

Together, We are Team LifeWise: from our President/CEO

Dear Friends,

At LifeWise StL, we believe that lasting change happens when we work together—and that's exactly what I see every day. Whether it's a staff member walking alongside a family, a volunteer showing up with time and heart, or a donor investing in brighter futures, each person plays a vital role in what we call **Team LifeWise**.

We're not just offering services—we're building trusted relationships that empower people to **pursue their goals and move beyond poverty**. From early childhood education and youth development to financial coaching, mental health support, and senior wellness, our programs are designed to meet people where they are—and walk with them every step of the way.

Inside this issue, you'll find our **Year in Review**, a snapshot of the impact we achieved together over the past year. From expanded programming to measurable outcomes across every age group, the numbers reflect what's possible **when people come together with purpose, compassion, and hard work**.

To those already part of Team LifeWise—thank you. Your support makes our work possible. And if you're new to LifeWise, we invite you to learn more, get involved, and join us in building stronger, more equitable communities.

With gratitude,



Scott E. Walker
President/CEO

Team
LifeWise



Some Team LifeWise members at the Golf Tournament and Dinner Auction

Save the Date: Trivia Night 2025 – Heroes Know Best!



Mark your calendar for **Saturday, October 4, 2025**, at the Pavilion at Lemay. Get ready to join forces with other LifeWise champions for our annual Trivia Night: **Heroes Know Best!** Doors open at 6pm and trivia begins at 7pm.

Come dressed as your hero—real or imagined—for an evening filled with fun, friendly competition, and mission-focused impact. Tables sell out quickly, so follow the QR code or check our website and register today!

Whether you bring your super squad or join a new one, it's a great way to show your support for LifeWise and help us continue building brighter futures for St. Louis families.



Summer Learning, Lasting Impact

Freedom School Builds Literacy, Leadership, and Joy

This summer, the energy at LifeWise StL was contagious as Freedom School welcomed 100 scholars across three campuses. This six-week program uses a **research-based, multicultural, and integrated reading curriculum** to boost literacy and foster a love of learning—all while creating space for joy, growth, and community connection.

Each day, scholars read individually and together, gaining critical literacy skills and avoiding the dreaded “summer slide.” But Freedom School is about more than reading—it also builds **social-emotional learning**, strengthens family and community bonds, and helps children learn about inspiring national figures. This year’s featured leaders included **Congressman John Lewis**, trailblazer **Claudette Colvin**, architect **Philip Freelon**, and food bank pioneer **John van Hengel**.

During our **National Day of Social Action**, scholars explored the theme of “*Public Education is a Public Good*”, created advocacy posters, and practiced using their voices to call for change.

Weekly swim lessons and field trips to the St Louis Zoo, Science Center, and other destinations added excitement and hands-on enrichment.

The summer’s success was driven by **our incredible Servant Leader Interns (SLIs)**, who guided, motivated, and mentored students with energy and compassion—**alongside a talented and dedicated leadership team**.



LifeWise Academy: Learning for Life

This summer, teens in **LifeWise Academy** dove into hands-on learning to prepare them for life beyond high school. **The curriculum—developed by Academy Director Darrius Harris—was designed to equip scholars with real-world tools and confidence.** Scholars strengthened practical life skills—like writing résumés, applying for FAFSA, and managing money—while also exploring college and career options through guest speakers and campus visits to local colleges and technical schools.

The program balanced serious preparation with creative expression and new experiences: students published original poetry, learned to inline skate, and gained valuable financial knowledge through saving challenges—earning matched funds along the way.

This summer our high school scholars had the chance to grow, plan, and discover new possibilities.

Their futures are looking bright!



Together, Freedom School and LifeWise Academy are helping young people build not just academic skills, but a deeper sense of identity, purpose, and possibility. **That’s the power of Team LifeWise.**



Participant Spotlight

A Dream Realized: Julianah Becomes a Homeowner

Julianah joined LifeWise’s Economic Wellness programming in 2022, starting with our ASSET matched savings program. After completing that, she enrolled in the IDA Home program—and in May, she officially became a first-time homeowner!

Her journey reflects the power of financial education, coaching, and determination. We’re proud to have supported Julianah every step of the way and celebrate this exciting milestone with her. **Congratulations, Julianah!**



Our Mission

Our mission is to help individuals and families achieve economic well-being by providing high-impact, relationship-based programming and by addressing systemic barriers to their success.

