

LINC Commission Meeting

April 20, 2009



A student from Johnson Caring Communities in the Hickman Mills School District shovels soil for the new garden project at the school.



3100 Broadway, Suite 1100 - Kansas City, MO 64111 - (816) 889-5050 - www.kclinc.org

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, April 20, 2009 | 4 – 6 p.m.
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
 - a. March minutes (motion)**
- III. LINC President's Report**
- IV. Missouri Budget Project – Amy Blouin**
 - a. Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR)**
 - b. Missouri Children's Health Insurance Program**
- V. LINC School Gardens**
- VI. Kansas City, Mo. School District Update**
- VII. Other Reports**
- VIII. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – MARCH 16, 2009

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo. Chairman **Landon Rowland** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bert Berkley
Sharon Cheers
Herb Freeman
SuEllen Fried
Rob Givens

Anita Gorman
Rosemary Smith Lowe
Richard Morris
David Ross
Gene Standifer

John Sutton, Independence chess coach, introduced Van Horn chess team members **Jeremy Heitzman, Oliver Conley, Stephen Martin** and **Dustin Mitchell**. The students reported on the ways that the LINC chess program has enriched their personal lives and academic careers. LINC staff **Lee Bohannon** reported on the recent annual LINC spring chess tournament at the Kansas City Public Library.

A motion to approve the minutes of the Feb. 23, 2009, LINC Commission meetings was passed unanimously.

Gayle Hobbs delivered the President's Report:

- An update on developments between LINC and the Kansas City, Mo. School District. Several LINC Commissioners met on March 2 with the school board to discuss the possibility of LINC returning to district schools. LINC staff will deliver a draft agreement to the district outlining startup and delivery of Before & After School services and a work plan for implementing an age 0-3 "Baby College." Discussion followed.
- Two videos were shown: 1. March LINC in Review. 2. Excerpts from a **Charlie Rose** interview with U.S. Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan**.
- LINC staff recently met with the FACT board to report on the savings to the state provided by Caring Communities. LINC requested it be included in discussions of distribution of stimulus funding through the state in the Kansas City area. A discussion of current state legislation followed.

Treasurer **David Ross** gave the second quarter LINC financial report.

LINCWorks co-chair **Terry Ward** reported on the Community Work Support (CWS) Initiative, an effort to work with participants in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families who have been sanctioned (had a portion of their cash grant reduced). Case managers from several partner agencies assist participants as they move toward work and self-sufficiency.

The meeting was adjourned.



Mission

The Missouri Budget Project is a statewide nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that:

- analyzes and informs the public about Missouri budgetary and fiscal policy options
- provides timely, accurate analysis of complex policy issues and their impact on moderate and low-income Missourians
- informs public debate and ensures that advocates, policy makers and the public have the information they need to create sound fiscal policies that protect the state's most vulnerable citizens.

Our Goals - Protecting Missouri Priorities

The Missouri Budget Project works to:

- Improve public policies for all Missourians, particularly those policies that impact low to moderate income citizens
- Increase public awareness of and engagement in state budget and fiscal policy debates
- Enhance the advocacy efforts of organizations serving low- income Missourians (social service, mental health providers and advocates)
- Ensure that policy makers have the necessary information to make sound budget and fiscal policy decisions
- Provide a voice for low-income Missourians in the fiscal policy debate.

How We Fulfill Our Mission

The Missouri Budget Project staff includes professionals with extensive experience in research and fiscal analysis. They work collaboratively with other experts to:

- Analyze issues of fiscal concern such as tax policy and social service policy, producing timely, comprehensive reports of the findings.
- Analyze the state budget and fiscal policy recommendations made by the governor and legislative leaders, and produces reports that analyze the impacts these policies have on all Missourians.
- Share research findings and policy recommendations with advocates, legislative leaders and policy makers in order to ensure a comprehensive public policy dialogue and sound decision making.
- Build public awareness and understanding of state fiscal decisions through conferences, presentations, legislative testimony and media outreach.
- Facilitate and encourage Missouri citizens to participate in the state fiscal debate through the E-mail Action Alert Network that reaches more than 10,000 Missourians.

FACT SHEET ON HJR 23, THE 2009 TABOR PROPOSAL

Like previous TABOR proposals, HJR 23 would cause severe reductions in state services

Background on HJR23 and other TABORs:

- HJR 23 would put a Constitutional Amendment on the ballot to create an appropriations and revenue growth lid for the state that would be the sum of inflation plus population growth.
- It is very similar to a government revenue lid known as TABOR, which was put in place, and later sunset by voters, in Colorado.
- HJR 23 imposes a strict spending limit and threatens the ability of future legislatures to adequately fund basic state services, including health care, k-12 and higher education, transportation, and public safety. HJR 23 slowly erodes the state's ability to fund critical services and infrastructure needs that not only impact our quality of life but also economic productivity.
- In addition, beginning a lid like HJR 23 at this time would permanently lock Missouri into the current fiscal crisis.

Why any TABOR, including HJR 23, is dangerous for Missouri:

- HJR 23 links state spending to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure, using a formula similar to the one that had devastating effects in Colorado.
- Linking state spending to the CPI does not make sense, because it does not capture the change in costs for the goods and services a state purchases, nor does it take into account changing population demographics, or changes in need for various services over time.
- Current estimates are that using a measure of Missouri population growth plus inflation, as HJR 23 proposes to do, would restrict appropriations growth to 2.5 percent to 3.0 percent per year. Limiting growth to this level will result in significant cuts to the state budget over time.

HJR 23 is NOT Needed in Missouri:

- Missouri has been and remains a low tax and low spending state. The most recent data shows that Missouri ranks 46th in *Per Capita State Government Total Expenditures*.
- Missouri already has a spending lid, the Hancock Amendment, which restricts the growth in state revenue, and thereby limits appropriations to the ratio of state appropriations to the level of personal income that existed in 1980.
- Additionally, the Missouri Constitution was amended in 1996 to require *voter approval* of any significant tax increase.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Question: HJR 23 proponents say that it will force the state to save money and end “boom and bust” budget cycles. Wouldn't this be good?

Answer: Missouri needs to reform its current Budget Reserve Fund to be more accessible and adequate during budget shortfalls. However, the restrictions on spending mandated by HJR 23 would cause a permanent budget crisis. Reforming the Budget Reserve Fund is a separate issue and can be accomplished without an additional spending limit.

Question: HJR 23 proponents say it will keep taxes low and make Missouri more attractive to business. Wouldn't this be good?

Answer: Missouri already has the lowest Corporate Income tax per capita among states that use this tax, and has numerous business-oriented tax credit programs. HJR 23 will not allow our state to make improvements in services for residents, including for education and transportation infrastructure, which are important to Missouri businesses. In fact, in Colorado, the only state with a TABOR, the Business Community, including the Denver Chamber of Commerce and others, worked to sunset TABOR because of the negative ramifications on business.



Updated May 5, 2008

A “TABOR” BY ANY OTHER NAME HAMPERS MISSOURI JUST AS MUCH *Like previous TABOR proposals, HJR 70, would cause severe reductions in state services*

Tom Kruckemeyer, Amy Blouin and Heather Lasher Todd

The Missouri House of Representatives recently passed legislation to put a Constitutional Amendment on the ballot that would create an appropriations and revenue growth lid for the state. The bill, House Joint Resolution 70 (HJR 70), is very similar to previous proposals in Missouri, which were never enacted. It is also very similar to a government revenue lid known as TABOR, which was put in place, and later sunset, in Colorado.

TABOR is an acronym used to describe the Colorado “Taxpayers Bill of Rights”, which was passed in 1992. It is arguably the most restrictive tax and spending lid (TEL) in the nation. While 29 states have some form of TEL, no other formula is as restrictive as TABOR was. Missouri is one of the states that currently have a limit on the amount of tax revenue the state can collect under the Hancock Amendment, which was passed by voters in 1980.

