

CREATING WHOLE COMMUNITIES

2021

END OF YEAR REPORT



UMSL University of Missouri—St. Louis

M Extension
University of Missouri

CREATING WHOLE COMMUNITIES

CWC is a collaboration between
University of Missouri–St. Louis,
University of Missouri Extension and our
region's neighborhoods to strengthen
communities through...

RESEARCH

Supporting place-based research on
community building practice and policy
issues, and sharing research for practical
application with community leaders.

CIVIC DIALOGUE

Creating space and opportunity for
community conversations, exploring what
works in creating whole communities.

LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY BUILDING

Providing training opportunities and technical
assistance to support leadership development
and community building.

RESEARCH

In 2021, CWC awarded **three Research and Implementation Grants (\$6,000 each)** that will support UMSL faculty in using a Community-based Participatory Research framework to address issues critical to local neighborhoods and municipalities.

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2021 RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION AWARDEES

Determining Messaging to Combat Littering Issues in the 24:1

Stephanie Van Stee and Lara Zwarun, UMSL Communication and Media, will continue to work with Beyond Housing after building their partnership with support from the CWC Relationship Building Grant last year. Their Research and Implementation project, *Determining Messaging to Combat Littering Issues in the 24:1*, seeks to lead to the creation of a campaign to combat littering and increase resident morale.

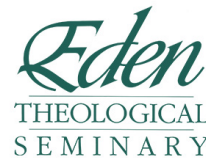
UMSL | Communication
and Media
University of Missouri–St. Louis

BEYOND
HOUSING

2021 RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION AWARDEES

Developing a Model of Faith-Based Placemaking: Lessons from Ferguson, Dellwood and Jennings

Michael Gearhart, UMSL Social Work, is partnering with the Eden Theological Seminary for a Research and Implementation project. The *Developing a Model of Faith-Based Placemaking: Lessons from Ferguson, Dellwood and Jennings* project will look at how faith-based institutions can be effective leaders in placemaking. This project will lead to the development of a capacity-building placemaking workshop for faith-based leaders.



Geographic and Demographic Distribution of Campaign Contributions and Access to Local Government

Anita Manion, David Kimball and Sapna Varkey, UMSL Political Science, are working with Show Me Integrity for a Research and Implementation project. The *Geographic and Demographic Distribution of Campaign Contributions and Access to Local Government* project will study how well campaign contributors represent the general public in local elections and whether contributors receive benefits or positions for their donations.



CWC awarded **one Relationship-Building Grant (\$1,000)**, which will serve to support university-community partnerships in exploring interests, developing mutual expectations and identifying research goals.

2021 RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AWARDEE

Student Unity Enhancing Community-UMSL: The School District of University City Scholar Collaboration

Dana Klar and Amanda Bequette, UMSL Psychological Sciences, are partnering with the University City School District on *The Student Unity Enhancing Community-UMSL: The School District of University City Scholar Collaboration* project, which aims to create opportunities for U-City and UMSL students to connect through collaborative service-learning projects and work towards a stronger connection between UMSL and the local community.



CIVIC DIALOGUE

In 2021, CWC focused our dialogue efforts on contributing to partnerships and collaborative initiatives. In an era of an over-abundance of Zoom meetings and screen time, we aligned our efforts with others to expand impact.

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Community Toolbox Digital Walkthrough

FEBRUARY 2021

In an effort to facilitate more equity in the development of St. Louis neighborhoods, CWC worked with a coalition of organizations to launch a new online toolbox to connect St. Louis residents with resources that provide vital community development knowledge. Supported by Invest STL, the Neighborhood Toolbox launched with two initial tools – the St. Louis Community LAB and the St. Louis Neighborhood Organization Map. Each is designed to help residents build the capacity needed to advance community development in their neighborhoods. CWC led two digital walkthrough events to enable community members to better understand and utilize these resources.

“We are a community rich with individuals committed to shaping a bold, thriving St. Louis to the benefit of all. The resources available in the growing online toolbox seek to lift up and leverage the skills and connections of even more neighborhood leaders in organizing and aligning their actions towards a just, powerful future.”

– Dara Eskridge
executive director, Invest STL

25

2-PART SERIES
ATTENDEES

1,424

PAGEVIEWS

1,120

UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS

Racial Equity Summit

AUGUST 2021

CWC participated in the Racial Equity Summit in August 2021 by hosting a breakout session presentation called Equity Through Neighborhood Leadership that posed the question: What if residents were truly in charge of their community's future? Claire Rippel, Dwayne T. James and NLF graduates, Gary Johnson, Julia Allen, Sundy Whiteside and Alan Mueller presented to an audience of 81 viewers. CWC sponsored tickets to any NLF Fellows who wanted to attend, providing opportunity for interaction with and learning from 1000 other Summit attendees.

