BUILDING A COMMUNITY JUST FOR KIDS

REPORT: ILLINOIS SOUTH ANNUAL MEETING
October 16, 2021
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.
DEACONESS FOUNDATION

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

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**

Children are the poorest demographic of people in the nation and our region

- **1 in 5 children** lives in poverty in Madison County

- **366,323 children** lived in food-insecure households in Illinois (2018)

- **52,978 unhoused children** were enrolled in public schools in Illinois (2018)

**Child Poverty**
- **16 percent** of Illinois's children were poor in 2019—a total of **436,327** children—and children of color were disproportionately poor.
- **34 percent** of Black, **20 percent** of Hispanic and **9 percent** of white children were poor.
- **6 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**
- **120,039** children ages 0-18 (**4 percent**) were uninsured in 2019.
- **1,350,045** children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) and All Kids (Children's Health Insurance Program) in 2019.

**Child Welfare**
- **33,331** children were abused or neglected in 2019.
- **18,317** children were in foster care on the last day of FY2019.

**Gun Violence**
- **179** children and teens were killed with guns in 2019.

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
Deaconess Foundation, **Forward Through Ferguson**, and **Missouri Foundation for Health** collaborated to establish the **St. Louis Regional Racial Healing Fund** to invest in healing community trauma and changing the conditions that reinforce systemic racism. With a matching grant from **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** and a growing pool of participating organizations, the Fund supports efforts to develop capacity and infrastructure in the racial justice movement to envision, articulate and create a transformed St. Louis region through community organizing and healing arts.

Grant distributions for the first and second grant cycles occurred this Spring and Summer, respectively, and total more than $554,000 of the Fund’s $1.69 million. Recognizing the longstanding need to convert plans to support community wellness and resilience into action, a broad table of organizers and institutions helped develop the concept of the St. Louis Regional Racial Healing Fund. The collaborative, clear that the work of the fund must be grounded in community, engages residents to participate in strategy development and grantmaking decisions. The Community Governance Board consists of community members across St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Clair County who guide the distribution of funds.
This year we have been focused on optimizing the space, place and network of Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being to drive family economic mobility through community-led democratic development. To that end, Deaconess Foundation, in partnership with the United Church of Christ Church Building and Loan Fund, resourced community-led visioning and strategic planning services in the Covenant Blu-Grand Center and Vandeventer neighborhoods in the City of St. Louis to develop a new neighborhood development plan for 5,500 residents – The North Central Plan.

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds of residents safely and responsibly engaged in community meetings, focus groups, and surveys to help shape the future of the North Central Area. Aldermen and neighborhood associations within the Plan’s geographic footprint, institutions in the Grand Center Arts District, businesses, schools, medical facilities, social service organizations, and churches participated in and endorsed the Plan. A 27-community member steering committee led the engagement and planning process.

On August 18, 2021, following a public hearing at Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being, the City of St. Louis Planning Commission unanimously adopted North Central Vision Action Plan as a Topical Plan.
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Bethany Johnson-Javois will take the helm as president and chief executive officer of Deaconess Foundation on October 18, 2021. Her appointment is the result of a rigorous and thoughtful search led by the Deaconess Executive Search Committee which was appointed by the Deaconess Board of Trustees following the September 2020 announcement of Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson's transition from Deaconess Foundation to the Children’s Defense Fund.

Bethany was a member of the Deaconess Foundation Board of Trustees from 2011 to 2018. During her service, she was instrumental in guiding the Foundation’s commitment to community capacity building and providing citizens with the resources needed to shift public policy and change systems to advance child well-being in the St. Louis region.

Bethany comes to Deaconess from the St. Louis Integrated Health Network (IHN) where she served as chief executive officer for more than 12 years. She resides in Southern Illinois. She is Associate Pastor of her parents’ founding ministry, Monument of Faith, a licensed evangelist missionary and former national health initiative leader in the Church of God in Christ. Bethany received her Bachelor of Science in International Business Management from Missouri State University and her Master of Social Work from Washington University.

BETHANY JOHNSON-JAVOIS
Incoming President and CEO

DEACONESS.ORG
OUR CORE TEAM
DEACONESS FOUNDATION STAFF

KIESHA DAVIS
Director, Partnership and Capacity Building

DAVID NEHRT-FLORES
Manager, Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being

MATT OLDANI
Vice President, Operations

CONSTANCE J. RUSH
Director, Advocacy and Freedom Schools

MICHAEL SHULTZ
Program Assistant

CASSELL WILLIAMS
Coordinator, Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being

CHERYL D.S. WALKER
Interim President and C.E.O.
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.
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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