A NEW DIRECTION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Last November, Neighborhood Houses announced a new direction for the agency. A direction that was 20 years in the making. While our mission remains the same, to close the opportunity gap for children and youth by building on the strengths they have within themselves, our name has changed. The new name, Unleashing Potential, clearly describes why we exist: to unleash the potential in children, youth and families that leads to a just community for all.

“Over the years, we moved away from being a settlement house, but our name didn’t change. We changed our programs to better meet the needs of the children, families and communities we serve - but our name stayed the same,” said Darlene Sowell, President & CEO of Unleashing Potential, formerly Neighborhood Houses. “It was time for our name to align with the mission of our organization. A mission that hasn’t changed over the last century and will not change over the course of the next century. We still create educational and empowering experiences through early childhood education, after school programs, youth development and enrichment camps. But now, we do our work with a new name.”

After a two-year long process, the new name was officially revealed in November at Art & Soul VII. A celebration party was later held in December for staff, volunteers, donors and program participants. The evening was highlighted with special remarks from Rev. Starsky Wilson, President and CEO of the Deaconess Foundation.

“UP is the direction for hope, for opportunity based on the idea that unleashing potential in children and youth results in helping them become whatever they can imagine and help them imagine whatever St. Louis can become,” said Sowell. “We are excited for the future that continues to look UP for the children and youth, families and communities that we support.”

VISION
A St. Louis community where all children, youth and families live into their potential.

MISSION
The mission of Unleashing Potential is to close the opportunity gap for children and youth by building on their strengths. We create educational and empowering experiences through early childhood education, after school programs, youth development and enrichment camps.

VALUES we believe in...
RESPECT FOR ALL
Unleashing Passion for respecting individuals while creating strong communities of inclusiveness, equity and fairness that empowers families and inspires children to their greatest potential.

FAITH AND STEWARDSHIP
Unleashing Power to advocate for social justice inspired by our faith-based legacy.

QUALITY PROGRAMS AND CARING STAFF
Unleashing Performance of dedicated staff to provide the highest quality of educational experiences for children and youth.

RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT
Unleashing Possibilities by affirming the resiliency of the children, youth and families we serve; building upon their own strength and capacity to overcome challenges.
Greetings,

Things are looking UP at Unleashing Potential! This month our administrative offices moved to the Deaconess Center for Child Well–Being. We are thrilled to be located in a sacred space with the purpose of elevating the awareness and affecting systematic change in the lives of children in our region. Regardless of economic circumstance, race or zip code, the Deaconess Foundation is focused on equity for the well-being of all children. Unleashing Potential is proud to be a covenantal partner in this endeavor. Our programs directly focus on making sure the children and families we serve can realize the assets they possess and provide opportunities for them to actualize them.

We could not achieve the goals set in our early childhood education, school age services or teen programs without your generous support.

Caroline Mission is preparing for graduation for kindergarten at the end of this month. All of our children at Caroline Mission, who are of age, are ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond!

This summer over 150 children are in our four summer enrichment camps. Each week they are engaging in a curriculum that develops skills in self-regulation and positive conflict resolution, cognitive development activities, swimming lessons and multiple field trips. It has been documented that the summer months can be the most difficult for children in under-resourced homes. This 8 week program provides a learning and fun environment with caring adults; two snacks and lunch are provided daily.

As you read our newsletter, you will see Magnificent Creations continues to grow. We have now included young ladies in the program! A college tour is planned and the youth are learning job readiness skills including silk screen printing skills and the soft skills needed to be successful in the world of work.

It is amazing how far we have come. The dedication and commitment our staff has for the children and families, as well as the generous support of friends like you, make this possible. Please consider making an investment to help us continue furthering our mission. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for joining me on this incredible journey of Unleashing the Potential of our children!

Yours in service,
Darlene Y. Sowell
President & CEO

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GIVE & RECEIVE WITH YOUTH OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDITS

Unleashing Potential is excited to announce that we have been awarded Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) tax credits from the Missouri Department of Economic Development. YOP credits are available to eligible donors for gifts of $500 or more. See the graphic on the left for how tax credits can reduce your out-of-pocket cost for a donation to our UP at Caroline Mission Early Childhood Education program.

