

# LINC Commission Meeting

May 13, 2019



LINC students from Buckner Elementary in the Fort Osage School District (above), Faxon Elementary (below left) and Troost Elementary (below right) in the Kansas City Public Schools all participated in the Girls on the Run 5K event at Children's Mercy Park.



# Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

## Our Shared Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

## Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

## Our Guiding Principles

1. **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Provide ready access to a full array of effective services.
2. **PREVENTION:** Emphasize “front-end” services that enhance development and prevent problems, rather than “back-end” crisis intervention.
3. **OUTCOMES:** Measure system performance by improved outcomes for children and families, not simply by the number and kind of services delivered.
4. **INTENSITY:** Offering services to the needed degree and in the appropriate time.
5. **PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT:** Use the needs, concerns, and opinions of individuals who use the service delivery system to drive improvements in the operation of the system.
6. **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Decentralize services to the places where people live, wherever appropriate, and utilize services to strengthen neighborhood capacity.
7. **FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS:** Create a delivery system, including programs and reimbursement mechanisms, that are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to respond to the full spectrum of child, family and individual needs.
8. **COLLABORATION:** Connect public, private and community resources to create an integrated service delivery system.
9. **STRONG FAMILIES:** Work to strengthen families, especially the capacity of parents to support and nurture the development of their children.
10. **RESPECT AND DIGNITY:** Treat families, and the staff who work with them, in a respectful and dignified manner.
11. **INTERDEPENDENCE/MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Balance the need for individuals to be accountable and responsible with the obligation of community to enhance the welfare of all citizens.
12. **CULTURAL COMPETENCY:** Demonstrate the belief that diversity in the historical, cultural, religious and spiritual values of different groups is a source of great strength.
13. **CREATIVITY:** Encourage and allow participants and staff to think and act innovatively, to take risks, and to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
14. **COMPASSION:** Display an unconditional regard and a caring, non-judgmental attitude toward participants that recognizes their strengths and empowers them to meet their own needs.
15. **HONESTY:** Encourage and allow honesty among all people in the system.



Monday, May 13, 2019 | 4 – 6 pm  
Kauffman Foundation  
4801 Rockhill Rd.  
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

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## Agenda

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- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
  - a. **Approval April 2019 minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports
- IV. Girls on the Run
- V. Giving Grove
  - a. LINC expansion
- VI. LINC Advocacy Efforts
- VII. Report Out
  - a. Justice in the School
  - b. Expungement Day
- VIII. LINC Retirement
  - a. Roosevelt Dickerson
- IX. Adjournment

Next meeting: Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 pm (Kauffman Foundation)



## THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – APRIL 15, 2019

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo. Co-chair **Bailus Tate** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bert Berkley  
Sharon Cheers  
Jack Craft  
Tom Davis  
Aaron Deacon  
Mark Flaherty  
SuEllen Fried

Rob Givens  
Anita Gorman  
Dick Hibschan  
Rosemary Lowe  
Ken Powell  
David Ross

### *Minutes of the March 18, 2019, LINC Commission meeting were approved.*

**Aaron Deacon** introduced a report on Clear My Record, a project to help Missourians who might have difficulties hiring a lawyer, go through the process of removing convictions from their record in order to help remove barriers to new jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. **Ellen Suni** of UMKC School of Law reported on the partnership between Code for KC and the law school to organize Expungement Day, an opportunity for Kansas City area residents to meet with law school students to find and clear their records. The first Expungement Day will be held on April 27 at Morning Star Missionary Baptist church. **Dawn Patterson**, LINCWorks staff, reported that Clear My Record will be of benefit to LINCWorks' TANF and SkillUp participants by helping them overcome legal barriers and gaining access to the path to self-sufficiency.

### Superintendent Reports

- **Sharon Nibbelink**, Superintendent (Center School District), reported district voters passed the \$48 million bond issue question in April with a yes-vote of 82%. Among the projects to be funded is construction of the first elementary school in 50 years.
- **Yolanda Cargile**, Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District), reported on the district's Ace the Test campaign to promote preparation for the upcoming MAP assessment. Recent recognitions include a Ruskin High student who made it to debate finals; three students of the Ruskin culinary arts program; the Compass nutrition team, which won a food safety award; and the district pre-K program, which won a Community Impact award from the South Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. The district recently hosted a Family Summit to provide information and resources including a job fair and dental and health care; LINC supported the event. A video of the event was shown.
- **Christy Harrison**, Director of Extended Learning (Kansas City Public Schools), reported the district is preparing to open Lincoln Middle School. The district is expanding its Middle College program serving dropouts from all districts. The district will offer Summer Quest project-based experiences for students in the summer school program; for example, some students will work on projects with food truck owners. The district is expanding its College Academy from a two- to four-year program.
- **Dan Clemens**, Superintendent (North Kansas City Schools), reported the district is working on a facilities plan to respond to aging buildings and a growing student population. **Brian Van Batavia** of Maple Park Middle School and **Eric Johnson** of Winnetonka High School were named principals of the year by the Greater Kansas City Missouri Principals Association. The North Kansas City Schools Education Foundation awarded \$35,000 in grants to teachers this year.
- **Kevin Foster**, Executive Director (Genesis School), reported the Genesis school board recently voted to transfer sponsorship of its charter to University of Missouri-Columbia after UMKC decided to discontinue sponsorship of all charter schools. Foster thanked LINC for piloting Families and Schools Together (FAST) this year at Genesis; next year FAST will be combined with the Let's Read initiative of Literacy KC.

- **Bob Bartman**, Director (Education Policy Fellowship Program), reported the EPFP fellows will hear a panel discussion on diversity at this month's meeting. Next month the fellows will visit the White House Decision Center at the Truman Presidential Library.
- **Gayden Carruth**, Executive Director (Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City), reported she is retiring at the end of August and will be succeeded by **Kenny Southwick**, who plans to attend the June LINC Commission meeting.

**Vivian Roper**, Superintendent, reported on the 20th anniversary of Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy. A video produced by LINC was shown. The video featured interviews with founder **Bishop Mark C. Tolbert** and Roper, and covered the origins of the school, its growth over 20 years, and the importance of the LINC Before and After School program to its survival. Roper reported the school will hold its third kindergarten roundup of the year on April 25. The school is working with LINC and Social Solutions on a plan to use the Apricot data system to better serve Tolbert families. Bishop Tolbert thanked LINC for its partnership.

LINC Caring Communities Administrator **Sean Akridge** reported LINC will operate 17 Before & After Summer School program sites this summer. In addition to providing a needed service to children, families and schools, the summer programs provide an opportunity for site coordinators, who double-up at summer sites, to learn from each other.

LINC Deputy Director-Community Engagement **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported that unlike the past several years, in 2019 no benefit will be provided to area families through the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBTC) program. LINC will inform past participants that the program will not be available.

