



Community Connection



Happy New Year!

We are well into January and excited to see what 2025 holds in store! Next week we begin a new semester with our annual holiday observance honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and hope you will join us for this event on January 20 at 11:00 AM in our beautiful Touhill Performing Arts Center.

We are happy to announce that, as part of its 2025 budget, St. Louis County approved a one-time \$10 million appropriation to support the development of the planned North County Business and Workforce District on the UMSL South Campus. We are grateful to the St. Louis County Council and the St. Louis County Executive for their support of UMSL's vision for our campus and surrounding communities. Additionally, we have received a renewal of a \$5.1 million literacy grant from DESE which will continue to support collaborations with local schools this year. Great things are happening on campus and in our community and I am looking forward to the new opportunities that lie ahead!

Gratefully forward,

Kristin Sobolik
Chancellor
University of Missouri–St.
Louis



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Events & Resources



St. Louis County Council directing \$10 million to UMSL's planned North County Business and Workforce District

The St. Louis County Council last month voted to approve \$10 million to support the development of the planned North County Business and Workforce District on South Campus at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. The funding will add to \$80 million the university has received from the state of Missouri over the past three years as it works to transform and modernize its campus while working to meet the needs of students now and in the future. Through those efforts, UMSL is establishing an academic core...and freeing up land for mixed-use redevelopment south of Natural Bridge Road.

Plans for the district call for new investments in North St. Louis County that will have a positive impact on surrounding communities by attracting new businesses, employees and eventually amenities and services like a childcare center, grocery store, restaurants and other mixed use commercial and residential spaces. "We are grateful to the St. Louis County Council for their support of UMSL's vision for our campus and surrounding communities, including our ambitious plan to establish a North St. Louis County Business and Workforce District," Chancellor Kristin Sobolik said. "This incredible investment will not only allow UMSL to build a campus for the future that will serve students for decades to come but will create a positive economic impact in the region by providing comprehensive, community-based services and amenities, while welcoming businesses and opportunities to grow Missouri's workforce." [Read more.](#)



UMSL receives \$5.1 million grant to promote evidence-based literacy



UMSL MLK Holiday Observance

Monday, Jan. 20, 2025

11:00 AM

UMSL Touhill Performing Arts Center

"The Beloved Community" and a global vision for a world in which all people can thrive is the theme for the 2025 MLK Day observance. The entire community is invited to this annual commemorative event with the Keynote address by Fredricka Newton who is President and co-founder of the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation, a former Black Panther Party member, and widow of Huey P. Newton. Performances are by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Sheldon Arts Foundation choir, and the UMSL Voices of Jubilee choir.

MLK: Three Landmark Speeches

Monday, Jan. 20, 2025

Noon and 7:00 PM

Online - Replacing St. Louis on the Air

St. Louis Public Radio presents this program examining King's 1967 "Beyond Vietnam" speech in which he opposed the Vietnam War; King's 1965 address at the end of the Selma to Montgomery marches — considered a turning point in the fight for voting rights and equality; and King's last address the night before his assassination in 1968. [Click here](#) for information.

2025 St. Louis Mid-County Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Jan. 18, 9:00 AM - Prayer & Leadership Breakfast

strategies in Missouri schools and area career centers

The University of Missouri–St. Louis is continuing to support literacy education in the St. Louis region with another substantial award from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Co-principal investigators in the College of Education – Shea Kerkhoff, Katie O'Daniels and Nancy Singer – have secured \$5.1 million from DESE to continue promoting evidence-based literacy strategies in Missouri schools and to continue creating literacy resources available online... The first grant [in 2020] allowed UMSL to build a full-time team dedicated to implementing several projects aimed at educators in St. Louis-area schools.

