNA Certificate)

College: Maryville University (Full Scholarship)

Major: Nursing

Scholarships: Albert R. Hamra Scholarship, Dr. Donald M. Suggs Scholarship

Mascuud Osman

Graduated: Rockwood Summit High School

College: University of Missouri – St. Louis

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Scholarships: Robert and Peggy Lambert Scholarship, Red Scholarship

Martrevion McDaniel

Graduated: Central Visual and Performing Arts High School

College: University Arkansas – Pine Bluff

Major: Nursing

Scholarships: Albert R. Hamra Scholarship, Vesper Choir Tuition Scholarship

Rabia Mohamed

Graduated: Gateway Stem High School

College: St. Louis Community College – Forest Park

Major: Nursing

Scholarship: Hands That Serve Service Scholarship



2022 Scholars 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 7 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 Alumni as graduating Scholars of Distinction in 2022.



Emerald L. Johnson graduated from Rockhurst University in May 2022 in the field of medicine. Emerald plans to continue her education for her BS in Nursing.



Tiffany Lomax graduated from Jackson State University with a degree in Biology. Tiffany began studying nursing at Goldfarb School of Nursing in May.



For 120 years we have been supporting and investing in our community. We couldn't do it without your financial help. Please consider giving in celebration of our anniversary!

www.lifewisestl.org

or
use the enclosed
envelope



Our annual Trivia Night is back! This year's theme "From Static to Streaming" is sure to keep you entertained while supporting a great cause. Brush up on your sitcom, cartoon, and talk show knowledge, and join the challenge! Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 5 and stay tuned for more information!

"FROM
STATIC
TO STREAMING"



SAVE THE DATE
NOV 5
SUPPORTING YOUTH LITERACY PROGRAMS

LifeWise StL has Missouri tax credits (YOP and NAP) for individuals and businesses.

Located in St. Louis City with reach into surrounding counties, LifeWise is a 501c3 social service agency, serving 2,500 annually. 2022 marks its 120th year in existence, but its approach to changing lives is quite contemporary. LifeWise provides unique learning-based programs that, in the spirit of "teach a person to fish," teach essential life skills, including personal finance and literacy that bring sustainable life change.

For more information about tax credits, contact Jennifer March at jmarch@lifewisestl.org or 314-627-1228, or visit lifewisestl.org/missouri-tax-credits.

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