

LINC Commission Meeting

October 19, 2009



A student with Wayne Miner Caring Communities flag football team runs with the ball on opening day.
Photo Credit: Tommy Del Greco



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, Oct. 19, 2009 | 4 – 6 p.m.
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
 - a. September minutes (motion)**
- III. LINC President's Report**
- IV. COMBAT**
- V. Caring Communities**
 - a. Status Report**
 - b. Lights on After School**
- VI. Finance Committee**
 - a. Audit report**
- VII. Other**
- VIII. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – SEPT. 21, 2009

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

Bert Berkley
Sharon Cheers
Herb Freeman
SuEllen Fried
Anita Gorman
Bart Hakan
Dick Hibschman
Judy Hunt

Rosemary Smith Lowe
Sandy Mayer (for Mike Sanders)
Mary Kay McPhee
Richard Morris
David Ross
Frank Salizzoni
Gene Standifer

Rowland introduced **Daryle Wallace**, principal of Crestview Elementary School, a LINC Caring Communities site which has undergone significant demographic changes in recent years.

A motion to approve the July 27, 2009, LINC Commission meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

Gayle A. Hobbs gave the LINC President's report:

- A video on LINC's return to the Kansas City, Mo. School District was shown. Hobbs reported on the process of hiring staff, purchasing supplies, and responding to unexpectedly high enrollment at some sites and to the changing needs of the district. Now under way are interviews for supervisory positions for existing LINC staff.
- **Joe Robertson** of the Kansas City Star recently interviewed several LINC site coordinators for a story expected to be published this week.

LINC Treasurer **David Ross** reported that the LINC Finance Committee recommends the Commission approve the proposed LINC budget.

A motion to approve the LINC budget was passed unanimously.

A discussion followed about expected state budget cuts and how they might affect LINC as well as school district partners.

Ross reported that after reviewing proposals, LINC has again selected BKD to perform the LINC audit. The audit is now under way.

Rowland left the meeting and **Bailus Tate** presided for the duration.

Tate introduced **Dr. Mark Enderle**, the new superintendent of the Fort Osage School District. All five Fort Osage elementary schools are LINC Caring Communities sites.

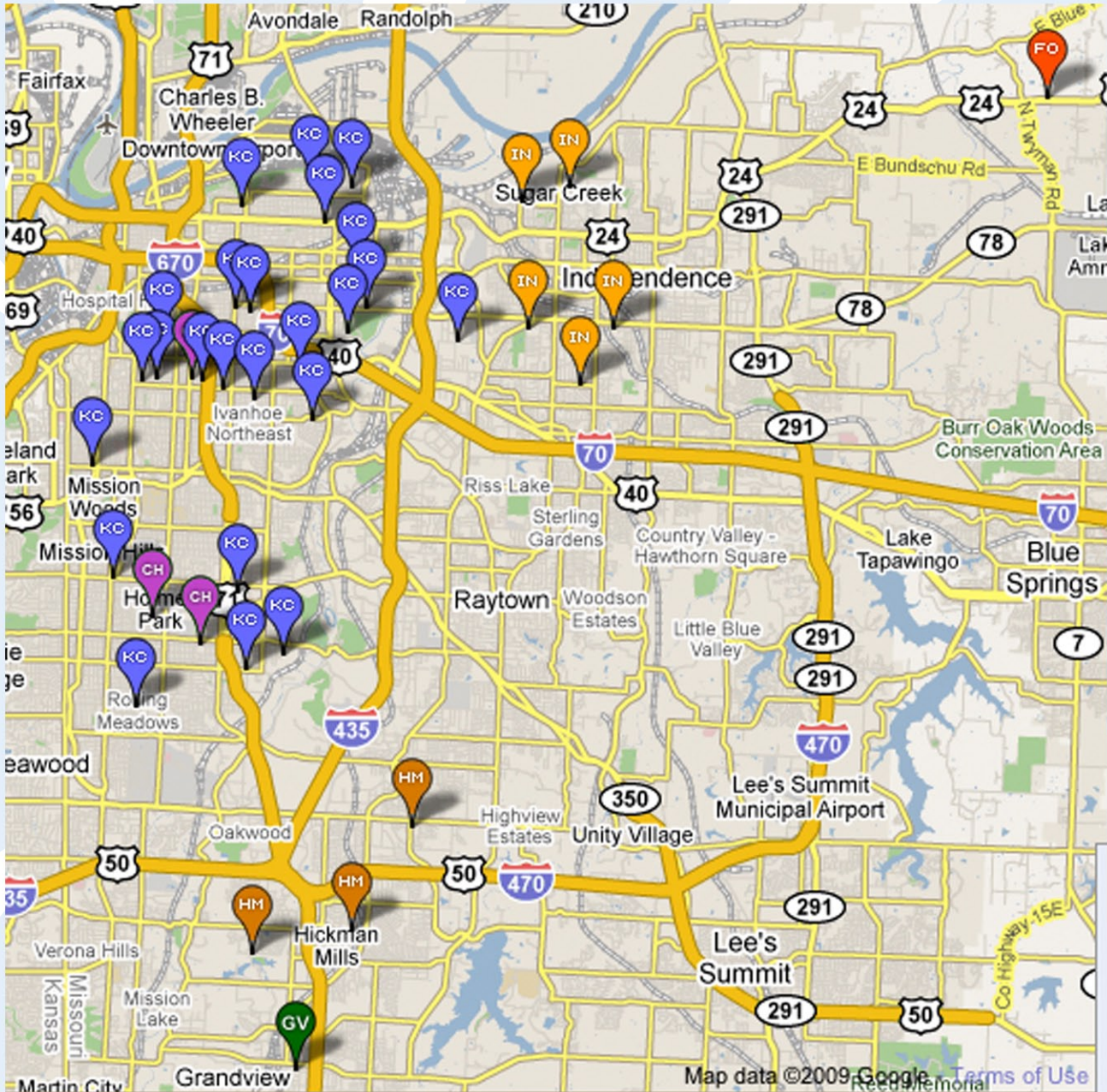
LINC staff **Brent Schondelmeyer** gave a presentation on the Family Support Division office makeover coming in October. LINC is helping remodel the FSD office at 4900 Swope Parkway in such a way as to make it more friendly and useful to customers.

Schondelmeyer reported on LINC's partnership with KCPT on the *Weathering the Financial Storm* series, which recently aired the program "Foreclosed, Evicted, Homeless." For that

program, LINC provided families with Flip cameras in order to document their own experiences. An excerpt from the program was shown.

The meeting was adjourned.

Lights On Afterschool



Lights on Afterschool! 2009

LINC is planning neighborhood and community events to mark the 10th annual *Lights On Afterschool!* celebration on Oct. 22. The event, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, raises public awareness of how afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families.