Eligible donors include individuals, businesses, or corporations with a Missouri income tax liability. Eligible contributions include gifts to Unleashing Potential's UP at Caroline Mission of $500 or more. Gifts can be in the form of cash, credit card, or stock.

Donors have up to five years to utilize all of the credits, but the tax credits are not transferable, refundable or sell-able. As with any gift, how much is deductible for tax purposes will depend upon the donor’s unique financial circumstances.

To make a gift or ask questions about Youth Opportunity Program Tax Credits, please contact Jessi Goodhart, Development Manager, at jgoodhart@upstl.org or 314-561-3337.
Unleashing Potential is pleased to announce that five outstanding recipients have been selected for the 2018 William Diersing Scholarship. Congratulations to Essowe Abassem, Cindy Fabian, Kenya Foster, Shyheim Rowe and Tewelde Melash Tesfasilasie. Each student recently received a $1,500 scholarship to help further their educational goals.

“The Trustee Committee was impressed by the dedication and perseverance of this year’s recipients,” said Cindy Bumb, William Diersing Scholarship Fund Trustee. “Bill’s vision with this scholarship was to help youth and families achieve their life aspirations and dreams. Through this scholarship, recipients are a step closer to finding educational and empowering experiences that unleash their magnificent potential.”

William Diersing was a devoted employee of Unleashing Potential (formerly Neighborhood Houses), who had a particular interest in encouraging the continuing education of families enrolled in Unleashing Potential programs. The William Diersing Scholarship Fund was created by a gift from William Diersing after his passing. Since that time, friends and relatives have made additional gifts to the fund, and scholarships have been awarded to help individuals achieve their educational goals.

NEW WEBSITE
Unleashing Potential is excited to share our new website! Check us out at www.upstl.org, where you'll find program information, news, events, stories and much more! While you are there, sign up for our e-news, delivered straight to your inbox.
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS FOR HELPING TO CREATE AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING!

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ART & SOUL VII: A CELEBRATION OF ART, CHILDREN & COMMUNITY

UPstl.org
On November 10, 2017, more than 300 guests joined us at Bissinger’s Caramel Room as we celebrated the role art plays in helping kids unleash their potential. Thanks to the generous crowd, more than $121,000 (net) was raised for the 1,200 children and youth served in our programs every day. The evening was also marked by the special unveiling and announcement of our new name, Unleashing Potential!

Attendees enjoyed a fabulous evening of art, dancing to music by Miss Jubilee, silent and live auctions, and delicious food and drinks. Once again, the silent auction showcased artwork from the talented kids in UP After School and UP Enrichment Camps. Thank you to our amazing sponsors, who partner with us each year in our mission to close the opportunity gap for children and families in St. Louis.

A special thanks to event chairs Charlotte Nenninger and Mary Mosqueda, and to Cory Stark, KMOV Morning Co-Anchor, who served as emcee.

Unleashing Potential was pleased to present the 2017 Jerry Paul Youth Advocacy Award to longtime UP friend and former board member, Ron Jackson. Ron’s life work has been focused on navigating and changing systems that work to make it easier for children to succeed and thrive. A well-respected champion for children in St. Louis, Ron has dedicated his career to serving and advocating for children and has worked passionately both behind-the-scenes and in the trenches to help make St. Louis a better place for children.

The Jerry Paul Youth Advocacy Award was created three years ago as a way to honor the life and legacy of Jerry Paul, retired President of the Deaconess Foundation and former UP board member. Jerry dedicated his life to making the lives of children in the St. Louis community better. Congratulations to Ron and thank you for all that you have done for children across the St. Louis area.
Thanks to an Impact Grant from Northern Trust, Caroline Mission is undergoing remodeling this summer, allowing us to provide additional child care services to children ages 2 and 3.

We are happy to announce that Caroline Mission staff continues their focus on professional development, with two teachers recently completing their Associates Degrees and one teacher completing a B.A. in Early Childhood Education. In addition, Pamela Harden, Mentor Teacher, became a Diakonal Minister through the Nollau Institute.

In 2018, a mentor teacher position was created to support the teaching staff, enabling them to further develop their skills, and leading to a better equipped and seasoned teacher.