LINC Caring Communities Administrator **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported LINC has been pursuing various ways of improving recruitment and hiring of site staff including Facebook ads, on-site TB testing, and reducing turnaround time of background screenings.

LINC Human Resources Director **Trent DeVreugd** reported on recent improvements to employee benefits including on-site staff retirement plan reviews with 2 West, a new FSA provider to provide better user experience, Onward savings plan, and option of the SpiraCare exclusive provider organization for the employee health plan.

**Rob Givens** reported the LINC 401(k) Committee has been meeting to carry out its charge to increase retirement plan efficiency, transfer fiduciary responsibility (to 2 West), and engage financial planners (2 West). The committee is working on selecting a record-keeper.

Schondelmeyer introduced new LINC staff **Joe Robertson**, who reported on the Kids Count initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to share county-level information on child well-being; in Missouri, and particularly in Jackson County, there are still many children in poverty, and mental health indicators are in need of improvement.

LINC Caring Communities Supervisor **Jeff Hill** reported that LINC staff recently visited Jefferson City to meet with area legislators during the annual Child Advocacy Day. A slide show of the trip was shown.

The meeting was adjourned.



# Girls on the Run is for **EVERY** girl.

Girls on the Run is a fun and effective afterschool program designed to enhance girls' social, emotional and physical skills and behaviors to successfully navigate life experiences. Twice per week for 10 weeks, trained coaches lead small teams of 3 - 5 grade girls through the program's intentional curriculum that creatively integrates running.



## WHY IT MATTERS IT'S FUN. IT'S EFFECTIVE.

Participating in Girls on the Run transforms girls' lives by helping them increase their self-confidence, develop healthy relationships, and feel good about themselves, inside and out.



Girls who were the least active at the start of the program increased their physical activity by more than **40%\***



**97%** of participants said they learned critical skills to manage emotions, resolve conflict, help others or make intentional decisions\*



Girls on the Run was **one of only three** afterschool programs recognized by Harvard University as a leader in social emotional learning



**96%** of schools surveyed by Girls on the Run said they would offer the program again

\*Results based on a 2016 independent study conducted by Positive Youth Development expert Maureen R. Weiss, Ph.D.

“

Girls on the Run has given our students tools, strategies, and language to be successful in all areas of their lives—from understanding the importance of physical fitness to learning how to resolve conflicts.” – **Sharon, School Administrator**

**BRING GIRLS ON THE RUN TO YOUR SCHOOL OR SITE TODAY!**

Learn more at [www.gotrk.org](http://www.gotrk.org)

# 'I know an angel'; Girls on the Run finds heroes among the young and old

By Joe Robertson, LINC writer

Published on May 08, 2019



Anyone who didn't know better saw just the simple joy of girls breaking the finish line of a 5k race in Saturday's sunshine.

But the Girls on the Run program in several LINC Caring Communities sites had already changed lives long before the teams of girls and their partners took on the season-ending challenge at Children's Mercy Park May 4.

LINC staffers and the many volunteers who supported the after-school program watched the exhausted runners, knowing the richer stories behind their triumphant smiles.

They celebrated new friendships.

Unexpected friendships.

Self-confidence and love.

One of those runners, Troost Elementary Site Coordinator Jamie Braden knew, had been living essentially homeless but had made all the Girls on the Run sessions and practices because her mother, despite the difficulties, was determined to get her there.

Some of the runners, running together — even holding hands — were girls joining with immigrants from Garfield Elementary’s New Americans class, Garfield site coordinator Danielle Small said.

They had stood apart from each other, cautious, when the new school year began, Small said.

And even though some of the elementary school girls might seem weary and complain, “Ooh, my legs hurt,” Faxon Elementary site coordinator Yolanda Robinson said, they all had fallen in love with Girls on the Run.

The homeless mother at Troost who had made sure her daughter was able to run knew what the volunteers and staff had done for her girl, Braden said.

“She thanked us,” Braden said. “She said, ‘I know an angel when I see one.’”

The Kansas City chapter of the national Girls on the Run program has been carrying out a mission “to inspire girls to recognize their inner strength and celebrate what makes them one of a kind.”

LINC has been in partnership with Girls on the Run for seven years and this year more than 150 girls participated from 11 LINC sites:

In the Kansas City Public Schools at Border Star Montessori, Faxon, Garfield, Hale Cook, Hartman, Longfellow, Primitivo Garcia and Troost elementary schools; in the Fort Osage School District at Buckner and Elm Grove elementary schools; and in the North Kansas City School District at Topping Elementary.

Girls on the Run this year supported LINC site runners with \$45,000 in support and scholarships.

The girls not only learn how to train during the 10-week program each year, but they also learn about nutrition, social skills, public service and confidence building exercises.



*Jamie Braden with her students.*





It involves parents and caregivers in ways that spark fresh enthusiasm in support of the program, with parents often serving as the girls' running partners.

Border Star Montessori site coordinator Shelley Taylor-Doran watched one of her school's girls run with her dad, who was a regular runner, but had never run with his daughter before.

"It was a challenge," Taylor-Doran said. As it was with many of the new runners, there was weariness and some walking during the runs, she said, "but they were sharing it together."

The staffers and volunteers see the beginning of lasting friendships among the runners.

"Girls who typically avoid (such physical activity) want to participate," said Garcia Elementary site coordinator Prentice Terrance.

"And then you get parent buy-in," Robinson of Faxon said, counting that as a victory that reaches beyond the program. "Parents are looking forward to it — *cha-ching!*"

Site coordinator Sarah Duzell at Hartman Elementary purposely tried to draw both active girls and girls who would ordinarily shy away from a running group.

It got the girls "out of their cliques," Duzell said. "You saw them get engaged in something in LINC. It was good."

In some cases, Girls on the Run helped create community partnerships as well. The program offers scholarships to support a lot of runners, but Hale Cook had more runners than the program could support on one team, site coordinator Qiana McGee said. But City Gym in Waldo stepped in to sponsor runners, she said.



In the end, Girls on the Run helps grow character that will carry on.

"Those girls who stick (with the program) end up helping the little ones," Robinson said.

In some cases, site coordinators said, girls who graduated to middle school come back to the elementary after-school program to help.

The program begins with 3rd graders, but in many cases younger girls in 1st and 2nd grade in the after-school programs eagerly go out to run with their older schoolmates.