In addition to the activities listed below, sites are providing enrollment information about MO HealthNet, Missouri's version of the federal Children's Health Insurance Program, and other health resources.

We invite you to participate in one of the more than 40 events scheduled at LINC Caring Communities sites. To get involved at a school event, contact the site coordinator.

Caring Communities Site	Event Location	Time	Activities	Coordinator	Phone
CENTER SCHOOL DISTRICT					
Center Elementary School	8401 Euclid Ave. Kansas City, MO	TBA	Balloon release.	Steve McClellan	(816) 349-3469
CHARTER SCHOOLS					
Lee A. Tolbert Academy	3400 Paseo Kansas City, MO	4-6pm	Healthy lifestyles presentation. Bingo.	Delores Gardner	(816) 569-5253
Pathway Academy	2015 E. 72nd St., Kansas City, MO	4-6pm	Balloon release.	Jason Ervin	(816) 365-1871
University Academy	6801 Holmes Road Kansas City, MO	Mon-Fri.	Parent readers, banner making, postcards.	Christina Esteban	(816) 412-5900 ext. 9278
FORT OSAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT					
Fort Osage Caring Communities district-wide event	Fire Prairie Middle School 24810 E US Highway 24 Independence, MO	5-7pm	Family activities, balloon release.	Kenneth Lingelbach	(816) 650-7525
GRANDVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT					
Grandview Caring Communities district-wide event	Conn-West Elementary School 1100 High Grove Road Grandview, MO	2-5pm	Grandview Olympics.	Lisa Stephenson	(816) 316-5279
HICKMAN MILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT					
Burke Elementary	11115 Bennington Kansas City, MO	4:30-6:30pm	Open House.	Lindsay Browne	(816) 316-8334
Dobbs Elementary School	9400 Eastern Kansas City, MO	TBA	TBA	Tasha House	(816) 316-7782
Ingels Elementary School	11600 Food Ln. Kansas City, MO	TBA	TBA	Angela Myres	(816) 316-7864
Johnson Elementary School	10900 Marsh Kansas City, MO	TBA	TBA	Onita Omorodion	(816) 316-7924
Symington Elementary School	8650 Ruskin Way Kansas City, MO	4:30-6pm	TBA	Wanda Thompson	(816) 316-8057
Truman Elementary School	9601 James A. Reed Rd. Kansas City, MO	4:30-6pm	Open House.	Treva Kinney	(816) 316-8103
Warford Elementary School	11400 Cleveland Kansas City, MO	6-8pm	Career Spotlight.	Lee Kupka	(816) 316-8160
INDEPENDENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT					
Fairmount Elementary	120 N. Cedar Ave. Independence, MO	4:30-6:30pm	Family fun night..	Jennifer Stone	
Korte Elementary	2437 S. Hardy Ave. Independence, MO	4-6pm	Community health festival.	Nancy Hillebrand	(816) 521-5433
Santa Fe Trail	1301 S. Windsor Independence, MO	6:30-8pm	Music, Halloween safety tips, club sign-up	Calvin Wainright	(816) 521-5450
Sugar Creek Elementary	11424 Gill St Sugar Creek, MO	4-6pm	Ice cream social. Magic show.	Connie Fields	(816) 521-5463
Three Trails Elementary	11801 E 32nd Street Independence, MO	4:15-6pm	Music, balloons.	Norma Miller	(816) 521-5473

Lights on Afterschool! 2009 (continued)

Caring Communities Site	Event Location	Time	Activities	Coordinator	Phone
KANSAS CITY MO. SCHOOL DISTRICT					
ACE Campus	6410 Swope Parkway Kansas City, MO	5:30pm	Performance: Dance, chants, drumming, choir	Brenda Newsome	(816) 418-1207
Askew Elementary	2630 Topping Kansas City, MO	4-6pm	Steppers, poetry, poster presentation, dance.	Ebonie Hawthorne	(816) 418-2781
Attucks Elementary	2400 Prospect Kansas City, MO	5-7pm	Comedian, clowns, health care resources.	Rodney S. Copridge	(816) 418-3937
Border Star	6321 Wornall Rd. Kansas City, MO	5:30-7pm	KCPT ELMO! Helping families communicate during tough times.	Laurel Sharpe	(816) 418-5174
Foreign Language Academy	3450 Warwick Kansas City, MO	4:30-7:30pm	Hispanic heritage celebration. Mariachi band, booths, games,	Alex Petersen	(816) 418-6018
Franklin Elementary	3400 Highland Kansas City, MO	4-6pm	Health & safety resources.	Gloria Pendergrass	(816) 418-6779
Garcia Elementary	1000 W 17th St Kansas City, MO	4:30-5:30pm	Site council meeting.	Rachel Crouch	(816) 418-8736
Garfield Elementary	436 Prospect Kansas City, MO	3:30-6p	Hearts of Darkness Afrobeat, Garfield Dance Team, KCFD truck.	Rosisella Villegas	(816) 418-3627
Gladstone Elementary	335 N. Elmwood Kansas City, MO	7-8am	Blood pressure screenings. Balloon release.	Pamela Ealy	(816) 418-3974
Hartman Elementary	8111 Oak Kansas City, MO	TBA	Magician.	Heather Bryant	(816) 418-1799
James Elementary	5810 Scarritt Kansas City, MO	7-8am	Breakfast. Healthy food conference.	Raul Lopez Gomez	(816) 418-3724
Knotts Elementary School	7301 Jackson Kansas City, MO	4:30-6pm	Talent show.	Terry Washington	(816) 418-1929
Ladd Elementary	3640 Benton Blvd Kansas City, MO	3:30-5:30pm	Balloon release, fun activities, special guest.	Richard Fisher	(816) 418-2889
Longan Elementary	3421 Cherry Kansas City, MO	4:30-6pm	Longan Marching Tigers, health resources.	Jamie Braden	(816) 418-6445
Longfellow Elementary	2830 Holmes Kansas City, MO	7:30 am	Balloon release.	NicKia McMurtrey	(816) 418-5331
McCoy Elementary	1524 White Kansas City, MO	5-7pm	Kids Musical Medley .	Casey Stephens	(816) 418-3662
Melcher Elementary	3958 Chelsea Kansas City, MO	3-6pm	Health screenings .	Terry Nooner	(816) 418-6742
Milton Moore Elementary	4510 Linwood Blvd Kansas City, MO	3:30-6pm	Talent show.	Steve Bradford	(816) 418-6858
Northeast Elementary	4904 Independence Ave Kansas City, MO	TBA	Balloon release.	Crusita Fuentes	(816) 418-3482
Paige Elementary	3301 E. 75th St Kansas City, MO	8am	Balloon release.	Shaun Hayes	(816) 418-5059
Pinkerton Elementary	6409 Agnes Kansas City, MO	3:30-6pm	Live entertainment. Health & safety activities.	Adrian Wilson	(816) 418-1626
Pitcher Elementary	9915 E 38th Ter Kansas City, MO	4:30-6:30pm	Emergency preparedness presentation.	Freddie Cheirs	(816) 418-4567
Richardson Elementary	3515 Park Kansas City, Mo.	4-6pm	Family activities. Health & safety presentations.	Sheila Marshall	(816) 418-2662
Rogers Elementary	6400 E 23rd St Kansas City, MO	4-6pm	Health & safety info. Site council meeting..	Rita Slatton	(816) 418-4789
Swinney Elementary	1106 W 47th St Kansas City, MO	4pm	Carnival.	Rochelle Owens	(816) 418-6301
Trailwoods Elementary	6201 E 17th St Kansas City, MO	3:30-5:30pm	Family health fair.	Mark Hash	(816) 418-3259
West Rock Creek Elementary	8820 E 27th St Kansas City, MO	4:30-6pm	Fun games, activities and prizes.	Dorothea Kelley	
Wheatley Elementary	8820 E 27th St. Kansas City, MO 64129	4:30-6pm	Talent show. Balloon release.	Kelley Harden	(816) 418-4857