Through a partnership with the St. Louis Internship Program, students Nijah Holloman and Cindy Fabian serve as office assistants at Caroline Mission. Nijah has completed her first semester of college and Cindy recently completed Clyde C. Miller Academy High School and is enrolled at Harris Stowe in the Early Childhood Education Program.

Caroline Mission parents completed 12 weeks of the Incredible Years evidence-based program, which has been found to be effective in strengthening parent management skills, improving children’s social emotional competence, emotion regulation, and school readiness, and reducing behavior problems.

A partnership with St. Louis Community College allowed Caroline Mission to provide three Early Childhood Credit Courses at its location.

20 children from Caroline Mission participated in a college tour during Week of the Young Child, an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers, and families.

Caroline Mission is pleased to continue valued partnerships with many community organizations, including Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis University Mirah House Students, St. Louis University IPE program, United4 Children, St. Louis Health Department, Kingdom House, St. Louis Community Credit Union, and St. Louis Community College.

During the 2017-2018 school year, students in the After School program participated in a wide variety of educational and creative activities, focusing on each student’s personal growth and academic success. Activities included:

- Street drumming, mural making and academic Olympics through Freedom Arts & Education Center;
- African dance and it’s music, culture and history through Spring Board to Learning;
- Interactive art experiences through ArtScope St. Louis;
- Fitness, tennis lessons and martial arts programming to support physical health and safety; and
- Theatre lessons to increase awareness and appreciation of the arts.

UP’s After School program was awarded a $4,000 grant from the Blues for Kids Foundation to purchase Lego WE-Do robotics kits and a $10,000 grant from the Monsanto Fund to expand STEM activities and expose students to concepts related to botany, entomology, space, medicine, engineering, computer technology and other STEM topics.
UP’s Enrichment Camps recently wrapped up at four locations this summer: Centennial Christian Church, Etzel Place Community Center, Immanuel United Church of Christ, and Jackson Park Elementary School.

Approximately 125 students participated in UP’s summer camps, with campers enjoying a variety of experiences, including:

- Cooking classes thanks to Panera Bread’s Bakers in Training program and the Cooking Matters for Kids program offered by Operation Food Search;
- Onsite activities provided by The Magic House and St. Louis Science Center;
- Field trips to St. Louis landmarks, including St. Louis Science Center, Myseum, St. Louis Aquarium, St. Louis Blues Museum, City Museum, St. Louis Chess Club and Hall of Fame, and Powder Valley;
- Fitness activities, including weekly swimming lessons, martial arts and tennis lessons;
- A week of sleep-away camp at Camp MoVal in Union, Missouri;
- Interactive nature experiences thanks to a partnership with Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center; and
- The Circle of Life Hula Hoop program, where students explored stretching fundamentals, learned Hula hoop tricks and concepts, and engaged in team building activities and games.

February welcomed young women to the Magnificent Creations (MC) program. The young women are excited to earn a salary and continue their curriculum.

John Phillips (JP) joined MC as the Shop Supervisor. Previously, JP worked for UP After School for six years as a Site Coordinator. He is excited and passionate about working with youth and brings knowledge of the t-shirt industry.

Magnificent Creations Teen Shyheim Rowe is a recent graduate of Vashon High School. He joined MC in the Fall of 2017 and will be attending Bethune–Cookman University in the Fall of 2018. He has received several awards, including a Rotary Scholarship from Webster Groves, a Student Achievement Award from the Missouri Teacher Union, an Ameren DAP Award, and is a 2018 William Diersing Scholarship recipient.

In March, MC moved its t-shirt screen printing location to Gamble Center, which is part of the Recreation and Parks division of the City of St. Louis. We are delighted to be partnered with the City of St. Louis.

Thanks to a partnership with STL Youth Jobs, our students are able to work 20 hours a week and receive a $1/hour raise for the summer.

Harris Stowe University Visit: MC students participated in an in-depth tour of the campus and discussed all the potential majors. We interacted with current students who gave us some insight on the affordability and caring atmosphere that a historically black college gives to its students.