They'll be ready to go, then, next year. Girls on the Run catches on fast.

the  
**GIVING  
GROVE**



**Rob Reiman**

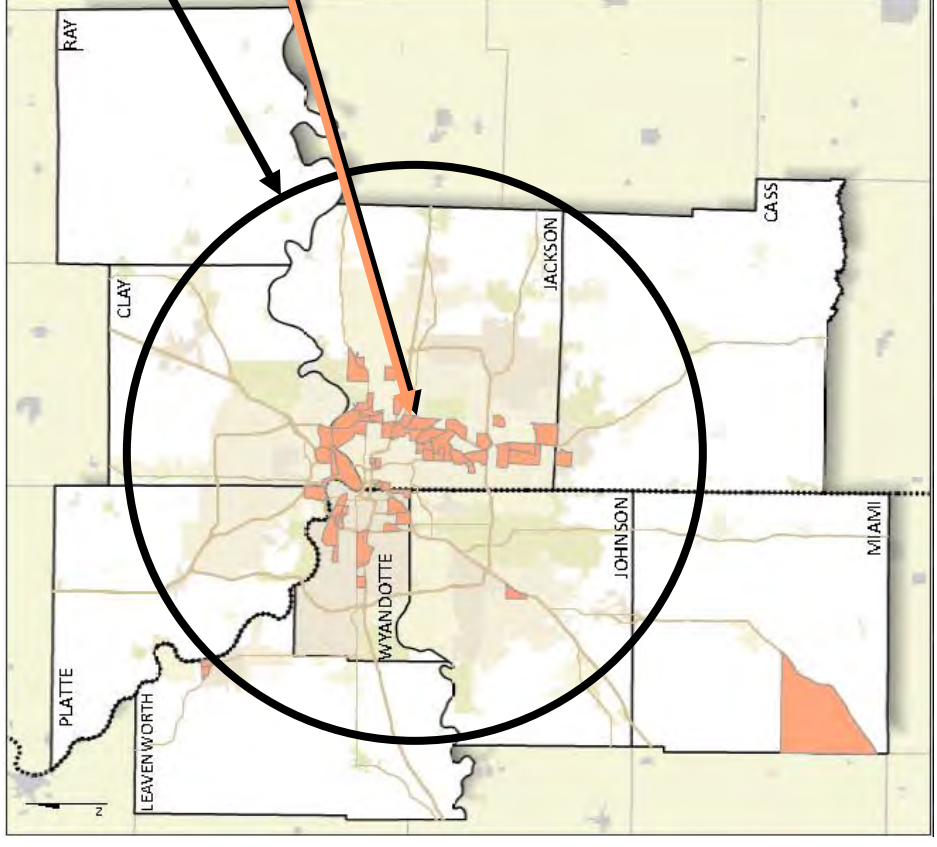
CEO

• The Giving Grove



**KCCOG**  
KANSAS CITY COMMUNITY GARDENS

# Food Access Problem – KC



## KC Metro Area

- 2,200,000 pop.
- 268,000 “Food Insecure”

*Lack of access to healthy food*

# Sustainable School Orchards

## Perennial Fruit Production

- Pear trees live 35-45 years
  - Produce up to 200+ pounds annually
- Apple trees live 20-30 years
  - Produce up to 300+ pounds annually
- Average 15 tree orchard produces ~300 peck baskets annually
- Free food for your students and families!



# Giving Grove Provides

- Access to disease resistant nursery stock
- Landscape planning and design
- Help with installation
- Lifetime education and coaching
- Community organizing assistance
- Holistic spray ingredients

11



# Partnership Requirement

- Water source
- At least **2** committed people to serve as stewards
- Committed care and monitoring of the orchard
- Attendance to all 7 workshops within first 2 years of orchard
- Portion of the harvest given away to communities of concern

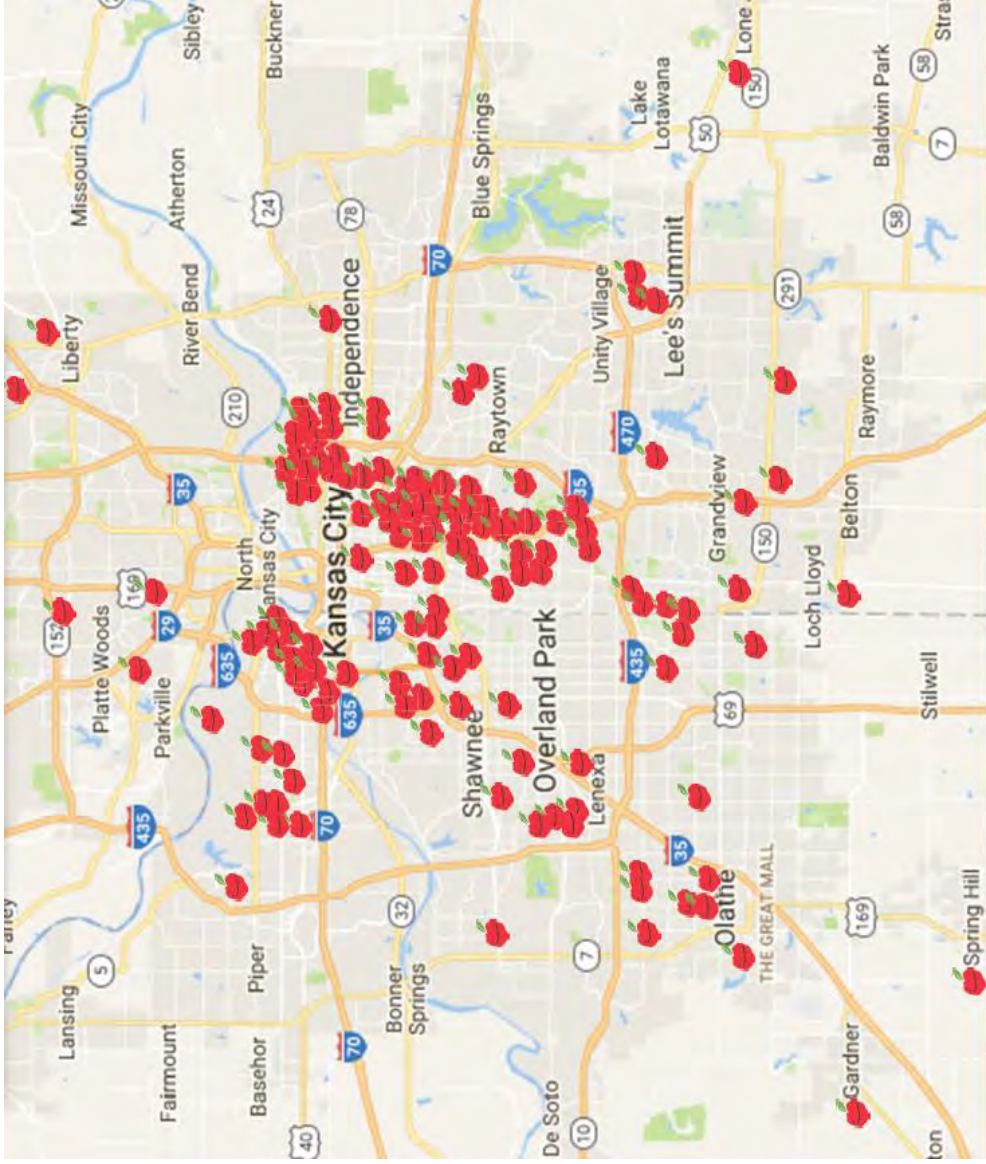


# Workshops

1. New Steward Training
2. Engage Your Community
3. Holistic Pest Management
4. Dormant Season Pruning
5. Summer Pruning
6. New Tree Maintenance
7. Preparing for Harvest