81
VIEWERS

1,102
VIRTUAL EVENT REGISTRANTS

998
ATTENDEES ACROSS 30 STATES AND OVERSEAS

What's Poppin'? Health and Well-being Pop-up Event

OCTOBER 2021

The University of Missouri–St. Louis and MU Extension partnered to offer a free event to showcase health and well-being opportunities offered through the university. CWC led a community building principles presentation and sponsored special bags of popcorn to promote neighboring and community action.

THE FIRST
100
ATTENDEES

received a wellness box of fun and useful goodies and information to support health and well-being.



Fair Mapping Coalition Redistricting Community Meeting

OCTOBER 2021

CWC partnered with a coalition of organizations spearheaded by the Urban League Federation of Block Units to offer an info session on the state redistricting process at the Ferguson Empowerment Center. Speakers featured NLF alum Farakkhan Shegog, Federation of Block Units, Mike Jones of St. Louis American, members of the St. Louis County Board of Elections and community organizers from the Kansas City area. The coalition's goal was to provide as much public feedback as possible to ensure that when the districts are redrawn, they represent the people.

20
ATTENDEES



25
ATTENDEES

Understanding How Your Local Government Works

OCTOBER 2021

CWC partnered with People Reaching Out for Unity and Diversity (PROUD) to present this virtual event that had 25 attendees. PROUD was founded by NLA and NLF alum Alan Mueller. The event was also live streamed on Facebook through Da Hood Talks Podcast, a project of NLA/NLF graduate Shavanna Spratt.

The event covered how local municipal government, specifically the City of Ferguson, works, the roles covered by different departments, levels and forms of municipal governance, among other governance aspects. The presentation was conducted by CWC Research Fellow, Napoleon Williams III and was based on his research brief, *Understanding the Role of Municipal Governance in Stabilizing Inner-Ring Suburbs in St. Louis*.

LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY BUILDING

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Neighborhood Leadership Academy

SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2021

In 2021, Neighborhood Leadership Academy hosted its biggest cohort in history. The cohort comprised of 81 participants from the counties of Saint Louis City, Saint Louis, Saint Charles, Boone, Crawford, Dent, Franklin, Gentry, Greene, Jefferson, Osage, Callaway, Phelps and Randolph. This brings the total NLA alumni count to 477. Additionally, NLA awarded 49 scholarships, the highest number awarded to date, thanks to funding from Missouri Foundation for Health. A substantial amount of these scholarships allowed individuals to participate in NLA at no cost, increasing access to individuals across the state looking to acquire skills and knowledge needed to bring positive change in their communities.

81
PARTICIPANTS
IN 2021

49
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

477
NLA ALUMNI
ACROSS MISSOURI

2021 NLA graduates shared the following feedback:

"I have learned that my voice is very important, and I am a force to be listened to. I had many ideas but didn't have the courage to pursue all avenues and to make things better for my community, but I now feel that my voice is very important and should be heard."

"NLA is a fantastic program to help you start your project or take it to the next level. If you want to be a community leader, or you are a leader who needs more concrete tools and help getting started or through some hurdles, this is the place to be."

"NLA really helps you understand the goals of community development, allows you to see how it can be applied in your own area, and creates a space for you to use other people's successes to guide your own. It is a space where people lift each other up and are excited about the same things you are excited about."

Neighborhood Leadership Fellows

JANUARY – SEPTEMBER 2021

In 2021, Neighborhood Leadership Fellows, an advanced leadership program focused on systems change, hosted 18 sessions (16 virtual) over nine months and graduated 22 St. Louis Promise Zone resident Fellows. Fellows learned advocacy skills and strategies needed to gain access to civic leadership tables and halls of power.

NLF program outputs: Each Fellow created a 10-year Individualized Personal Leadership Plan. They also worked in groups to develop a policy-focused project aimed at addressing more equitable regional policies for neighborhoods and preventing violence in the community. Groups were tasked with developing or enhancing a policy model/framework based on lived experiences, strengths and networks in addition to performing data research, advocacy and community engagement in order to work towards systematic change that would address an inequity in the Promise Zone.