HJR 70 is an even more severe limit than previous versions proposed in Missouri, and potentially more restrictive than the Colorado version. Enacting this legislation would have a long-term, detrimental effect on Missouri’s ability to provide services and meet the changing needs of residents.

The Facts: What makes HJR 70 a “TABOR”:

Colorado’s TABOR is unique among state tax and spending lids due to two major components:

- The “TABOR” formula ties spending for state services to growth in population plus general inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index; and
- “TABOR” is Constitutional, making it permanent.

HJR 70 contains both of these components, making it a “TABOR”. The “Inflation + Population” TEL formula has proven in Colorado to be flawed, and would have the same impact on Missouri it has had on Colorado.

First, HJR 70 utilizes the consumer price index inflation (CPI) measure to restrict growth in state spending. The CPI did not work in Colorado because it does not capture the change in costs for the goods and services a state purchases. The CPI inflation measure was created to measure the growth in costs for what the average *consumer* buys, not what *governments* buy. For example, from 1993 and 2003 the CPI rose by approximately 27 percent. During that same 10-year span, however, education costs grew by over 70 percent - three times what the CPI reflected.¹

Further, general population increases, averaging less than 1 percent per year, do not reflect the changes in the subpopulations of a state that rely on government services. For instance, students in need of special education and the senior population in need of aging services tend to grow more rapidly than the total population measurement would reflect.² Missouri's senior population specifically is expected to grow dramatically in the next 20 years. While in 2005, there were just under 800,000 seniors living in Missouri, by the year 2025 there are expected to be more than 1.2 million Missouri seniors.³ The growing senior population will require increased government response beyond what TABOR allows in its simplistic formula.

Finally, the formula would additionally prohibit the state from investing available revenue in infrastructure improvements. For example, the Missouri Department of Transportation projects a *reduction of \$700 million* in transportation-specific non-general revenue fund sources by fiscal year 2010.⁴ If at the same time the economy were to improve, resulting in general revenue increases, the state would potentially have the ability to offset the reduction in other funds with general revenue. However, under TABOR, the state would be prohibited from investing any of the general revenue growth beyond what TABOR permits to make up for the lost transportation revenue. TABOR would restrict the investment in infrastructure needs no matter how critical they are.

The Impact of TABOR in Colorado:

As a result of living under TABOR for 13 years, Colorado's investment in services for its citizens has declined significantly⁵:

- In 1992, Colorado's average per-pupil K-12 funding was \$379 below the national average. By 2001, K-12 per pupil funding had fallen to be \$809 below the national average,
- In 2001, Colorado ranked 41st nationally for the average student-teacher ratio and dropped from 30th in 1992 to 50th in 2001 in national rank for the average teacher salary,
- Higher education funding per resident student has dropped by 31 percent, from an average of \$5,188 per student to just \$3,564 per student,

¹ Data from the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities

² From the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute

³ Data from the Missouri Hospital Association

⁴ Missouri Department of Transportation

⁵ All indicators related to Colorado as listed in the following paragraphs were taken from the report "A Formula for Decline: Lessons from Colorado for States Considering TABOR", Bradley & Lyons; Center on Budget & Policy Priorities; October 19, 2005. This report can be found on the Center's website at www.cbpp.org

- Between fiscal year 2002 and fiscal year 2005, Colorado public universities increased tuition by 21 percent to offset the loss of state aid, and
- Between 1992 and 2004, the percent of Colorado children who were uninsured doubled from 16 percent to 32 percent, moving Colorado to last in this child well-being indicator as compared to other states.

On November 1, 2005, Colorado voters passed by referenda a five year suspension of TABOR. A diverse, bi-partisan coalition of individuals, service providers, business leaders and educators worked together to pass the referenda.

Distinctions of HJR 70 Would Make Missouri’s Proposal Even More Restrictive than Colorado’s TABOR:

In addition to including the basic core components of Colorado’s TABOR, HJR 70 contains two unique provisions that make it more restrictive:

Permanent Tax Reductions – HJR 70 mandates a permanent tax reduction rather than a one-time tax refund when the “TABOR” appropriations lid is met. When general revenue collections exceed the appropriations allowed by the appropriations growth limit plus 1 percent, the Cash Operating Reserve Fund exceeds 5 percent of net general revenue collections, and the Budget Reserve Fund exceeds 7 percent of net GR collections, HJR 70 would require a tax reduction. The refund is achieved by a permanent reduction in the income tax rate to the nearest .25 percent. This mechanism is new in the HJR 70 proposal and distinct from Colorado’s TABOR. Because a permanent tax rate reduction would impede general revenue growth in future years, even when the TABOR formula is not exceeded, HJR 70 is a more restrictive limit than Colorado’s TABOR.

Changes to the Budget Reserve Funds – HJR 70 would also divide the current state Budget Reserve Fund into a Cash Operating Reserve Fund and Budget Reserve Fund, and make adjustments to the requirements of the Budget Reserve Fund as well. The current Budget Reserve Fund contains more than \$530 million and is limited to 7.5 percent of state general revenue. HJR 70 would require the Budget Reserve Fund to maintain 7 percent of general revenue, or \$525 million, and the new Cash Operating Reserve Fund to contain 5 percent of general revenue, or an additional \$375 million. As a result, the official fiscal note for HJR 70 indicates that general revenue would be required to be reduced by \$369 million to fund these obligations.⁶

Use of the Budget Reserve Fund would continue to be restricted to fund “emergencies”, as called by the Governor and approved by the legislature. If used, funds would be required to be repaid over a five year period.

The Impact of HJR 70 on Missouri:

The exact fiscal impact of HJR 70 depends on several factors. At this point, it appears that the growth limit would be 2.5 percent to 3.5 percent per year. As indicated by the official fiscal note, HJR 70 in the immediate future would require at minimum a reduction in general

⁶ Official Fiscal Note of the Perfected Version on HJR 70 (2008).

revenue of \$369 million to fund the budget reserve and cash operating reserve funds, resulting in a significant reduction in available general revenue to fund critical services.

Although the *Missouri Budget Project* expects state spending to be constrained in the next few years as a result of the weakening economy and recent state tax reductions, it is likely that HJR 70 would eventually cause ongoing and permanent reductions in many vital state services, as TABOR did in Colorado. Over time, HJR 70 would eat away at Missouri's ability to invest in education, health care and state infrastructure needs. Eventually, the cuts to services would further erode Missouri's economic growth.

Summary:

HJR 70 would be a very restrictive and completely unneeded limit on state spending. Even though there are some differences, this proposal is very similar to the TABOR legislation, which had very detrimental effects on the state of Colorado.

Additionally, by requiring permanent income tax rate reductions, HJR 70 is an even more severe limit than previous versions proposed in Missouri, and more severe than Colorado's TABOR. Enacting this legislation would have a long-term, detrimental effect on Missouri's ability to provide services and meet the changing needs of residents.

