



# LINC<sup>SM</sup>

Stronger Families Together

## 2025 Impact Report



# A letter from our president



**“Together, we helped children grow and thrive, rallied families, and unified neighborhoods.”**

Dear Kansas City Community,

2025 was a powerful year for our Caring Communities. We celebrated our 33rd anniversary and took inspiration from the testimonies that families and partners shared with us.

In celebrating the work of LINC, we celebrated you.

I hope you will take a moment to consider the faces of some of our neighbors seen in the pages that follow—friends we made along the way in our community-driven mission of building stronger families together.

Some came in need of emergency assistance. Some sought help with employment. Some needed their lights back on. Some had hungry children to feed. Some volunteered in our classrooms or on our food lines. Some joined our empowering community site councils.

Together, we helped children grow and thrive, rallied families, and unified neighborhoods. We gave each other courage and were heartened by each and everyone’s strengths.

As we look back at the impact of LINC’s Caring Communities, we offer appreciation for the many partners who share this path with us. With deep gratitude, we look forward to meeting new challenges in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

**Janet Miles-Bartee, President & CEO**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet L. Miles-Bartee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



# Mayor of Kansas City, Mo.



Dear Friends and Partners,

It is my honor to extend my sincere appreciation to LINC for its unwavering commitment to strengthening neighborhoods and empowering families across Kansas City.

Each year, the LINC Annual Community Impact Report tells a powerful story—one of collaboration, innovation, and measurable progress. Through its deep-rooted partnerships with schools, families, community organizations, and local leaders, LINC continues to demonstrate what is possible when we work together to ensure every child and every neighborhood has the opportunity to thrive.

From supporting students' academic success and social-emotional well-being to engaging families as partners in education, LINC plays a vital role in building stronger, safer, and more connected communities. The organization's dedication to neighborhood-based solutions reflects the very spirit of Kansas City—resilient, compassionate, and forward-thinking.

The impact highlighted in this report is not just reflected in numbers, but in lives changed, opportunities expanded, and futures strengthened. Kansas City is a better place because of LINC's leadership and the many educators, community partners, volunteers, and families who make this work possible every day.

As Mayor, I am proud to support initiatives that align with our shared vision of equitable opportunity, community safety, and long-term prosperity. LINC's work advances these goals in meaningful and lasting ways, and I look forward to continued partnership in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Q. Lucas', written in a cursive style.

Quinton D. Lucas

**“I am proud to support initiatives that align with our shared vision of equitable opportunity, community safety, and long-term prosperity.”**

# U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II

Greetings,

As you celebrate the achievements for LINC in 2025, I am inspired by its impact on our community. It is my pleasure to contribute to this annual report, which highlights not just what you have accomplished but also the incredible difference LINC makes in the lives of children and families every single day.

LINC shines brightly in the Kansas City region, courageously tackling the complex needs of families and children facing adversity. LINC's commitment to local initiatives and powerful partnerships creates boundless opportunities for our youth to soar. With educational programs, health services, and comprehensive family support initiatives, LINC equips families with the tools to overcome challenges and envision extraordinary futures.

As your Member of Congress, I am committed to championing initiatives that prioritize the wellbeing of our children and families. LINC embodies this spirit through impactful programs and igniting a collective spirit of service within the Kansas City region. Together, we can ensure that every child has access to the opportunities they deserve and the support to realize their dreams.

In closing, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partners who tirelessly advance LINC's mission. Your unwavering commitment showcases our shared belief that investing in our communities is an investment in our collective future. Let us continue this essential journey together strengthening our bonds and empowering families to fulfill their highest potential.

Warmest regards,



**Emanuel Cleaver, II**  
Member of Congress



**“LINC equips families with the tools to overcome challenges and envision extraordinary futures.”**

# From our school superintendents

Greetings,

As public school leaders, we bear great responsibility with our dedicated staffs to give the children under our charge everything they need to succeed. Our best efforts are strengthened by critical community partnerships.

