

Education is the Heartbeat of LifeWise StL

Every day, I'm reminded of the profound power of education. At LifeWise StL, we're anchored in the belief that knowledge and skills can transform lives, lighting up pathways to endless opportunities and creating better futures for those we serve.

Our **Early Childhood Center** serves as the foundation of our educational initiatives. From the young age of 6 weeks to 5 years old, we provide a warm, stimulating environment for children to grow and learn. Collaborating with partners such as the YWCA's Head Start programs, we ensure that quality education and comprehensive care are within arm's reach for our families. It's worth noting: an astounding 85% of brain development unfolds by age 5.

Building upon this foundation, our **Young Scholars After School Program** acts as a haven for school-age children. More than just homework help, we prioritize literacy. Reading isn't just fundamental—it's the bedrock of future success. A concerning statistic reveals that only 18% of students in the city are reading at grade level. Our unyielding mission? To mold these young minds into confident learners, ready to excel in their academic pursuits.

Even during the summer, our commitment remains strong. Our **Freedom School Summer Literacy Camp** continues to emphasize the importance of reading. We focus on literacy to address the "summer slide"—a potential setback of one to three months in learning. Notably, 85% of our scholars avoid this slide, with many showing learning gains of up to nine months.

And as scholars transition into the challenges and opportunities of adolescence, **LifeWise Academy** is there to support and guide. This comprehensive program for teens bridges academic enrichment, life skills training, and emotional support. Whether it's ACT test preparation, career exploration workshops, or individualized mentoring, we're committed to equipping our teens for the future, be it in academia, the workforce, or any path they choose.

Join Us in Amplifying Our Impact

The strides we've made have been significant, but the journey ahead remains challenging. The shadow of Covid looms large, leaving a trail of learning deficits in almost every community. Your support, whether through donations, volunteering, or sharing our mission, makes a world of difference. **I personally invite you to make a financial contribution to LifeWise StL, helping us further our mission and impact.**

Together, we can nurture growth, well-being, and empowerment in every individual we serve. Thank you for being an invaluable part of the LifeWise journey. Let's continue to shape futures, one educational step at a time!

Warm regards,

Scott E. Walker
President/CEO



LifeWise StL's Annual Trivia Night

Get ready to travel back in time with our much-anticipated Trivia Night, themed "When We Were Kids!" Set to take place on Saturday, November 11, 2023, at the scenic Pavilion at Lemay, located within Jefferson Barracks Park on 305 Gregg Road, Lemay, MO 63125. Doors open at 6:00pm with trivia starting at 7:00pm.

Channel your younger self and come as your favorite character or toy from yesteryears. Whether you team up with friends for a themed ensemble or make a solo statement, our costume contest awaits.



Registration is currently open at lifewisestl.org. Tickets are \$30/individual and \$240/team of 8. Complimentary beer, wine, and soft drinks will be served and guests are encouraged to bring their own food and non-alcoholic beverages.

The night will include games, a raffle, and a silent auction with every penny raised supporting our literacy-focused youth programs.

Explore sponsorships, from \$100 to \$5,000, with potential Missouri tax credits for \$500+. If you have questions or need more details about the event, contact Greta Buck at gbuck@lifewisestl.org or 314-260-6369.

Join us for an evening that promises laughter, memories, and a friendly competition for a heartfelt cause. We're not just reminiscing about the past; we're building a brighter future for our kids!

From Dream to Reality: How Financial Social Work Paved the Way for Fanny's Bakery Success

In the world of economic empowerment and social well-being, financial social work stands out as more than just a practice. It has become a force of transformation, not only offering financial guidance but also reshaping lives in profound ways. One such life is that of Fanny, who, with the right financial tools and support, transformed her dream of owning a bakery into a tangible reality.

Fanny always harbored a vision: her own bakery. This dream was named 'Capulí Cakes'. Yet, transforming this aspiration into a business demanded more than just passion—it required financial knowledge and the right resources. This is where our Economic Wellness Department and our team of dedicated Certified Financial Social Workers stepped in.