Lights On Afterschool!



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SESAME STREET



families stand together™

SESAME STREET HELPS FAMILIES COMMUNICATE DURING TOUGH TIMES

To help families cope with these challenging economic times, Sesame Street, with the generous support of the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, presents Families Stand Together, a bilingual (English and Spanish) outreach initiative with useful strategies and information to help families talk, come together, and reach out for support.

With special host Nick Haines!

Thurs., Oct. 22, 5:30 - 7pm
Border Star Montessori

6321 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, Mo.



Editorial

Commentary: Lights On!

By Ms. Gayle A. Hobbs and Ms. Candace Cheatem

The lights are on after school.

And that's great.

When lights are on after school, great things happen.

- Children are cared for in safe, supportive environments instead of being home alone after the end of the regular school day.
- Families learn and grow through classes that help build necessary skills – personal finance, parenting, safety and prevention, language and employment.
- Neighbors get together to address issues such as crime, foreclosure and health care.
- The school's conditions for learning can be addressed: the school has a sound core instructional program; students are motivated to learn; their basic physical, mental and emotional needs are met; parents and families are engaged with the school; and the broader community supports the effort.

On Thursday, Oct. 22, the Local Investment Commission (LINC) and 7,500 different communities across the nation will celebrate Lights On Afterschool. For more details about LINC's local celebrations, visit www.kclinc.org/lightson.

“We are excited about this event, about our growing efforts and about the challenge of supporting children and families who need help during tough economic times,” Ms. Candace Cheatem, deputy director of LINC, said.

LINC calls its afterschool initiative “Caring Communities.” Our Caring Communities sites are located in neighborhoods in the urban core, inner ring suburbs and even rural areas.

“The challenges of poverty are not confined to a single zip code, school district or city. This was true prior to the economic downturn and is even more apparent now with increasing unemployment and foreclosures,” she said.

There are over 80 LINC Caring Communities sites – each with an assigned site coordinator – located in seven school districts (Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Center, Grandview, Independence, North Kansas City and Fort Osage) along with several charter schools.

This is a massive effort. The 80-plus schools have a combined enrollment of 29,000 students. The students we serve are demographically diverse – 48 percent African American, 32 percent white and 16 percent Hispanic. Of those students, 71 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch status (a generally accepted measure of poverty and need).

As of the end of this September, enrollment in the LINC Before and After School program was 5,739 (for all school districts) and continues to grow. Program attendance for LINC programs is typically robust, too.

What is harder to measure but no less real is the strong parental participation and sense of involvement that can occur when families and their children make the school the center of the community.

“There is renewed interest in community organizing, citizen engagement and closing the achievement gap. These kinds of grassroots bottom-up effort have the potential to change large systems – schools, welfare and government,” Ms. Gayle Hobbs, president of LINC, said.

“We encourage you to become involved in your neighborhood school, to join with Caring Communities in making a difference in the lives of students, parents, neighbors, and the community as a whole,” Ms. Hobbs, said.

LINC Caring Communities school sites are hopeful, exciting and engaging places that are open to partnerships, volunteers and the kindly presence of a larger community that cares for its children, families and neighborhoods.

Join LINC October 22.

Look for a school where the lights are on.

Neighborhood News

FROM JACKSON AND CASS COUNTIES

Belton jewel

Could this be high school football? New stadium has it all, even video replays. | **PAGE 5**



Before- and after-school programs feed the mind and build sense of community | **PAGE 3**

SPORTS

Rumble at Rim Rock Farm



Area runners compete at the Rim Rock Farm Cross Country Classic. | **PAGES 18-19**

LEE'S SUMMIT

Surprise!

A surprise party thanks two generous couples for being who they are. | **PAGE 11**