**Notably, we rely on LINC. Let us tell you why.**

The valuable before and after school programming LINC provides is just the beginning of the far-reaching impact of LINC's partnership with schools. LINC supports the work of our teachers, counselors and staffs through its deep connections in our communities.

We see our families getting emergency services, rent and utility assistance, access to legal aid, employment, training, as well as the comfort that comes from just knowing that their LINC site coordinator is there as a trusted friend, ready to help, whatever the need.

**LINC keeps families in their homes, parents at their jobs and children safe in classrooms.**

This is the work of community schools. This is how children and families thrive. And we are honored to have LINC at our side as we build the future together.

Sincerely, your superintendents,



Handwritten signature of Dennis L. Carpenter in black ink.

Dennis L. Carpenter  
Hickman Mills



Handwritten signature of Jennifer Collier in black ink.

Jennifer Collier  
Kansas City



Handwritten signature of Rochel L. Daniels in black ink.

Rochel L. Daniels  
North Kansas City



Handwritten signature of Kevin Foster in black ink.

Kevin Foster  
Genesis School



Handwritten signature of Troy S. Hogg in black ink.

Troy S. Hogg  
Center



Handwritten signature of Carnest Mitchell in black ink.

Carnest Mitchell  
Lee A. Tolbert



Handwritten signature of Kenny Rodriquez in black ink.

Kenny Rodriquez  
Grandview



Handwritten signature of Jason Snodgrass in black ink.

Jason Snodgrass  
Fort Osage

# LINC is a trusted partner of public funding

As a trusted intermediary for the State of Missouri, LINC serves as a vital bridge between public investment and community impact. By stewarding state funds with strong fiscal oversight and deep local partnerships, LINC ensures that resources reach children, youth, and families efficiently, equitably, and with full accountability.

Our role goes beyond administering funding; we strategically align state investments with school and neighborhood priorities, coordinate service providers, and strengthen local infrastructure to maximize results. In doing so, we attract additional in-kind and monetary contributions from philanthropic partners, community organizations, volunteers, and local stakeholders. Each public dollar entrusted to LINC is intentionally leveraged to generate expanded services, shared ownership, and measurable outcomes.

Through this multiplier effect, state investment is amplified, fueling broader collaboration and sustainable improvements in human services across the communities we serve.





**Using the Caring Communities model, LINC works with families to tackle the complexity of the social safety net.**

# Who we are

## 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 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 Core Results

*LINC's work is organized around achieving results in these nine core areas:*

- Adults working
- Children and youth succeeding in school
- Healthy children and families
- Young children ready to enter school
- Children safe in their families and families safe in their communities
- Youth prepared for productive adulthood
- Elders and people with disabilities valued and living as they choose
- Well-informed citizens making decisions about their communities
- Strong, thriving neighborhoods



# What we do

## ■ Caring Communities

LINC's 55 Caring Communities sites anchored in schools and the Morning Star and Palestine community centers help thousands of families thrive every day. LINC's free, quality before and after school programming in six school districts helps children grow while parents are able to go to work. Families have access to all the many services LINC provides. And community site councils at each site empower local voices in shaping the future of their neighborhoods.

## ■ Workforce Development

LINC helps hundreds of parents every year move off state aid and into employment. Our case managers in the Missouri Work Assistance program helped 400 participants gain job skills and overcome barriers like transportation to attain jobs or get schooling to start new careers. Clients starting new jobs earned an average of more than \$17 an hour.

## ■ Senior Services

LINC's Caring Communities at Palestine Senior Citizens Activity Center is a generator of good health, good food, fellowship, activities, games, workshops, and community empowerment for hundreds of seniors. Since LINC's management of Palestine began in August 2024, enrollment has grown from 90 to more than 475 as LINC has brought in robust programming partners.

