

# LINC Commission Meeting

November 18, 2019



Students from several LINC Caring Communities sites around the metro participated in the Girls on the Run Fall 5K on Sat., Nov. 9 at Swope Park.



# Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

## Our Shared Vision

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

## Our Mission

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

## Our Guiding Principles

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



Monday, Nov. 18, 2019 | 4 – 6 pm  
Kauffman Foundation  
4801 Rockhill Rd.  
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

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## Agenda

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- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
  - a. **September 2019 minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports
- IV. LINC Finance Committee
  - a. Auditor Presentation
  - b. IRS Form 990
- V. Child Welfare Initiatives
  - a. FosterAdopt Connect
  - b. Drumm Farm Center for Children
  - c. New Children's Division Initiative
- VI. Report Out
  - a. Lights on After School
  - b. Social Solutions Impact Summit
  - c. CCO Recognition
- VII. Adjournment



## THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

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

Bert Berkley  
Sharon Cheers  
Jack Craft  
Tom Davis  
Aaron Deacon  
David Disney  
Mark Flaherty

Rob Givens  
Anita Gorman  
Rosemary Lowe  
Ken Powell  
Marge Randle  
David Ross

*A motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2019, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.*

*A motion to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2019, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.*

Tate introduced **Marge Randle**, who reported on her career in state government including working in partnership with LINC on welfare-to-work efforts.

*A motion to approve the appointment of Marge Randle to the LINC Commission was approved unanimously.*

### Superintendent Reports

- **Christina Medina**, Public Relations Director (Center School District), shared architectural renderings of the new Indian Creek Elementary, scheduled to open in August 2021, and expanded Red Bridge Elementary. She announced a Sept. 30 community forum on proposed design of the new Early Childhood Center. The projects are to be funded by bonds approved by voters earlier this year.
- **Anissa Gastin**, Assistant Superintendent (Fort Osage School District), reported the district has received a Real World grant from the Kauffman Foundation to better prepare its students for the real world. The grant will fund efforts for student to graduate high school with market-value assets. Two elementary schools are planting orchards this fall.
- **Yolanda Cargile**, Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District), reported the district is partnering with Sprint on the One Million project to provide free internet access for any student who wants it. The district continues to develop its college-career readiness program, which offers students to have five opportunities outside of school and to graduate with an industry certification. Ruskin High School students will give a presentation on small learning-community experiences at the upcoming Missouri School Boards' Association meeting.
- **Sharon Ahuna**, Extended Learning Coordinator (Kansas City Public Schools), reported there will be a public hearing on the district's tax levy rate tonight. Carver Elementary will hold an immigration workshop on Sept. 26. The KCPS Innovations Office is planning a kick-off of its mentoring program.
- **Kevin Foster**, Executive Director (Genesis School), reported Genesis is partnering with Operation Breakthrough and St. Mark Center to provide school families with free pre-K care. Ten children are currently enrolled in care. Genesis is partnering with Academy for Integrated Arts on shared transportation which has increased the number of buses, reduced student time on busses, and added bus monitors.
- **Vivian Roper**, Superintendent (Lee A. Tolbert Academy), reported this is the seventh year for Tolbert to offer Girls on the Run. The program teaches girls confidence and prepares them for a 5K to be held in November at Swope Park. Tolbert is partnering with Operation Breakthrough, which hosts weekly STEAM Center activities for fifth- and sixth-graders.
- **Bob Bartman**, Program Coordinator (Education Policy Fellowship Program), reported the new program year has begun with a cohort of 23 fellows meeting in Jefferson City last week. This year's cohort includes staff from 13 school districts.

- **Kenny Southwick**, Executive Director (Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City), reported CSDGKC is working with area school district superintendents to create a legislative platform which will be shared publicly. CSDGKC is also working with the Kauffman Foundation on the Real World initiative.

**Rob Givens** reported on the LINC 401(k) Committee's work to engage a fiduciary (Two West) and a new retirement plan provider (Vanguard). The committee recommends the Commission approve and adopt the new Adoption Agreement and Basic Plan Document effective Oct. 1, 2019.

*A motion to approve and adopt the new Adoption Agreement and Basic Plan Document effective Oct. 1, 2019, was passed unanimously.*

LINC HR Director **Trent DeVreugd** reported on the transition process to activate the new retirement accounts with Vanguard.

LINC Caring Communities Director **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported the new school year is off to a smooth start following staff training and work with school building staff over the summer, and staff involvement in back to school events and convocations. LINC afterschool programming this year features expanded offerings from Kansas City Young Audiences and Science City.

LINC Deputy Director-Community Engagement **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported on the new online pre-enrollment process provides convenience to parents enrolling children in the LINC Before & After School program and reduces time spent by LINC staff on data entry.

Schondelmeyer reported on school district efforts to meet the goal of 90% of students attending 90% of school days and to address the causes of absenteeism. Over the summer United Way of Greater Kansas City hosted a summit on absenteeism featuring keynote speaker **Hedy Chang** of AttendanceWorks. Superintendent **Yolanda Cargile** reported on the Hickman Mills initiative to create attendance teams at each school. **Kia Turner** reported on the district's strategy for each building to identify and focus efforts on 10-15 students who are in the middle tier of attendance. **Jim MacDonald** of United Way reported on the partnership to create strategies around chronic absenteeism and the hope to expand the work to other districts.

Principal **Jim Dunn** reported on Star School, the LINC-Mo. Division of Youth Services partnership to provide opportunities for court-involved youth statewide to attend virtual school and complete their secondary education. A video featuring Adam, a Star School student, was shown. Teacher **Linda Davidson** reported on Star School students' efforts to pass the HiSET exam, which is a gateway to college and career. Teacher **Alicia Walker** reported on being part of a dedicated team working to help students gain high-school credits and pass the HiSET. Teacher **Lora Ackerman** reported on working with students to pass the English subsection of the HiSET. Teacher **Elizabeth Hayslett** reported on the rewards of staying focused on students' success.

**Jim Nunnelly** and **Janice Nunnelly** reported on the experience of hosting the radio show "Plain Talk About Diabetes" on KPRT 1590 AM. Jim Nunnelly requested names of volunteers who help with diabetes in order to recognize them for National Diabetes Month in November.