Here's an illustration of how LifeWise StL might serve a family:

PROGRAMS

- Mom builds her credit by making timely payments to a [Lending Circle](#)
- Her young children are cared for in the safe, nurturing, and stimulating environments of our [Early Childhood Center & Young Scholars Program](#)
- Her teen daughter prepares for post-secondary success by engaging in the career readiness and life skills activities of [LifeWise Academy](#)
- Mom strolls in the Missouri Botanical Garden with her [Emotional Wellness Group](#) to connect socially and enjoy the therapeutic benefits of nature
- Her father finds purpose and meaning as a [Senior Companion](#)



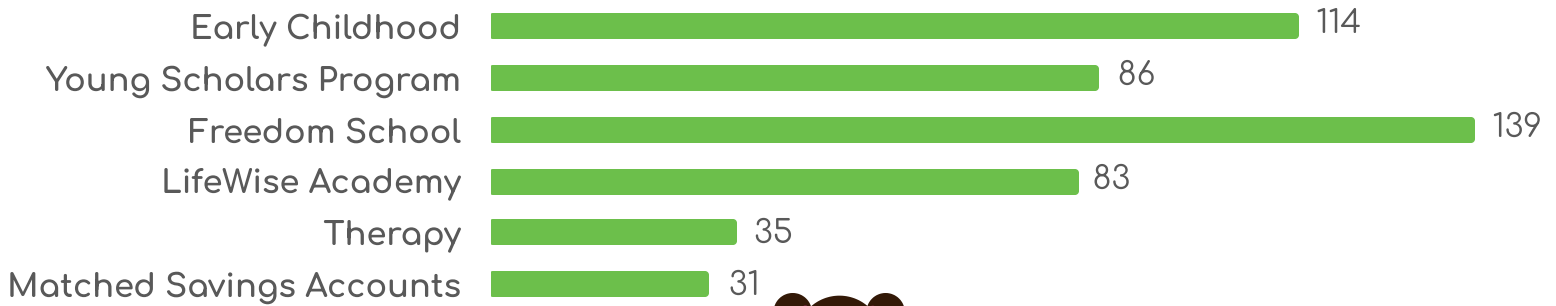
SERVICES & EVENTS

- Weekly, Mom purchases low-cost groceries, household supplies, and diapers at our [Bodega](#) and [City Harvest Market](#)
- For only \$5 per child, Mom purchases new shoes and stocked backpacks at our annual [Back-to-School Event](#)
- Mom shops for gifts for the whole family at our low-cost [Holiday Market Event](#)

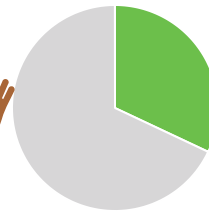
1,264 participants engaged in high-impact, relationship-based programs at LifeWise StL in 2024.

Youth Programs

Number of participants per program:



Our youth programs are designed to engage participants more frequently and/or for longer durations than most adult programs, which results in fewer youth participants than adults.



32% of 1,264 program participants are youth (0-18 yrs)



88% of Early Childhood youth assessed met or exceeded developmental milestones for literacy (up from 44% in Fall of 2023)



LifeWise invested \$11,000 in the futures of 11 early childhood youth whose parents opened child saving accounts this year (up from \$3,000 in 2023)



92% of Freedom School scholars surveyed felt more confident to achieve their goals as a result of participation



15,467 meals provided to K-12 youth during after-school and summer programming



90% of LifeWise Academy scholars who attended at least 2 days per week on average improved their grades



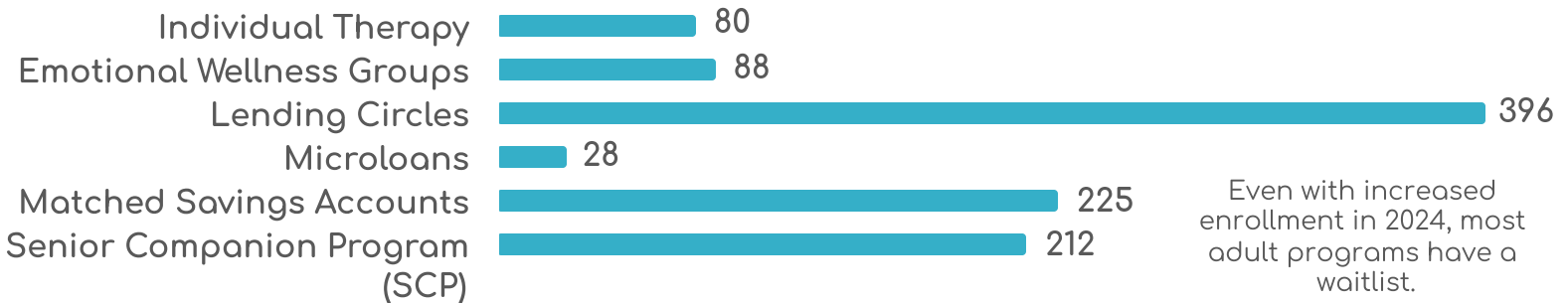
100% of LifeWise Academy seniors graduated from high school, with the majority pursuing college or trade school