## ■ Foster Youth Transitions

LINC's youth transitions team helps older youth aging out of the state foster care system gain essential skills, life coaching, financial support, leadership skills, love, and confidence to live as independent adults. In 2025, our case managers helped 693 youth with more than 3,500 services and more than \$390,000 in support.

## ■ Athletics

LINC wants all children to be able to enjoy the opportunities and benefits of sports regardless of family income. LINC provides free coaching, uniforms, equipment and league participation while teaching children a variety of sports, including basketball, flag football, soccer, pickleball, boxing, golf, baseball, softball, bicycle safety, and mindful movement.





## ■ Early Childhood Support

LINC's Program Support Network helps early education centers across multiple counties provide higher quality care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In 2025, LINC's team supported 62 centers impacting 482 children with on-site coaching, training seminars, relationship building, educational materials, and improved furnishing and equipment.

## ■ Emergency Assistance

LINC brings all resources to bear when helping families in crisis. LINC's Caring Communities at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center serves as a hub of services and a training ground for LINC's program coordinators. LINC helps families directly or by guiding them through the social safety net. In 2025, LINC helped hundreds of families access rent and utility assistance, nutritious food, hygiene products, clothing, legal assistance, and much more.

## ■ LINC Chess

LINC believes in the power of chess to help children learn strategic thinking, problem solving, and good sportsmanship. LINC's Caring Communities after-school programs feature regular chess instruction, chess teams, and preparation to participate in LINC's annual chess tournaments. LINC also runs a summer chess camp and chess university for adults.

## ■ Justice in the Schools

LINC helps fund an attorney with Legal Aid of Western Missouri who is dedicated to serving the needs of families and staff in Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Center, and Grandview schools. The legal assistance helps families in housing crises, under threat of eviction, in need of guardianship and other civil matters. In 2025, 40 families received services impacting more than 100 children.

## ■ Star School

LINC's online Star School program enabled 337 students from 87 counties in Missouri to continue high school education despite disruptions in their lives that impeded traditional schooling. More than 130 youth overcame challenges to earn high school credits. Sixty passed HiSET graduation equivalency diploma tests and 27 were able to return to their home high school.





# Highlights of the year

## Engaging Community

All of LINC's 55 Caring Communities sites expanded their Site Councils. These regular meetings gathered parents, business owners, neighborhood associations, church leaders, public officials, school staff and other stakeholders in giving everyone the opportunity to be heard in decisions that shaped their unique communities.

## Palestine Senior Center's Big Year

With LINC's great expansion of the Palestine Senior Citizens Activity Center in Kansas City, seniors enjoyed many programs for good health, community engagement, and fellowship, as well as many special field trips, including a meaningful trip to the boyhood home of George Washington Carver in Diamond, Mo.

## Caring Communities Day

LINC's ever-growing signature event on a beautiful September day drew over 2,000 people to 27th and Prospect Avenue as people of all incomes, races, ages, and ethnicities gathered with the wide network of LINC partners, celebrating their community with pride, love, and heartfelt joy.

## Youth Anti-Violence Work and Pledge

Hundreds of youths across four school districts participated in a multi-week anti-violence, leadership course with The POSSE, culminating with signed pledges to safety and a celebration with the Kansas City chief of police and other leaders at Manual Tech in Kansas City.

## The STEAM Team is in the House!

LINC's in-house STEAM team of "Tech Brett" and "Professor LaTricia" spiced up after-school and summer programming with thrilling, hands-on adventures in science, technology, engineering, art and math.

## Senior Wealth and Wellness

Inspired by past Caring Communities Days, Kansas City Councilmember Darrell Curls wanted to start a Wealth and Wellness Fair for senior citizens and caregivers. LINC was Curls' lead partner in the new event in July that brought together important services, information and health programs for seniors.

## 5K Community Bike Ride

LINC's ongoing commitment to promoting healthy living shone during its first community 5K bike ride in Grandview, joining with BikeWalkKC to teach bicycle safety and leading dozens of children and parents on a trail ride.