The team plans to build on the strong foundation it has laid over the past several years. UMSL specifically worked with 40 of the 80 K-12 schools that received literacy education services because of the initial funding in 2020. This work has reached approximately 35,000 children in the state, including Normandy, Jennings and University City school districts among other metropolitan St. Louis schools. [Read more.](#)

Jan. 20, 11:00 AM - Parade begins at Barack Obama Elementary School to Normandy High School 6701 St Charles Rock Road

Sponsored by Ameren UE and Normandy Schools Collaborative, the event honors the life and legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This celebration is a shared vision between communities in the cities of Wellston and Pine Lawn. RSVP is required for the Prayer Breakfast. Monday program at NHS features speakers, music, and commUNITY resource tables. [Click here](#) for information.



Griffith Intermediate 3rd Graders Create Original Opera with Local Arts Organizations

UMSL Des Lee Fine Arts Education Collaborative

Recently, the 3rd-grade class at Griffith Intermediate in the Ferguson-Florissant School District collaborated with Opera Theatre St. Louis, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and the Des Lee Fine Arts Education Collaborative at UMSL to create their own opera, The Bremen-town Musicians. The project, which began in September, taught students the art of writing, musical storytelling, and teamwork. The class used Ruth Belov Gross's version of the story as inspiration, crafting original songs, adding dialogue, and putting a unique twist on the tale. After months of preparation, the students proudly premiered their opera in mid-December in front of their family and friends.

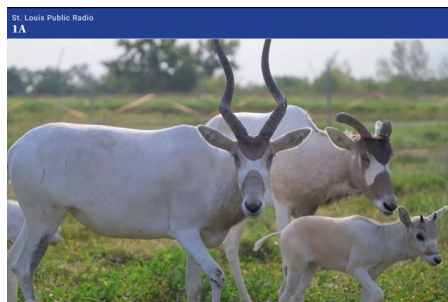
This collaboration with a local school, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Opera Theatre St. Louis, and the UMSL Des Lee Fine Arts Education Collaborative is an example of how teamwork and community partnerships make a significant impact on student education, particularly for those who may not otherwise have access to such opportunities. [Read more.](#)



STL Neighbors for Complete Streets: Enhancing our streets, sidewalks, and public spaces

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025,
6:00 - 7:30 PM
UMSL RCEW building
8225 Florissant Road

Join Trailnet, UMSL and MU Extension for an informative and interactive session on street safety in the St. Louis region. This event will provide a deep dive into the Complete Streets laws in the city and county, their administration, and the key departments and stakeholders involved in decisions regarding area streets and sidewalks. [Register here](#) for this is a free event.



WildCare Park to bolster global and local conservation efforts in St. Louis

St. Louis Public Radio, Jan. 3, 2025

St. Louis Zoo WildCare Park plans to open to the public in 2027, but the 425-acre conservation area in north St. Louis County is already home to 38 animals, including one Grevy's zebra and three addaxes born at the park in 2024. "The very first thing we look at is selecting which animals will thrive in Missouri's climate because we might have a really hot, humid day in the summer, or we might have 12 to 15 inches of snow," said WildCare Park General Curator Martha Fischer. "After that, we look at which animals are the most endangered."... The next two years will be devoted to letting the animals get to know each other — building their own species herd and acclimating to other species — and getting used to human visitors.

...

St. Louis Zoo WildCare Park Director Sabarras George expects the park to support the economic development of the region, in addition to supporting local flora and fauna. He estimates that the park will bring more than \$660 million to north St. Louis County in its first 10 years. [Read more.](#)



African American Healthcare Summit

Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025
9:00 AM
Touhill Performing Arts Center

Presented by the African American Healthcare Association of Missouri, the African American Healthcare Summit will empower those in attendance with information that will empower them to navigate the American healthcare system. It will cover issues such as racial disparities in healthcare, the Medicaid, the healthcare concerns of veterans, disabled children, and more. The Summit will also address access to healthcare and public health programs such as Obama Care. Learn more at <https://aahamo.org/> [Click here](#) for \$25 tickets.



Winter Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop

Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
EarthDance Organic Farm School
233 S Dade Ave.