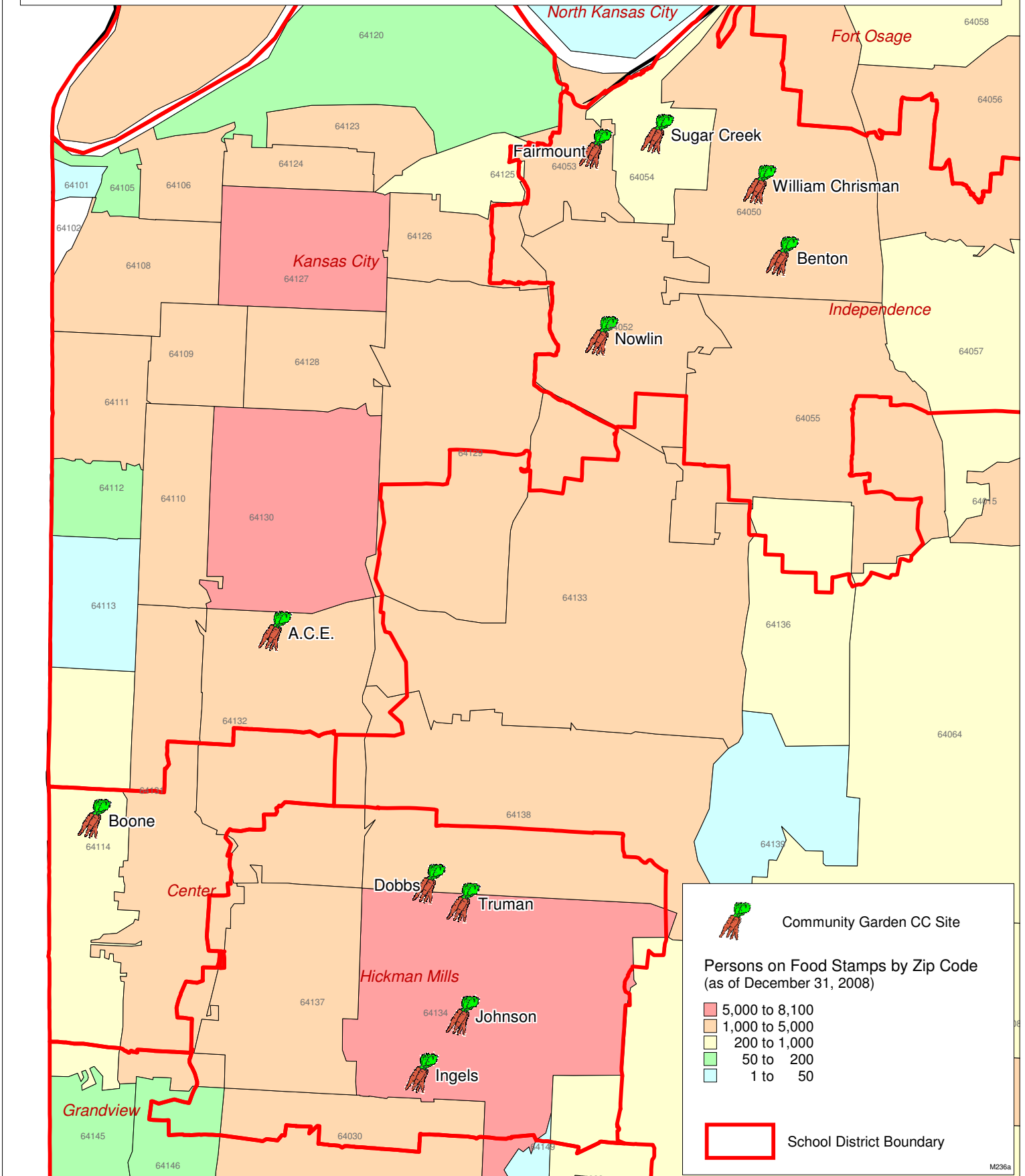
The Mission of the Missouri Budget Project is to advance public policies that improve economic opportunities for all Missourians, particularly low and middle income families, by providing reliable and objective research, analysis and advocacy. Contact the MBP through our website at www.mobudget.org



**EATING SPINACH
MAKES YOU
STRONG.
GROWING IT
MAKES YOU
STRONGER.**

*Kansas City Community Gardens -
2008 Annual Report*

LINC Caring Communities Community Garden Sites



Letter from the Director

One of our member gardeners recently expressed appreciation for the services that Kansas City Community Gardens provides: "It's not about someone else doing something for me, it's about me becoming more self-reliant." We love helping people in our community grow their own nutritious food and believe strongly in the additional physical, mental, social, economic and environmental benefits that community gardens yield. The 2008 gardening season brought continued growth in low-income members, Schoolyard Gardens and visitors to our Beanstalk Children's Garden. As we enter into our 30th year of serving this community, we look forward to reaching more children, low-income and special needs people and celebrating the legacy of gardeners and donors that have helped KCCG to grow.

Ben Sharda
Executive Director

COME GROW WITH US

Recently, the U. S. has experienced a dramatic rise in the cost of food. Over the past fifteen years, food costs have typically gone up 2.5% annually. Currently, food costs are increasing by 4% each year. The trend, coupled with the troubled economy and rising unemployment, is putting a financial strain on low-income families here in Kansas City. Local food pantries are seeing an increase in demand as more people turn to them for help in providing food for their families. So what role does Kansas City Community Gardens have in helping our community?

We Help Low Income Families Lower Food Costs.

KCCG provides self-help and educational assistance to low income people so they can grow their own food. KCCG's low-income membership has grown by over 30% since 2004 and there is currently a waiting list of low-income gardeners for gardening space.

We Help Organizations Grow Food for the Hungry.

Many organizations have approached KCCG for assistance in developing community gardens where vegetables and fruit are grown and delivered to area food pantries. Included among these organizations are Harvesters, DST Systems and numerous churches across the metropolitan area.

We Help Special Needs Communities Benefit from the Mental, Physical and Environmental Aspects of Gardening.

Some very innovative organizations are using community gardens as a healing activity that brings people together socially and gives individuals a sense of purpose. KCCG has assisted several special needs communities, including an organization that cares for mental health patients, a correctional facility and aging communities in the development of gardens.

We Help Children Learn Life Skills that Never

Become Obsolete. By exposing children to gardening through the Beanstalk Children's Garden and the Schoolyard Gardens program they gain experience that will last a lifetime.

Truman Medical Center's Healing Garden



The original plan for the space between the Truman Medical Center buildings was to build a basketball court. Physical activity, of course, is recognized as a key component to mental health. But when the idea of building a community garden was presented as an alternative use for the space, there was a swell of interest as it inspired creative thinking around new approaches for healing. Susan Wyssmann, Director of Special Projects at the Truman Mental Health Center, understood from her childhood the multi-dimensional benefits of gardening. As a descendant of German immigrants, Susan grew up on a farm in Central Missouri where planting, cultivating, harvesting and canning were a significant part of their daily family life. From this experience, Susan recognizes that gardening is not only a physical activity, but also a nurturing activity that brings people together, gives them a sense of purpose and teaches them life skills.

Spring of 2008 was the first planting season for the TMC Healing Garden. The community garden is designed around 4 zones that include a meditation area, culinary area, an herbal bed and a nature area where perennials are grown. The clients not only plant, grow and harvest fruits and vegetables, they also plan their own menus and use the produce in their cooking. "We are moving people from disability to capability with these life skills," Susan explained. Much was learned during the first growing season. Irrigation was improved and daytime shade is now better understood. Plans are already in place to expand the garden next spring and (if it's a good harvest year) extend the life skills to include selling produce at the farmers market.

ADOPT-A-GARDEN DONORS

10/01/07 - 09/30/08

Mrs. Suzanne Allen	JoAnn Field	Mr. Cliff Jones	Mr. & Mrs. John T. Pierson
Bill & Helen Ambrose	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Fields	Mrs. Edward Kander	Ellen Porter
Russell & Carolee Atha	Leanna Flandermeyer	Jerry & Joy Kaplan	Mrs. James Powell
Mr. & Mrs. William T. Atwood	Rebekah Foote	George & Carolyn Kroh	Mrs. John Readey III
Carole & Fred Barth	Michele Freyder	Mrs. James T. Lacy	Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Reed
Mrs. Paul Bartlett	Dody & Lathrop Gates	Mrs. Ellison Lambert	Mrs. Edward Riss
Jacob W. Bayer, Jr.	David & Lorelei Gibson	Mrs. S. R. Lambert	Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Rose
Mrs. Edward Biggar	Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Gilmore	Mrs. Albert Lea	Ann Simpson
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Bleakley	Mr. & Mrs. Frederick M. Goodwin, Jr.	Ruth Leiter	Beth Smith
Judith Bliss	Frederick & Elizabeth Goodwin, Sr.	James Lonergan & Ruth Ann Burdett	Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Smith, IV
Mary Shaw Branton	Anita Gorman	Mr. & Mrs. Lee Major	Kathleen Somerville
Jill Bunting	Laura Lee Grace	Raymond D. Malone	Mrs. Edwin Thompson
Dixie Buss	Mrs. Albert Gustin, III	Malco Construction	Mrs. Suzanne Vawter
Rita Cain	Rebecca Hagan	Henry & Betty Jo Marder	Mr. & Mrs. Scott Ward
Michael & Jean Churchman	Mr. & Mrs. William Hall	Mr. & Mrs. Alan Marsh	Jim & Sarah Weitzel
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Copaken	Anne F. Harris	Mrs. Barbara Marsh	Mr. & Mrs. Robert West
Myrna Corpeny	Carolyn & Hugo Hauge	Dr. & Mrs. Lynne McCause	Jack & Marie Whitacre
Cynthia Cowherd	Paget Gates Higgins	Jean Holmes McDonald	Dr. Michael Wilkins
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Curran	Laura Hockaday	Mr. & Mrs. Owen McPherson	Mrs. Thomas Wood, Jr.
Patricia Dale	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hunter	Virginia Miller	Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Zimmer
Shirlene Damico	Mrs. Michael T. Hyde	Deborah Negus	
Courtney R. Earnest	Ellen Isch	Mr. & Mrs. William Nelson	
Carolyn Egle	Mr. & Mrs. John Johntz	Berit & Charles Newell	
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Esrey		Mr. & Mrs. Henry Newell	
		Marilyn Patterson	