## Coding After School

LINC and the Kansas City Public Schools teamed up with local computer and tech specialists CodeAlgo Academy to start an after-school coding program at King Elementary School. CodeAlgo's team's success in engaging the students is leading to a planned expansion of the program in the coming school year.

## Kansas City Black History Project

LINC continued its award-winning collaboration with the Kansas City Public Library and the Black Archives of Mid-America to produce a new set of profiles in the Kansas City Black History Project. These biographies of great men and women were shared in booklets and posters for schools, libraries, and community centers.

## Holiday Distributions

LINC's year-round support of its community soared during the holidays with major distributions of food, resources, and holiday toys at Thanksgiving and December. LINC united multiple partners in serving some 2,000 neighbors at each event. LINC also teamed up again with the U.S. Marine Corps in helping its Toys for Tots program sort and deliver more than 60,000 toys in the Kansas City area.





## Real people, real voices



We've done so much together. You stuck with me through the pandemic. And here we are.

—Christina Puckett

*Puckett's Kids in Christ Academy childcare center is flourishing with help from LINC's early childhood Program Support Network.*



I'm not going to give up. I want to continue this path I'm on because my kids deserve it.

—Ira Conway

*Conway is a parent in LINC's Missouri Work Assistance SkillUp program and emergency aid recipient.*

We feel incredibly supported. LINC's like a perfect hand-hold between my household, the school and the greater community.

—Kristen Garretson



*Garretson's family is one of more than 6,000 enrolled in LINC's Caring Communities programs.*

My confidence has definitely grown a lot. I needed to find myself, find my voice, and be able to just escape from where I was.

—Rowan Peterson



*Rowan is a foster child supported by LINC's youth transitions team who is preparing for independent adulthood.*

It humbles and motivates me just to bring people together. That's the most important thing, just to bring our community together to help youth out.

—Tavion Banks



*Big 10 basketball star Banks and former LINC student donated sports shoes to LINC's youth athletics.*



**400**

parents on welfare supported by LINC's Missouri Work Assistance program



**3 million+**  
pounds of food distributed from LINC community and school sites



**40**  
households with children that received legal aid through the Justice in the Schools program



**2,700**  
Employers who benefited because employees used LINC before and after school care



**6,000+**  
children participating in LINC before and after school programs



**\$109,325**  
rental and utility bill assistance accessed by 215 households through LINC



# 19,000+

children and their families that have access through their schools to LINC services



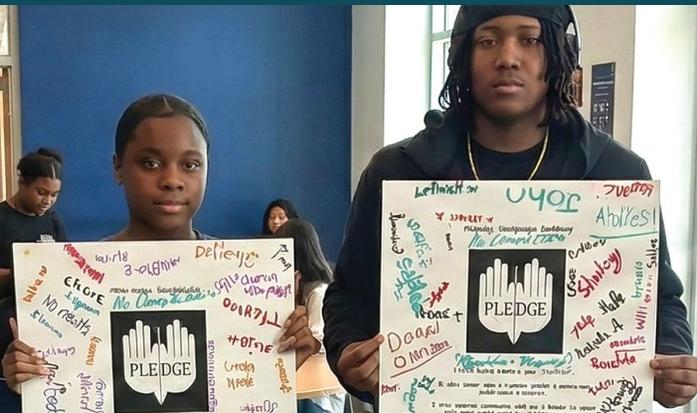
# \$560,000

Incentives and support LINC MWA provided parents toward jobs skills and education



# 693

foster youth supported by LINC's youth transitions team in becoming independent adults



# 483

children who benefited as enrollees in early childhood centers supported by LINC



# 62

early childhood centers that improved their care with LINC's Program Support Network



# 337

students statewide who were able to continue high school through LINC's online Star School

# LINC in the community



You've probably seen us—the LINC team—in your neighborhoods, at work and play. We share your joys, your special places, and memorable events. We are always grateful for the time we spend together in our Caring Communities.