# Giving Grove Projects: 176



## YOUTH Sites:

- 16 Elementary Schools
- 9 Youth Services
- 8 High Schools
- 6 Middle Schools
- 5 Pre-Kindergarten
- 3 University or College
- 2 K-12 Schools



# Annual Neighborhood Benefit

Avg Trees/Site: 15  
Value: \$9,775  
Cost to Neighbors: **FREE**

# Lifetime Benefit

Lifetime: 73,800 lbs  
Value: \$ 186,000  
Cost: **FREE**



# Kansas City Metro-wide “Benefit”

176 Orchards – Directly in areas of need

2,995 – Trees in the ground

18,247,000 lbs – Lifetime Harvest Potential

\$44,157,000 – Free, Healthy Calories

# An Apple A Day

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**E**very day, one in six Americans – including one in five children – face the unimaginable question, “Will I have enough to eat today?” Getting plenty of healthy, nutritious food in the first three years of life is the foundation for a child’s future physical and mental health, academic achievement, and economic productivity. Last year, food insecurity drove up healthcare costs an estimated \$160 billion, due in part to increasingly poor mental health and chronic disease outcomes.

Hunger in the U.S. is a chronic injustice that is growing at an alarming rate, particularly in low-income urban areas with little to no access to healthy food. Emergency food relief programs have become the de facto solution, but only address the temporary symptoms of hunger rather than the root cause.

The Giving Grove was founded in 2011 with the idea that planting edible tree gardens in neighborhoods throughout Kansas City could provide more sustainable, nutrient-rich food for the growing number of hungry families in the metro area.

Since 2012, The Giving Grove has equipped communities in the Kansas City metro with nearly 2,800 trees in over 160 orchards. A 15-tree Giving Grove orchard provides approximately 225,000 servings of fresh, organic produce.



Now, Giving Grove, Inc. is prepared to launch a national expansion, bringing community orchards to 17 major U.S. cities over the next four to five years.

For each new city, we plan to provide new stewards and neighborhoods with disease-resistant trees and berries, holistic ingredients to care for the orchards, and the onboarding and curriculum they will need to successfully install, maintain, harvest, and distribute their produce.

Kansas City will serve as a national hub for our community orchard network, acting as a “laboratory” to test out new ideas and programs. Each year, we’ll convene partners from across the country to provide hands-on training and resources that will maximize our national impact.

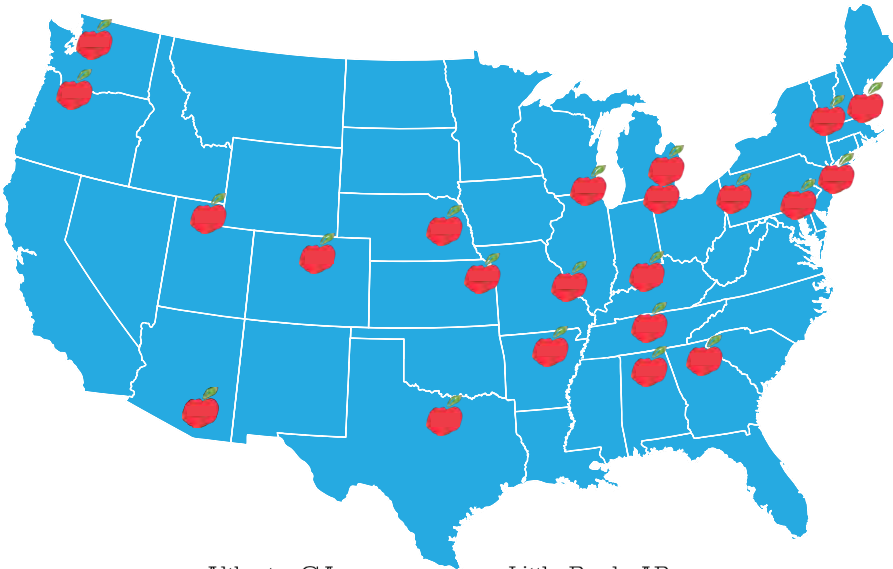
We’ve met with experts across the country, and after piloting year-long replication sites in St. Louis and Omaha, the building blocks are in place to bring our innovative program to scale.

# Scaling Across the U.S.

Replication plans include 17 cities with densely-populated urban centers, high levels of food insecurity, and urban agriculture organizations with the capacity and sophistication to add new programming.

Based on our pilot process, we have evidence that:

- The business model is ready to be shared,
- Our program aligns with the needs and resources of many urban communities,
- We have the experience and resources to get the job done right, and
- This programming can make a dramatic impact on food insecurity in cities across the country.



Atlanta, GA  
Birmingham, AL  
Boston, MA  
Chicago, IL  
Detroit, MI  
Seattle, WA  
Dallas, TX  
Denver, CO  
Hartford, CT

Little Rock, AR  
Louisville, KY  
Nashville, TN  
NYC, NY  
Portland, OR  
Salt Lake City, UT  
Toledo, OH  
Wilmington, DE

# 17

cities

more than  
**5 million**  
americans

representing

# 15%

of all food  
insecurity  
in the U.S.