COMMUNITY PARTNER GARDENS

10/01/07 - 09/30/08

Bethel Neighborhood Center Garden, KCK	ICAN Garden, Independence	St. James Church Garden, KCMO
Booth Manor Garden, Grandview	KC Boiler Room Harrison Group Garden, KCMO	St. John's Garden, KCMO
Canady Bunch Garden, KCMO	Lincoln University Extension Garden, KCMO	St. Louis Church Food Pantry Garden, KCMO
Catholic Charities Refugee Garden, KCK	Linwood YMCA Garden, KCMO	St. Paul Garden, Independence
Centennial United Methodist Garden, KCMO	Main Street Group Home Garden, Independence	St. Paul's Episcopal Garden, KCMO
Chelsea Garden, KCK	Manheim Park Neighborhood Garden, KCMO	St. Peter's Church Garden, KCMO
Chouteau Courts Garden, KCMO	Marlborough Manor Garden, KCMO	St. Xenia Sisterhood Garden, KCMO
Columbus Park Plaza Garden, KCMO	Mission Church Garden, KCK	Sterling Courts Garden, KCMO
Crosslines Garden, KCK	Morning Star Baptist Garden, KCMO	Stonegate Meadows Garden, KCMO
DST Systems Garden, KCMO	Municipal Corrections Garden, KCMO	Strawberry Fields Garden, KCK
East Hills Village Garden, KCMO	Nativity of Mary Campfire Girls Garden, KCMO	Strugglers Hill/Roots Garden, KCK
El Centro Community Garden, KCK	The Neighbor's Garden, KCK	SW Blvd Free Clinic Garden, KCK
Freeway Park Garden, KCMO	Nolen Manor Group Home Garden, Grain Valley	Swope Park Community Garden, KCMO
Friendship Village Garden, KCMO	Palestine North Community Garden, KCMO	Swope Ridge Geriatric Garden, KCMO
Front Porch Alliance Garden, KCMO	Pemberton Heights Garden, KCMO	T.W.I.G. Community Garden, KCMO
Good Samaritan Distribution Center, Excelsior Springs, MO	Plaza/Westport Garden, KCMO	Temple of Faith Missionary Baptist Garden, KCK
Gratitude Garden, Edgerton, KS	Prairie Estates Garden, Grandview	Truman Medical Healing Garden, KCMO
Green Thumb Club Garden, Independence	Rainbow Mennonite Church Garden, KCK	Univ. of MO-Extension Master Gardeners Demo Garden, KCMO
Green Works Garden, KCMO	ReDiscover Community Garden, KCMO	Veronica's Voice Garden, KCMO
Hawthorne Place Garden, Independence	Rosedale Community Garden, KCK	Whatever Community Garden, KCMO
Heartland All Species Project Garden, KCMO	Salvation Army-Adult Rehab Garden, KCMO	

Schoolyard Gardens: Off to a Great Start



2008 was a great year for Kansas City Community Gardens Schoolyard Gardens program! With an increasing amount of attention nationally and locally on addressing childhood obesity, going green, and eating locally, along with the growing need to save money on food costs, schoolyard gardening is gaining momentum in Kansas City area schools. Principals, teachers and parents are excited to teach their kids about where food comes from, how they can grow their own food and the nutritional value of adding more vegetables and fruits to your diet.

In 2008 there were 35 schools enrolled in the Schoolyard Gardens program; 20 of those schools were added this year. Most of the schools gardening with the Schoolyard Garden program are located in Kansas City's urban core, Midtown, and Brookside. Fifteen of them are preschools, 19 are elementary and/or middle schools, and two are high schools.

In addition to nutrition education, another benefit of schoolyard gardening is increased physical activity. This past year KCCG helped 13 schools construct new raised beds or container gardens on school grounds. At many of these schools the kids constructed the raised beds themselves and then shoveled several cubic yards of soil into wheelbarrows in order to fill the garden beds. Even after garden construction is complete, schoolyard gardens continue to offer opportunities for physical exercise as kids plant, pull weeds, water and mulch the gardens on a regular basis.

Schoolyard gardens are also a great tool for increasing observation skills. Schoolyard gardens are often located in places that kids pass daily. Students can watch the garden change as sugar snap peas climb up a trellis, cucumber plants flower and then form fruit, sunflowers start to form seeds and peppers and tomatoes turn from green to bright red. Many kids also enjoy watching the variety of insects that the garden attracts. Some favorite insects include butterflies, garden spiders and earthworms.

Hard work coupled with a great year of gardening weather led to outstanding food gardens at schools around the city. One of our best crops this year was sweet potatoes. Several schools that did not have summer school planted the sweet potato slips before they left for summer break, mulching the bed with a thick layer of straw. Between

rain and an occasional watering, many schools had sprawling sweet potato vines and large, plump sweet potatoes to dig up when they returned in September. Scuola Vita Nuova, located in Northeast Kansas City, MO, harvested more than 40 sweet potatoes, with several of them weighing more than three pounds. The cafeteria baked sweet potato pies for the entire school.

Most of the schoolyard gardens are now put to bed for the winter, weeds and plants pulled out and a thick layer of straw covering the beds. But even now, kids in classrooms all over the city are waiting patiently, just like the little garlic bulbs planted in early December, for the first sign of spring and another gardening season.

PROGRAM STATISTICS

Low-income family memberships	778
Garden Plots Tilled	455
Households with plots at Swope Park and Freeway Park Community Gardens	86
Community Partner Gardens	64
Schoolyard Gardens	35
Persons who participated at Group garden sites	1,375
Seed packets packaged by volunteers	19,327
Plants produced in KCCG greenhouse	29,892

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED
FOR SEED
LABELING &
PACKAGING
TUESDAYS
AND
THURSDAYS
FROM
9:00AM
TO 1:00 PM
BEGINNING
TUESDAY
JANUARY 13TH**



Gardener Profile: Ernest Rodgers Swope Park Community Garden

Ernest Rodgers (known as "Ernie" around KCCG) remembers his first gardening experience when he was seven years old in Waterproof, Louisiana. His grandmother gave him some black-eyed peas, dried beans and popcorn from their pantry. He planted them and they grew! Encouraged by that success, he remembers saving seeds out of watermelons and other fruits and vegetables to plant in his garden. He next started growing greens which became one of his favorite crops.

His grandmother taught him how to garden and gave him important advice for his future gardening endeavors. She said, "if you are going to have a garden, you have to keep it clean." He still follows that advice 60 years later as he meticulously weeds his garden, pulling out weeds when they are small before they have a chance to get big.

Ernest also remembers making a scrapbook of leaves from the plants in the vegetable garden. He labeled these leaves so that he could learn to identify the leaves and learn the names of the different plants.