One of our financial social workers charted a course tailored specifically for Fanny. Through one-on-one coaching, she was introduced to the complexities of finance—how to set realistic goals, devise a budget, and kick-start a robust savings plan. Every meeting was a stride towards equipping her to take charge of her financial future.

To strengthen her foundation, Fanny immersed herself in the financial education classes offered by LifeWise StL. Beyond mastering the intricacies of budgeting and investing, she built significant social capital. These classes connected her with a valuable network—a community of individuals with similar aspirations and challenges, demonstrating the true power of shared knowledge and mutual support.

A significant boost to Fanny's entrepreneurial journey came through our Individual Development Account (IDA) program. Her savings of \$2,000 received a substantial match, adding another \$4,000 to her funds. This combined amount of \$6,000 became the keystone in bringing her bakery dream to life.

Now, our community is graced with the presence of 'Capulí Cakes', a testament to Fanny's hard work and the transformative power of financial social work. Hoping to grow even more, Fanny's bakery serves not just delightful treats but also stands as a shining example for other aspiring dreamers.

We invite everyone to be a part of Fanny's continuing journey. Delight in the bakery's offerings, which you can discover on their Facebook page at @Capulí Cakes or place an order by calling (314) 546-0847. Every purchase not only supports Fanny but also bolsters the message that with the right guidance and determination, dreams do come true!



Understanding Trauma, Building Resistance

We are proud to unveil the continuation of our partnership with Trauma Smart for a second successive year. This collaboration underpins our dedication to creating a nurturing environment where children and their families can acquire the tools needed to navigate the repercussions of trauma, ensuring their success both in school and in broader life.

This past year, every member of the LifeWise StL team undertook a rigorous 20-hour training program facilitated by Trauma Smart. This course, rich with practical knowledge and actionable strategies, is designed to empower families and children to thrive amidst adversities. For those who wish to delve deeper into Trauma Smart's methodology, their website traumasmart.org is a treasure trove of information.

To guarantee that our trauma-informed approach retains its momentum, two staff members have taken on roles as Trauma Smart facilitators. They are tasked with training new staff members and also refreshing the entire team with periodic "trauma booster sessions," ensuring that the enthusiasm and learnings from the previous year remain alive and effective. Moreover, we've trained three of our team members as Trauma Smart coaches. They play a dual role, providing tailored support to fellow staff and also guiding parents with a comprehensive curriculum. This program imparts knowledge on fortifying their children's resilience and helping parents grasp the intricate effects of trauma.

At LifeWise StL, we believe being trauma-informed isn't a milestone but a continuous journey. It's built from many conversations, insights, and shared moments. Trauma affects everyone in different ways, and we're fully committed to tackling its widespread impact. This commitment was validated by a recent Trauma Smart pre/post-assessment, which showcased considerable growth in our team's proficiency in enacting trauma-informed interventions and their comprehension of trauma-centric principles.

With the successes of the past year as our backdrop and our unwavering alliance with Trauma Smart, we are optimistic about the path that lies ahead. Our ambition remains undiminished: to sculpt an environment where understanding trauma and building resilience stand paramount.



LifeWise StL Summer Camp: Fostering Growth and Nurturing Minds

This summer, we once again upheld our commitment to empower young minds, offering a 6-week summer camp as part of the national Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools program. Established as an official partner in 2016, LifeWise StL champions the Freedom Schools' mission of shaping well-read, confident children ready to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

Launched in 1995, the Freedom Schools Program is more than just a summer camp. It's a beacon of hope, ensuring that children have access to books during the summer, reducing the summer learning loss and bridging the achievement gap. With a curriculum aligning with the Common Core Standards, scholars delve into STEM education activities. A 10:1 child-to-teacher ratio ensures that the culturally relevant curriculum remains engaging and personalized.