# Giving Grove National Impact



**Lifetime Production Potential**  
54,642,000 Servings



**Registered Volunteers**  
1,269



**Number of Giving Grove Sites**  
194



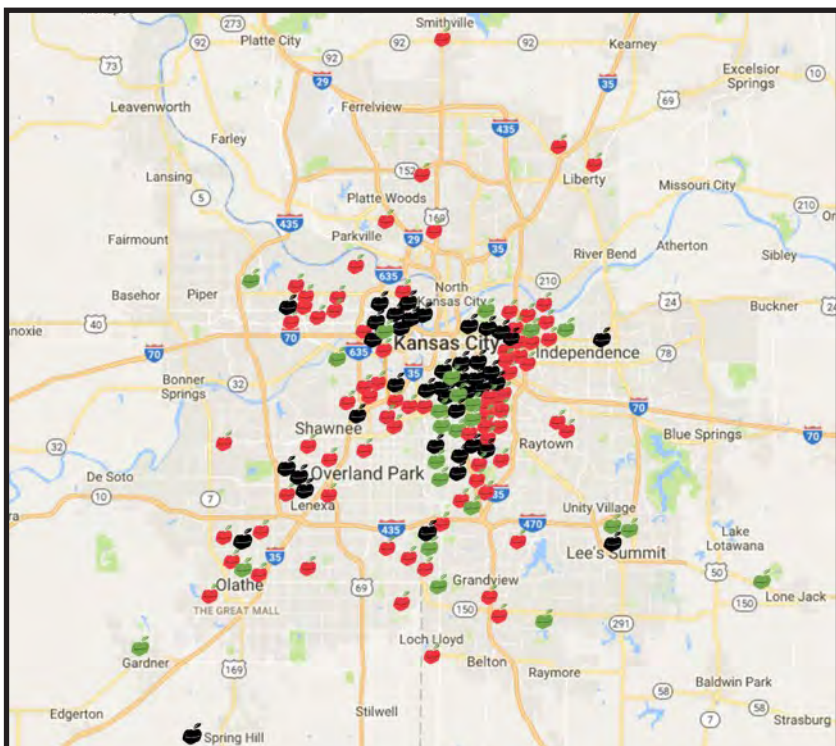
**Trained Stewards/Apprentices**  
403



**Annual Production Potential**  
735,000 pounds



**Number of 1/3 lbs. Servings**  
2,205,000 (annually)



## -- ANNUAL -- PRODUCTION POTENTIAL



Less than 2,000 lbs.



2,000 – 5,000 lbs.



Greater than 5,000 lbs.

## TREES/BERRIES AT SITES

Apple	938
Pear	1,036
Peach	231
Cherry	391
Jujube	122
Raspberry	574
Blackberry	536
Apricot	21
Paw Paw	35
Fig	81
Pecan	31
Hazelnut	57
Chestnut	16

## NEIGHBORHOOD ORCHARD ECONOMICS

Avg. Trees/Site	15
Annual Production Potential	4,000 lbs.
Annual 1/3 lb. Servings	12,000
Annual Value	\$9,775
Lifetime Production Potential	73,800 lbs.
Lifetime Value	\$186,000

BECAUSE

LEGAL

# JUSTICE IN THE SCHOOLS

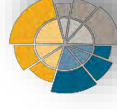
Free Legal Services and School-Based Clinic

AID

MATTERS

# What is the Justice in the Schools (JTS) Legal Clinic?

- ▶ An initiative created through the partnership of Legal Aid, KCPS, School Smart, and the KC Health Department
- ▶ Justice in the Schools Legal Clinic is a free school-based legal clinic ran by Legal Aid staff and volunteer attorneys
- ▶ Providing free legal assistance to eligible KCPS families with civil legal issues



# Quick Facts

- ▶ The clinic has officially existed since September 2018.
- ▶ Has been housed at Central Academy of Excellence since January 2019.
- ▶ The clinic is staffed with an attorney who has several years of experience working with different practice areas within Legal Aid's diverse units and projects.
- ▶ Hosts a panel of dedicated Volunteer Attorney Project attorneys from a few local private firms to provide *pro bono* counsel.
- ▶ Boasts a caseload of almost 100 clients.



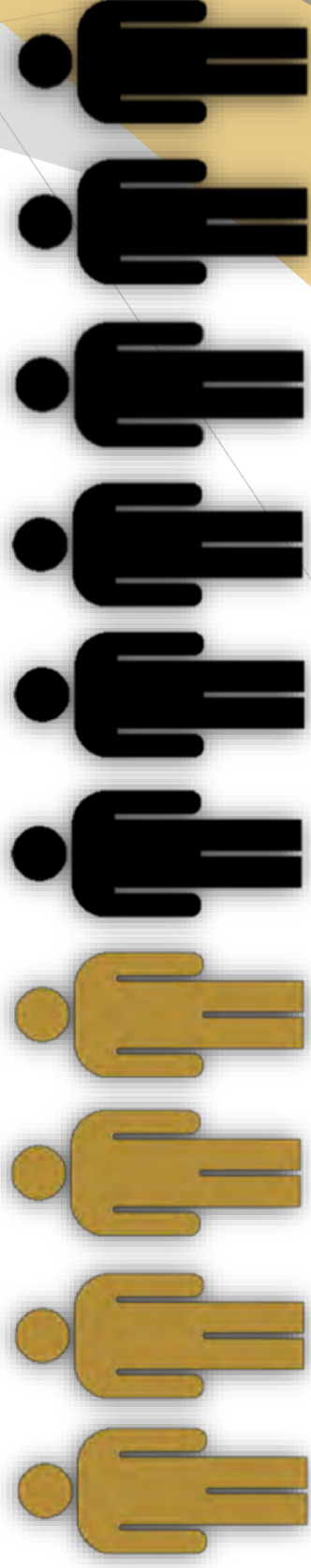
# What Qualifies as Eligible for our Clinic?

- ▶ Currently living within the Jackson County boundaries
- ▶ Applicant has a student currently enrolled in the Kansas City Public School District
- ▶ Meet our income requirements
  - ▶ Within the 200% range of the Federal Poverty Line
- ▶ Have a legal problem within our practice areas



# Why a School Based Legal Clinic?

- ▶ Student Mobility Crisis in Kansas City increasing at an alarming rate
  - ▶ Mobility- the movement of students between schools within or between school years, which in turn negatively impacting academic achievement and student morale for both the mobile student and their classmates
- ▶ On average, 25 families in Jackson County are legally evicted every day.
- ▶ More than 40% of KCPS students are affected by the mobility crisis.