Schondelmeyer reported the Health Forward Foundation is helping to organize a citizen initiative petition on Medicaid expansion in Missouri for the November 2020 ballot. **Mark Flaherty** reported the foundation is coordinating with other groups on the effort which, if successful, would expand health care by hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

**Sharon Cheers** thanked LINC for sharing news of Herb Freeman's death, and recognized **Bridget McCandless**, who is retiring from the Health Forward Foundation.

The meeting was adjourned.



# 2018 Annual Report



# BRITNEY'S STORY

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Abuse and neglect can alter a child's brain to the point that emotions and daily activities are hard to navigate without significant behavioral issues. Thankfully, kids can overcome the effects of abuse and neglect with intentional support like the Behavioral Interventionist program.

"FosterAdopt Connect's Behavioral Interventionist (BI) program has completely changed our family's life! My husband and I have had foster placement of a little guy for almost 6 years. He had escalated so much we were considering placing him in a residential treatment center at 4 years old. He was angry, frustrated, and prone to physically assaulting us. We had exhausted all other community resources and our caseworker did not know what other services



After 18 months in the BI program our son is a different little guy. He is happy, able to handle his negative emotions, and rarely hurts himself or others. I was able to take him shopping with me last week and I began to get teary-eyed in the store because I realized just how far he had come. Previously, I would have had to have found a sitter and then gone grocery shopping without him. This time he got to go, we had fun, and I got to just be a 'normal' mom in a store with her son. It was the best feeling.

I can't speak highly enough of this program. It worked so well that we have since enrolled two more of my children in the program and am looking forward to see what great things will come for them!"

- BRITNEY, foster parent

# UNITE

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Stability is key to healthy child development, especially for those who have suffered abuse and neglect. FosterAdopt Connect works to ensure that children are united with loving biological, relative/kinship, foster, and adoptive parents to begin the healing process through programs such as our Family Connections Center, 30 Days to Family™, and Extreme Recruitment™.

The Family Connections Center provides emergency placement for children entering foster care, intensive services to reunify children with their birth families, and academic support so children can overcome educational delays.

Extreme Recruitment™ unites “hard to place” children with families through intensive search and concurrent planning executed by recruiter-private detective teams, while 30 Days to Family™ unites children with relatives on the front-end of a child’s case, avoiding extended stays with unfamiliar foster families.

A group of diverse children and adults smiling together in a field. The group includes a woman holding a baby, a young girl, a man, a young boy, a woman holding a baby, a young girl, a young boy, and a young girl. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a field of tall grass and flowers.

In 2018,  
**294 children**  
were united with loving families.



# EQUIP

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FosterAdopt Connect equips families to provide loving, committed homes for foster and adopted children through programs like Sammy's Window Clothing Closet and Food Pantry, Licensing, Training, Advocacy, and Behavioral Interventionist because children thrive best in the context of loving families.



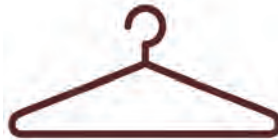
213 children recieved in-home behavioral support thus preventing their placement in residential treatment facilities.



7,190 hours of training equipped parents to offer the best quality of care for children.



540 foster parents recieved advocacy support with navigation a complex child welfare system.



1,408 families recieved clothing and food assistance to lessen the significatn burden of foster care.

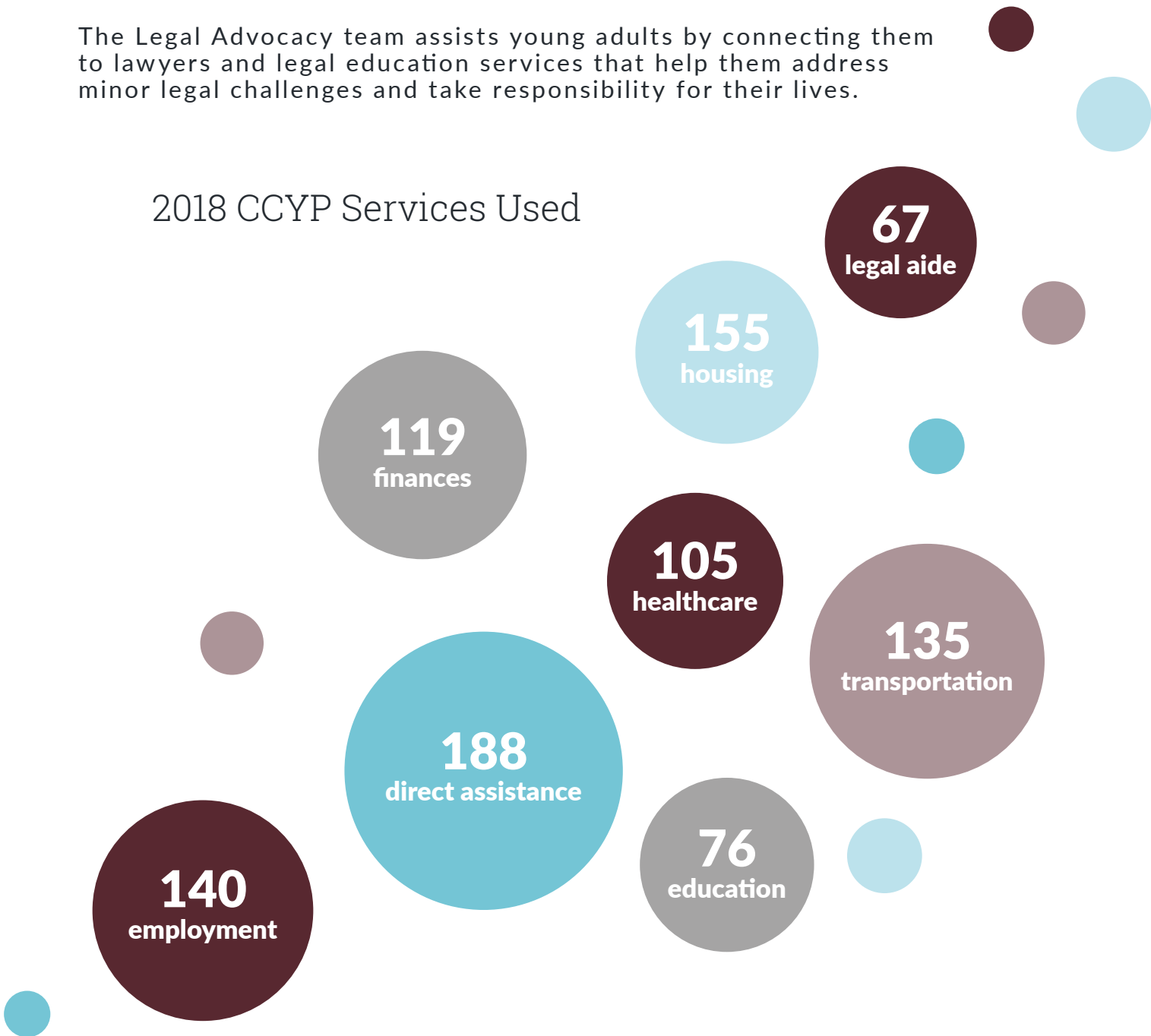
# LAUNCH

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Children need a solid foundation to launch into adulthood with confidence and security. Community Connections Youth Project (CCYP) works directly with young adults impacted by foster care to obtain the resources necessary to successfully thrive in society, such as housing, jobs, health coverage, crisis intervention services, educational assistance, identification and driver's licenses, birth certificates, and more.