A typical day at camp begins with the invigorating Harambee - a session of reading, singing, chanting, and reflection. This spirited start is followed by three hours dedicated to a rich integrated reading curriculum. Post lunch, scholars step into an eclectic mix of activities, handpicked according to their interests: from visual arts to field trips and from fitness routines to community service projects. We take pride in providing activities that nurture minds and bodies. Each activity is a mirror, reflecting back to the scholars that they can, indeed, make a difference.

The essence of the CDF Freedom School program lies in its ability to nurture two generations: the young scholars and the young adults who teach them. These 'Servant Leader Interns' undergo comprehensive training, spanning topics from child development to emergency protocols.

This summer was not just about learning but about growing, connecting, and understanding the power of community. Here's to more summers of growth and inspiration!



This summer, we were excited to serve 160 scholars with the help of 45 dedicated staff.

Scholars underwent a Basic Reading Inventory test at the start and end, showcasing their growth.

Scholars engaged in a variety of activities including chess, journalism, critical thinking exercises, and art therapy.

Our field trips took scholars to exciting places like the Butterfly House, Tropicana Bowling Alley, Webster Ice Arena, and the STL Myseum, to name a few.

Back to School Event: Equipping Kids for Academic Success

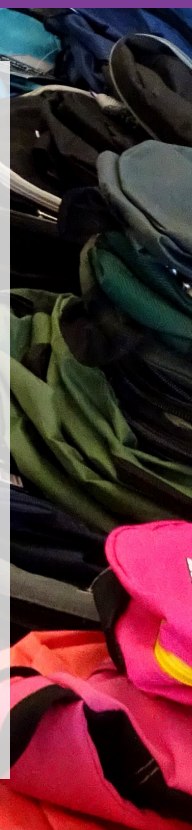
On Saturday, August 12, LifeWise StL and Guardian Angel Settlement Association joined forces for their annual back-to-school event. Aimed at reducing economic barriers to education, the event ensured families received the essential school supplies they needed for the upcoming academic year.

Recognizing the crucial role of education in economic advancement, over 400 children were provided with new shoes, backpacks, and other key school materials. Equipped with these tools, they're set to start their school year with enthusiasm and confidence.

But the event was more than just about supplies. Families had the chance to enjoy a BBQ and interact with one another, while children engaged in face painting and games. A community resource fair was also set up, introducing attendees to programs from LifeWise StL, Guardian Angel, and New Dimensions soccer. Vaccines were also available thanks to Affinia Healthcare.

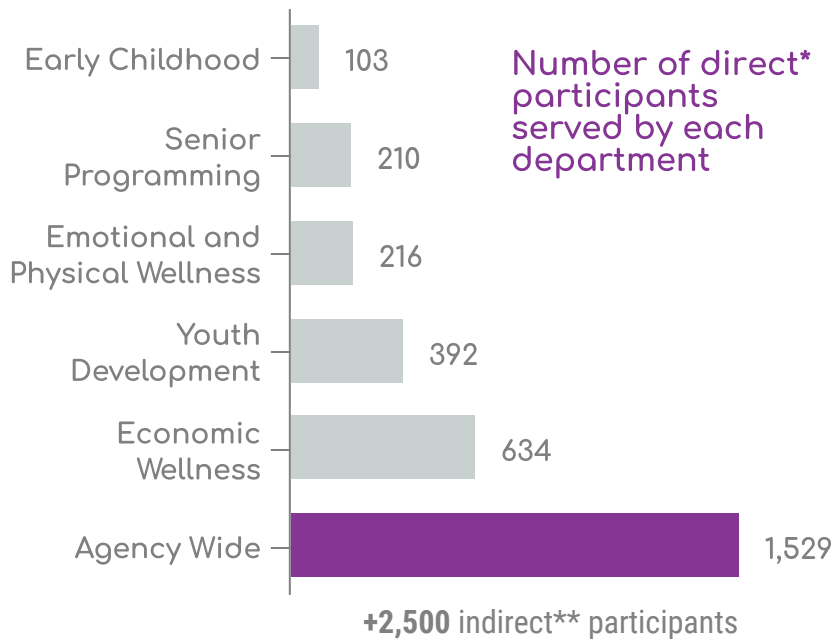
The success of the event was testament to the generosity of our donors and the dedication of over 125 volunteers. Their efforts guaranteed a seamless flow of activities, leaving every attendee feeling appreciated and supported.