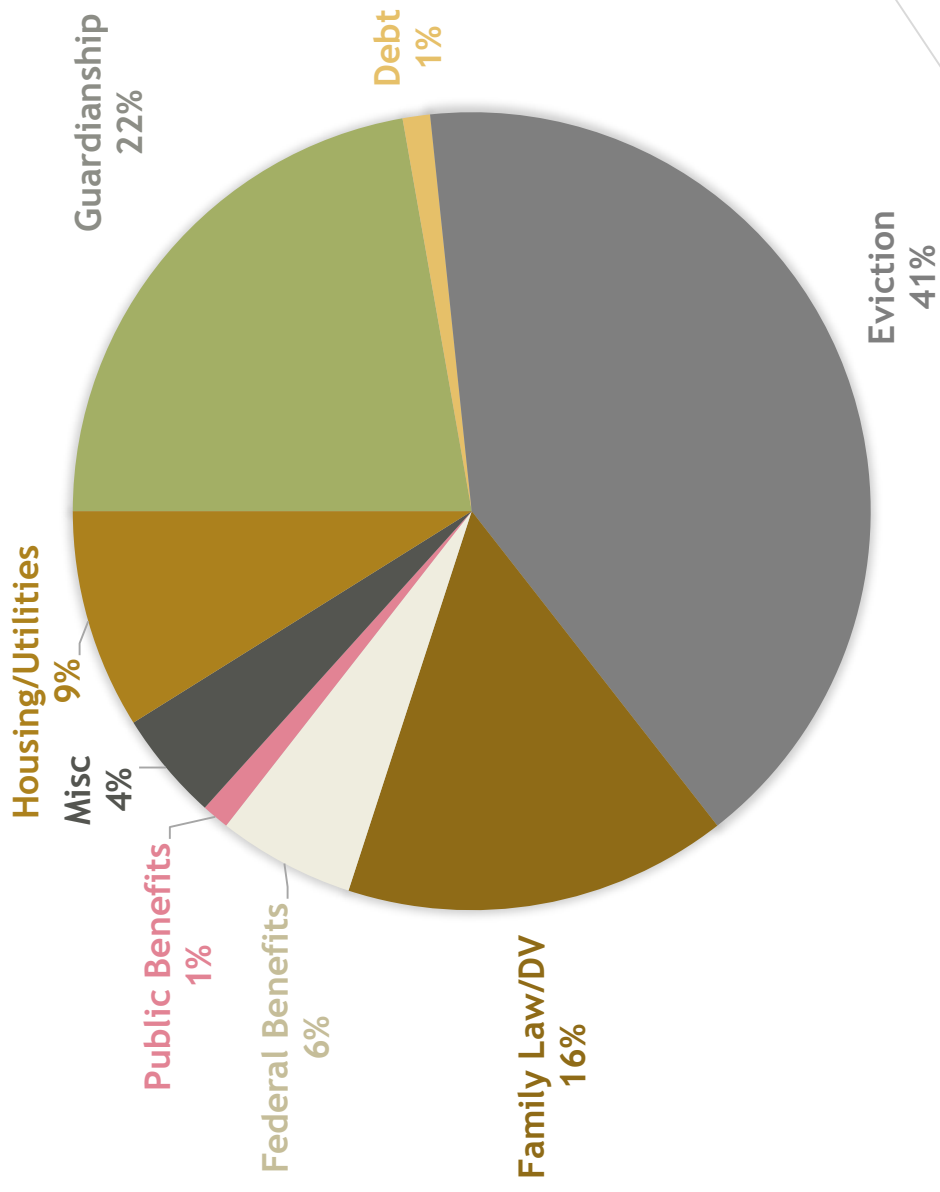
# What Legal Issues Can We Help With?

- ▶ Defend families within the KCPS district against wrongful evictions to prevent homelessness and keep students in their current school(s).
- ▶ Other legal issues we can help with:
  - ▶ Family Law/ Domestic Violence Protection
  - ▶ Landlord/Tenant Law (Eviction Defense)
  - ▶ Foreclosure Prevention
  - ▶ Housing Issues
  - ▶ Healthcare
  - ▶ Public and Federal Benefits
  - ▶ Consumer Matters (Debt)

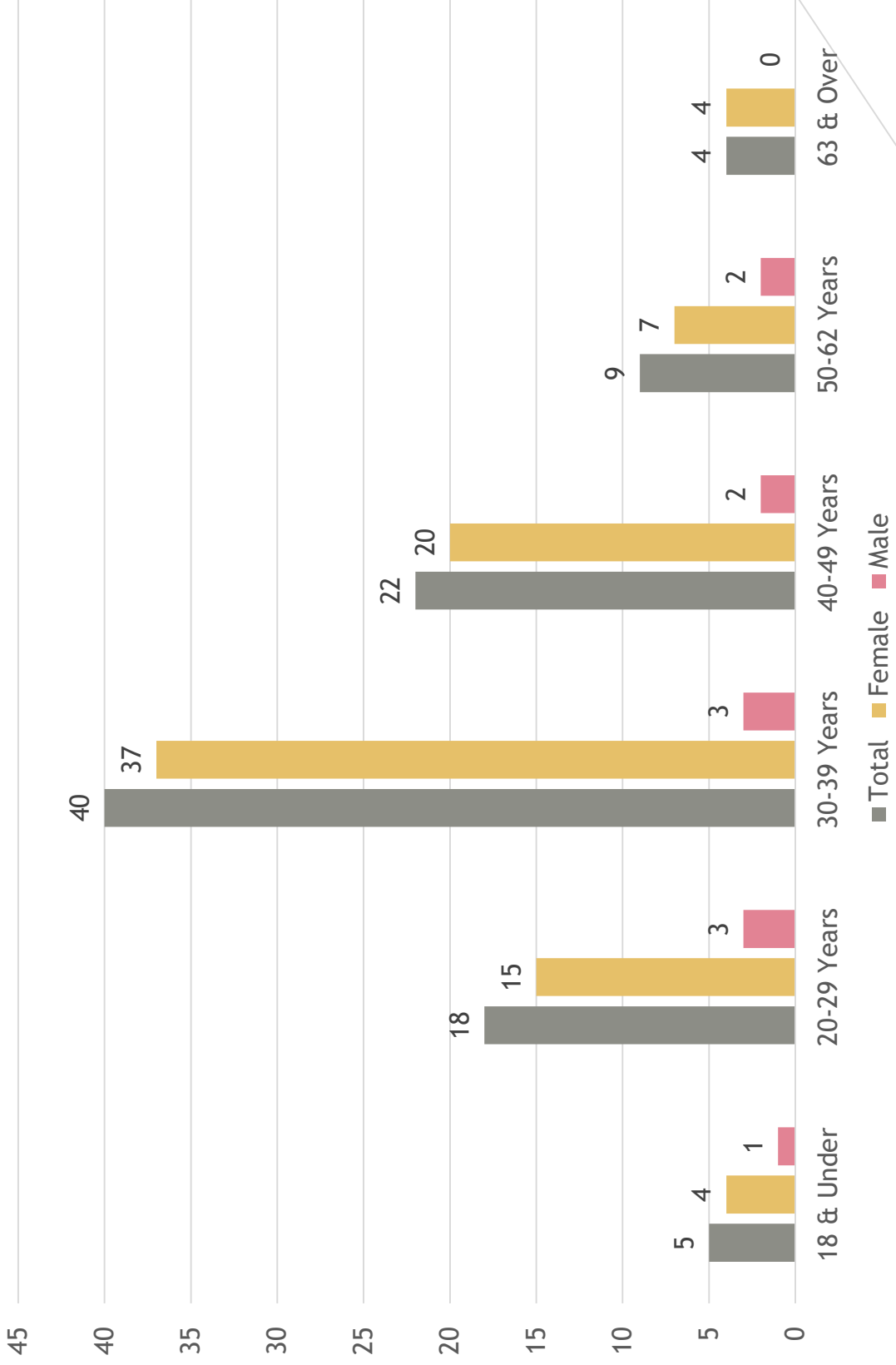


# A Breakdown of Our Client Profile

## CLIENTS BY ISSUE TYPE



# A Breakdown of Our Client Profile



# BECAUSE

## Contact Us

*Josh Murphy, Staff Attorney*

(816) 418 - 2061

[jmurphy@lawmo.org](mailto:jmurphy@lawmo.org)

*Cori Smith, Project Director/Paralegal*

(816) 418 - 2061

[csmith@lawmo.org](mailto:csmith@lawmo.org)

# AID

# WATTERS

# Overwhelming stories flood 'Clear Your Record' expungement campaign in KC

By Joe Robertson, LINC writer

Published on May 01, 2019



*Here they came, bringing their hidden pain with them.*

Tristin Stewart, a 29-year-old father from Harrisonville. Tamara Sigars, a 44-year-old cancer survivor from Kansas City. Brandi Wheeler, a 35-year-old new college graduate from Olathe.