The Legal Advocacy team assists young adults by connecting them to lawyers and legal education services that help them address minor legal challenges and take responsibility for their lives.

## 2018 CCYP Services Used



# FINANCES

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Thanks to the generosity of donors and community supporters in 2018, for every dollar spent:

**92¢**

went to  
programs

**3¢**

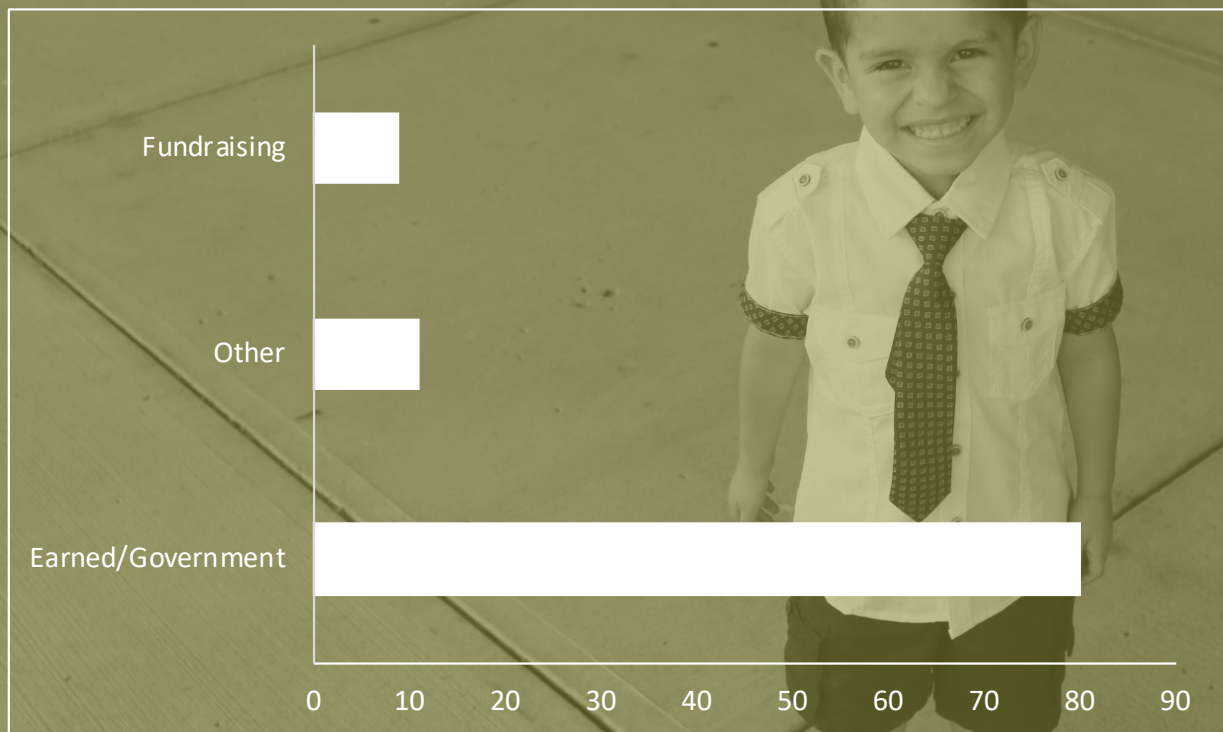
went to  
administration

**5¢**

went to raising  
the next dollar

Fundraising activities serve a dual purpose for FosterAdopt Connect's financial stability. Hosting more than 5 major events brings community awareness and funding to sustain the programs and services we provide. Additional financial resources are generously provided through community, family, and corporate grants.

## 2018 Income



# Drumm Farm's century of helping young people

By Mike Genet

A century after a wealthy local businessman Andrew Drumm established the namesake farm institute with his will, the directors of what is now Drumm Farm Center for Children are taking the year to celebrate his vision being carried out for 100 years – and hopefully another 100 more.

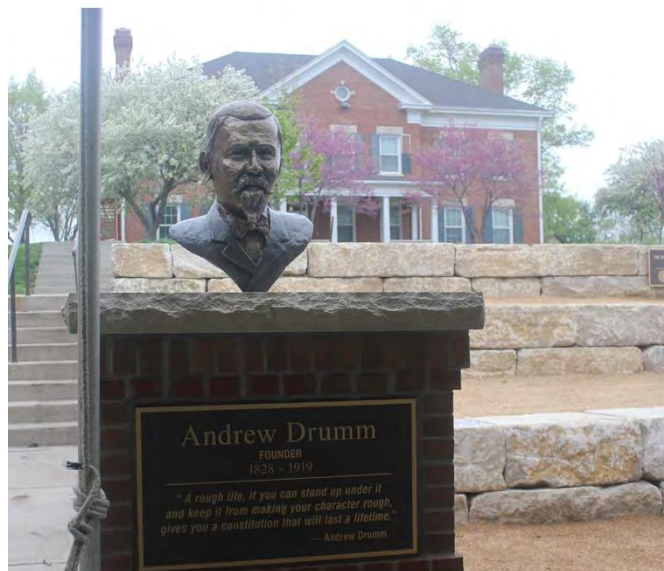
Incorporating the nonprofit's annual fundraising events, Drumm Farm's Century Celebration benefit dinner is Friday at the campus on Lee's Summit Road in Independence.

In October, the Hoedown festival will be what Executive Director Brad Smith calls the big celebration. Of course, there's also the annual alumni reunion in July for men who spent part of their childhoods at Drumm when it served as a home for orphaned or indigent boys. The 2017 reunion was the 70th event.

