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Dear friends, neighbors and community members,

It's hard to believe that we are wrapping up another year already. December is both a time for reflection and for celebration, and we are thrilled to congratulate and celebrate more than 900 students who are graduating this semester. We look forward to seeing how they will transform their lives and communities. This is what we do at UMSL—we develop, support and recognize accomplishments. You will see in this issue some great examples of how collaborations are having positive effects on our community members.

2022 has been a good year, and we are looking forward to 2023 as we continue to make progress on our campus transformation. In the days ahead, there will be opportunities for our community to share ideas with us as we envision a new business and workforce district anchored on our south campus. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the holiday performances and festivities taking place on campus and in the community.

### **UMSL Community Connection newsletter**

Received this as a forward?  
[Click here](#) to subscribe.

### **UMSL Community Card**

[Register](#) for a community card to receive benefits and discounts at UMSL events and facilities.

### **UMSL Careers**

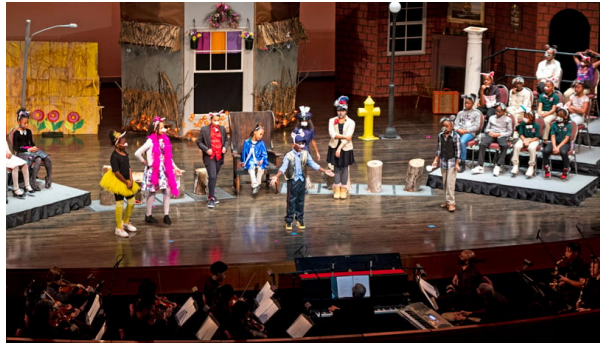
[Click here](#) to learn about job opportunities at UMSL. Check back regularly for new listings.

### **UMSL Contracts**

Interested in bidding on projects at UMSL?

Wishing you all a peaceful and enjoyable year-end!

Kristin Sobolik  
Chancellor  
University of Missouri–St. Louis



## 'The Big Bad Day'

Third-grade students from Jefferson School in the Normandy Schools Collaborative go through a dress rehearsal of their original opera, "The Big Bad Day," at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center. The one-act piece – written and performed by the students – was based on the book "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs" by Jon Scieszka. The production resulted from a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the Normandy Schools Collaborative, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and the E. Desmond Lee Fine Arts Education Collaborative at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Teaching artist Valerie Smith led students through the creative process of writing the libretto following the national curriculum Music! Words! Opera! She began meeting weekly with the students in NSC Fine Arts Director Suzanne Palmer's third grade class at Jefferson School. "This opportunity to create a libretto is a welcomed creative writing experience for our young scholars," Palmer said. "When I was approached by Opera Theater St. Louis to do this project with them, I thought this experience of singing, acting and performing combined with an emphasis on scholastic growth is exactly what I want for students of all ages in Normandy." [Read more.](#)

**Media Coverage**  
[St. Louis Public Radio](#)

[Procurement Bids](#)  
[Construction Bids](#)

## Community Connect

[Click here](#) to learn about UMSL resources, services and programs available to the community.

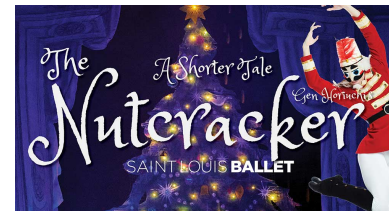
## STL Community LAB

[Click here](#) to learn about community development trainings and programs.

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## Events & Resources

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**St. Louis Ballet: The Nutcracker- A shorter tale**  
Friday, December 16, 2022  
11:00 a.m.  
UMSL Touhill Performing Arts Center

This abridged version of Saint Louis Ballet's *The Nutcracker* was created for younger audiences and those with limited attention spans. This narrated performance employs the same sets, costumes, special effects, and glorious dancing as the full-length presentations. Ideal for holiday field trips! To purchase tickets, [click here.](#)

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[KTVI \(Channel 2\)](#)  
[KSDK \(Channel 5\)](#)

Note: The opera had its public debut on November 29 at the UMSL Touhill Performing Arts Center.