PARENT QUOTE:

"It is comforting knowing my children are safe and well cared for. They are addressing things like employment and resumes, assisting with homework, and giving my child a male figure that she can trust and learn from... My daughter has moved around to many schools during her educational career, but having the continuity of seeing the same staff and students at LifeWise helps establish a bit of stability. The stipend is so helpful since I cannot afford to give my children an allowance, and having her own card helps me to teach her responsibility with money without risking my own. The programs and assistance offered through LifeWise are so helpful, and I tell everyone I know about their programs."

Adult Programs

Number of participants per program:



Even with increased enrollment in 2024, most adult programs have a waitlist.



86% of adults in therapy experienced a reduction in stress, anxiety, and/or depression symptoms



95% of Desayuno Group participants surveyed agreed the group improved their emotional wellness



\$154,436 in combined savings for 116 participants who completed a match saving program in 2024



68 credit-invisible Lending Circle participants established an average credit score of **674**



\$21,500 in low-interest loans disbursed to empower immigrants



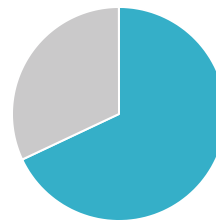
98% of Senior Resiliency Fund participants felt confident in their ability to achieve a financial goal after completing coaching and classes



98% of SCP clients remained in their homes thanks to the support of 63 Senior Companions



100% of Senior Companions surveyed reported the program provided meaning and purpose in their lives



68% of 1,264 program participants are adults with **25%** of program participants being 55 yrs or older

PARTICIPANT QUOTES

"I have learned to know myself, listen to myself, love myself, to have compassion, to develop skills to better manage my emotions, etc. The **support of my [therapist] has been vital to continue my life with great acceptance and respect for myself.**"

Lending Circles "**taught me to be disciplined and responsible with payments.**" It's very important to my finances, to improving my credit, and to save for my family's future."

The Senior Companion Program "gives me more support, you know. I'm [home] by myself and [it] gives me someone to talk to. **I'm so glad to have a Senior Companion.**"



Support Services



2,724 volunteers performed 12,253 hours of service in support of LifeWise StL staff & participants.

AGENCY SERVICES: In addition to programming, LifeWise StL provides wraparound services to support participant and non-participant families in various aspects of well-being



5,354 visits to the City Harvest Market & Bodega



51,296 pounds of low-cost food distributed via City Harvest Market



9,984 meals prepared for Haven Street meal ministry



400+ referrals provided by the Community Care Liaison to support family stability



Weekly English Language Classes for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)



79 calls, messages, and meetings in support of LifeWise Academy Alumni



~133 Exercise Classes



248 Commodity Boxes delivered to low-income seniors



The Family Center provided childcare during all adult programs

PARTICIPANT EVENTS: Participants & their household members are eligible for events if the participant is a child (<18 yr) or if the participant has dependent children (<18 yr) living in the home



300 youth received new shoes & backpacks stocked with school supplies at our annual **Back-to-School Event**



176 families shopped our low-cost **Holiday Market** in 2024, impacting roughly 770 people in all households

URBAN FORUM: In 2024, **846 individuals** participated in this service learning program, which provides professional guidance in social justice education. Our curriculum is designed to help participants gain a greater understanding of issues, such as poverty, food insecurity, racism, and educational disparities.

Created by Kallie Clyde, Director of Program Evaluation
For more information about LifeWise StL, visit www.lifewisestl.org

Tornado Relief: The Road to Recovery is Long - But We're Walking It Together

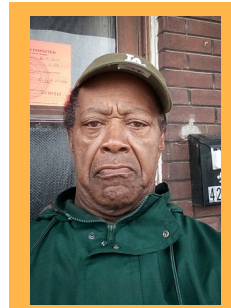
In the aftermath of the May 16 tornado, LifeWise StL joined forces with the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging, the St. Louis City Senior Fund, and a network of community partners to form the Senior Support Team (SST). Together, we're working to help older adults rebuild their lives with dignity, stability, and care.