Friday's benefit dinner at the gymnasium will have about 350 to 400 in attendance, said Lisa Moorhouse, Drumm's donor development director.

"What we've tried to do is have it lead up to 100-year celebration in October," Smith said. "The big hoedown – it has been smaller – we decided to make it the 100-year event. We'll have a lot of people interact with our families and the campus."

Drumm Farm now serves as a foster family residence site and also provides transitional housing – both on and off campus – to some who have aged out of foster care. When Smith took over as executive director in 2011, replacing the retired Rufus Little, Drumm Farm served 18 children. Now it has between 70 and 75 children and those in transition housing, he said, and when a new set of apartments opens soon that number will grow to about 90.



Drumm Farm has made about \$10 million in capital improvements this decade. Six structures have been constructed, including residences and the farmers market building supplied from produce and small livestock raised on the farm. Having a farmers market, as well as banquet hall rentals and hosting annual kindergarten field trips, helps the farm's visibility.

"It's one thing to engage the community, but if you don't give them a reason to come, it's kind of a shallow engagement," Smith said. "Community awareness leads to community support, which allows us to serve more people."

Next to the gymnasium where the benefit dinner takes place is a bronze bust of Andrew Drumm made by local retired attorney Byron Constance. Smith said they wanted the simple monument because there was nothing prior on campus that directly honored a man whom he lauds as a visionary even beyond establishing Drumm Farm Institute.

The plaque on the base reads, "A rough life, if you can stand up under it and keep it from making your character rough, gives you a constitution that will last a lifetime."

Smith recalled that when he first interviewed for the position more as a courtesy, he realized the "upside" and potential the campus had to reach more people.

"My wife and I, we went to the library and checked out every book on Andrew Drumm and Drumm Center that they had," he said. "This guy, he was so ahead of his time."

A few examples that stick out to Smith:

- Having a Catholic priest, Jewish rabbi and Baptist preacher on the original board of trustees – an unusual grouping at the time – along with his wife, who when he died in 1919 wouldn't have even been allowed to vote.
- Presuming that Drumm Farm's land would eventually be annexed by Independence or possibly Kansas City, he instructed that boys housed there be able to attend local schools, to avoid a sense of isolation.
- He predicted (decades ahead) that the government would develop what is now 501(c)3 non-profit status and encouraged Drumm Farm become such an organization.
- Realizing that part of the farm's 370 acres would be desirable in the future for development, he allowed that some land could be developed as a means of supporting operations. Drumm Farm Golf Club leases a large portion of what had been farmland, in addition to the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Between the golf course lease and mineral rights retained from Drumm's lands in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, that accounts for 10 to 15 percent of the group's income.

Guiding Drumm Farm with the same vision as its namesake, Smith said, is an admirable challenge.

"The hardest job I have," he said, "is to live up to what he did."

# Major step for Drumm Farm’s housing program for young adults

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By **Mike Genet**

Posted Aug 31, 2019 at 4:09 AM

In the midst of its centennial year, Drumm Farm Center for Children celebrated a notable expansion Thursday, as well as another one planned for the near future.

Drumm Farm unveiled its new Duvall Campus in southeast Independence, a nine-unit apartment complex near Independence Commons that adds to its COMPASS program for transitional housing.

Brad Smith, Drumm Farm’s executive director, also revealed during the ribbon-cutting that Tom and Carman Duvall, the owners of TruckMovers who purchased and donated the land for the apartments and helped fund construction, have recently committed to financing a campus expansion for the next few years.



“It’s big, huge,” Smith said of the campus, even without the future plans. “To go from 2012 when we started our COMPASS program, we had for apartments on campus and added two, then we added the five on Chrysler and now nine.”

When the Duvalls' next addition is complete, Drumm Farm could have 14 more apartments.

"Stunning amount of growth," Smith said. "They committed to do that, and we're hoping to start in 2020. They committed to it (Wednesday)."

The COMPASS program offers housing and a support network to help young adults age 17-22, some of who have aged out of the foster care system, with life skills, instruction, development and some supervision to help them start life on their own, including finding a job and car and starting savings.

Smith has called the COMPASS program the "polishing center" to Drumm Farm's main campus being the "triage center" for children in need. The house on Chrysler Avenue near the Community of Christ Auditorium opened last year.

Smith and associate director John Tramel both said the niche they serve, unfortunately, is growing.

"It's a population that's exploding in the Kansas City metro area, and around the country," Smith said. "There's very little social services focused on them."

"Some people have not been part of any system, but they're still homeless," Tramel said. "They're not with their families; they're not connected to a formal system that would identify them."

"We'll have more people in need of this than we can ever support."

For many young people, he said, having a stable roof over their head is the pivotal difference between a more successful life or continuing to struggle. The new campus includes another apartment for a residential assistant.

"We make sure everything's smooth, to be a support for them," Tramel said. "We believe these young people deserve to be safe, comfortable."

Drumm Farm worked with Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity to make sure each 560-square foot apartment is live-in-ready with some furniture, bedding, kitchen supplies and personal items. Each unit will have a couch, bed, two bar stools, coffee table, lamps and other kitchen and bath needs.

Besides the Duvalls (Carman is on the Drumm board of directors), funding came from tax credits purchased by individuals, and a small loan and with help with a grant Mutual of Omaha Bank. To continue help with operations, Drumm Farm has partnered with the Independence Housing Authority for project-based vouchers.

Smith didn't specify how much the Duvalls' future commitment is worth, but suffice to say, "It's life-changing for some people and organization-changing for us."

"I'm blessed and humbled by it."

# Rosemary Smith Lowe and Lee Bohannon honored for social activism

By Joe Robertson, LINC writer  
October 22, 2019

Founding LINC Commissioner Rosemary Smith Lowe and LINC Community Organizer Lee Bohannon were recognized by the non-profit organization Communities Creating Opportunity with their Social Movement Activist & Advocate Award for 2019. The awards were presented at CCO's Art of Movement annual event on October 10, 2019 at the Gem Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri.

The award is presented to individuals who have fought for social, racial, and economic equity in Kansas City. Individuals who have been credible and compelling voices for justice on behalf of the unheard, and whose efforts have made a difference in the lives of many people in the metropolitan community.