After growing up, Ernest always tried to have a garden wherever he lived. He was gardening on his own when he heard about KCCG from a friend. He was looking for a better place to garden and when he saw the Swope Park Community Garden, he signed up right away. He has been gardening at the Swope Garden since it opened.

Ernest loves "eating fresh out of the garden" and he loves watching things grow. "I could just sit and watch it grow every day." He loves sharing produce with other people (especially those who don't have access to a garden or are unable to garden.) He also enjoys helping other people with their gardens, while volunteering at the Swope garden.

Ernest especially enjoys the Swope Garden because of the presence of all the other gardeners. Gardening at a community garden gives him the chance to exchange ideas with other gardeners, which Ernest

has found is the best way to learn about gardening. He appreciates that his garden saves him a lot of money with his food budget. He also says that being a member of the KCCG saves him money on gardening costs.

During the gardening season from early March to late November, Ernest comes to the community garden almost every single day (sometimes twice a day). In the heat of the summer, of course, he likes to garden in the early morning hours and the early evening time.

When asked about advice he would give to beginning gardeners, Ernest recommends trying a fall garden. Ernest has witnessed new gardeners give up in late summer when it gets hot and you don't necessarily feel like planting new seeds and plants. Planting in late July and early August will give you crops that will grow and thrive with the cool fall temperatures.

It was hard for Ernest to name his favorite crops because he likes to grow everything. He did admit to being especially fond of growing green beans, onions, sweet potatoes and greens. Mustard greens are his favorite and likes to mix them with turnip greens or kale. He does freeze a lot of produce from his garden and he also did some canning of pickled hot peppers (jalapenos are his favorite).

Even with all his gardening activities, Ernest manages to find a little time for other hobbies including, fishing, softball and cooking. He says that he loves to cook a big Sunday dinner (with produce from the garden). So what does a gardener do this time of year when it's too cold to garden? Right now Ernest is waiting. He is waiting for January, when he will again start volunteering his time (along with other gardeners) to help package seeds at the KCCG office. For him, that is the beginning of the garden season.

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March 20, 2009

Obamas to Plant Vegetable Garden at White House

By [MARIAN BURROS](#)

WASHINGTON — [Michelle Obama](#) will begin digging up a patch of the South Lawn on Friday to plant a vegetable garden, the first at the White House since [Eleanor Roosevelt](#)'s victory garden in World War II. There will be no beets — the president does not like them — but arugula will make the cut.

While the organic garden will provide food for the first family's meals and formal dinners, its most important role, Mrs. Obama said, will be to educate children about healthful, locally grown fruit and vegetables at a time when obesity and diabetes have become a national concern.

"My hope," the first lady said in an interview in her East Wing office, "is that through children, they will begin to educate their families and that will, in turn, begin to educate our communities."

Twenty-three fifth graders from Bancroft Elementary School in Washington will help her dig up the soil for the 1,100-square-foot plot, in a spot visible to passers-by on E Street. (It is just below the Obama girls' swing set.)

Students from the school, which has had a garden since 2001, will also help plant, harvest and cook the vegetables, berries and herbs. Virtually the entire Obama family, including the president, will pull weeds, "whether they like it or not," Mrs. Obama said with a laugh. "Now Grandma, my mom, I don't know." Her mother, she said, will probably sit back and say: "Isn't that lovely. You missed a spot."

Whether there would be a White House garden had become more than a matter of landscaping. The question had taken on political and environmental symbolism, with the Obamas lobbied for months by advocates who believe that growing more food locally, and organically, can lead to more healthful eating and reduce reliance on huge industrial farms that use more oil for transportation and chemicals for fertilizer.

Then, too, promoting healthful eating has become an important part of Mrs. Obama's own agenda.

The first lady, who said that she had never had a vegetable garden, recalled that the idea for this one came from her experiences as a working mother trying to feed her daughters, [Malia](#) and [Sasha](#), a good diet. Eating out three times a week, ordering a pizza, having a sandwich for dinner all took their toll in added weight on the girls, whose pediatrician told Mrs. Obama that she needed to be thinking about nutrition.

"He raised a flag for us," she said, and within months the girls had lost weight.

Dan Barber, an owner of Blue Hill at Stone Barns, an organic restaurant in Pocantico Hills, N.Y., that grows many of its own ingredients, said: "The power of Michelle Obama and the garden can create a very powerful message about eating healthy and more delicious food. I don't think it's a stretch to say it could translate into real change."

While the Clintons grew some vegetables in pots on the White House roof, the Obamas' garden will far transcend that, with 55 varieties of vegetables — from a wish list of the kitchen staff — grown from organic seedlings started at the Executive Mansion's greenhouses.

The Obamas will feed their love of Mexican food with cilantro, tomatillos and hot peppers. Lettuces will include red romaine, green oak leaf, butterhead, red leaf and galactic. There will be spinach, chard, collards and black kale. For desserts, there will be a patch of berries. And herbs will include some more unusual varieties, like anise hyssop and Thai basil. A White House carpenter, Charlie Brandts, who is a beekeeper, will tend two hives for honey.

The total cost of seeds, mulch and so forth is \$200, said Sam Kass, an assistant White House chef, who prepared healthful meals for the Obama family in Chicago and is an advocate of [local food](#). Mr. Kass will oversee the garden.

The plots will be in raised beds fertilized with White House compost, crab meal from the Chesapeake Bay, lime and green sand. Ladybugs and praying mantises will help control harmful bugs.

Cristeta Comerford, the White House's executive chef, said she was eager to plan menus around the garden, and Bill Yosses, the pastry chef, said he was looking forward to berry season.

The White House grounds crew and the kitchen staff will do most of the work, but other White House staff members have volunteered.

So have the fifth graders from Bancroft. "There's nothing really cooler," Mrs. Obama said, "than coming to the White House and harvesting some of the vegetables and being in the kitchen with Cris and Sam and Bill, and cutting and cooking and actually experiencing the joys of your work."

For children, she said, food is all about taste, and fresh and local food tastes better.

"A real delicious heirloom tomato is one of the sweetest things that you'll ever eat," she said. "And my children know the difference, and that's how I've been able to get them to try different things."

"I wanted to be able to bring what I learned to a broader base of people. And what better way to do it than to plant a vegetable garden in the South Lawn of the White House?"

For urban dwellers who have no backyards, the country's one million community gardens can also play an important role, Mrs. Obama said.

But the first lady emphasized that she did not want people to feel guilty if they did not have the time for a garden: there are still many changes they can make.

"You can begin in your own cupboard," she said, "by eliminating processed food, trying to cook a meal a little more often, trying to incorporate more fruits and vegetables."

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION Trend Update

Volume 1, Issue 2



Metropolitan Areas Most Amenable to Child Care

Projecting the demand for child care is not an exact science. We know that families at both ends of the income spectrum are more likely to use child care than are families in the middle. We know that families with more education and families where the mother is employed are more likely to use child care. But a myriad of other factors enter into the child care decision-making equation, such as the attitudes of grandparents, one's religious and cultural beliefs about the role of the mother, the availability of quality services in the community, and the accessibility of public or employer support.

In this Trend Report, we have taken some of the factors we know about the use of child care and factored these to rate the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas in the United States in terms of their climate for child care. Given the complications noted above, we make no claims that these ratings are scientific or exact. In addition, the data we are using, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census' American FactFinder program, is based on surveys conducted in 2005 through 2007. Therefore, this

data comes before the economic chaos that is currently remaking the American business landscape. However, we are boldly putting out these ratings to stimulate creative thinking (and even harsh criticism) on how to improve these ratings for when the world finds a new normal.

How the Ratings Were Constructed

We collected data on the nine factors described below for the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas and assigned a weighting to each factor. Then we analyzed the range of data for each factor and broke metros into five quintiles for each one and assigned a score of 5 to those in quintile 1, 4 to those in quintile 2, and so on. Then to arrive at a 'score' for each metro, we multiplied their rating for each factor (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) against the weighting (X1, X2, or X3) for that factor.