**Twenty Community Partnerships that bridge the gap between state resources and local needs, empowering communities across Missouri to thrive.**

## Missouri Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships in Missouri serve as collaborative, community-based organizations that convene various local resources, nonprofits, government agencies, businesses, and community members to address specific local needs. Their main role is facilitating collaboration, coordinating resources, developing innovative programs, and addressing social issues such as housing, homelessness, workforce development, family support, childcare and early childhood. They often lead coalitions, facilitate coordinated entry systems, and focus on community-wide strategic initiatives rather than just direct services alone.

The partnerships are dedicated to identifying and addressing gaps in services within our communities. When an unmet need is recognized, they develop targeted projects to bridge the gaps. As these initiatives grow and prove beneficial, they may be transitioned to other community-based organizations, ensuring long-term impact and continuity of services.

Working across Missouri, they partner with local, state and federal agencies to implement effective community strategies that meet local needs and reduce duplication.





**FACT governs the work of 20 Caring Communities Partnerships across Missouri, including LINC, with the goal of building stronger communities.**

## **Community Investment**

**grows** capacity, allowing positive changes in communities

**focuses** on crucial human services and education in rural and urban areas

**enhances** the already impressive return on state investment

**continues** the 30-year legacy of addressing issues with input from local communities

**\$1 = \$22**

Every FY25 state dollar invested in Missouri Partnerships generates \$22 to serve Missouri residents

**85% of Children**

reached through partnerships in both urban and rural areas.

**773,388  
Missourians  
served**

through outreach projects and programs centered around early childhood, youth development, workforce, food insecurity, before and after school programs, and more in 2025!

# Leadership



**Janet Miles-Bartee**  
President & CEO



**Jeff Hill**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Deborah Hogan**  
Director of Human Resources



**Elice Redfern**  
Executive Assistant



**Alex Hughes**  
Director of Finance



**Bryan Shepard**  
Director of Information Services  
& Communications



**Trent DeVreugd**  
Director of Caring Communities



**Jason Ervin**  
Director of Athletics,  
Health & Wellness



**Lauren Walls**  
Director of Training  
& Compliance



**Sean Akridge**  
Director of  
Community Engagement

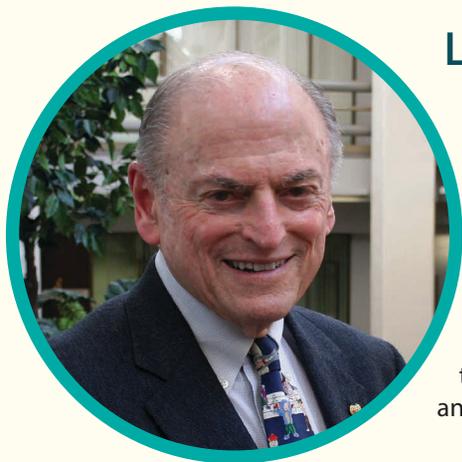


**Michael Coram**  
Director of Youth Services



**Marlisa Collins**  
Director of Missouri  
Work Assistance

**“We have to tap into the  
compassion of this community.”**



### **LINC's Founder: Bert Berkley**

Bert Berkley created LINC in 1992 with a firm belief in the right of families and neighborhood leaders to shape their own destinies from their neighborhoods, schools, and meeting halls. Berkley gathered the original members of the LINC Commission.

Those leaders and dedicated staff advanced the vision that it is the people who truly know the needs and strengths of their communities. The people should be the ones informing the policy makers and legislators and leading the action of change. Berkley, former CEO and chairman of Tension Envelope and recipient of numerous civic awards, died in 2024 at the age of 101.