## UMSL DEI Accelerator announces newest cohort

Tears of gratitude streamed down Jada Huffman's face as she watched a video of herself learning that she and her business partner, Brandace Johnson, of B Juiced, were selected to be part of the University of Missouri–St. Louis Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Accelerator's latest cohort. "Today is a really good, big day for us," Huffman said. "And we are so grateful for being given the opportunity to participate in the accelerator program."

The six founders making up the accelerator's third class were announced in a "Big Reveal" event [on December 7th]. The group features a variety of businesses including: B Juiced, a fresh juice company; Fysiq, a fitness business; Jakapa, a soft skills app company; My friends and I, a production company; Mr. Fresh, an air freshener company; and Posie Pots & 3D Prints, a company that makes self-watering planters using 3D printing technology.

Each company in the 10-week program will receive a \$50,000 nondilutive capital infusion, mentoring from UMSL staff, faculty and other business owners and be assigned two UMSL interns to help with the operations. Dan Lauer, founding executive director of UMSL Accelerate, is excited about the newest cohort and helping them connect with resources. [Read more.](#)



### St. Louis Ballet: The Nutcracker

Performances December 16 through December 23, 2022  
UMSL Touhill Performing Arts Center

Gen Horiuchi's *The Nutcracker* has become the region's most popular holiday production. A dazzling set at the Touhill frames the company dancers, professional character actors, and talented students from the school of the Saint Louis Ballet. And now, with a larger cast and some new choreography! To purchase tickets, [click here.](#)



### Ferguson's Winter Wonderland

Friday, December 16, 2022  
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Ferguson Community Center  
1050 Smith Ave.

This outdoor event features photos with Santa, Elsa's Castle, The Grinch, Carriage Rides, Carolers, Hot





## Cracking the Code

Wendy Todd, *Community News- St. Louis County*

According to the national nonprofit Code.org, which focuses on providing computer science education to youth from kindergarten to 12th grade, there are nearly 700,000 computing jobs open in the U.S. in 2021, but fewer than 80,000 computer science students graduated into the workforce.

Whether one is learning computer science as preparation for a career, or to gain an additional skill, understanding computer technology has become increasingly important in the ever-expanding digital age. With that in mind, the local nonprofit, Unleashing Potential, partnered with Code.org to host a free Hour of Code event in Ferguson [taking place on December 10, 2022]. [Read more.](#)



Photo by Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park, created by PGAV

## Zoo WildCare Park Preview

Suzanne Vanderhoef, HEC Media

Chocolate, Balloon Twister, and lots of lights! Food will be available to purchase. For information, [click here.](#)



### Chili Chill

Saturday, December 17, 2022  
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Jennings Civic Center

Come enjoy good food and good music! An evening of laughter, fun, prizes, food, and entertainment. For more information, [click here.](#)



### Santa and Sirens

December 17 and December 19, 2022  
Begins at 6:00 p.m.

What used to be a golf course in North St. Louis is about to undergo a major change: the 425 acres in unincorporated Spanish Lake are being transformed into the Saint Louis Zoo's WildCare Park. Currently under construction and renovation, the WildCare Park will be an entirely different experience than what visitors are used to at the Zoo. The animals, primarily large ungulates, or hoofed species, such as things like Grevy's Zebras, addax, giraffes and White Rhinos.

"We will have multiple pastures where we will breed endangered ungulates, or animals with hooves," explains Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park Director Jo-Elle Mogerman. "And we're going to give them private space where we can build up those numbers. And many of those species have current recovery programs So ideally, some of those animals that are born here go back to their range land to help our conservation efforts." In addition, the other half of the WildCare Park will be more experiential for visitors. The main draw will be two large safari areas where people will ride through a savannah and a woodland region while the animals roam freely around them. [Read more.](#)



## UMSL embarks on a dramatic campuswide transformation

Ken Cella wouldn't change anything about the education he received at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Cella is the principal overseeing branch development at financial services firm Edward Jones and the new president of UMSL's Chancellor's Council. He reflects fondly on friends he made at UMSL, relationships he built with faculty members and the lessons they taught him during his time at the university before graduating with his degree in marketing in 1993. He admits, however, that the students of today have far greater opportunities. "When I was a student, there really weren't many amenities to speak of for the students," Cella says. "The student center was something far different. We had the library,

in Ferguson  
Each date will have a predetermined route that will be posted on [Facebook](#) and the [Ferguson City website](#) a few days prior to the event.

