BUILDING A COMMUNITY JUST FOR KIDS

REPORT: ILLINOIS SOUTH ANNUAL MEETING
October 24, 2020
Deaconess Foundation is a grant making organization building power for child well-being through philanthropy, advocacy and organizing for racial equity and public policy change. A ministry of the United Church of Christ, Deaconess has invested more than $85 million to improve the health of the St. Louis community since 1998. The Foundation’s advocacy and grantmaking footprint includes St. Louis City, St. Louis, Jefferson, St. Charles and Franklin Counties in Missouri and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois.
OUR MISSION

In the spirit of our faith heritage, the mission of Deaconess Foundation is the improved health of the Metropolitan St. Louis community and its people.

OUR VISION

Deaconess Foundation envisions a community that values the health and well-being of all children and gives priority attention to the most vulnerable. This community only thrives if the allocation of power and distribution of resources, benefits, opportunities and burdens are not predictable by, nor predicated on race.

OUR VALUES

Justice
We believe a just society is essential for the full achievement of individual and community health.

Hope
We believe that positive health changes can occur through cooperative, intentional and well-planned efforts.

Service
We believe the opportunity to serve is a gift with which we have been blessed, and all our interactions should embody that spirit.

Identity
We believe our tradition and history as a ministry of the United Church of Christ should inform and help shape our work.

Faithfulness
We believe our decisions and actions should reflect a faith commitment based on God’s living presence in the world, continuing revelation, and call to servanthood.
WHY IT MATTERS

Child Poverty
• 16 percent of Illinois’s children were poor in 2018—a total of 456,925 children—and children of color were disproportionately poor.
• 35 percent of Black, 20 percent of Hispanic and 9 percent of white children were poor.
• 7 percent of children were extremely poor (their family had income below half the poverty level).
• 18 percent of children under 6 were poor.

Child Health
• 102,466 children ages 0-18 (3 percent) were uninsured in 2018.
• 1,356,850 children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) and All Kids (Children’s Health Insurance Program) in 2018.

Child Welfare
• 31,515 children were abused or neglected in 2018.
• 16,840 children were in foster care on the last day of FY2018.

Youth Justice
• 1,071 children were in residential placement in 2017. 66 percent were Black; 11 percent were Hispanic; and 21 percent were white.

• Children are the poorest demographic of people in the nation and our region
• 1 in 5 children lives in poverty in Madison County
• 456,925 children lived in food-insecure households in Illinois (2017)
• 51,617 homeless children were enrolled in public schools in Illinois (2017)
• 71% of students in East St. Louis graduate

Source: Children’s Defense Fund
OUR DESIRED IMPACT

OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE CLOSER TO THE VISION OF CHILD WELL-BEING WHEN OUR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES ARE REALIZED:

Health Care
All children of the St. Louis region should have universal access to comprehensive mental, physical and dental care, supported by a trauma informed care approach, a network of school-based health centers and the benefits of Medicaid expansion.

Economic Mobility
Families in the St. Louis region should be able to achieve economic stability within one generation in an environment marked by fair chance employment practices, family-supporting wages and asset-building supports.
OUR DESIRED IMPACT

OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE CLOSER TO THE VISION OF CHILD WELL-BEING WHEN OUR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES ARE REALIZED:

Justice and Equity
All children of the St. Louis region should receive just treatment under the law, with specific emphasis on contact with the state's systems for juvenile justice and foster and adoptive care.

Early Childhood Education
All children of the St. Louis region should enjoy full access to quality early childhood care and education from birth to Pre-Kindergarten.
OUR APPROACH IN ACTION

INVEST
in endeavors that improve the health and well-being of children

ADVOCATE
for change in our community

DEVELOP
public policy that improves child well-being

ENGAGE
the St. Louis region to come together to make a difference
To meet the needs of a rapidly changing environment caused by the advent of COVID-19, Deaconess launched the **COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Fund** in April to provide emergency support for Black-led organizations responding to community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Deaconess invested more than $2.2 million to support emergency response and recovery efforts in the St. Louis region from March through August.

In response to disparities in COVID-19 contraction and death rates for Black people and under-representation of Black leadership in regional response, Deaconess focused investment in Black-led organizations and prioritized those that serve Black communities. In addition to being Black-led, eligible organizations, provided direct aid (i.e. food, shelter, financial supports) to people most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or led efforts to mobilize these communities to meet social needs.
The geographic footprint for funding included: St. Louis City, St. Louis, Jefferson, Franklin and St. Charles Counties in Missouri and Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties in Illinois. Overall the 100 organizations funded served residents across ninety-five regional zip codes.
RESPONDING TO THE URGENCY OF NOW

COVID-19 EQUITABLE RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUND

SCOPE OF SERVICES SUPPORTED

FAMILY STABILITY
• Childcare for children of essential workers
• Rental and utility assistance for households

ACCESS TO HEALTH SUPPORTS
• Language translation services
• Virtual healthcare visits

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & JUSTICE AND EQUITY FOR YOUTH
• Technology and support for virtual education and therapeutic intake engagement
Deaconess has allocated $300,000 to support a cohort of six organizations it has identified as critical to framing a just recovery and assure public will for a sustained public policy response. The cohort will receive training, coaching, and peer support for capacity building alongside funding. Notably, every organization within the Just Recovery Cohort is Black-led, further illustrating the Foundation’s commitment to advance equity within the region’s social sector. The Just Recovery Cohort includes:

• Action St. Louis,
• Dutchtown South Community Corporation,
• Forward through Ferguson,
• Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council,
• Organization for Black Struggle, and
• United Congregations of Metro-East.
COVID-19 EQUITABLE RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUND

For the complete Impact Report:

Visit: www.deaconess.org/errf
In light of restrictions on public gatherings that have been in place since March, Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being has continued to offer virtual and on-campus open-air convening spaces to our partners. The Center’s open-air convenings give partners access to the Center’s exterior courtyards and parking lot.

For more information on virtual convening requests please visit www.deaconesscenter.org. To learn more about on-campus open-air convening opportunities contact David Nehrt-Flores at davidn@deaconess.org.

* A community action tank
The journey to an equitable economic recovery from the pandemic will take time. The crisis of the past few months illustrates the enduring scope and scale of need - from increasing access to paid sick leave, to increasing the minimum wage, to providing democratic access and participation of historically under-represented, affected communities. Deaconess Foundation and its partners remain steadfast on the journey towards transformative change and invite community members to continue to engage this movement through future action alerts – the power to change the lives of the region’s children is in your hands.
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Deaconess Foundation is a supporting ministry of both the and Illinois South and Missouri Mid-South Conferences of the United Church of Christ and member of the UCC Council for Health and Human Service Ministries. The majority of the board of trustees are members of the United Church of Christ.
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