This workshop is for those newer to foodscaping and wanting to hone their fruit tree tending skills. It will provide valuable knowledge and wisdom along with practical skills for healthier trees,

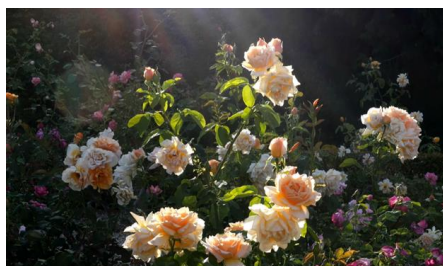
<div>NLF</div> <div>CONGRATULATIONS</div> <div>TO THE</div> <div>NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERSHIP FELLOWS</div> <div>2025 COHORT</div>		
Jillian Bell	Curtis Griggs	Deborah Ogunti
LaChelle Billups	Reign Harris	Tashauna Parker
Felicia Bishop	Kyra Jefferson	Martha Peebles
Kyra Clerk	Keba Jones	Raven Pugh
Kalonda Cloyd	Sandra Kay Keely	Tori Sombright
Colby Crowder	Alia Knight-Brooks	Rachel Winney
Arica Davis-Clark	Samantha Minor	James Willfred
Sequol Edwards	Vynetta Morrow	Nikki Wilson
Della El-Amin	Denitra Neil	

Neighborhood Leadership Fellows announces newest cohort

Neighborhood Leadership Fellows (NLF) is an advanced leadership training program of [UMSL](#), [MU Extension](#) and the [St. Louis Promise Zone-St. Louis Economic Development](#)

January 2025

[Partnership](#). This will be the 8th cohort of NLF, an annual advanced leadership training program that works to increase and amplify the voices of residents to work towards local systems change through advocacy skills and the knowledge needed to gain access to civic leadership tables and halls of power. One geographic focus area is neighborhoods within the St. Louis Promise Zone due to the well-documented need for more targeted investment. [Learn more](#).



THE GARDEN Studio + Cafe + Kitchen opening in Ferguson

St. Louis Magazine, Dining Out, Jan. 6, 2025

The Garden, located at 100 N. Florissant, is set to open mid-month in the former Corner Coffee House. This innovative space will serve as a cooperative kitchen, art gallery, and collaborative café, offering a blend of culinary and artistic experiences. Notably, The Garden will host the 29th location for the Currency of Caring program. This initiative allows patrons to purchase tokens, providing underserved communities with access to nutritious, high-quality meals from participating restaurants. [Visit the website](#) regularly to learn more about the grand opening and explore how The Garden is poised to make a meaningful impact on the community.



Transform UMSL - A Foundation for the future

A drone photo shows progress being made on the foundation for the Richter Family Welcome and Alumni Center as work continued during the first week of winter break on North Campus at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. The new

increased fruit production and easier harvest, as well as beautiful fit into an ever-changing landscape. Note: this class will focus on Asian pear trees, but the skills learned in this class apply to many other tree species. All tools will be provided. To register or for information about other courses such as Training for Gardeners, [click here](#).



Ferguson Winter Indoor Farmers Market

Third Saturdays of the month
November - April
9:00 AM - Noon
St. Stephen's Episcopal
33 N. Clay Ave., 63135

Find fresh produce all year long. Includes pay what you can for produce at the Earthdance booth. To learn more, [click here](#).



Triton Toastmasters
First and Third Thursdays
Noon to 1:00 PM
Online

Looking to improve and become more confident with public speaking in 2025? The Triton Toastmasters club presents an opportunity for people to learn to communicate more effectively, improve

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31,000-square-foot center is one part of the ongoing [Transform UMSL initiative](#) and is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025. It will connect to the J.C. Penney Conference Center and serve as a gateway to UMSL for prospective students and their families while also providing a permanent home for the university's more than 117,000 alumni.

confidence and develop their leadership skills to better serve their employers and their communities. The club is open to local community members. Visitors welcome! To learn more, [click here](#).

Share with Us

We'd love to hear your questions and comments about UMSL and stories about great things happening in our communities. Your thoughts will help shape content covered in future newsletters to be pertinent to you and your neighbors. Leave any suggestions, questions, or stories [here](#). Thank you!