Santa's coming to town with the help of the Ferguson Fire Department, Ferguson Police Department, and Ferguson Parks and Recreation! They will be escorting Santa and his friends throughout the streets of Ferguson.



**Chancellor's Certificate in Advancing DEI in the Workplace**  
January 23 – June 23, 2023  
online

The Chancellor's Certificate in Workplace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) is a highly interactive, cohort-based, online professional development program that explores the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. In collaboration with MU Extension, this non-credit bearing course is open to all professionals in the Greater Saint Louis community.

but it just wasn't seen as a place to hang out. You had to find places off campus to do that.”

Construction of the Millennium Student Center was completed seven years after Cella graduated. It would be another 15 years after that for the Recreation and Wellness Center to open its doors. Now, almost 30 years since Cella completed his degree, UMSL is embarking on another period of transformational change....“We're building a more cohesive academic experience while connecting campus assets and creating a collaborative environment for learning, research and innovation,” Chancellor Kristin Sobolik says. “And the subsequent demolition of vacant buildings and clearing of land on the South Campus will open 35 acres for transformative development. [Read more.](#)



## Share your thoughts!

UMSL joins St. Louis County and the State of Missouri in working with our community to envision an ambitious plan to improve quality of life and economic opportunities by creating a North St. Louis County Business and Workforce District anchored on the UMSL South Campus. [Learn more](#) about North Campus consolidation and South Campus redevelopment plans.

The community is invited to share their vision for a reimaged campus by attending a public session and through an online survey.

### Attend a Public Co-Design Session

On Campus Session  
ED Collabitat Building  
Tuesday, January 31, 2022  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

For more information, [click here](#). To register for the program, [click here](#).

**The State of Healthcare in North County**  
Leadership Lunch

**Date:** January 12, 2023  
11:30am-1:30pm

**Location:** Catering To You  
12775 New Halls Ferry Rd.

**\$30** Reservation Required  
Visit [NorthStLouisCounty.com](http://NorthStLouisCounty.com)  
Per Person or call 314-895-6241 for reservations.

**The State of Healthcare in North County**  
Thursday, January 12, 2023  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
12775 New Halls Ferry Rd.

This event will host North St. Louis County's healthcare leaders for a panel discussion centered around the current state and well-being of the healthcare industry in our region. Tickets are \$30. Reservations are required. To make a reservation, [click here](#).



**Normandy Family Night**  
Friday, January 13, 2023  
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
UMSL Recreation & Wellness Center

Public Library Sessions  
Natural Bridge Branch  
Thursday, February 2, 2022  
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Parkview Branch  
Saturday, February 4, 2022  
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

### [Take the survey](#)

In alignment with the UMSL Master Plan, the university is planning to develop 35 acres of the south campus for a business and workforce district and public plaza along the Natural Bridge Road corridor to be anchored around the UMSL South MetroLink Station. Questions in this survey are designed to help gather feedback on these goals to best meet the needs of the community. Total time to answer questions should be no more than 8 minutes. To complete the survey, [click here](#).

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## 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!

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There will be activities such as a craft room, pickle ball, climbing wall, and more! This event is free to Normandy residents. Outside community attendee entry is \$4/person. For more information, [click here](#).

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### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observation**

Monday, January 16, 2023  
11:00 a.m.

UMSL Touhill Performing Arts  
Center

Save the date! This annual event features a keynote speaker, music and an announcement of the MLK scholarship awards. Check the website regularly for updates on the event. For details, [click here](#).

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