Founded 1977 in the KCMO Blue Hills Neighborhood, CCO's initial purpose was to address racial "redlining" and "blockbusting." These practices excluded and exploited the black community of Kansas City. Since then, our focus has remained on neighborhood organizing, following our roots in social justice advocacy.

## **Rosemary Smith Lowe, LINC Founding Commissioner**

Rosemary Lowe is a tireless community and neighborhood activist. Known for speaking her mind, "Mother Lowe," as she is affectionately called, is well respected by law enforcement, dignitaries, politicians, and the community at large.

Rosemary Lowe worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help found the local political group Freedom Incorporated in 1961, and went on to become the first African-American Committeewoman in Kansas City, Missouri. She has served in various capacities in the community, including president of the Santa Fe Neighborhood Association, and a member of the board of directors of the KC Neighborhood Alliance, Missouri Board of Cosmetology, and the Local Investment Commission.

Her work has led to outcomes one could only describe as remarkable, such as drug dealers voluntarily cutting weeds and picking up trash in their communities. Overall, she has helped enable police officers and neighborhood residents in developing safe, economically sound, viable places to live.

Lowe has also been a volunteer throughout Kansas City, for organizations such as the American Red Cross at Menorah Hospital and the VA Hospital.

A native of Arkansas, she has numerous awards from various local organizations, which stands as a testimony to her



Rosemary Smith Lowe



commitment to Kansas City. As LINC Commissioner, she was awarded the Rev. Dr. Nelson “Fuzzy” Thompson Legacy Award during the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Kansas City Chapter 2019 MLK Day Community Mass Celebration. Lowe was honored, via official resolution, by the city council of Kansas City in 2016. She received the Bruce R. Watkins Foundation Pioneer Award in July 2014, the Harry S Truman Award in 2004 from the Jackson County Democratic Committee, and even has a street named in her honor!

At an age when most people want to sit and talk about the good ol’ days, Lowe’s indefatigable spirit makes her talk about the future -- and when she talks, people listen.

### **Lee Bohannon, LINC Community Organizer**

In April of 1968, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was slain by an assassin’s bullet, sparking riots throughout the United States, including in Kansas City. From this upheaval, the Social Action Committee of Twenty (S.A.C.-20) was born. The distinguished Lee Bohannon is one of the surviving leaders.

The goal of the organization was to teach leadership skills to young African-Americans, who would lead positive efforts for social change going forward. Lee Bohannon, working under the visionary Bernard Powell and alongside eighteen others, helped bring various Kansas City groups together to take action on multiple fronts.

Thanks to Bohannon and his comrades, many initiatives were started. The first was the creation of a nine-point plan for trash clean up and beautification in neighborhoods affected by the riots. S.A.C.-20 made large trash barrels available, painted in their official colors of black and gold, throughout Kansas City. It would ultimately be the springboard for the city’s free trash bag distribution program.



Lee Bohannon, LINC Community Organizer

With various national anti-poverty programs authorized by President Lyndon Johnson soon under way, Bohannon and the S.A.C. leadership took advantage of the Office of Economic Opportunity, “Model Cities,” and more to fight for economic justice in Kansas City. They began offering free breakfast to inner-city children, who might otherwise go to school hungry. This inspired similar federal and local efforts, like that of Kansas City’s Black Panthers.

Over time, S.A.C.-20 gained the attention of national civil rights leadership, and several higher profiles emerged to support the committee. Dick Gregory became its national spokesperson; Bernard Powell marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma; the Congress of Racial Equality came to Kansas City to establish a chapter. Unfortunately, Powell was assassinated in 1979, and the F.B.I. confiscated all of S.A.C.-20’s records. The group was ultimately disbanded. With what artifacts he has salvaged, Lee Bohannon has been able, over the years, to create an archive to document as much of the organization’s rich history as possible.

Other honorees were: Mamie Hughes, Rev. Wallace Hartsfield, and Rev. Sam Mann.

# 'Lights On Afterschool' celebrates LINC's daily mission: Empowering children, families, communities

By Joe Robertson, LINC writer  
October 17, 2019

Just the setup itself was one heckuva roundup.

More than 180 children in LINC's Caring Communities after-school program at Grandview's Meadowmere Elementary queued up in appointed lines in the cafeteria like freshly fueled rail cars.

To get here, they'd deposited their backpacks, marched through bathrooms and hand-washing stations, passed through the food line and had dinner — ready now for their blue-shirted LINC "engineers" to lead them to their eagerly anticipated destinations.

Right on schedule at 4:30 p.m. as if a steam whistle had blasted them into motion.

Today their separate lines were dispatching to Boy Scouts, fitness and dance, reading classes and art. Other days, at Meadowmere and at 43 other LINC sites across five Missouri school districts, their choices might include tennis lessons, STEM classes, Girl Scouts, drill teams, e-sports and chess.

That's more than 7,600 children from the Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Center, North Kansas City and Grandview school districts, pulling this off every full school day.

The list of partners — like Kansas City Young Audiences, Urban TEC, Local Legends Gaming, and Nash Jem Elite All-Stars — continues to grow.

And there's an upshot for families, as one mother would learn when she approached Meadowmere's after-school operation to ask about joining its new Girl Scout troop.

All of LINC's programming, including the scout troop, as well as LINC's reliable safe-keeping of children, would be opened to her family if she simply enrolled her daughter, LINC site coordinator Adrian Wilson told her.

*"But how much does it cost?" she asked.*

Said Wilson: *"It's free."*

## **Fun, cool, strong . . . and safe**

For 25 years LINC has been leveraging state and federal dollars to build Caring Communities sites with its partner school districts that strengthen children and empower families.



8-year-old Indian Creek Elementary students Tasia Cannon and Zoe Ray in the Center School District tell why they love their LINC after-school program.



Children work on a collage based on South Africa's flag with LINC staffer Zion Triplett at Grandview's Meadowmere Elementary School.

Families are flocking to before- and after-school programs, said Meadowmere Principal Stephen Fielder, “because they need it.”

The pressures on families are growing, said Center School District Indian Creek Elementary Principal Angela Price.

“Family structure and job requirements have changed,” she said.

Many families move from apartment to apartment and job to job, said Pitcher Elementary Principal Karol Howard in Kansas City Public Schools.

Parents who may have only fleeting chances to connect to their child’s school by day get new opportunities when after-school programs bring them in, Howard said.

“LINC provides stability,” she said. “It is an excellent liaison. It is a safe place.”