# LINC Commission



*LINC's board brings together business and civic leaders, local voices, and engaged citizens who lend their leadership and insight to key community priorities—from education and youth resilience to aging, employment, and neighborhood well-being.*

## Chairman



**Shawn G. Foster**  
Preuss | Foster Law

## Vice-Chairs



**David Disney**  
J.E. Dunn Construction,  
Retired



**Ken Powell**  
Social Security Administration,  
Retired

## Commissioners



**Sharon M. Cheers**  
Community Volunteer



**Kiki Curls**  
Heavy Construction Assoc.  
Former Mo. State Senator



**Aaron Deacon**  
KC Digital Drive



**Theresa Garza Ruiz**  
Public Official & Civic Leader



**Rob Givens**  
Mazuma Credit Union,  
Retired



**Anita Gorman**  
Community Volunteer



**Matthew G. Haase**  
Kansas City University



**Cokethea Hill-Woodard**  
BLAQUE KC



**Tom Lewin**  
University of Kansas,  
Retired



**Tammy Robinson**  
Metropolitan Community  
College-Penn Valley



**David Ross**  
David P. Ross LLC



**Patricia Scaglia**  
Scaglia Law Firm LLC



**Marjorie Williams**  
Hickman Mills School District,  
Retired



**Quinton Lucas**  
Mayor, Kansas City, Mo.  
Ex-Officio



**Phil LeVota**  
Jackson County Executive  
Ex-Officio

# Looking forward in 2026!



Imagine a Kansas City where every family, every child, and every person has access to the resources they need to thrive—not tomorrow, not next year, but today. At LINC, we've been making that vision a reality for over 30 years with a proven, community-driven model.

Today, this model touches the lives of thousands of Kansas Citians every year by meeting people where they are. From foster youth to working parents, from elder citizens to rural farmers, LINC ensures that everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest potential.

Thanks to the generosity of local foundations, partners, and state and city agencies, we were able to strengthen the overall Caring Communities system so that we could respond quickly to emergency needs, stabilize families, deepen programming, expand services, and train staff.



But we can't do it alone. LINC's success depends on our community—people like you who believe that every Kansas Citian deserves the opportunity to thrive. With your support, we can expand our reach, strengthen our programs, and meet the growing needs of our community.

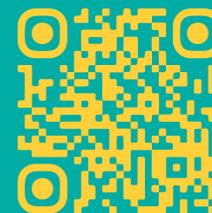
Your investment in LINC isn't just a donation—it's a commitment to creating a stronger, more connected Kansas City. It's a chance for you to amplify your voice and make a difference.



## Will you join in making this vision a reality?

Make your gift today and be a part of creating stronger families together.

➤ [kclinc.org/donate](https://kclinc.org/donate)



# In Memoriam

*Mary Kay McPhee*

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Mary Kay McPhee, a tireless advocate for the disenfranchised, the poor, the equal rights of women, and for justice in health and wellness for all, died May 31, 2025, at 97 after a lifetime of wide-ranging work in social justice.

McPhee shared her enterprise and leadership as a member of the LINC Commission, becoming a Commissioner in 2002. For many years she served as chair of the Commission's Aging Committee.



*Jack Craft*

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LINC founding commissioner and former co-chair Jack Craft, whose many civic accomplishments as an attorney and community leader included heading the redevelopment of Kansas City's iconic Union Station, died Dec. 2, 2025, at the age of 87.

John Charles Craft joined the LINC Commission in its first year in 1992, adding his service of Caring Communities to a long list of community work at the same time that he held great influence in Missouri politics in helping lead campaigns for John Danforth, Kit Bond, and Richard Berkley, among others.

Craft and former LINC Commissioner Bailus Tate Jr. together served as co-chairs of the LINC Commission after the death of longtime LINC Chair Landon Rowland in 2015. Craft continued as Chair of the Commission after Tate's death in 2020 until April 2021, and remained a commissioner until his death.

As his obituary noted, Craft embraced the challenges of finding solutions for tough problems, and that unique skill served LINC and its Caring Communities well.