Brown and James Law Firm: We met lawyers and their support team. Youth spent most of the day learning about various careers and educational requirements for each position. At the conclusion, our students were paired with young Associates who coached them to complete a mock trial. We had several stand-out students, but Darius Harris stood out and grabbed all of our attention.

Washington University’s Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab: We visited a class who pitched their final project to other classmates and community members. The focus of two of the projects was on Magnificent Creations. Our students participated in the discussion, received a tour and discussed entrepreneurship. Destiny Davis, a Washington University student, will work with MC this summer to help implement the recommendations.
ON THE MOVE!

Unleashing Potential’s administrative office has a new home! On June 25, administrative staff settled in to their new space, located in the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being at 1000 N. Vandeventer Avenue in St. Louis. The Center is a new, 21,000 square-foot facility that serves as a community action tank that is expected to host more than 6,000 child advocates, civic leaders and community organizers per year in more than 350 gatherings focused on children’s policy. UP, a long-time Deaconess Foundation grantee, will be joined by co-locating partners, the Deaconess Foundation and Vision for Children at Risk.

Self-funded by the Deaconess Foundation, the Center’s mission is to build power to advance child well-being in the St. Louis region by strengthening alliances for child-friendly public policy, increasing citizen contact with policy makers, positioning youth and organizers to move systems and engaging faith communities in child advocacy.

“Deaconess Foundation envisions a community that values the health and well-being of all children and gives priority attention to the most vulnerable,” said Rev. Starsky Wilson, Deaconess Foundation President and Chief Executive. “The St. Louis community can only thrive if the allocation of power and distribution of resources, benefits, opportunities and burdens are not predictable by, nor predicated on race. The new Center will be a place for the community to engage, collaborate and advocate for children.”

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Unleashing Potential welcomes four new members to our 2018 Board of Directors!

REV. PATRICK CHANDLER

Georgia born and raised, Patrick has served as Senior Pastor of St. Peter’s United Christian Church in Ferguson since 2015. Patrick has a deep love for God and a passion for God’s justice best revealed when the Church throws open wide its doors to be a place of extravagant welcome and radical hospitality to all people. He is a father, husband, pastor, fundraiser, Bruce Springsteen fan-boy, devoted to University of Georgia and Atlanta Falcons football, Braves and Red Sox cheerleader, poor golfer, comforter of the afflicted, afflicter of the comfortable. Patrick is married to the Rev. Courtney Montgomery Chandler, who serves as the Director of the Zion Lutheran Child Development Center in Ferguson. He is the parent of three children, Collin (age 17), who lives in Georgia, and Liam (age 10), and Liliann (3 years). He and his wife serve on the Missouri Mid-South Conference for the UCC.

JACKIE DIPPEL

Jackie is an audit partner at KPMG LLP, a global audit, tax, and advisory accounting firm. During her 33 years at KPMG LLP, she has focused on providing auditing services to state and local governments, higher education institutions, and other not-for-profit entities. Jackie leads KPMG LLP’s St. Louis office not-for-profit practice. A lifetime St. Louis resident, she has been actively involved in a number of local not-for-profit agencies. Jackie lives in Des Peres and her son is a student at the University of Washington in Seattle.

MICHÉLE OTTINGER

Michele currently serves as the Director of Children’s Ministries and All-Church Programming for St. Lucas United Church of Christ. Having more than 30 years of experience in the field of early childhood education, Michele has held a variety of roles throughout her career, including serving as the Executive Director for several large child development centers, as a consultant for the state of Missouri Bureau of Child Care and as a Crisis Intervention Specialist for Head Start programs across the country. Michele and her husband, Randy, are active members of St. Lucas UCC and many community organizations.

JERRY WALKER

Jerry Walker is the Director of IT for the City of St. Louis Treasurer’s Office. Jerry has more than 18 years of IT experience in both non-profit and for-profit organizations that includes LAN/WAN engineering and architecture, DRP policy and planning, strategic IT business planning, network security, and overall leadership strategy planning. Previously, Jerry was the Director of IT for Family Development Services in Indianapolis, Indiana, where they served as the grantor and grantee for all Head Start services in the Indianapolis metro area. Jerry is a proud graduate of Ball State University, where he earned his Bachelors and Masters of Information and Communication Science.
More than 260 trivia buffs gathered at The Den on April 21, 2018 for Unleashing Potential’s 8th Annual Trivia Night, raising nearly $12,000 (net) for UP’s four core programs.