The 30 Metros Most Amenable to Child Care

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Atlanta, GA | 16. Jacksonville, FL |
| 2. Raleigh, NC | 17. Omaha, NE |
| 3. Austin, TX | 18. Colorado Springs, CO |
| 4. Charlotte, NC | 19. Virginia Beach, VA |
| 5. Washington, DC | 20. McAllen, TX |
| 6. Denver, CO | 21. Orlando, FL |
| 7. Kansas City, MO | 22. Phoenix, AZ |
| 8. Salt Lake City, UT | 23. Cincinnati, OH |
| 9. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX | 24. Chicago, IL |
| 10. Des Moines, IA | 25. Nashville, TN |
| 11. Houston, TX | 26. Richmond, VA |
| 12. Minneapolis, MN | 27. Ogden, UT |
| 13. Boise, ID | 28. Memphis, TN |
| 14. Columbus, OH | 29. Charleston, SC |
| 15. Indianapolis, IN | 30. Columbia, SC |

The 15 Youngest Metros

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. McAllen, TX | 9. Phoenix, AZ |
| 2. El Paso, TX | 10. Boise, ID |
| 3. Ogden, UT | 11. Stockton, CA |
| 4. Salt Lake City, UT | 12. San Antonio, TX |
| 5. Bakersfield, CA | 13. Modesto, CA |
| 6. Fresno, CA | 14. Riverside, CA |
| 7. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX | 15. Austin, TX |
| 8. Houston, TX | |

Factor #1 — The prevalence of children under 5

There is a considerable range in the youthfulness of communities — 12% of the population of McAllen, Texas is under 5, whereas in Palm Bay, Florida just over 5% is. This is a fairly straightforward and significant factor in the need for child care, so we gave this a weighting of 3 in the rating process. The table above presents the 15 metros with the highest percentage of children under the age of 5.

Factor #2 — Parent Education

When it comes to parents who are paying for child care on their own (easily four out of five child care users), their level of education has been found to be a significant factor. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to use child care outside of the home than those with less education. Because this is an accepted and measurable factor, we gave it a weighting of 3. The table below lists the 15 metros with the highest percentage of inhabitants with at least a bachelor's degree.

The 15 Most Educated Metros

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Washington, DC | 9. Minneapolis, MN |
| 2. San Jose, CA | 10. Denver, CO |
| 3. Bridgeport, CT | 11. Seattle, WA |
| 4. San Francisco, CA | 12. New York, NY |
| 5. Madison, WI | 13. Colorado Springs, CO |
| 6. Boston, MA | 14. Atlanta, GA |
| 7. Raleigh, NC | 15. San Diego, CA |
| 8. Austin, TX | |

Factor #3 — Working Women

When women work outside the home, families are more likely to use child care. Again, there is a wide range in the likelihood that women will work: in Madison, Wisconsin, over 69% of females 16 and over are in the workforce, compared with just under 49% in Sarasota, Florida. We gave this factor a weighting of 3. The table below lists 15 metros with the highest percentages of working women.

The 15 Metros Where Most Women Work

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Madison, WI | 9. Portland, ME |
| 2. Minneapolis, MN | 10. Salt Lake City, UT |
| 3. Des Moines, IA | 11. Indianapolis, IN |
| 4. Omaha, NE | 12. Raleigh, NC |
| 5. Washington, DC | 13. Atlanta, GA |
| 6. Denver, CO | 14. Austin, TX |
| 7. Kansas City, MO | 15. Columbus, OH |
| 8. Charlotte, NC | |

Factor #4 — Fastest Growing Metros

Growing communities have an increasing demand for child care—not exactly rocket science. The data used in this report, however, may be less relevant given the economic downturn. Nonetheless, we assigned this factor a weight of 3 and believe it will be relevant again once the economy turns around. The adjacent table presents the 15 metros that demonstrated the highest percentage of population growth between 2000 and 2006.

Factor #5 — Single Moms

Single mothers, not having the option of having a spouse care for their young children, are more inclined to rely on outside the home child care options. We gave this factor a weighting of only 2, because the Census data counted single mothers with children under 18 and because single mothers often find it a challenge to afford child care. In McAllen and El Paso, Texas, over 12% of households are headed by single moms, compared with less than 5% in Sarasota, Florida and Madison, Wisconsin. The table below lists the 15 metros with the highest percentages of female headed households (no husband present) with children under 18.

15 Metros with Highest Prevalence of Female Headed Households

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. McAllen, TX | 9. Baton Rouge, LA |
| 2. El Paso, TX | 10. Columbus, SC |
| 3. Memphis, TN | 11. San Antonio, TX |
| 4. Jackson, MS | 12. Springfield, MA |
| 5. Bakersfield, CA | 13. Charleston, SC |
| 6. Augusta, GA | 14. Stockton, CA |
| 7. Fresno, CA | 15. Atlanta, GA |
| 8. Virginia Beach, VA | |

Factor #6 — Nursery School Enrollments

We look at nursery school enrollments because they tell us how likely families are to use child care. Unfortunately, the way the data is presented in the American FactFinder is not directly helpful as it tracks the percentage of inhabitants enrolled in nursery schools, not the percentage of all children under 5 enrolled in nursery schools. Therefore, it more directly reflects the number of under 5s in a community than the propensity for parents to select child care. For that reason we assigned this factor a weighting of 2.

Factor #7 — Wealthy Families

Given the perceived high cost of child care, parents with higher incomes are more likely to use child care than families with more modest incomes. And, community wealth varies widely — the median household income

The 15 Fastest Growing Metros

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Fort Myers, FL | 9. Atlanta, GA |
| 2. Las Vegas, NV | 10. Orlando, FL |
| 3. Raleigh, NC | 11. Stockton, CA |
| 4. Phoenix, AZ | 12. Charlotte, NC |
| 5. Riverside, CA | 13. Bakersfield, CA |
| 6. McAllen, TX | 14. Houston, TX |
| 7. Boise, ID | 15. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX |
| 8. Austin, TX | |

in San Jose, California is over \$82,000, while in McAllen, Texas it is below \$29,000. We have given this factor a weighting of 2. The table below lists the 15 metros with the highest median incomes.

The 15 Wealthiest Metros

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. San Jose, CA | 9. Honolulu, HI |
| 2. Washington, DC | 10. Minneapolis, MN |
| 3. Bridgeport, CT | 11. Baltimore, MD |
| 4. Oxnard, CA | 12. Seattle, WA |
| 5. San Francisco, CA | 13. San Diego, CA |
| 6. Boston, MA | 14. New York, NY |
| 7. Poughkeepsie, NY | 15. Worcester, MA |
| 8. Hartford, CT | |

Factor #8 — Prevalence of Poverty

This may seem like a contradiction to Factor #7. However, as noted above, the households most likely to use child care are those with the highest incomes who can afford to pay on their own, and those with the lowest incomes who qualify for public assistance. Not surprisingly, the prevalence of poverty varies considerably from metro to metro. Over 30% of all families with children under 5 in McAllen and El Paso, Texas live below the poverty line, whereas less than 6% of these families do so in Washington, DC. We gave this factor a weighting of 2. The table below presents the 15 metros with the highest proportion of families with children under 5 below the poverty line.

The 15 Metros with Most Poverty

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. El Paso, TX | 9. Memphis, TN |
| 2. McAllen, TX | 10. Augusta, GA |
| 3. Bakersfield, CA | 11. Syracuse, NY |
| 4. Fresno, CA | 12. Buffalo, NY |
| 5. Youngstown, OH | 13. Tulsa, OK |
| 6. Dayton OH | 14. Scranton, PA |
| 7. Greenville, SC | 15. Toledo, OH |
| 8. Albuquerque, NM | |

Factor #9 — Total Population

As a general rule, the size of a metro is not an indicator of that metro's propensity to use child care. However, with there being such a huge variation in population between the metro with the largest population — New York with 18.8 million — and the metro with the smallest — Madison, Wisconsin with just under .5 million — we need to consider this factor. If all factors were equal, New York would need 38 times more child care than Madison. We assigned total population a weighting of 1.