Led by Samantha Ferguson Knight, LifeWise's Director of Senior Programming, **the SST team has already completed over 300 triage intake calls and started case management for 55 individuals.**

But the reality is daunting: Over 2,000 people over 60 filled out a survey requesting assistance, with almost 400 of them needing help to find safe shelter due to damage to their homes. FEMA support often doesn't cover the full cost to repair their homes. For those who must relocate, safe, affordable housing is incredibly hard to find. St. Louis was already facing a housing crisis before the storm. Now, there simply aren't enough apartments to go around—and many of these vulnerable seniors on a low fixed income cannot afford the rent.

That's why **Samantha and her team of social workers from a variety of local agencies are doing deep, intensive work**—case by case—to help each person navigate a complex and often overwhelming process. From locating housing and coordinating moves to securing financial support and basic necessities, every situation is different, and every solution takes time. On average, it takes \$3,000 per person to help move a senior into safe housing.

Behind each number is a story like Mr. Robert's or Mr. Arnold's, made possible by personalized support and the strength of collaboration. **We're proud to stand with our community—and we're not going anywhere.** The road ahead is long, but Team LifeWise will continue walking alongside every step of the way.



Mr. Robert

Mr. Robert

- Provided laundered clothing & bus pass
- Assisted with credit clearing to qualify for senior housing
- Connected to Urban League hotel voucher program
- Coordinated transportation to & from hotel & appointments
- Helped obtain Social Security award letter
- Managed home move, including application & moving help from Samaritan's Purse & LifeWise
- Arranged furniture delivery with Home Sweet Home
- Coordinated financial assistance with St. Vincent de Paul & HOPE

Mr. Arnold

- Received \$750 for car repairs
- Funded a hotel stay for six days
- Helped complete FEMA application
- Registered for Farmer's Market food basket & received \$50 Aldi gift card from LifeWise
- Used CRSS Affordable Housing Grant to pay Spire bill & secure housing
- Enrolled in Senior Fund Loneliness Grant at CRSS

Donor Spotlight: WashU Student, Luc Neacy, Secures \$50,000 for LifeWise StL

This spring, students from Washington University's **Philanthropy Lab course** visited LifeWise StL to learn more about our work. We were thrilled that after evaluating several local nonprofits, the class awarded a **\$10,000** grant to LifeWise!

Then, student **Luc Neacy** was selected to represent WashU at the **2025 Philanthropy Lab Ambassador's Conference** in Fort Worth, Texas. There, Luc pitched LifeWise for additional funding alongside students from across the country—and we were honored to be selected as **one of just four nonprofits nationally to receive a \$50,000 grant!**

The funding supports our **Individual Development Account (IDA) program**, which helps adults save for first-time asset purchases like a home, vehicle, or education—while receiving matched funds. Luc's proposal highlighted what sets our approach apart: **personalized coaching, financial education, and trusted relationships** that empower lasting change.



We're incredibly grateful to Luc, Professor Barbara Levin, and the WashU community for their partnership in helping St. Louis families build brighter futures!





Excellence Recognized: ECC Receives License & Accreditation Once Again

We're proud to share that the **LifeWise StL Early Childhood Center (ECC)** has once again received its full **state license and national accreditation**—a significant achievement that reflects our ongoing commitment to high-quality care and education for our youngest participants.

The licensing and accreditation process is a comprehensive review conducted every five years, assessing everything from curriculum and classroom environment to staff qualifications and family engagement.

Maintaining this recognition takes months of preparation, attention to detail, and a deep dedication to best practices in early childhood education. It's an achievement made even more meaningful knowing that fewer than 50% of child care centers in St. Louis are licensed and accredited.

Congratulations to Ms. Dee and the entire ECC team for their incredible work in creating a nurturing, developmentally rich space where children can grow and thrive. Their dedication makes a lasting impact on the families we serve and sets a strong foundation for lifelong learning.



Shop Now for the Holiday Market

Help us get a jump on the holidays! Our **Holiday Market** lets LifeWise families choose new gifts for their children at low cost.

Scan the QR codes to shop our **Amazon and Target** wish lists—every item goes directly to families in need. Thanks for spreading joy early!



Support LifeWise While You Shop at Schnucks

Every grocery trip can make a difference! When you link your **Schnucks Rewards** to LifeWise StL through the **My Schnucks Card** app, a portion of your purchase comes back to support our programs.

It's an easy way to give back just by doing your regular shopping.



Double Your Impact with a Matching Gift

Did you know many companies will match your donations or volunteer hours? It's a simple way to make your support go even further for LifeWise families.

Check with your HR department or visit your company's giving portal to see if a match is available.



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