This annual Back to School event is just one example of our year-round commitment to the community. We're continually working to enhance resilience, encourage self-sufficiency, and support the economic progress of the families we serve.



2022 Recap

LifeWise StL impacted over 4,000 individuals this year!



Volunteer Engagement & Service Learning Department:

-  **Volunteers spent 53 hours** reading aloud to youth at 6 Freedom School sites
-  **11,856 volunteer service hours** were provided by 2,740 volunteers (twice as many hours and volunteers as 2021)
-  **28 groups** participated in Urban Forum, an immersive service learning program

The Year at a Glance:



120 Years of service since LifeWise StL's founding as Kingdom House in 1902



TraumaSmart training completed by all LifeWise staff



385 Backpacks school supplies, and shoes received by youth in preparation for the new school year



1,570 individuals accessed **28,000 pounds** of affordable food through City Harvest Market



42 Units of blood collected at 2 blood drives, benefitted up to **126 individuals** in need of a blood transfusion



*Direct Participants engage in meaningful relationship-based programming

**Indirect Participants utilize limited services

Prepared by Kallie Clyde April 2023

2022 Program Data Snapshot

Early Childhood Center



2,728 Learning Hours facilitated by teachers & staff



70% of children assessed met social-emotional developmental milestones



12 graduates prepared to enter Kindergarten

Economic Wellness



268 participants reduced their debt balances (**59% increase since 2021**)



507 participants increased income, savings, and/or assets



97 individuals who were formerly credit invisible established a credit score

Emotional & Physical Wellness



1,042 attendance responses recorded for 1-hour exercise classes, **averaging 13 classes per participant**



100% of Participants in individual therapy experienced a reduction in stress, anxiety, and/or depression symptoms



81 internal referrals provided by the Community Care Liaison connected foreign-born individuals to LifeWise StL programs

Senior Programming



97% of seniors remained in their homes thanks to the support of **more than 50 Senior Companions**



100% of Senior Companions reported feeling a sense of belonging and increased knowledge of local resources



\$30,860 in combined savings for **50 seniors** who completed the Senior Resiliency Fund program

Youth Development



100% of seniors graduated from high school



61 youth accessed free mental health services from a licensed therapist



83% of scholars tested through Freedom School maintained/increased reading levels

Celebrating the Season of Giving: LifeWise StL's Annual Holiday Market

For more than 50 years, LifeWise StL has served as a pillar of community support. Each holiday season, we rekindle this commitment through our Holiday Market, an event that goes beyond just celebration.

Throughout the year, countless families benefit from our programs, and many eagerly anticipate our unique Holiday Market. We take pride in offering a curated selection of brand-new household items, clothing, and age-specific toys—all at an affordable price. This market serves as a beacon of hope and a reason to celebrate for the families we support.

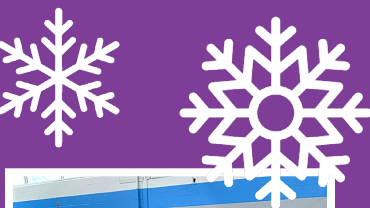
We're excited to announce that this year, the Holiday Market will run from December 1-8 at the 12th and Park Recreation Center.

For those looking to get involved, there are numerous ways to participate! If volunteering speaks to your heart, you can assist by preparing the space for shoppers, or on shopping days, by guiding our participants through the shop as a store guide. From serving as a cashier, to assisting shoppers to their vehicles with their purchases, or assisting with breakdown of the space once the market has concluded, every helping hand counts!

Interested volunteers should mark their calendars, as sign-ups will begin on November 1 at www.lifewisestl.org.

Donations play a crucial role in the success of our market. If you're considering contributing, you can refer to our suggested donations list or our Amazon Wish List. All we ask is that items be brand new and unwrapped. We will be accepting donations until November 30, after which the 12th and Park Recreation Center will become the designated drop-off point. And remember, our doors are always open for donations year-round.