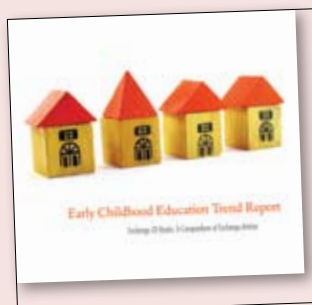
Other Factors

In this rating, we only considered factors in the Census Bureau's American FactFinder. However, there are many other factors that could be considered such as:

- mothers with children under 6 in the workforce
- state reimbursement rates
- state eligibility requirements
- state licensing requirements
- rate of job growth
- average family size
- households with two working parents

Your Feedback

Exchange will be conducting this rating annually and needs your help in making it as reliable as possible. Please share your opinions on the factors we have selected, as well as the other potential factors we have listed. What should be the correct mix of factors? What weighting should be applied to each of these factors? Should we consider all 336 metropolitan statistical areas in constructing these ratings? Send your much needed feedback to info@ChildCareExchange.com.



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Lexington

A nation of jailbirds

Apr 2nd 2009

Far too many Americans are behind bars

THE world's tallest building is now in Dubai rather than New York. Its largest shopping mall is in Beijing, and its biggest Ferris wheel in Singapore. Once-mighty General Motors is suspended in a limbo between bail-out and bankruptcy; and the "war on terror" has demonstrated the limits of American military might.

But in one area America is going from strength to strength—the incarceration of its population. America has less than 5% of the world's people but almost 25% of its prisoners. It imprisons 756 people per 100,000 residents, a rate nearly five times the world average. About one in every 31 adults is either in prison or on parole. Black men have a one-in-three chance of being imprisoned at some point in their lives. "A Leviathan unmatched in human history", is how Glenn Loury, professor of social studies at Brown University, characterises America's prison system.

Conditions in the Leviathan's belly can be brutal. More than 20% of inmates report that they have been sexually assaulted by guards or fellow inmates. Federal prisons are operating at more than 130% of capacity. A sixth of prisoners suffer from mental illness of one sort or another. There are four times as many mentally ill people in prison as in mental hospitals.

As well as being brutal, prisons are ineffective. They may keep offenders off the streets, but they fail to discourage them from offending. Two-thirds of ex-prisoners are re-arrested within three years of being released. The punishment extends to prisoners' families, too. America's 1.7m "prison orphans" are six times more likely than their peers to end up in prison themselves. The punishment also sometimes continues after prisoners are released. America is one of only a handful of countries that bar prisoners from voting, and in some states that ban is lifelong: 2% of American adults and 14% of black men are disfranchised because of criminal convictions.

It is possible to pick holes in these figures. Some of the world's most repressive regimes do not own up to their addiction to imprisonment (does anyone really believe that Cuba imprisons only five in every 1,000 of its citizens?). No sane person would rather be locked up in Russia or China than in America. A country as large and diverse as America boasts plenty of model prisons and exemplary training programmes. But all that said, the conclusion remains stark: America's incarceration habit is a disgrace, wasting resources at home and damaging the country abroad.



Few mainstream politicians have had the courage to denounce any of this. People who embrace prison reform usually end up in the political graveyard. There is no organised lobby for prison reform. The press ignores the subject. And those who have first-hand experience of the system's failures—prisoners and ex-prisoners—may have no right to vote.

Which makes Jim Webb all the more remarkable. Mr Webb is far from being a lion of the Senate, roaring from the comfort of a safe seat. He is a first-term senator for Virginia who barely squeaked into Congress. The state he represents also has a long history of being tough on crime: Virginia abolished parole in 1994 and is second only to Texas in the number of people it executes.

But Mr Webb is now America's leading advocate of prison reform. He has co-sponsored a bill to create a blue-ribbon commission to report on America's prisons. And he has spoken out in every possible venue, from the Senate to local political meetings. Mr Webb is not content with incremental reform. He is willing to tackle what he calls "the elephant in the bedroom"—America's willingness to imprison people for drug offences.

Does Mr Webb have any chance of diminishing America's addiction to incarceration? History is hardly on his side. For most of the 20th century America imprisoned roughly the same proportion of its population as many other countries—a hundred people for every 100,000 citizens. But while other countries stayed where they were, the American incarceration rate then took off—to 313 per 100,000 in 1985 and 648 in 1997.

Mr Webb also has some powerful forces ranged against him. The prison-industrial complex (which includes private prisons as well as public ones) employs thousands of people and armies of lobbyists. Twenty-six states plus the federal government have passed "three strikes and you're out" laws which put repeat offenders in prison for life without parole. And the war on drugs has pushed the incarceration business into overdrive. The number of people serving time for drugs has increased from 41,000 in 1980 to 500,000 today, or 55% of the population of federal prisons and 21% of those in state prisons. An astonishing three-quarters of prisoners locked up on drug-related charges are black.

Up for a fight

But Mr Webb is no ordinary politician. He packed several distinguished careers into his life before becoming a senator—as a marine in Vietnam, a lawyer, a much-published author and secretary of the navy in the Reagan administration. And he is not a man to back down from a fight: one of his best books, "Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America", celebrates the martial virtues of the clan to which he is proud to belong.

Some signs suggest that the tide is turning in Mr Webb's direction. Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act in 2003. Barack Obama's Justice Department has hinted that it wants to do something about the disparity in sentencing between blacks and whites for drug crimes. Support for both the death penalty and the war on drugs is softening: a dozen states have legalised the use of marijuana for medical purposes. If Mr Webb can transform these glimmers of discontent with America's prison-industrial complex into a fully fledged reform movement, then he will go down in history as a great senator.

Lexington now writes a blog, which is open for comment at Economist.com/blogs/lexington

The New York Times

Missouri System Treats Juvenile Offenders With Lighter Hand

By [SOLOMON MOORE](#)

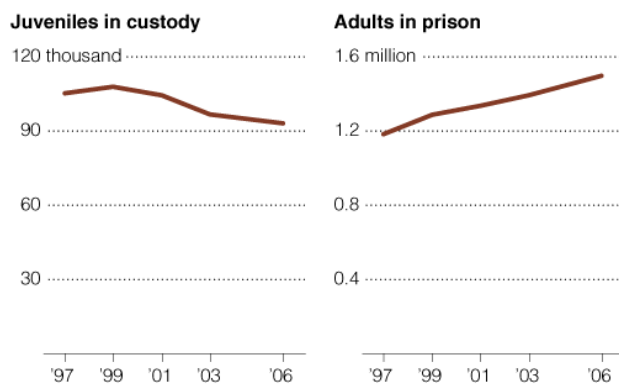
Published: March 26, 2009

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — VonErrick celebrated his 14th birthday last year by committing a daylight carjacking, beating the driver to the ground. With a long record of truancy, assault, and breaking and entering, he was sent to a state group home — the same home that his two older brothers passed through after their own scrapes with the law.

Both of those brothers are out now. Tory, 16, has A grades and plans to attend college. Terry, 20, has a job and has had a clean record for four years. VonErrick was recently released and immediately started high school.

Fewer Youths in Custody

While the adult prison population continues to rise, the number of juveniles in prison has decreased in recent years. Several states like Missouri have begun to focus on improving conditions inside juvenile facilities to keep offenders from returning.



Sources: National Center for Juvenile Justice; Bureau of Justice Statistics

THE NEW YORK TIMES

The brothers say they benefited from confinement in the Missouri juvenile system, which emphasizes rehabilitation in small groups, constant therapeutic interventions and minimal force.

Juvenile justice experts across the nation say that the approach, known as the Missouri Model, is one of several promising reform movements that strapped states are trying to reduce the costly confinement of youths. California, which spends more than \$200,000 a year on each incarcerated juvenile, reallocated \$93 million in prison expenses by reducing state confinement.

There is no barbed wire around facilities like Missouri Hills, on the outskirts of St. Louis. No more than 10 youths and 2 adults called facilitators live in cottage-style dormitories in a wooded setting, a far cry from the quasi penitentiaries in other states. When someone becomes unruly, the other youths are trained to talk him down. Perhaps most impressive, Missouri has one of the lowest recidivism rates in the country.