“A point of pride for me,” said Hickman Mills School District Superintendent Yolanda Cargile, “is knowing that the LINC team will always focus on creating the best learning spaces for our children.”

This month, LINC school sites are celebrating the role of Caring Communities in their neighborhoods with their annual Lights On Afterschool festivals. Children will be showing off their work as the schools throw unique parties.

Meadowmere is having an ethnic festival, Wilson said, celebrating the cultural diversity of its families. And this year many families are helping supply special foods and adding their own cultural flare to the music and dancing.

“The Lights On program is so valuable,” Fielder, the Meadowmere principal, said. “It helps us get families used to having fun, cool, strong activities they can be a part of.”

### **The power of ‘free’**

The benefits reach even farther.

LINC’s organization expands the reach of the state’s dollars, bringing families and children into after-school programs at a savings of more than \$3.7 million from what it would cost the state if it distributed subsidies to qualifying low-income families on its own.

The average family, nationwide, pays some \$2,400 a year on before- and after-school care, according to the After-school Alliance’s report of national data. Even low-income families on average pay \$1,700 a year.

By delivering its program free to its partner schools, LINC brings more families into after-school programs, strengthening the gains that schools — and their communities — enjoy nationwide.

Research shows that high-quality after-school programs can lead to increased attendance, improved behavior and



The dance team practices at Pitcher Elementary School in Kansas City.



LINC staff member Kennedy Glover shares reading time with Meadowmere second grader Taniya Bethany.

improved grades, reports the Afterschool Alliance.

After-school programs help parents keep jobs and help shield children from drugs and alcohol and make them less likely to become teen parents or be characterized as obese.

Considering that businesses lose up to \$300 billion a year in lost productivity in parents' missed work days, and that children in after-school programs have shown to be more likely to stay in school, graduate, earn more and stay out of the penal system, every dollar invested in after-school programs saves up to \$9 in long-range benefits.

### **The magic inside**

Tasia Cannon and Zoe Ray — both 8 years old — get the picture.

Many of the “fun things” at the new LINC after-school program and Indian Creek Elementary in the Center School District are working their brains, Tasia knows.

She sends her hands in orbit around her head, knowing the magic inside, saying that the homework help and math work “is helping us grow our minds like a plant, and grow inside.”

“LINC,” Zoe says, “is my inspiration.”

Elijah McKinzie, 8, loves the program at Meadowmere, he said, knowing as well that he'd otherwise be whiling away the afternoon in his mother's hair salon.

“He'd be sitting with me,” his mother, Latricia Carter, said.

It's much better, she said, for Elijah to be here, “engaged with other children, having fun and doing activities.”

Many parents work long hours, like Ciarra King and her husband, whose 7-year-old daughter MaKenzie finished another day at Meadowmere.

“I know where she is after school and in the morning,” King said. “LINC reinforces the things that I teach her at home as to playing and sharing and being a responsible kid.”

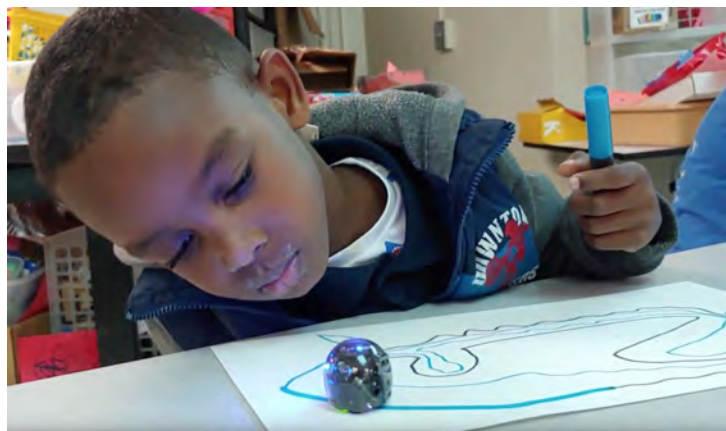
Parenting is hard enough as it is without having to worry about those out-of-school hours, Cameron Green said as he picked up 10-year-old Jayden.

“I can trust the LINC staff to take care of our son,” he said.

### **The light at the end of the day**

Craig Merkerson, the principal of Millennium at Santa Fe Elementary School in Hickman Mills, appreciates good collaboration.

He likes it that LINC's site coordinator at Millennium, Jene Counts, often arrives ahead of the after-school time and circulates among the classroom teachers, picking up on things LINC's staff can carry on.



Indian Creek kindergartner Roy “RJ” Gonzalez Jr. watches a color-sensitive “Ozobot” light up as it traces his drawing in a visiting STEM program by Urban TEC.



Braydon Allen, right, a second grader at Millennium at Santa Fe Elementary in Hickman Mills, watches for the next move by fifth-grader Peyton Thomas in a chess exercise called Rooks vs. Pawns.

LINC can be that extra connection, blending lessons and themes, and bringing more parents into the school.

“We want LINC definitely to be an extension of our school day,” he said.

Counts, like many of LINC’s site coordinators, comes from a family of educators.

The love of “engaging with families and students . . . is ingrained in me,” Counts said.

Marissa Cage is aiming for the same neighborhood and school staff connections as she leads LINC’s newest site, opened this school year at Indian Creek Elementary School in the Center School District.

Cage and her staff are teaming up with Indian Creek’s principal, teachers, parents and children, “working alongside them to build community programming.”

Trusting partnerships are hard-earned, said Andrew Smith, LINC’s site coordinator at Pitcher Elementary School.

It means assuring the 120 children in his program are safe, he said.

“That’s why we fill out the incident reports. That’s why we have the walkie-talkies,” he said. “At the end of the day we want to be accountable. LINC staff is going to be consistent.”

It means valuing relationships and giving children time with line staff like Pitcher’s Kimberly Lee, who says she urges students to write “silly stories” for her.

“I want them to use their imagination,” Lee said. “I want to make it fun. I want them to open doors they thought they’d never open up.”

Trust means being mindful of that child who’s there moment to moment to moment.

“Every interaction influences kids,” said LINC staff member Avaa Lofton at Meadowmere. “At LINC we pay attention to that. I’ve learned patience. I’ve learned about *listening*.”

That’s how LINC’s young team grows, said Bennie Avery. She is a retired LINC site coordinator who has continued on with LINC, working on the line staff at Meadowmere.

“LINC’s training prepares the young staff for life,” Avery said. “We become a family. It’s not a job. It becomes a mission.”