THE AREA

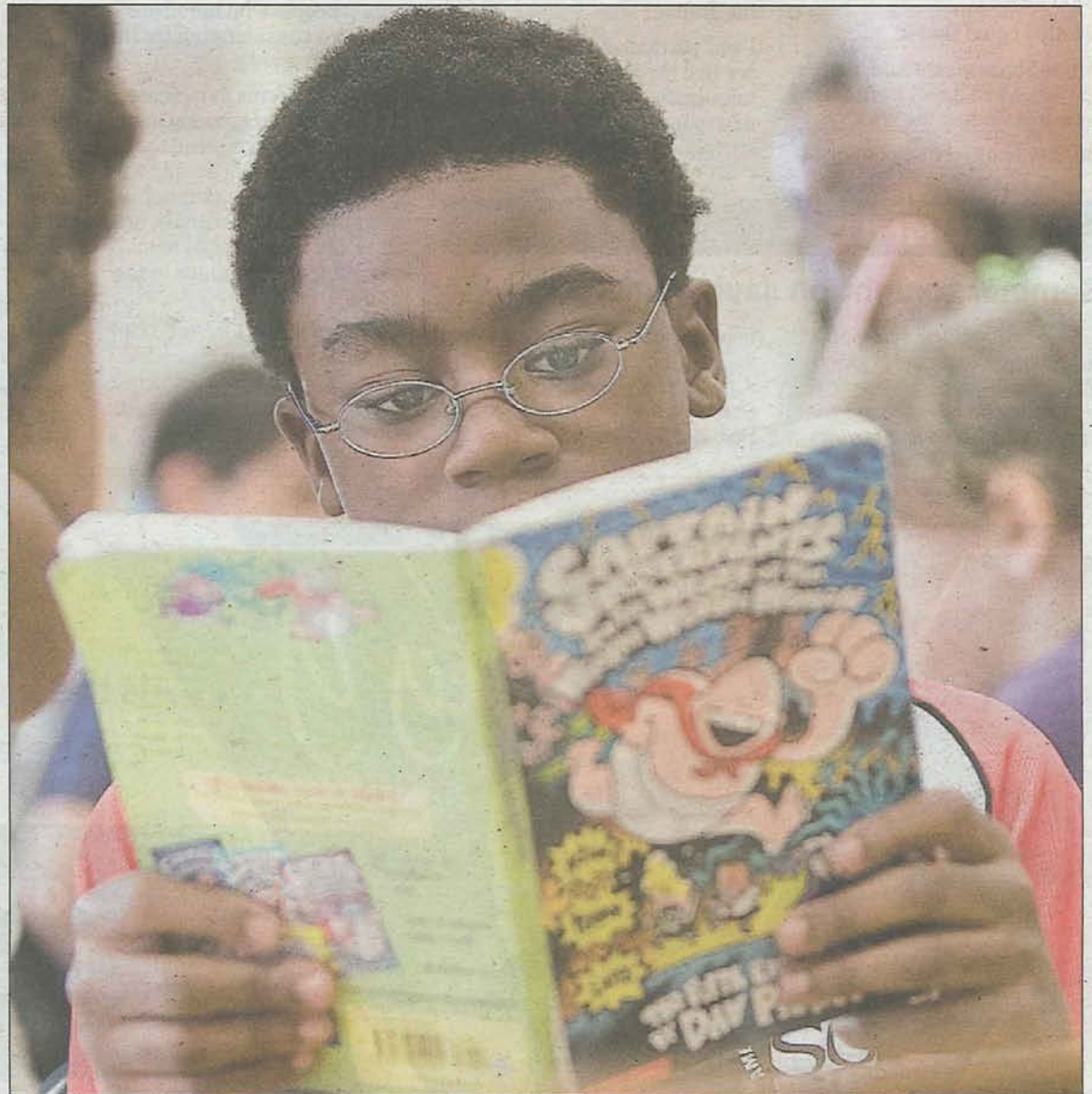
Looking for second chances

The economy pinches new foundation that aims to keep former inmates from offending again. | **PAGE 12**

WESTPORT

Guardian Angels 100

The pastor spoke German when Guardian Angels parish was founded 100 years ago on what was then the urban frontier. | **PAGE 7**



DAVID EULITT | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

The Local Investment Commission, a state-supported non-profit, has returned to the Kansas City School District this year. LINC creates "Caring Communities" based in neighborhood schools and community centers. Above, Dahnvon Phippen was engrossed in his book during the after-school program at the Foreign Language Academy on a recent Friday afternoon.

TONY RIZZO Quick! Give me an idea! I'm angling for one of those genius grants | **PAGE 2**

POLICE REPORT | **PAGE 14**

CALENDAR | **PAGE 17**

RAY-PEC SCHOOLS Authorities give Route J a closer look after wreck puts student in a wheelchair | **PAGE 6**

BELTON DISTRICT

Freshman Center teacher wins engineering grant

Rex Groom, a Belton High School Freshman Center technology and engineering teacher, recently was honored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a Technology and Engineering Grant recipient for the 2010 fiscal year.

The \$17,300 is a matching grant, bringing Groom \$35,600 to purchase computers and software for Project Lead the Way.

The equipment will be used in an introductory course in engineering design.

BLUE SPRINGS DISTRICT

South has yearbooks from '93 to '08 for sale

Blue Springs South High School has a collection of yearbooks for sale, and members of the public are welcome to purchase yearbooks from 1993 to 2008.

The books are \$10 for volumes released in 2006 or earlier and \$20 for those from 2007 and 2008.

For more information or to purchase the books, contact Cindy Wood at cwood@bssd.net or 816-224-1315.

LEE'S SUMMIT DISTRICT

Internet safety workshops being offered for parents

Three Lee's Summit entities are joining with the Lee's Summit School District to present Internet safety workshops.

The workshops will be offered from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Oct. 8 at Pleasant Lea Middle School, 630 S.W. Persels Road, and Feb. 23 at Bernard Campbell Middle School, 1201 N.E. Tudor Road.

Parents will learn how to protect their children through knowledge on topics such as cyber-bullying, sexting, social networking and the legal aspects of technology.

The workshops are presented by the district, Lee's Summit CARES, ReDiscover and the Lee's Summit Police Department. Admission is \$5 per person. To register, visit <http://r7webforms.leesummit.k12.mo.us/formsslc/inetsafety/09-10/index.htm>. For more information, call Lee's Summit CARES at 816-347-3009.

Schools



PHOTOS BY DAVID EULITT | THE KANSAS CITY STAR
Marquan Pennington, 10, center, took part in a soccer activity recently during the Local Investment Commission's (LINC) after-school programming at the Foreign Language Academy at 3450 Warwick Blvd. The Kansas City School District's former after-school partner, LINC, is back this year.

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT

DREAM TEAM

Experience of after-school site directors spans many cultures and continents.

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

This job of building neighborhood school communities couldn't be for just anyone.

The Local Investment Commission, newly charged with running after-school and community programming for 37 Kansas City schools this year, figured it would need to cast a wide net to fill hundreds of positions in a matter of months.

LINC especially needed site directors to lead staffs that would serve



Dahnvon Phippen, 11, was engrossed in his book during LINC's after-school programming at the Foreign Language Academy.

LINC SERVICES

The Local Investment Commission is a state-supported non-profit organization that provides programs and resources for low-income families. LINC creates "Caring Communities" based primarily in neighborhood schools and community centers.

LINC serves neighborhoods in five school districts: Kansas City, Independence, Fort Osage, North Kansas City and Hickman Mills.

Programs vary between sites, but generally LINC helps with children's activities, family health, employment, senior services and community organizing.

On the web at www.kclinc.org

LINC

FROM PAGE 3

students and adults with an increasing variety of backgrounds and needs.

As it turned out, the experience of those who came to work spanned cultures and even continents.

Alex Petersen came with skills learned while helping families build communities in Juarez, Mexico.

Ebonie Hawthorne recog-



Alex Petersen



Ebonie Hawthorne



Raul Lopez



Steve Bradford



Rosisella Villegas



Laurel Sharpe

nized in her assigned school's community the resiliency of the South Side Chicago neighborhood where she'd been raised.

Raul Lopez and his family had fled his native Colombia where his work, trying to help troubled families, had brought threats against his life.

They'd been teachers, social workers, program builders — working at their pieces of the whole.

As a LINC site director, said Steve Bradford, he can reach out in so many more directions than in his years working with suspended students or as a classroom teacher.

"I can bring the whole pie together," he said. "That's the beauty of it."

LINC, one of several organizations in Missouri delegated to put state funds to use in local communities, began its work with before- and after-school programming in Kansas City

more than 15 years ago.