22

GRADUATING ST. LOUIS PROMISE ZONE RESIDENT FELLOWS

The groups presented their final projects at the 2021 Graduation Ceremony in September.

Topics included:

- **Community Based Restoration and Purchasing Model:** Policy to give Promise Zone residents the right of refusal of unsold tax sale properties in order to increase property ownership.
- **Community Benefits Agreement Model:** Targets illegal dumping in communities through community voice and organizing.
- **Community Engagement Framework:** Focuses on ensuring equity in voice, generational differences and technology gaps in addition to collaboration with community stakeholders through multi-stage measures of accountability.
- **Community Review Board Model:** Policy centered around economic development in communities and neighborhoods.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

NLF conducts a final evaluation and participants gave the program an average overall rating of

4.8/5

Fellows also completed a qualitative evaluation. Excerpts from NLF Fellows are included below:

"I would say that I owe everything that I am today because of NLF. NLF helped me build my confidence in speaking to and in front of people. The programs provided me with a network of people who wanted to see me win. They included me in opportunities and spoke my name up to people and in rooms that I didn't even know that I wanted to be or should be a part of. NLF helped me find my path."

"I have gained a complete appreciation for the types of work and interest going on in our St. Louis area. NLF has actually given me insight and push about some of my own aspirations. I believe that not being exposed to the various topics and NLF participants, I would have never believed that my goals can actually be accomplished. I told someone that the networking and like-minded persons in the NLF is priceless in itself, as we now have people we can reach out to for just about anything."



WILLIAM HUMPHREY FARRAKHAN SHEGOG LYSYIN LOBSTER JANE KAYSER



MARCEL HAGANS TASHARA EARL KEITH CRAWFORD PATRICIA DEES

We have seen a number of individual successes by our 2021 Fellows since they started NLF, for example:

- **William Humphrey** was elected to be the president of the Normandy School Board.
- **Farrakhan Shegog** was appointed to the Senate Independent Bipartisan Citizens Commission.
- **LySyin Lobster** was selected to participate in the WePower Chisolm's Chair, a cohort for black and brown women interested in running for office.
- **Jane Kayser** was re-elected as alderwoman of Greendale.
- **Marcel Hagans** was hired to work with Action St. Louis as their policy coordinator.
- **Keith Crawford, Tashara Earl and Patricia Dees** were selected to serve on the St. Louis City Citizen's Advisory Committee for Capital Funds/ARPA.

Neighborhood Leadership Academy Mini Grants

NOVEMBER 2021

Thanks to funding from the Pershing Charitable Trust and the Missouri Foundation for Health, CWC launched the inaugural Mini-Grant Fund for Neighborhood Leadership Academy 2021 participants with a goal of ensuring that project ideas become reality and create positive change at the grassroots, neighborhood level. Participants had an opportunity to apply for a maximum of \$2,500. CWC received 46 applications and funded 20 projects across the state through a grant review committee made up of NLA alumni.

46

APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED BY CWC

20

PROJECTS FUNDED
ACROSS MISSOURI

A sample of the funded projects
can be found below:

Garden in Patch

Steelville BBQ Meeting

Neighbor to Business Festival
Springfield, MO

Community Walk
Velda City, MO

O'Fallon Neighborhood Association

Bus Shelter in Spanish Lake

Blessings Box
Pilot Grove, MO

Military Banner Project
Stanberry, MO

Soldan High School Peace Zones

Street Signage in Mount Pleasant
Neighborhood

Jefferson County 4H Club –
Genders and Sexualities Alliance

Pavilion/Hub for Maplewood

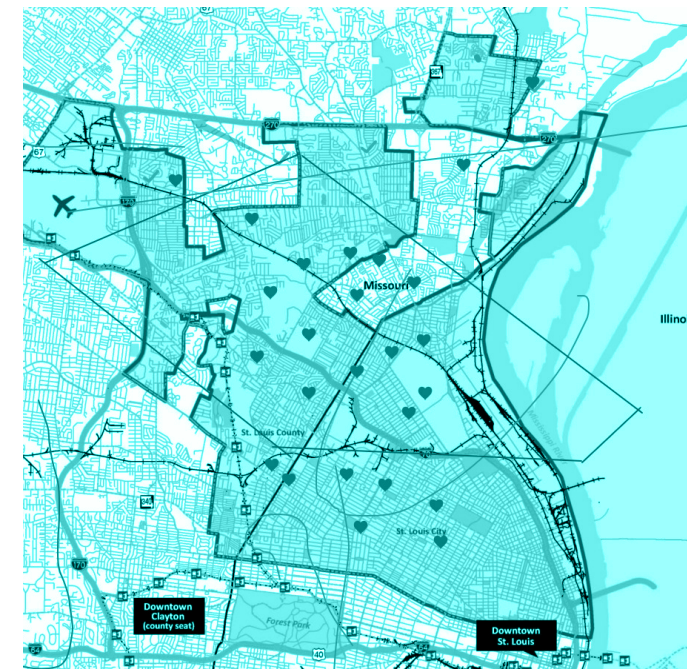
Youth Drama Troupe

Operation Clean-Sweep in Baden

Neighborhood Leadership Fellows Think Tank

OCTOBER 2021

To activate our NLF alumni, CWC pulled together an alumni-led NLF Think Tank Planning Committee. The launch event had 21 alumni attendees and the group collectively created a book club as a branch of the Think Tank.



21

ALUMNI ATTENDEES

**NLF Think Tank will be a
regularly occurring convening,
specifically for NLF alumni to:**

- Meet/think/talk/collaborate
- Work on challenging issues/
create solutions together
- Continue projects and
concepts initiated in NLF
- Develop policies and
legislation that benefit the
Promise Zone
- Collaborate on research
and advocacy
- Support one another
- Make ideas come to fruition
through action

St. Louis Community LAB (Learn. Act. Build.)

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021

STL Community LAB pulls together community development trainings in the region to a single, organized platform that aims to increase participation in the community building process by educating and supporting all in the quest to build strong, whole communities. LAB's core partnership team includes InvestSTL, Urban Land Institute, UMSL Community Innovation and Action Center, Community Builders Network, WePower, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership and Network for Strong Communities.

In addition to the core partnership team, LAB established formal collaborations with 46 local and national organizations in 2021 who agreed to promote courses and trainings on LAB, allowing for accelerated growth in the number and diversity of offerings. There were a total of 218 courses featured on LAB from these organizations.

With the successful launch of LAB in the first half of 2021, partners began pursuing next goals including a badge system in which individuals earn a badge upon completion of courses in a particular area, such as neighborhood

leadership, economic development, real estate development or community development generalist. Badges can be used to indicate qualifications and skills in these specialized areas. Additionally, the LAB team is working to seek UMSL course accreditation for its courses in order to increase resident capacity in building strong communities by serving as an on-ramp for residents to pursue a professional degree and career through an equitable and cost- and time-saving track.

Lastly, like all of CWC's programs and initiatives, STL Community LAB will scale to a statewide framework with the new name, Missouri Community LAB, in 2022. LAB is currently undergoing re-branding and the development of a stand-alone website.

46

COLLABORATIONS
WITH LOCAL & NATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS

218

COURSES FEATURED
ON LAB FROM THOSE
ORGANIZATIONS

COMMUNITY LAB PARTNERS



Grant and Scholarship Committee Opportunities

Graduates of the neighborhood leadership programs continue to engage with CWC through leadership opportunities. These opportunities include sitting on decision-making committees to allocate funds or select participants.

The following committees all incorporated community resident voice in the leadership, deliberation and decision-making:

- NLA Scholarship Committee - **50+ APPLICATIONS**
- NLA Alumni Mini-Grant Committee - **46 APPLICATIONS**
- NLF Application Review - **81 APPLICATIONS** and Interview Committee - **40 INTERVIEWS**
- Relationship-building and Research and Implementation Grant Allocation Committee - **6 APPLICATIONS**

Creating Whole Communities Leadership Advisory Team

This year, CWC began expanding its footprint across the state to focus its impact on both urban and rural communities. The advisory team began conversations on how to leverage what is being done locally in order to scale programming statewide through design thinking and co-creation. CWC established a collaboration with Missouri Community Betterment, a rural-based community development organization, where both organizations will hold mutual responsibilities to aid in each other's goals and initiatives. The advisory team will work on revising programming and ways to innovate and grow CWC with the new direction of a statewide scope.

CWC ADVISORY TEAM MEMBERS

Kiley Bednar
Adam Brown
Roslyn Brown
Nicole Cline
Riisa Easley
Tinnie Glispie-Smith
Karl Guenther
Sarah Hultine-Massengale
Ronald Jones
Pamela McLucas
Carla Reid
Richard Reilly
Florian Sichling
Todd Swanstrom
Adriano Udani
Patricia Zahn

CWC SUPPORTING STAFF

Tasnim Haq
Claire Rippel

CWC ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNER

UMSL School of Social Work

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