And hundreds more, in person or online, all hoping to shed criminal records that have kept them shadowed far too long in their communities' plain sight.

"That one mistake can hang over your head for so long," Stewart said after he and some 140 other men and women filed into the Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church Community Center April 27 to meet an army of volunteers who want to help clear their names.

The numbers of people — and their stories — are overwhelming the Clear Your Record effort led by the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, Code for KC and the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office.

Nearly 800 people with criminal histories in Missouri are now registered through the Clear Your Record website.

"I just want a second chance," Stewart said.

He wants the world to accept him as the father whose life changed the moment he took his then-two-month-



*Tristin Stewart and "J.J."*

old son into his arms for the first time inside the walls of the Fulton, Mo., prison three years ago.

His son — "J.J." — lifted his eyes and looked into his father's face with mysterious wonder, "like he knew who I was," Stewart said. "Then he buried his head in my chest and he slept in my arms."

He held the child the entire time during that visit with his girlfriend. "For hours," he said.

"I'm trying to change everything to be there for my son."

Stewart is no longer the 21-year-old Stewart who was chasing a methamphetamine addiction, who stole a box of checks out of the trunk of a car and falsified desperate signatures.

He's working, providing for his new family the best he can with the limited options available to him.

Stewart learned of the Clear Your Record effort through LINC and LINCWorks, which helps people find work and build careers.

LINCWorks is supporting the expungement crusade that began with a partnership between UMKC, Code for KC's problem-solving "Brigade," and the prosecutor's office soon after new Missouri law expanded expungement opportunities in 2018.

"You are *not* the worst thing you've ever done," UMKC law professor and Dean Emerita Ellen Suni told a team of volunteers as they prepped for the April 27 event.

"People will try to define you . . ." she said, "but you can take that back."

It's not easy. And many people who come in hopes of clearing their records are learning they do not qualify for relief under the new law.

Violent crimes, including Class A felonies, are not eligible. Neither are any crimes that required registration as a sex offender. And there are lesser crimes, like theft, still not allowed for expungement that Suni and team want added to the law.



*Volunteer UMKC student Beth Beavers consults with Tamara Sigars at the Expungement Day event April 27*

There is a simple reason the volunteers are trying so hard to help these hundreds navigate the law, spare them onerous legal expenses and digitally speed up the process.

Because they believe Tamara Sigars is right.

The Kansas City woman battling back from cervical cancer shouldn't have to keep paying for long-past misde-



meanors and a non-violent felony conviction from more than 20 years ago.

Sigars was shaking a figurative fist at the world as she sat with UMKC law student Beth Beavers on Expungement Day, adding up all the missed jobs and denied housing while the student searched online for her criminal history.

She's worked most of her life, Sigars said. She can drive delivery trucks or "anything with wheels" if she could get a break.

"I mean, come on," she said. "Get your foot off my neck."



Volunteers in the Clear Your Record effort prepare to see clients at the Expungement Day event April 27

Be patient, said Lawrence attorney and expungement event co-leader Scott Stockwell to the crowd that already filled the church center's hall by 8 a.m. on Expungement Day.

"We've had over 600 sign up," he said, "for a day where we thought we'd have maybe 25."

In the work room behind him, UMKC undergraduate student Kylee Gomez was scrambling with other organizers to set up dozens of volunteers supporting 10 pro-bono attorneys.

"Finally," she thought to herself, seeing the crowd. *"The message is getting out."*

Gomez had teamed up with Suni, who a year ago turned a law technology and ethics class onto the idea of taking up the expungement cause.

Paul Barham, a member of the Code for KC coalition and a volunteer assisting Suni's class, saw opportunity as well.

Federal and state criminal justice systems have been cracking under the logistical weight of overzealous drug prosecutions from the 1990s and ongoing stockpiling of mostly poor offenders with unpaid fines.

The changes in Missouri's expungement law cracked a door that Suni wants to bust wide open.

"It's time," she said, "in light of our mass incarceration."

The Kansas City chapter of the Code for America movement was already watching how the national organization was developing technology with prosecutor offices to help thousands of Californians wash away drug charges after the state legalized marijuana.

That's the kind of thing Code for KC tries to do, said Aaron Deacon, managing director of the non-profit KC Digital Drive and LINC Commission member.

"We work on tricky problems," he said.

So far, the tech experts are creating digitalized forms to help speed the process of entering and sorting the criminal history information that flows into the petitions that people must file to seek expungement.

Ideally, they'd like to create a process that helps people and their attorneys quickly analyze eligibility, complete petitions and then deliver them electronically to the inboxes of the appropriate courts, police agencies and prosecutor offices.

They could guide people through the confounding legal process with the ease of online tax filing programs that now speed customers through the IRS and dense state and federal tax codes.

The Jackson County Prosecutor's Office quickly joined in the expungement effort, eager to help the movement assist people who qualify to have their records cleared.

"There is a wonderful synergy" between the law school, the community and the courthouse, said Jackson County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Kate Brubacher.

She has followed the volunteers in outreach efforts into Kansas City communities that have had "zero trust" with police and prosecutors because of so many negative experiences, she said.

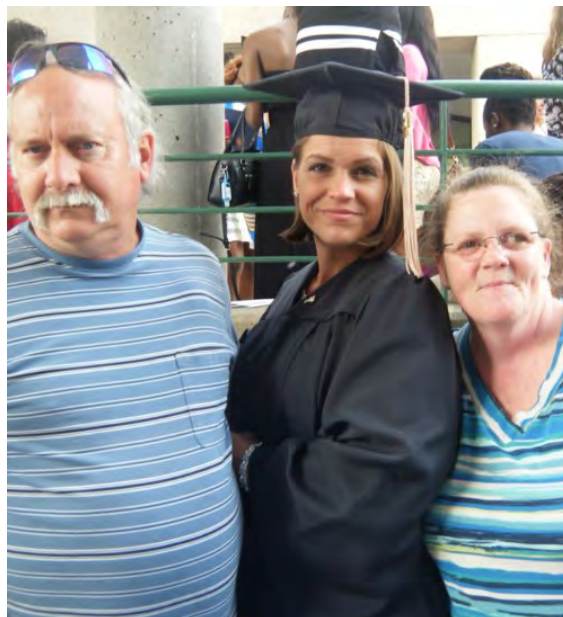
The Clear Your Record campaign is generating "excitement," she said, "showing ways the law can help you."