Its collaboration with the Kansas City School District grew to more than 50 schools before a contract dispute in 2006 broke the relationship. LINC, which had already begun expanding outside the Kansas City district, spread its resources further into the Hickman Mills, Grandview, Center, Independence, Fort Osage and North Kansas City school districts.

When Kansas City reversed itself and beckoned LINC back for this school year, it meant LINC would have to grow by about 80 percent to meet the demand. Its total staff would need to go from nearly 400 to more than 700.

And with LINC's resources committed, the Kansas City school board approved paying for the services, estimated by the district at \$5.8 million.

"It had been difficult to leave,"

said LINC President Gayle Hobbs. "We are thrilled to be in other districts, but the opportunity to go back to Kansas City was an opportunity to go back home."

Rosisella Villegas, who had been a high school teacher, is taking her bilingual skills to Garfield Elementary School as its LINC program coordinator.

She remembers the Hispanic mother with smaller children at her feet needing to enroll her eldest boy, her first kindergartner.

She helped her read the Spanish enrollment forms. She talked to her about programs.

She's had parents already volunteering to start a drill team to go with a flag-football team.

"They're making pom-poms," she said.

At James Elementary, Lopez is taking special training so his staff will be better prepared to assist families who need help with utility bills.

At Moore Elementary, Bradford has taken a seat with the newly formed Historic East Neighborhood Coalition to help it address housing concerns and other problems.

The after-school programs are going to be part of their communities, and Laurel Sharpe made sure the Faxon Elementary neighborhood took notice.

Sharpe, who had started a non-profit support organization for families of minor league baseball players before joining with LINC, had her staff take all 30 of their children for a city bus ride.


They marched as a group the few blocks to the bus station, catching stares and smiles.

They loaded up and rode downtown, learning about riding the bus and seeing the sights of their city along the way.

"It was fun to see the happiness of the kids," Sharpe said. "They were experiencing what was around them...and neighbors were seeing the innocence of the kids."

"You can say you want to change lives, but it's a challenge," she said. "You have to earn trust and be welcomed."

To reach Joe Robertson, call 816-234-4789 or send email to jrobertson@kcstar.com.



Presented by
David T. Littlefield, O.D., F.A.A.O.

DIABETES DRUG MAY THREATEN VISION

Patients taking glitazones, a new class of drug that specifically targets insulin resistance, should be careful to note that they may be at increased risk for diabetic macular edema (DME), a vision-threatening complication. According to recent research involving diabetic patients with DME, those taking glitazones, including pioglitazone and rosiglitazone, were 2.6 times more likely to develop DMA than those not taking the drugs. Thus, diabetics taking any one of this class of drugs are strongly advised to inform their Eye doctors that they are doing so. Diabetic macular edema is characterized by swelling in the central portion of the retina due to leaking of fluid from blood vessels. Blurring in the middle (and periphery) of the visual field results.

Many people schedule routine appointments with dentists and doctors. Your vision is priceless. It is important to have routine eye health examinations because many vision problems display few, if any, symptoms until well advanced. Please call **LITTLEFIELD OPTOMETRY, LLC**, at **913-498-1363** to schedule an eye exam that incorporates the latest advances in research and technology. We test for glaucoma, cataracts, and retinal disease. Our practice is located at 13014 State Line Rd., Leawood.

P.S. Diabetic macular edema is divided into two types, focal and diffuse, each of which responds to a different type of laser treatment.

Littlefield Optometry 13014 State Line
Leawood, KS 66209
913-498-1363
www.drittlefield.com

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HEPATITIS C

RESEARCH STUDY

If you are **18 to 65** diagnosed with **Hepatitis C** and have not yet received **treatment** — you may be eligible to participate in a clinical research study with an investigational medication.

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5 overnight stays required. Call for details.



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Sun, Oct. 04, 2009

Dozen area schools overcome challenges to meet state standards

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

Our nation's future was having a tantrum.

An 8-year-old boy, filing in with others to learn writing in Melissa Mitchell's third-grade class in the Hickman Mills District, wasn't in an appropriate frame of mind.

You know how we romanticize education, Mitchell would say later. "Oh, these children are our country's future ..."

"But *their* future," she said, "is where they are right now."

This child stood in the door at a school in the Kansas City area that — while serving high concentrations of low-income students — has met the demands of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Out of 93 Missouri schools in the Kansas City area where at least two-thirds of the students qualify for subsidized lunch, 81 missed the federal benchmarks.

But a dozen made it.

These schools broke the persistent correlation between poverty and student performance with the combined efforts of people such as:

- A test data analyst and math teacher at Garfield Elementary School in Kansas City.
- A family-school liaison at Randall Elementary School in Independence.
- A team leader and coordinator of English language learner programs at Allen Village Charter School.
- The third-grade teacher ready to teach writing at Warford Elementary in Hickman Mills.

Her troubled 8-year-old, like so many others, has problems at home. Gaps in early childhood education. Stress no child should experience.

But that can't stand in his way, Mitchell said.

"His reality is what he understands today," she said. "His future? He has to get on track so he can learn this afternoon."

Garfield Elementary

When the strategizing clicks among the teachers at Kansas City's Garfield Elementary School, the sports coach inside Jason McBride delights.

He's seen the look before.

"All of a sudden, you can see it," he said. "You can tell they got it. Their eyes get a little wider. Their step quickens. There's a hunger there."

That was how McBride described the moment his first youth basketball team really understood its full-court press. It was a teaching thrill that spurred him to set aside his original career in information technology to teach math in an elementary classroom.

He is seeing that same energy in the eyes of fellow teachers and staff at Garfield.

They toss around acuity test scores — predictors of student performance on state exams.

They pore over charts of past state exams, noting which items among the voluminous state standards are tested the most.

They look at which teachers have succeeded with the most students around specific lessons, and share lesson plans.

They know which students are close to moving into higher test performance categories. They know who needs help. They are burrowing down to what an individual student needs.

McBride takes a lead role in organizing and presenting test data generated from Kansas City's central office and in the school.

"It's about doing what you're supposed to be doing and holding each other accountable," he said.

At Garfield, 89 percent of the children last year came from low-income families who qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch.

The school has reached the state's performance standards required by the No Child Left Behind Act for the second time in three years.

"I'm just a piece of all the people solving these problems," McBride said. "You need to figure out your targets. Figure out how to accomplish goals. You do the things you know will work, and you do them right."

Randall Elementary

On her first day on the job, a caseworker from the state's Children's Division waited for family-school liaison Andrea Pittman.

It seemed a mother of three children at Randall Elementary School in Independence had let her drug addiction cripple her family.

"We loaded up and went to their home," Pittman said.

There was no food. The utilities had been shut off.

Pittman had been an advocate at a youth shelter. She thought she understood poverty before she followed her parents into a career in elementary education. But not this.

"I felt overwhelmed," she said.