We invite everyone—whether you're a participant, donor, or volunteer—to join us in this heartwarming tradition. As the cold winter approaches, let's warm our community with love, support, and shared joy!



Volunteer Spotlight: Kate Steele



What inspired you to become a volunteer with us? The community of staff and participants makes this place what it is.

How long have you been volunteering with us? 12 years

Can you describe the tasks or projects you've worked on as a volunteer? Events, Market, Health & Wellness Classes, Teen Cooking Classes

How has volunteering influenced or changed your perspective on the cause we serve? It is a constant reminder that we are not saviors but community, and we should all work together to make life for all better.

What do you find most rewarding about volunteering? The smiles and laughter

What would you say to someone who's considering volunteering but is on the fence? Just try it! You can learn so much.

Who or what inspires you to give back to the community? I have been blessed with a community that has given so much to me so I just want to pay it forward.

How do you hope to make a difference through your volunteer work? Making life better for all, helps us all.

How do you envision the future of our cause or mission, based on what you've seen and experienced? It will expand and grow not so much to bring people out of poverty (because they have already worked towards that), but to provide education and opportunities that people thought they didn't have access to.

Do you have any favorite stories or funny moments from your time volunteering? Cooking with the teens was always fun!

Remembering Berni Broyles: A Pillar of the LifeWise StL Community

In July of this year, the Early Childhood Center at LifeWise StL felt the weight of an immeasurable loss. Mrs. Bernadette "Berni" Broyles, a cherished member of our staff, passed away, leaving a void that's difficult to fill.

For nearly four decades, Berni was more than just a staff member. She was a beacon of inspiration, dedication, and love. For 38 years, she passionately embraced her role, going beyond just educating. She was a mentor to many and a source of constant support to both children and staff. Her impact on LifeWise StL was profound, touching countless lives and leaving an indelible mark on our agency.

Berni was a woman of strong faith, and her love for the Lord was evident in her everyday interactions and deeds. Beyond her commitment to her work, she cherished her family deeply. Her devotion to her husband and her loved ones was a testament to her big heart and the values she held dear.

To many of us at LifeWise StL, Berni was not just a colleague; she was family. Her radiant smile, often the highlight of someone's day, is sorely missed. Every corner of our center echoes with memories of her laughter, wisdom, and kindness.

As we remember Berni, we are reminded of the lasting legacy that one individual can leave behind. Berni's legacy is one of love, service, and unwavering dedication. While her physical presence is no longer among us, her spirit continues to inspire and guide us.



The smiles of innocent children, like sunbeams in the morning, light the world with joy and hope.

LifeWise StL

1321 S. 11th Street, St. Louis, MO 63104

FRIENDS LUNCH & TOUR

*Building New Friends to Support
Life Skills for Better Futures*

Bring 5 friends to tour and have lunch prepared by our LifeWise culinarians Jamie Anderson and Sarah Bosquet

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMPACT
LIFEWISE IS HAVING ON OUR SHARED COMMUNITY.**

Contact Jennifer March jmarch@lifewisestl.org, 314-627-1228
to reserve your tour and lunch date.

Maximize Your Impact with Matching Gifts

Did you know your donation to LifeWise StL could potentially double or even triple its impact? Many employers offer matching gift programs, where they match donations made by their employees to eligible nonprofits. By taking a few extra minutes to initiate this process, you can significantly amplify the effect of your gift.

The benefits may not stop there! Some companies go a step further. If you volunteer with us, your dedication might translate into a monetary grant from your employer.

Before making a donation or volunteering, we recommend reaching out to your company's Human Resources Department. They can provide information on eligibility, guidelines, and the necessary steps to ensure LifeWise StL benefits from these generous programs. Your effort can make a considerable difference, and we genuinely appreciate it.



The LifeLine Inside!

TRIVIA NIGHT NOVEMBER 11



HOLIDAY MARKET DECEMBER 1-8 Volunteers needed!



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