For so much of the first year, Gomez said, she and other students working with UMKC staff saw a trickle of people responding to their search for people with records that could be expunged.

Now, taking stock two days after the April 27 event, Gomez added up the suddenly massive work ahead of the volunteers:

- 790 total applications for expungement
- 249 applications reviewed, 541 reviews pending
- 139 in-person applicants on Expungement Day

"This reinforces that this *matters*," she said. "People need our help."



*Brandi Wheeler poses with her father and stepmother at her graduation from UMKC in May 2015.*

Yes, Brandi Wheeler agreed. She was first in line at Morning Star in pursuit of relief from her one criminal felony record in Clay County over a decade ago.

She has fought her way back, taking loans and relying on the help of family to go back to school.

It was supposed to be her bright day of hope — May 2015 — standing in her cap and gown with a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UMKC.

But the long-ago felony still blocks her from anything beyond \$10- and \$11-an-hour wages.

“I have struggled with jobs and wages and housing . . . one foot from being homeless,” she said.

“It’s so crazy,” she said. “I want to be that example. That there is hope. That you can become something for yourself.”

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***“I want to be that example. That there is hope. That you can become something for yourself.”***

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Meanwhile Stewart, Sigars and Wheeler take the jobs and whatever homes or apartments they can get.

The Code for KC brigade hacks away in pursuit of better technology.

And Suni and the expungement advocates prepare to take people’s stories back to lawmakers in hopes of opening more opportunities for people they believe have earned a reprieve from the law.

In Stewart’s case, the burglary may be expunge-able, but his forgery needs an expanded expungement law.

He’s tireless, though, getting work.

He watches for the right moment, he said, after an interview is off to a good start and he sees the excitement of the interviewer growing. A good impression has been made, and then, he has to ask:

“How do you feel about hiring felons?”

Then well-meaning employers often get that disappointed, “dammit,” look on their faces, he said.

They can get some jobs, but the responsibilities and pay are often too limited.

They watch now, by the hundreds, hoping the law and their communities will give them a new shot.

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February 11, 2019

John Kennedy said, “Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans”....This quote speaks volumes as to one generation passing responsibility to another through a quiet resolve along with a peaceful gentleness. I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity to serve in a capacity not for my own glory, but for the uplifting of others. With that said I am officially informing you that I will not be returning for another school year as Gladstone Elementary School Local Investment Commission (LINC) coordinator, it has been a pleasure, honor, and gift from above to serve in this position....It is written there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under Heaven; my season as LINC Coordinator at Gladstone has come to a close—as chapters in a book so are seasons in life. It is time for me to take my place beside someone whom has waited on the porch so to speak for me to join her. As I enter into this new season/chapter of life’s journey I ask for your prayers and blessing for I do not know how many pages/days are left to be written in the life’s’ journey of Roosevelt and Rose.

Roosevelt S. Dickerson Sr.  
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF (Retired)



# The hard, 'scary' road of an artist is worth it, British author tells Hickman Mills students, if you 'love what you're doing.'

By Joe Robertson, LINC writer

Published on May 03, 2019



*Author, illustrator, designer and podcaster Katie Green from the United Kingdom speaks to students at the Hickman Mills School District Freshman Center.*

Katie Green was 25 when she packed all her life's personal pain and her dreams of being a comic artist into the same handbag and dared to change her life.

Where she got the courage, she didn't know, said the writer and artist from Devon in the United Kingdom, speaking to Hickman Mills Freshman Center students.

But she got the notion that she could take her difficult battle with anorexia and sexual abuse — tell the story in heartfelt pictures — and produce an illustrated comic book that would go around the world encouraging and comforting young people like herself.

She wanted to be a professional artist, she told the students. She was determined to get the 30 pages of work that she had already done into the hands of a publisher.

So there she was, she said remembering the moment 10 years ago, with the pages in her handbag, seeking out a comics publisher who she had learned was going to be at a comic book convention. Nervously calling him by name, she handed over her precious work, asking him to please take a look.

“It was scary going to the event,” she said. “It was scary talking to people.”

Today she is being sought out to talk about the influential book that came of it — “Lighter Than My Shadow,” 500 pages long — plus her popular shorter works, “zines,” and her Youtube podcasts, “The Green Bean Podcast.”

Green will be one of the authors speaking at the Mid-Continent Public Library’s LitUp reading festival Saturday, May 4, an all-day event at the North Independence Branch, 317 W. 24 Highway.

The Freshman Center, with the help of LINC, gathered together students in the school’s communication arts group, to hear the author’s story and gain some courage of their own.

Piper Brown, 14, told Green she is working on a play and hopes to be a playwright. Kaijah Simmons, 15, is a writer with plans to produce short films.

They and other students peppered Green with questions over how the author got her start and how she made her creative career.

*“Where did you get the concept for a podcast?” “What motivated you to write a book?”*

It’s been hard, she told them. She had to work other jobs most of the time to support her creative career, and only in the past year has her art become her full-time career. And even then the logistics of her artistic business — contacting clients, packaging her products, managing contracts and accounts — takes up more time than the drawing.

But it will be worth it, she told the students, if you “make sure you love what you’re doing.”

That’s the kind of inspiration and commitment to creative arts that the school and LINC had hoped for when they asked Green to visit the school, said Bryan Geddes, LINC’s site coordinator.

“It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to see someone who made a career out of her passion,” he said.

Green said she calls it a gift to be able to travel to talk about her books and her other projects. She has spoken at events as far away as Bangladesh. It is gratifying that people are saying how much “Lighter Than My Shadow” is helping youth and parents understand difficult experiences like anorexia

And the podcasts, with her mixed terrier, Jack, are drawing a growing audience that enjoys her tales of the creative process — and dog adventures.





# 2019 Summer Programs

District	Location	Before & After Summer School
<b>Center</b>	Boone Elementary	June 10-27
<b>Grandview</b>	Meadowmere Elementary	June 10-July 3
<b>Hickman Mills</b>	Ervin Early Learning Center	June 13-28
	Johnson Elementary	
	Santa Fe Elementary	
	Smith-Hale Middle	
<b>Kansas City</b>	Faxon Elementary	June 6-28
	Foreign Language Academy	
	Hale Cook Elementary	
	Holliday Montessori	
	James Elementary	
	King Elementary	
	Phillips Elementary	
	Trailwoods Elementary	
Banneker Elementary	Year-Round School	
<b>N. Kansas City</b>	Topping Elementary	June 3-28
<b>Charter</b>	Tolbert Academy	June 11-July 16

For more information, visit [www.kclinc.org/summer](http://www.kclinc.org/summer)