At Randall, 75 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch. Many live in nearby subsidized housing.

The three children she counseled that first morning were followed by others, like the boy who said he didn't have his homework because his family had moved into a shelter overnight.

"You say, 'OK,' but you're not going to tarnish his pride with lower expectations," Pittman said. "We have to help him. He might not have his homework ready, but his teacher is going to expect it today."

School is where they get to show their resilience.

"Some of them might not have had dinner the night before, but they know if they get to school, they'll get breakfast and they're going to make it."

Pittman has a morning session with children she calls triage. She runs out to visit homes during the day. She has her regular "Lunch Bunch" group of students who snack in her office. They can work on social skills here. Get special attention. Comfort. Sometimes they need "to vent," Pittman said. Her heavy punch-the-referee floor doll stands ready.

Some of the parents had bad experiences when they were in school, Assistant Principal Kathy Butler said. It can be hard to get them to come into the school.

"For many of them, Andrea is the first person they call," Butler said. "She's their safe person. She's the one who came and supported them."

Allen Village

Rhonda Reddick came to Allen Village Charter School as a Spanish teacher.

But things have changed in the school's 10-year history. Now more than a third of its students are Hispanic. One-third of those students — or one out of every 10 in the school — are learning English as their second language.

Now she's a Spanish teacher and coordinator of the English language learners program and team leader for the middle school teachers.

"You realize you're so much more," she said, speaking for all of the teachers and staff.

"You're a mother for some. You're the emotional dumping ground, the person lighting the flame, the person giving the swift kick, the motivator."

Allen Village, with 77 percent of its students qualifying for free or reduced-cost lunch, saw enough growth in test scores to make the federal benchmarks this year.

When Reddick gathers to brainstorm with her middle school team, the teachers show themselves as statisticians, too. They deal in scatter plots, box and whisker graphs, special software, trying to understand what's working and what's not.

She urged the teachers to post classroom benchmarks on wall posters.

Her work with Spanish-speaking students involves helping parents who often speak little or no English.

Allen Village is bringing parents into the school with the help of Spanish newsletters and gatherings such as the "ELL Chat and Chew Club." She has 42 students in the program, and 25 of them brought parents to the latest meeting.

More of the parents are reading bilingual books with their children, she said, learning English together.

The program's success is important to the school's ability to meet the state's performance benchmarks, Principal Phyllis Washington said.

"It defies the idea that these children can't learn," Washington said. "Language does *not* become the barrier."

Warford Elementary

It's time for class.

Mrs. Mitchell's class.

Other times, she will look after her students' needs — maybe share lunchtime with some of them, talk after class, even visit a home.

But right now, all of her third-graders will be writing.

Got problems? Her philosophy is, "You drop it outside."

Feel like acting up? Mitchell will deal with it. No trips to the principal's office here.

"I'm going to give no one the idea that there is anyone meaner than me," she said.

She stalks her room at Warford with a blend of strictness and humor.

"Show 'em what clueless looks like," she says to the class when one student wasn't paying attention.

The students swing their hands whiffing past their heads, saying, "Whoop!"

Mitchell's class has worked this writing drill before. That work, completed shortly after school started, is displayed in the hallway.

"Are you going to tell me kids can't write by the second week of school?" she said. "My kids can write in the second week of school."

No one is coddled here. She distributes praise throughout the session, but only where it fits, and with a snappy air that says: Of course you can do it.

At Warford, 67 percent of the students come from families who qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch.

Because of teachers and staff like Mitchell, Principal Everlyn Williams said, new students catch on quickly and "feel the community" of the school.

In Mitchell's room, the teacher said, that feeling is "going full-throttle."

The boy who had trouble at the start of class works as hard as everyone else. No one misbehaves. When told the hour's up, disbelief rises among the busy students.

"That seemed like two minutes," one says.

"Tomorrow," Mitchell tells them, "this is going to blossom into a story. How many of you know you can make the best paragraphs I've ever read?"

All 25 third-graders raise their hands.

"I'll see you tomorrow, story writers."

Making AYP

Public schools that meet the state benchmarks under the federal No Child Left Behind Act are credited with making AYP — Adequate Yearly Progress. Here is how Kansas City area schools in Missouri fared, comparing those schools that had more than two-thirds of their students qualifying for free or reduced-cost lunch with all other schools.

Total No. Made AYP Percentage

High-poverty schools	93	12	13
Other schools	254	96	39

The 12 high-poverty Missouri schools that made AYP

Charter schools

Allen Village

University Academy Lower School

Hickman Mills district

Warford Elementary

Independence district

Bryant Elementary

Procter Elementary

Randall Elementary

Kansas City district

ACE Collegium 6-8

Garfield Elementary

Hartman Elementary

Knotts Elementary

Longan Elementary

Longfellow Elementary

Posted on Mon, Oct. 05, 2009

Foreclosure crisis creates thousands more vacant buildings in KC

By MICHAEL MANSUR
The Kansas City Star

Fueled by the foreclosure crisis, the number of vacant buildings in Kansas City has spread like the real estate version of a pandemic flu.

In just one year, city officials say, the number has exploded by 2,000 to more than 7,500 empty or abandoned structures. That figure doesn't include thousands of empty lots.

"It's staggering what is happening," said Cindy Circo, who represents some of the hardest-hit neighborhoods in Kansas City's East Side.

The problem touches every area, from as far north as Kansas City International Airport to portions of Kansas City that are south of Grandview. But it most dramatically affects the urban core, where some streets may have only one occupied home left.

This summer, Forbes magazine helped focus city leaders on the problem, naming Kansas City the nation's most "abandoned city" because of high rental and homeowner vacancy rates.

City officials and others are critical of the study, saying Kansas City certainly is not the nation's most abandoned city. It pales in comparison to Detroit, Baltimore or troubled Rust Belt centers such as Cleveland, or even smaller towns such as Youngstown, Ohio.

But the study woke up Kansas City leaders.

"No one really realized Kansas City has that significant of a problem," said Julie Porter, executive director of the Greater Kansas City LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corp.), a community development organization. "And the foreclosure crisis has made it much worse. Lots and lots of vacancies."

Many urban core neighborhoods are close to becoming so abandoned that they will have a hard time coming back, said Joe Schilling, associate director for the Metropolitan Institute of Virginia Tech University in Alexandria, Va.

“They’re at a critical juncture,” said Schilling, who recently spoke at a symposium in Kansas City on vacant homes.

The damage affects more than just the residents of those neighborhoods, he said.

Every city resident must pay the extra costs to mow the lots, enforce the city codes, board up the buildings or demolish them, he explained. Then there are the extra costs for police as crime often festers around the vacant buildings, or for fire crews to battle the arsons that commonly hit vacant structures.

A 2008 study by ReBuild Ohio found that the annual cost of vacant homes and lots in Cleveland was at least \$35 million per year — \$186 per household.