As 6 p.m. comes around, parents walk in the doors in the slanting rays of the late day’s sun, to find Wilson there with his Meadowmere staff, sending their children back to them.

You feel lucky, Wilson said. You feel blessed.

“That is the joy that fills me every day,” he said. “To be able to give back what was given to me.”



Meadowmere first-grader Aniya Carter shares a hug with LINC’s Avaa Lofton

## How One Intake Form Saved LINC 85 Days' Worth of Time

*When it comes to thinking about data in innovative ways, Social Solutions' customer Local Investment Commission (LINC) has long been a nonprofit trailblazer. Since the organization's founding in 1992, LINC has been pushing the boundaries of public-private collaboration in the name of supporting families across the Kansas City community. And, by leveraging data and technology to increase efficiency and meet the community's needs around after-school care, LINC continues to increase its impact by improving the lives of Kansas City families.*

"My last name has 13 letters, so you can imagine how many different ways I've seen it spelled over the years," says Brent Schondelmeyer, the Deputy Director of Community Engagement at Local Investment Commission (LINC). "Then, when you add in the issue of handwriting, my own name is an example of how challenging it can be to ensure data integrity across sets of paper-based forms and records."

Brent's is just one name. Now, imagine needing to crunch through paper enrollment forms for more than 6,000 students – with 6,000 handwritten names – within six weeks. That's exactly what LINC needed to work through each summer to get local children and families enrolled in after-school programs for the upcoming school year. If we consider a 3-page enrollment form for 6,000 students, that's 18,000 pieces of paper to collect and process over the course of a few weeks – a daunting task for LINC and time-strapped families alike.

Or, it was, until Brent and his colleagues implemented one key process improvement in 2019.

### ***From 18,000 Sheets of Paper to One Online Form***

For the 2019-2020 after-school program enrollment period, LINC introduced an online form to allow parents and caregivers across the area school districts to pre-enroll their child or children in after school programs ahead of the late-summer dash. LINC's web-based form asks parents to submit key information related to the child, family, emergency contacts and health considerations, along with two signatures.

When LINC announced the availability of the after-school program pre-enrollment intake form – easily accessed via a mobile device or PC and available in both English and Spanish – the response from parents left Brent in disbelief.

### ***Delivering What Parents Wanted***

"I was stunned," he says. "We sent an email around in July, when we typically don't have as ready access to parents, and had a 49% open rate, which is very high. As soon as we sent that first email, people were acting on it immediately. Then, we sent a follow-up in early August, and we saw a 56% open rate. The immediate response to the pre-enrollment intake form was extraordinary."

The instantaneous uptake was proof that Brent and LINC had implemented a major improvement in the enrollment process that parents welcomed. “To me the success of the new pre-enrollment form showed that there was pent-up demand for an online option,” Brent explains.

What LINC’s web-based after-school program pre-enrollment form has achieved for parents and adults is two-fold: greater convenience of enrolling children in programs and greater peace of mind knowing that children are set up for the school year ahead of time.

When LINC introduced its new intake form option for after-school program enrollment, parent response was both immediate and delighted. One parent shared this comment directly with LINC:

*“Hello, I have not encountered any issues with the online enrollment process. I just want to say thank you soooooo much for automating this process!!! It is much more effective and efficient! Paper and time saving! I look forward to this next year!”*

As Brent puts it, “We were able to give parents confidence that their children’s after-school arrangements were in place for the school year. We wanted to make this experience better for families, and the online intake form powered by Social Solutions’ Apricot enabled us to do that.”

### ***Reclaiming 17 Weeks’ Worth of Staff Time***

The online form results were equally impactful for LINC internally.

In previous years, the after-school program enrollment process would be a tedious 6-week process for LINC staff, taking thousands of handwritten paper forms and entering the data into the organization’s Apricot data management system, powered by Social Solutions.

By having parents and caregivers enter their children’s enrollment information directly into LINC’s Apricot system through the electronic form, this eliminated the need for staff to run through manual data entry. As a result, LINC staff were able to save the equivalent of 85 days’ or 17 weeks’ worth of time. And this meant that staff could focus more on meeting families while organizing and optimizing programs for the upcoming year.

“As our trusted technology partner, Social Solutions has the capacity and desire to help us meet the needs of our community in new ways,” says Brent. “Everything we do in human services should be shaped by community needs – but you need data to be able to get to, understand and respond to those needs. At LINC, we continually look at ways to stretch our Apricot system to help us increase efficiency internally, enhance services and programs externally, and optimize the way we collect and use data to drive impact.”

*Thank you to Brent Schondelmeyer and the team at LINC for sharing this success story where Social Solutions’ Apricot data management system played a role in delivering key outcomes.*

**Ready to create efficiencies and deliver impact with a new approach to data collection? Contact the Social Solutions team today to chat about how our easy-to-use software can help you get ahead of the data curve for your clients and staff:**

**[demonstratingoutcomes@socialsolutions.com](mailto:demonstratingoutcomes@socialsolutions.com).**

# FAST graduation day celebrates new wisdom, shared anxieties, mutual joys — and friendship

By Joe Robertson, LINC writer  
October 24, 2019

You can ask the seven graduating families why they loved their eight weeks together in LINC's Families and Schools Together (FAST) program with the Fort Osage School District.

And they will extol how they learned to listen to each other — parent to child, husband to wife. How they enjoyed meal times, play times and the parent circle times. How they'll cherish the moments of new wisdom, shared anxieties and mutual joys.

"We've become like a family," Lizeth Plemons said, scissoring the fingers of her two hands together as she and husband Jared spoke to the rest of the parent circle on their graduation night, at Blue Hills Elementary School, Oct. 22.

You can ask. Or just sit in and watch scenes unfold:

## TAKE ONE:

Jokes roll out easily. Laughter flows from the wellspring of parents who are unabashedly *relaxed*.

"Oh, I don't go in *my* neighborhood," one parent clarifies, when Circle time's open conversation between parents, being late October, inevitably turns to trick-or-treating strategy. "We go to the *rich* neighborhoods."

Yes, agrees another laughing parent, adding that you should shuffle the treats into a separate bag and approach each new house with a mostly empty candy sack. Get that extra sympathy dose of candy.

"Ah, poor kid," she says, imagining the reaction of a homeowner passing out the candy. And then the trick-or-treating parent's plausible explanation: "We got a late start . . ."