Teams were challenged with 10 rounds of 10 brain teasers, led by former KSDK Meteorologist Mike Roberts. A special thanks goes to Ken Bentlage, former UP board member, and Kevin Arnold, President of the UP Young Professionals Board, for researching and writing all of the questions.

Thank you to all of the generous guests, round sponsors, VIP table sponsors, in-kind donors, auction donors and volunteers who helped make the evening a tremendous success!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

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The Unleashing Potential Young Professionals Board (UPYPB) is a dedicated and fun group of young professionals who promote community awareness and provide leadership and fundraising efforts for Unleashing Potential. The UPYPB is currently looking for young leaders who are interested in giving back to the community and helping further UP’s mission. For more information, please contact Jessi Goodhart, Development Manager, at jgoodhart@UPstl.org or 314-561-3337.

This spring, the ladies of St. Louis Association Women UCC once again visited Caroline Mission for their annual Spring Pilgrimage. The morning began with an update on Unleashing Potential, followed by crafts with the children and a tour of the new home for UP’s administrative offices in The Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being. The day wrapped up with lunch and a worship service led by Rev. Dr. Allen Fluent, former UP board member. Pilgrimage is a long-time tradition for the St. Louis Association Women and we are honored to have these special friends visit each year!
Don’t forget: The teens of UP at Magnificent Creations can create custom screen-printed t-shirts for any occasion, including:

- Family reunions
- Sports teams
- Special events
- College groups
- Camps
- Market your business
- Church groups
- Prizes and Giveaways

Throughout the year, the students also create unique t-shirt designs that reflect their dreams, stories, and vision—their very own magnificent creations! For more information, contact John Phillips at jphillips@upstl.org or 314-585-6216.

Gift cards: Target, Walmart, K-mart, Schnucks, Shop & Save, Save-A-Lot, Home Depot, Lowes
New underwear (for children up to size 6)
New socks (for children for up to 6 years)
Medical quality exam gloves
Kitchen towels
Lysol spray
Electric pencil sharpener
Mini dictionaries
Mini thesauruses
Drop cloths
Butcher paper
Hand sanitizer
Clorox wipes
Paper towels
Tissue boxes
Soap refill
Hats
Gloves/mittens
Scarves
Ear muffs
Digital Cameras
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Diapers & wipes
Soft books (for babies)
Outlet covers
Spray bottles (30)
High-quality thermometer
Plastic containers - shoe box size (20)
Plastic clothes baskets
White board
Cart with wheels
Fabric for sewing
Crocheting hooks
Yarn for crocheting
Smocks-Child size
CD Players-portable
Cot Sheets
First Aid Kits
1 inch Binders
Presentation Folders
Chromebooks, tablets, ipads, reading nooks
School supplies:
- Glue
- Construction Paper
- Paint for arts & crafts
- Pencils
- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Loose Leaf Paper
- Notebooks
- Scissors
- #2 paint brushes

To arrange for delivery or pickup of donated items, please contact Jessi Goodhart at 314.561.3337 or jgoodhart@upstl.org.
Join us as we celebrate art, children and community at Art & Soul VIII on November 2, 2018. Art & Soul highlights how Unleashing Potential uses art to reach across boundaries such as poverty and challenging urban neighborhoods to help reduce the opportunity gap for children and youth from low-income families.

Guests will enjoy unique works of art in a variety of forms, done by artists of all ages. The evening also includes cocktails, fabulous food, music, silent & live auctions, and fund the need. All funds raised by Art & Soul VIII will support Unleashing Potential’s four core programs which serve more than 1,200 children each week.

Individual tickets are $175. Sponsorships are available from $1,000 to $10,000. For more information, visit www.upstl.org or contact Jessi Goodhart, Development Manager, at jgoodhart@upstl.org or (314) 561-3337.

Friday, November 2, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
The Four Seasons Hotel St. Louis,
999 N 2nd St, St. Louis, MO 63102