“It does feel hopeless sometimes,” said Gillian Ruddy, a Legal Aid of Western Missouri attorney who regularly helps neighborhoods battle the growing problem of blight and vacant homes. “But think how much worse it would be if no one was doing anything.”

“And there are good people in these neighborhoods,” Ruddy added. “That’s who we’re fighting for.”

Empty Spruce

At 59th Street and Spruce Avenue on Kansas City’s East Side, it would be difficult to fling a rock and not hit a vacant building.

On one corner is a row of small homes, just recently boarded up. Across the street sits a decrepit old commercial building that neighbors call “the old candy store.” The back of it has been busted open. Across the street, on a little hill, perches a boarded-up yellow house.

“There are a lot of vacant houses around here,” says Cathy Woolridge from her porch overlooking 59th Street.

She’s sitting there, enjoying through a straw an afternoon drink in the sun. Woolridge says “it’s OK” living on her block.

“But I’m the only one,” she added. “Sometimes it gets a little scary.”

The real damage to Spruce is not as obvious as the run-down candy store. Walk down the 5900 block of Spruce and you find just a single home occupied. What must have been 15 properties now sit either vacant, some overgrown, or with structures boarded up. Some have piles of trash littering the sidewalk and front yard.

Cynthia Canady, a longtime city activist, lives a block away. She’s been there for 40 years.

“First we had white flight,” she says, a hand placed defiantly on her hip. “Then we had black flight. If people with any income had stayed, it wouldn’t look like this.”

Canady's house may be the only owner-occupied home on her block and Spruce, just east of her.

"It's almost a nightmare for me to have stayed," Canady added. "Now, I've gotten old, and I'm stuck."

Cost of progress

A little farther west, the Rev. John Wandless, a Catholic priest, began his Urban Ranger Corps to help at-risk youth by repairing housing in the city's core.

But the housing crisis is putting a crimp in those plans.

Wandless has financed the effort with personal wealth he acquired before becoming a priest. He says he has spent \$1.2 million since 2005 but won't be able to continue.

His plan was to employ youths to fix up homes in the neighborhood of his old church, St. Louis Catholic Church on Swope Parkway.

On one "model block," East 60th Street between College and Indiana, Wandless has acquired four of the homes and fixed up the six others. Some were vacant or abandoned homes, their fronts obscured by overgrowth.

"This one looked like Guadalcanal," Wandless joked, referring to the jungle of weeds and brush that had covered the home. Today, it's a tidy terra-cotta colored bungalow with a new kitchen, refinished hardwood floors and new windows.

Wandless estimated he's invested \$45,000 to repair the house, and more to acquire it. He had to go to state court to be trustee of the property after the owner failed to respond to nuisance violations, dangerous building notices and offers to purchase it.

"It was doing a terrible disservice to the neighborhood," Wandless said.

Once the rehab is completed, Wandless expects the court will turn the property over to his Urban Rangers.

But the increased number of vacant homes and the depressed housing market means he can't generate enough profit from the homes he fixes to sustain his program.

"We were expecting to make \$20,000 to \$25,000 per house," Wandless said. "But this model block will probably be the last one we will do directly."

Mary Kelly, who has lived on Indiana Avenue since 1970, used to look out her back door at vacant homes, as well as out her front. But Wandless' project has at least improved the view out her back door. The nuisance out the front remains.

"This is what I face every day," she said, sitting on her front porch. "It's crazy."

More fixes

But what can be done to salvage the rest of the urban core?

First, city officials propose spending an additional \$400,000 to mow and remove brush at the increasing number of vacant homes — pushing the city budget to more than \$1.2 million for mowing.

The council also is refining a new “receivership” ordinance that would allow nonprofits and others to more easily take control of abandoned or vacant properties. A problem related to the foreclosure crisis is that some banks or investment groups hold onto properties, even after foreclosure, making it difficult to buy them for redevelopment.

Community development agencies are using state law to acquire them, but officials said the new city law will offer more flexibility.

In addition, the city has won more than \$8.4 million in federal and state grants to rehab and market more than 200 homes abandoned due to foreclosure. It also is part of a regional effort to win \$35 million more in federal money for foreclosed properties.

What’s more, Legal Aid has enlisted the help of five major Kansas City law firms that will allow their attorneys to do pro-bono work to help with the project, said Gregg Lombardi, executive director of Legal Aid.

Porter of Greater Kansas City LISC noted that Kansas City has some key pieces in place to combat the problem: a housing court and a database of vacant homes and lots. “But there’s not a great deal of agreement on priority,” she added. “That’s our biggest issue. Where do we start and how do we get everyone to agree where to start?”

Porter hopes to reconvene participants from the recent vacant property symposium to develop a strategy to combat the problem.

Mayor Mark Funkhouser appointed a New Tools Task Force to find ways to redevelop blighted neighborhoods.

A key element of the program would be a new community-development credit union that would marshal funds for urban-core redevelopment. For example, Kansas City Power & Light’s utility payments from those areas might be deposited in that credit union to help finance loans to redevelop that area.

Spark Bookhart, a task force member, said vacant lots are not liabilities but new opportunities to employ neighborhood workers in rehab work funded by this new credit union.

“The community has to do this,” said Linwood Tauheed, another member of the New Tools Task Force. “No one is going to come to help it.”

Posted on Fri, Oct. 02, 2009

HCA sued over its accounting for charitable contributions

By DAN MARGOLIES
The Kansas City Star

The foundation created after HCA Inc.'s purchase of Health Midwest is suing the hospital giant, claiming HCA has not properly accounted for \$750 million in promised charity and capital improvements.

The lawsuit, filed Friday by the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City in Jackson County Circuit Court, seeks an order directing HCA to give it information showing HCA has lived up to its commitments.

The nonprofit foundation was created in 2002 as part of HCA's \$1.13 billion purchase of nonprofit Health Midwest, which operated 11 hospitals and other facilities in Missouri and Kansas. The foundation's mission is to improve health care quality and access for the uninsured and underinsured.

At the time of purchase, HCA agreed to make \$450 million in capital improvements to the hospitals it bought from Health Midwest and to donate an additional \$300 million in charity care.

In its lawsuit, the foundation alleges that it has repeatedly sought information from HCA to verify that HCA has met those obligations but has received only vague answers.

"In the best interest of the community, we feel as if we had no choice but to seek a court's approval in these matters. The action filed today is an attempt to gather the information needed to determine if HCA has indeed met its obligation as called for in the post-closing covenants," Larry Blankinship, the foundation's board chairman, said in a statement.

A written statement by HCA said it had not only met its obligations but surpassed them.

The company claimed it had invested more than \$600 million in capital improvements and more than \$784 million in charity care.

