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Dear Neighbors and Community Partners,

This month's newsletter is filled with stories of people and partnerships committed to progress. We see this commitment in the rejuvenation of an abandoned plaza in Dellwood into a new community hub spearheaded by the Refuge and Restoration Church. UMSL Researchers are working with schools and communities to transform education in predominantly Black school districts in the St. Louis region and to better understand the role of municipal practices on community stability. Creating Whole Communities, a collaboration between UMSL and University of Missouri Extension, continues to support the development of our community's leaders through the Neighborhood Leadership Fellows program, and we are accepting [applications for this program now](#).

While we work for a better future, we continue to face a challenging present. We hope you take a moment to look at

the community resources listed for COVID-19 testing, food distribution, and tutoring.

It takes us all to build community and the society in which we want to live. We encourage you to fill out the Census, register to vote, and exercise your voice.

Sincerely,

Kristin Sobolik  
Chancellor, University of Missouri-St. Louis



## Abandoned Plaza in Dellwood Set to be New Community Hub in Spring 2021

*By Rebecca Rivas of The St. Louis American*

West Florissant Avenue in North St. Louis County drew national attention in 2014 for being Ground Zero of the Ferguson uprising. The abandoned Springwood Plaza at 10148 W. Florissant Ave. is just one mile north of the Canfield Green apartments, where Mike Brown was shot and killed by a former Ferguson police officer in August 2014. It's a place where Pastor Ken Jenkins, of Refuge and Restoration Church, used to walk to shop with his family in Dellwood. But for more than 15 years, it has sat vacant.

In October, Ken and his wife Beverly Jenkins will lead the start of construction on a \$15-million redevelopment project at the plaza, which will include centers for workforce development, early childhood education, financial empowerment, entrepreneurial advancement, and a multiplex facility that will host community opportunities, such as a church, health and wellness, events and the arts. It's set to open in spring/summer of 2021. [Click here](#) to read more.

Check out this [video](#) to hear from area leaders about this exciting project. [Click here](#) to learn more about R + R development.





## Jerome Morris Wins Research Award to Transform Education

Jerome Morris, the E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor of Urban Education at UMSL, was named the recipient of the Lyle M. Spencer Research Award. Morris has studied the impact of school reforms, as well as the links between race, social class and the geography of educational opportunities and Black communities in the South for more than 20 years. He will use the \$1 million prize to investigate his theory of communally bonded schooling in three predominantly Black school districts in the St. Louis region – St. Louis Public Schools, the Jennings School District and the Ferguson-Florissant School District. [Click here](#) to read more.



## UMSL PhD graduate Napoleon Williams III Investigates Role of Municipal Government in Community Stabilization

In 2014, as protests roiled the streets of Ferguson and were broadcast on newscasts across the country in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown, Napoleon Williams III found himself looking for ways to help. Williams was already enrolled as a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, and his day job had him serving as the director of advocacy and outreach at Connections to Success, a local nonprofit working to help individuals break out of the cycle of poverty.

The more time Williams spent in Ferguson, and the more people he talked to, the more he found himself wondering how the community had become the center of national attention. Its deep divisions along racial and socioeconomic lines undergirded the unrest then spreading more broadly across the United States. That launched Williams into a deep dive examining the actions of the municipal government and then comparing them to what other nearby communities had done. The result, five-plus years later, was a more than 300-page dissertation titled "[Role of Municipal Governance in Stabilizing Mature Inner Suburbs: A Study of Five St. Louis Municipalities](#)





## UMSL Contracts

Interested in bidding on projects at UMSL?

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

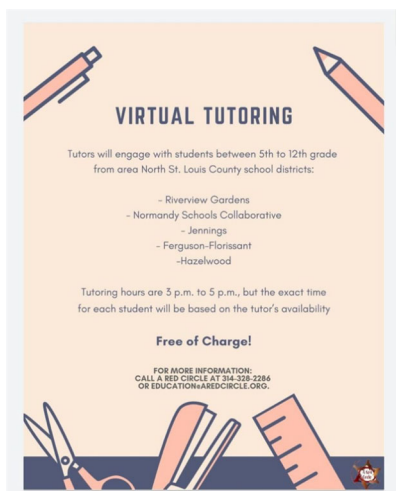
## Resources and Reminders



### Free Food Distribution and COVID-19 Testing at St. Vincent Home for Children

Wednesday 9/30 and 10/03 at 10 AM, 7401 Florissant Road, 63121

This FREE drive-up food distribution event and COVID-19 testing will put those in need in direct contact with support services, and fill their cars with food. By working together, we are keeping our community connected, which is so important at a time when so many are feeling isolated. No insurance cards or payment will be required for COVID-19 testing, and no one will be turned away.



### Virtual Tutoring

A Red Circle is coordinating virtual free tutoring sessions for

students from 5th to 12th grades in Ferg-Flor, Hazelwood, Jennings, Normandy, and Riverview Gardens school districts. For more information, contact A Red Circle at 314-328-2286 or email EDUCATION@AREDCIRCLE.org.



*Images courtesy of the 2020 Missouri Census website*

## **Last Chance to Fill Out the Census!**

We are in the final countdown to complete the 2020 Census, with operations ending on September 30. As you well know, Missouri cannot afford to leave individuals and households uncounted. The 2020 Census will determine the allocation of billions in resources for Missouri communities and we must ensure our voices are adequately represented for the next 10 years.

According to the Census Bureau's response rate report, more than 90% of Missouri households have been counted. However, there are still areas of our state and in our St. Louis area that are falling behind. If you haven't done so already, FILL OUT THE CENSUS, then contact your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors to make sure they are counted.

## **Eighth Grader at Barak Obama School Wins Local Census Video Contest**

Normandy's Barak Obama School eighth grader Zachary Lawrence Piphus is the winner of a local 2020 Census Video Competition. Click here to take a look at Piphus' winning entry, to see why it's important for everyone to complete the census today!





## Are You Registered to Vote?

Visit [www.Vote.org](http://www.Vote.org) to register or confirm your current voter registration status. This site has links to all states. October 7, 2020 is the last day in Missouri to register for the upcoming general elections on November 3rd.

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