Other states, including Florida, Illinois and Louisiana, have moved in a similar direction, focusing on improving conditions at state facilities to keep young offenders from returning.

Some states have worked at the county level to avoid confinement altogether, keeping youths in their communities while they receive rehabilitative services, which advocates say is a cheaper alternative to residential care.

The two largest state systems, Texas and California, cut long-term youth confinement by requiring counties to house low-level offenders in detention halls. Texas cut its 5,000-youth population by half within two years, while California reduced its population to 2,500, from more than 10,000 in 1997. But critics say that city and county detention programs are uneven and point out that states often do a poor job of monitoring them.

Missouri and other states are using new approaches in the juvenile justice system to try to stem the flow of adults behind bars. Missouri managed to cut its adult population from 2005 through the first half of 2007 by applying techniques from the Missouri Model.

The reforms have begun to have a national impact, with a 12 percent decrease in juvenile offenders from 1997 to 2006, from 105,000 youths to 93,000.

Most of the decline during that period was in state confinements, although some of the decrease is attributed to a 28 percent decline in youth arrests, which reform advocates say proves that there is no detriment associated with fewer incarcerated juveniles.

The Anne E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore has been a leading advocate for ending the confinement of low-risk offenders and placing them in community programs. Since trying the foundation's approach in 2003, five counties in New Jersey have reduced juvenile detention by 42 percent, to 288 youths from 499.



Missouri Hills cottage operated by Division of Youth Services

Three years ago in California, Scott MacDonald, who is in charge of probation in Santa Cruz County, began asking courts to use Casey Foundation methods. Instead of confining every gang member accused of a crime, or every juvenile who failed a drug test, judges now look at a youth's record and risk to determine whether he should remain free. A youth who fails a drug test, for example, might be ordered to attend substance abuse classes.

“Even if a kid doesn't follow all of the rules — particularly rules that have nothing to do with crime — we won't necessarily detain him,” Mr. MacDonald said.

In the 1990s, the Santa Cruz juvenile hall averaged 50 to 60 youths. Now it averages about 20 detainees, most of them under community supervision. More than 90 percent of those in the community programs have not committed new crimes within three years, Mr. McDonald said.

“The question we're always starting with is, How do we keep them home?” he said.

Isela Gutierrez, a juvenile justice expert with the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, a nonprofit group, said one drawback to the Missouri state system was that too many low-level offenders there were being confined, while serious juvenile felons were being sent to adult prisons, where conditions are harsher.

Tim Decker, director of the Missouri Division of Youth Services, said judges preferred to send youths to state facilities — Missouri Hills or the Hogan Street Regional Youth Center, with dorms that have wooden beds, male health and wellness classes, group counseling and game rooms — rather than dismal county lockups or to backlogged community programs.

“Judges have more faith in us,” Mr. Decker said. “So far we're O.K., but you can't do what we do with 25 kids in a group.”

Missouri Hills is clean and homey, with plush couches, stuffed animals on the bunks, and a dog rescued from the pound. The violence that plagues many juvenile prisons is also absent.

In a typical juvenile corrections environment, Mr. Decker said, if a youth becomes aggressive “you would have guards drag him into isolation” for three days.

“But,” he added, “the problem is that a young person doesn’t learn how to avoid that aggressive behavior and it will get worse.”

In Missouri Hills, isolation rooms were used only about a dozen times last year, Mr. Decker said, and never for more than a few hours. Pepper spray is banned, and youths are taught to de-escalate fights or apply grappling holds, a form of restraint.

Victoria, 16, who stole her grandmother’s car, her second offense, explained how her housing unit does a “circle-up,” or ad hoc counseling session, several times a day, whenever there is a conflict, like cursing.

“There’s drama all the time,” she said. “It’s like having a bunch of sisters.”

The Missouri system provided triage for an imploding system in Washington, where the juvenile corrections agency was plagued by vermin-infested buildings, overcrowding and chronic violence.

“The kids were stuffing their shirts with paper before they went to sleep to keep the roaches and rats from biting them,” said [Vincent Schiraldi](#), head of the city’s Division of Rehabilitative Services.

With advice from experts in Missouri, Mr. Schiraldi divided platoons of youths into small groups. By October, the number of juveniles reconvicted within a year of release dropped to 25 percent, from 31 percent four years earlier. However, as conditions improved, confinements have risen, even as juvenile crime has declined.

Mr. Decker said that upgrading facilities and training new staff cost more initially, but that the reforms would reduce recidivism, which would result in long-term savings.

VonErrick has been home for a few weeks, and his 18-year-old sister said he seemed calmer and less interested in running with the wrong crowd. Their mother, Rosie Williams, said all three of her sons seemed more focused, and she attributed the changes to the counselors at the state group home.

Ms. Williams, whose husband is in prison, occasionally attended family counseling sessions where she said she learned important lessons as a parent. “Instead of just hollering at them and trying to keep them out of trouble,” she said, “I try to do things with them one on one, to get to know what’s on their mind and what’s going on in their lives.”



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gary Stangler Receives APHSA Lifetime Achievement Award

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2009 – Gary Stangler, executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, is the recipient of the American Public Human Services Association’s 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award, given annually to recognize an individual’s lifetime contributions to the field of human services.

Stangler is a former member of APHSA’s Board of Directors, serving several terms, including two as an at-large member. He served for 11 years as director of the Missouri Department of Human Services. He has testified in Congress on numerous occasions and has worked tirelessly on behalf of children in foster care. He is the co-author of “On Their Own,” a book about the foster care system. He also serves on the boards of The Finance Project and the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and is a fellow with the Center for Family and Policy Research at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has received numerous awards, including the Lewis Hine Award for service to children.

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative is a collaborative effort between Casey Family Programs and the Annie E. Casey Foundation to bring together the people, systems and resources necessary to help youth leaving foster care make successful transitions to adulthood.

Jerry Friedman, executive director of APHSA, said Stangler is “the acknowledged leader who raised the consciousness of the country to the needs of foster children ‘aging out of the system.’ “He is an inspiring leader who can address questions about key child welfare issues and how adults can help to change a lifetime for a young person in foster care,” Friedman said.

The award will be given during APHSA’s spring conference April 5-7 at the Fairmont Washington.

About the APHSA

The American Public Human Services Association is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization of individuals and agencies concerned with human services. Its members include all state and territorial human service agencies, more than 150 local agencies, and several thousand individuals who work in or otherwise have an interest in human service programs. Its mission is to develop, promote and implement public human service policies and practices that improve the health and well-being of families, children and adults.

Summer Fun



with LINC

www.kclinc.org/summer

This summer LINC will provide opportunities for children to learn and have fun at locations throughout the Kansas City area.

At several Caring Communities sites, LINC will operate Before & After School programs in conjunction with district-run summer school sessions. At others, LINC will offer all-day summer camps.

A summary of LINC summer programs is below.

For more information or to enroll, contact the LINC site coordinator at your school.

Independence School District

Before & After School
June 1-July 2, 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

All-Day Camp
July 6-August 7, 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Open to students who attend Fairmount, Korte, Sugar Creek or Three Trails during the regular school year.

Korte Elementary
Grades K-2

Nowlin Middle
Grades 3-5

Hickman Mills School District

Before & After School
June 1-26, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

All elementary schools
Grades K-5

All-Day Camp
June 29-July 24, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Selected elementary school sites
All district students grades K-5

Grandview School District

Before & After School
June 1-26, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

Conn-West Elementary School
All district students grades K-8

Center School District

Before & After School
June 1-26, 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Boone Elementary School
All district students grades K-5

Other Sites

ACE Campus
Before & After School
June 8-July 17, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.
Grades K-6

Tolbert Academy
Before & After School
June 1-July 2, 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Grades K-8

University Academy
Before & After School
June 8-July 23, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.
Grades K-8

Wayne Miner
All-Day Camp
June 15-August 10, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.
Grades K-8