The statement quoted HCA Midwest President Steve Corbeil as saying that HCA leaders had met with Health Care Foundation leaders "on numerous occasions" and "willingly provided details and answered detailed questions above and beyond what's required."

Because Health Midwest was a nonprofit institution, the net proceeds from its sale to HCA were distributed to two newly created nonprofit foundations — one in Missouri and one in Kansas — under agreements with the Missouri and Kansas attorneys general.

A large percentage of the sale proceeds went to the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City. A smaller percentage went to the REACH Foundation, the public charity set up in Kansas.

The Missouri foundation began in 2003 with about \$425 million and the Kansas group with about \$105 million. HCA's pledges to make capital improvements and donate medical care were separate from the proceeds received by the foundations.

But as part of their responsibilities, the foundations monitor HCA's compliance with those pledges. And the Health Care Foundation says that in doing so, it discovered large discrepancies in HCA's annual reports to the foundations.

For example, a summary in HCA's 2008 annual report says that HCA made \$603 million in capital outlays in the five years ending March 31, 2008. But the suit alleges that a detailed spreadsheet in the same report listed only \$202.4 million in capital expenditures.

Moreover, the suit says, about 20 of the hospitals and medical facilities listed as receiving capital expenditures were not part of the Health Midwest purchase.

Likewise, the suit alleges, HCA reported that it provided charity care far in excess of the requirements under the Health Midwest purchase agreement. But HCA's Medicare cost reports, the suit says, contain "dramatically" different figures.

In March, Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster sent a letter to HCA seeking additional information about HCA's numbers. "HCA responded to the Missouri Attorney General with largely the same inadequate responses that it had provided to the Foundation," the suit states.

Besides seeking more information from HCA, the Health Care Foundation wants the court to rule that it doesn't need HCA's approval before making grants of more than \$250,000.

Such grants have gone to health care and social services institutions, including Children's Mercy Hospital, Legal Aid of Western Missouri, the Independence School District, Jewish Family and Children Services, and Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, according to the lawsuit.

Since it began making grants in 2005, the foundation says, it has awarded more than \$90 million.

Paul Seyferth, an attorney for the foundation, said HCA's reports raised "questions that, frankly, every concerned Kansas Citian should be asking."

To reach Dan Margolies, call 816-234-4481 or send e-mail to dmargolies@kcstar.com.

NAACP Announces Award Winners

Monday, October 5, 2009

The Kansas City, Mo., branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is celebrating a successful existence with a 2009 theme, "NAACP 100 Years: Bold Dreams – Big Victories."

Contact the NAACP Office, (816) 421-1191 or naacpkcmo@sbcglobal.net

The keynote speaker will be Mayor James A. Young who became the first African-American mayor of Philadelphia, Mississippi, by a margin of 46 votes, on July 3, 2009 in a town where three civil-rights workers were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in 1964 while registering voters.

Four persons will be honored at this year's Freedom Fund Luncheon on Saturday, Oct. 24, at Westin Crown Center Hotel, One Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri.

A silent auction begins at 11 a.m., and lunch follows at 12 Noon.

Leonard Graham and his wife, Barbara, are honorary chairpersons.

Mary Long is general chairperson, Anita L. Russell is president of the NAACP branch and Rosa James, Publicity Chair.

The honorees are as follows:

•Bert Berkley, Harold L. Holliday, Sr. Civil Rights:

Berkley is chairman of Tension Envelope Corporation and chairman of Global Envelope Alliance, an international organization with membership in 38 countries.

Berkley is founder of the Local INvestment Commission (LINC) which invests in children and families in the Greater Kansas City metropolitan area; former chairman of Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and Civic Council; chair named after him – Bert Berkley Chair for Community Relations - in May 2009 by Jewish Community Relations Bureau American Jewish Committee in honor of his pursuit of justice over the decades.

He co-authored a book entitled, Giving Back, Connecting You, Business and Community. Bert Berkley's awards and titles are numerous. However, it is honorable to note his

combat infantry service during World War 2 where he received the Combat Infantry Badge and Bronze Star. He serves on several boards that impact locally and nationally. Most oversee that money is well spent for social services, education, health, and business. One board, Centerpoint for Leaders, located in Washington, D. C., trains not-for-profit leaders at all levels on the Internet, tracks behavioral change and is considered as revolutionary. Bert Berkley is a graduate of Duke university and Harvard Business school.

•Stacey Daniels-Young, PhD, Lucile H. Bluford Special Achievement:

Mrs. Daniels-Young was born and raised in Kansas City, graduated from Paseo High school, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Pre-Medical Services at University of Missouri (Columbia), the Master of Arts degree in Social Psychology, and in 1986, received a PhD degree in Community Psychology at UMKC. She is presently the director of Community Backed Anti-Drug Tax (COMBAT), Jackson County, Mo. A few of her experiences have taken her from lecturer of general psychology and group behavior at Penn Valley Community college, 1981-1985, to clinical assistant professor conducting diversity and cultural sensitivity to psychology interns at UMKC, research associate at Greater Kansas City Mental Health Foundation, research and evaluation director at Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and Black Health Care Coalition's chief executive officer. Mrs. Daniels-Young's consultant services include Net Remix, Maternal and Child Health Coalition, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Ad-Hoc Group Against Crime, Kansas City School District, Kansas City Human Relations Committee, Learning Exchange, TeamTech, Inc., for State of Kansas, UMKC Institute for Human Development and Black Community Fund. Mrs. Daniels-Young has authored or co-authored several publications in psychology, health and disparities, lectured, served on thirty-three boards and commissions from 1985 to present – one included the Kansas City Board of Police Commissioners. Stacy has received many honors and awards. She is a member of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church.

•Barbara A. Tate, ABD Velma E. Woodson Outstanding Leadership:

Mrs. Tate is one eight children and former resident of Menifee, Arkansas. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from University of Arkansas and received other degrees to the ABD from UMKC. Her professional experiences in leadership include secondary educator, teacher coordinator, and staff developer for Kansas City School District. Tate became an assistant principal at Bingham Junior High school from 1983-1984. She was elevated to principal of Westport Junior High School in 1984 and in 1986 was promoted as principal of Southwest High school. In 1987, Ms. Tate acted as administrative assistant to the superintendent and became interim deputy superintendent from 1989-1990. She became principal of Hickman Mills High School from 1990-1992. She is presently assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in the Grandview School District. During all of the positions listed above, Ms. Tate has been responsible for organizing, coordinating, evaluating, developing curriculum, supervising staff members and students. These duties also include community-relations programs, counseling, and representing superintendents at community and district functions.

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|---|----------------|
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615 E. 13th St., Kansas City, MO | (816) 889-2000 |
| South Jackson County Office
6801-B Longview Rd., Kansas City, MO | (816) 325-1012 |
| East Jackson County Office
201 E. Partridge St., Independence, MO | (816) 325-5800 |



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