"You guys did a great job coming together," FAST team member and parent educator Julia Hupp tells the circle. She sees their comfort and friendship and how they have made the most of FAST's opportunities, and it is rejuvenating.

"I leave here blessed," Hupp says.

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If the FAST program works, said Rick Jackson, the FAST national trainer supervisor, the bonding strength it builds between the families and with their schools will be realized by their children.

"The kid will do better in school," said Jackson, who was on hand to see the last day and the graduation ceremony. "The family will be more engaged in their community. Their kids will be more engaged in school. They will enjoy coming to school. They will feel more comfortable in the building."

The parents filled out initial surveys and they will fill out post-surveys, Jackson said. They will also survey teachers and school officials to evaluate progress.



Seven graduating families pose for a group picture as LINC's eight-week Families and Schools Together (FAST) program with the Fort Osage School District came to a close Oct. 22.



The Fort Osage FAST program was opened to all five elementary schools with LINC programs — Blue Hills, Buckner, Cler-Mont, Elm Grove and Indian Trails — giving families across the community a chance to take part.

“These guys have grown a lot,” LINC site coordinator Steve McClellan said of the graduating families. “They’ve gotten an opportunity to not only build their relationships with their children, but with the other parents and team members.”

“Their children are special to us, and they are too,” he said. “We are really looking forward to supporting them with this graduation.”

### TAKE TWO:

It was probably a mistake to be asking FAST program parent Jamie Liddell to talk about what she experienced over the past eight weeks while she and her daughter were in the middle of “Special Play” time.

Because 6-year-old Sasha, like all the other children in this recurring part of the program, is “the boss” right now, deciding what she and her mom will do with a box of arts and craft supplies.

While this time for empowering her child’s unique creativity was important, Liddell also wanted to talk about the benefits of FAST’s “Circle” time with other parents away from the kids, and that time the program sets aside for husbands and wives to get some alone-time together.

This was not “alone” time, as became obvious.

LIDDELL (answering a visitor’s question): I like the one-on-one time with my husband, because we never get to talk—

SASHA: (cutting mom off) What is one-on-one?

LIDDELL: It’s where me and your dad—

SASHA: Oh yeah! I know.

LIDDELL: —talk and—

SASHA: Nobody can start to interrupt.

LIDDELL: —no interrupt. Yes.

Liddell smiles, taking in her daughter’s sing-songy performance in the middle of her craft project.

LIDDELL: We get to see her personality on full blast—

SASHA (head wagging, playing with pipe cleaners): *We talk, talk . . . talk-talk-talk.*



Children return from their play time.



Parents and FAST team members share Circle time.



Sasha and Jamie Liddell

LIDDELL: —especially in Special Play.

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The big-hearted fun stays with you, said Tia Petty, with her husband Rusty and their daughters, Lone, 8, and Sai, 9. Each FAST gathering begins with boisterous introductions, with big round-house waves and the unison greetings in return — *“Helloooo, Petty Family!”*

“Now I want to greet everyone that way,” Petty said.

The games and the lessons behind them also carry on, said parent Courtney Powell with her sons, Caleb, 10, and Micah, 8.

Micah found many of the games “really fun,” like acting out words on flash cards “like charades.”

What Powell knows is that the game opens the door for a child to act out feelings, and for a parent to ask about feelings in ways that get down to their child’s well-being.

The parents learn strategies, Powell said, “how to help the kids . . . what we should do as far as teaching them things in life.”

And they’ll take new friendships with them, said Taylor Wood, with her husband, Brandon, and 5-year-old Caiden and 1-year-old Ellie.

“It’s really nice to get to meet new people,” she said. “We get to discuss things about our kids that we don’t usually get to discuss with other parents of the same age.”

### TAKE THREE:

The ceremonial last night could have ended with pomp and circumstance of the promenade and certificates, the eating of the cake and the party that went with it.

But every previous session had ended with “Rain” — a collective piece of performance art where everyone in a large circle begins a wave of migrating sound that gets sent around the circle person-to-person.

Shuffling hands together like wind. Clicking fingers for the first patter of rain. Slapping thighs for hard rain and then stomping with thunder. And finally unwinding it back, sound by sound, to the soft wind.

They had to make it rain one last time.

The joy in their faces, the way the families lingered at the end — all showed that Fort Osage sessions hit their mark, said Jackson the FAST national trainer supervisor..

“You see the smiles on the faces,” he told the FAST team members at the end of the night. “You see families still not wanting to leave . . . that’s because you got it going out here in Fort Osage.”



Rusty Petty and his 8-year-old daughter, Lone, enjoy Special Play.





# LINC Commission Meeting 2020 Schedule

The Local Investment Commission (LINC) meets monthly to inform board members, community partners, and the public on current LINC initiatives as well as topics of community interest such as education, health, child care, and other family and neighborhood supports. The public is invited.

## **2020 LINC Meeting Schedule**

- January 27 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- February 24 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- March 23 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- April 13 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- May 18 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- June 15 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- July 20 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- August – no meeting
- September 21 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- October 19 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- November 16 (Monday), 4-6 p.m.
- December – no meeting

Meetings are held at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, 4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, Mo.

Meeting location, dates and times are subject to facility availability, weather, etc., and may be changed with notice given.

Enter your email at [www.kclinc.org/commission](http://www.kclinc.org/commission) to receive meeting updates, agendas, and meeting booklets.

# LINC Chess

2019-20 TOURNAMENT SEASON

# Saturday, Dec. 14

## William Chrisman High School

1223 N Noland Rd, Independence, MO 64050



Pre-register at [kclinc.org/chess](http://kclinc.org/chess) by Wednesday, noon, prior to each tournament. Any player who is not pre-registered and not checked in by 9 a.m. will not be able to play in the first round! **Participants must play for the school they attend.**

### Schedule:

Check in from 8 - 9:00 a.m.

First round begins at 9:30 a.m.

Last round ends by 4:30 p.m.

Players who pre-register and are on time will participate in all five rounds.

### Divisions:

K-2, K-5, K-8, and K-12

All Kansas City area K-12 players are welcome to participate. All players must know how the pieces move and how to make a checkmate.

### More information:

Ken Lingelbach, LINC Chess Coordinator  
[klingelbach@kclinc.org](mailto:klingelbach@kclinc.org), (816) 650-7525

### Lunch:

A **FREE** lunch will be provided to players and families.

