

Making Our MARK



A Connection to Friends, Families and Supporters of United Inner City Services and St. Mark Center

Fall 2018

Good morning, Sunshine! Welcome to St. Mark Center • Friends & Family Breakfast

When you start the morning with special people, you know it's going to be a good day. A really good day!

And so it was on September 27th at St. Mark Center where 115 Friends and Family gathered for breakfast in our very own Mamie Lee Isler Theatre. On the menu: steaming mugs of coffee, of course, and a fresh and tasty serving of all-things-St. Mark.

A planning committee put the wheels in motion for the Friends & Family Breakfast a few months ago. The event was a way to fortify the minds and hearts of guests with our essential

mission: building bridges, inspiring minds, and impacting futures for children and families whose growth, development, and academic and life success get a healthy start at St. Mark Center.

"Our community is everything," says Deidre Anderson, CEO of UICS. "Our students, our families, our faculty - we're all lifted up by the kindness, encouragement, and investment in a strong and healthy Kansas City. Every opportunity to connect is an opportunity to impact not just a child's life, but the lives of their family."

Like our young students ages six weeks to five years, our guests



Above left: Gene Willis, Chief Engagement Officer at UICS-St. Mark Center, and Matrika Hornsby, Blue Room Lead Teacher, visit with students.



Above right: Guests of table host Rob Flores enjoyed coffee and conversation before a brief "get-to-know-St. Mark" program got underway.



were immersed in seeing, learning and experiencing how quality early education at St. Mark Center builds a solid foundation right from the start. We shared a distinctive taste of what life at St. Mark Center is all about: a rich and vibrant culture of creative expression, a place where aspiration meets action, an environment of nurturing strength and uplifting support.

"It is always, always our pleasure to welcome visitors to our campus," Deidre says, "and we appreciate our table hosts for opening their circle of friends and family with us."

Want to see for yourself why St. Mark Center is a catalyst in our community sparking change? Come for a tour and visit by registering with Gene Willis, Chief Engagement Officer, gene.willis@uicskc.org or call 816.994.5400.





On the Mark



Dear Friends,

Timing is everything.

We are privileged to spend the earliest, most formative years with students at St. Mark Center. Children from six weeks to five years of age come into our care at the most integral time of their learning, growth and development. Hand-in-hand with families, we build the foundation for each child's potential and success, not only in the classroom, but at home and in life.

Quality early education is just that: early on and with a seize-the-day momentum! The clock is ticking and there's much work to be done considering 90% of brain development occurs before a child's fifth birthday. When we invest from the beginning in a child's education and healthy development, everyone reaps the rewards.

Building a strong and early foundation for academic and life success means St. Mark Center students:

- are less likely to repeat a grade
- more likely to finish high school
- more likely to overcome developmental disabilities.

Our influence before kindergarten also has lifelong rewards:

- parents are more likely to continue their own education and pursue careers
- families take a generational step ahead as they leverage the opportunities inspired by a quality education and the network of support we provide at St. Mark Center.

There's no better time than now to share our gratitude for all that you do to support our hope-filled work at St. Mark Center. Thank you for helping us make the most of every moment!

Warm regards,

Deidre Anderson
Chief Executive Officer, UICS • St. Mark Center

There's no better time
to build a foundation
for each child's
**POTENTIAL
& SUCCESS**
in the classroom,
at home, and in life.



OUR VISION

UICS/St. Mark Center envisions an empowered community where children and families flourish.

OUR MISSION

Building bridges.
Inspiring minds.
Impacting futures.

VISIT

Come for a visit to see our hope-filled mission in action. Please call to schedule your visit. 816.994.5400

GIVE

Your support makes a difference.
Donate online at UICSKC.org/invest

CONNECT

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Phone: 816.994.5400

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UICSKC.org

Arts@St. Mark

New partnership with the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art draws connections to child development and the arts.

Art at St. Mark Center not only inspires boundless creativity, it reveals the immeasurable ways the arts influence lifelong learning and relationships to the world around us.

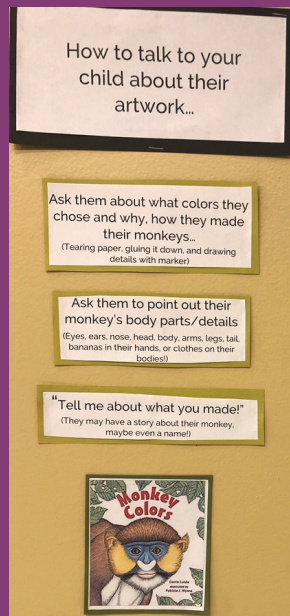
In an exciting partnership with The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, students at St. Mark Center are connecting art-making processes to literature, developing fine motor skills, and tapping into their creativity: crafting an exotic animal hat has special meaning after a visit to the African art gallery.

“You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”

- Maya Angelou

Educators from The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art visit our pre-school classrooms weekly where students read a book and enjoy a related art lesson. In a recent tactile lesson, students explored textures while developing fine motor skills by creating a texture rubbing, painting with feathers, and folding paper.

Beginning this fall, museum educators will also host quarterly Stay, Play & Learn after-school programs for students and families to enjoy together.



St. Mark Center Community Star

When children see themselves in literature, they are more likely to be engaged in their lessons, improve comprehension, and develop a lifelong passion for reading, according to the Cooperative Children's Book Center.

The Junior League of Kansas City, Missouri is generously supporting St. Mark Center's efforts to provide culturally-relevant language and literacy lessons by helping to fund literacy kits for our classrooms.

The Junior League's generous gift provides storybooks and interactive items such as play props, puppets, and flashcards to enhance student lessons. With a student body comprised of 87% children of color, the kits give students an opportunity to directly place themselves in stories.

"It's important for students to see characters in books that look or live as they do," said Ronisha Conway, Rainbow Room lead teacher. "Whenever we read a book that reflects similar cultures, family dynamics or physical traits in our students, they will smile and say, 'look, their hair is like mine,' Ronisha says. "It's fun to see our students light up when they sense a connection to the lesson or activity we're learning that day."

St. Mark Center welcomes opportunities for community partnership. To learn how your company or organization can make a meaningful difference in the lives of St. Mark Center students, please visit UICSKC.org or contact Gene Willis, Chief Engagement Officer, gene.willis@uicskc.org or call 816.994.5400.



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**
Women building better communities





in Communities



Special things are happening at the corner of 12th Street and Sesame Street

In late June, St. Mark Center had a special visit from a brand that would make anyone smile: Sesame Street!

The production team from the iconic educational experience in New York City, NY visited St. Mark Center to record segments with three of our families for the "Sesame Street in Communities" project.

This initiative addresses childhood and family traumas, with the completed recordings and accompanying books designed to help young people better cope with loss, family member departures, life changes, community violence, and more.



With education on these sensitive topics starting at a young age, children can learn how to process and address strong emotions into perspectives that go beyond negative feelings. Adults also learn the importance of comforting young children, insights into the grieving process, and how nurturing touch fosters brain development.

These segments will be available later this year. For more information, visit SesameStreetInCommunities.org

An egg-ceptional way to start the day!

It was a perfect autumn day for guests from all corners of our community to come together for a Friends & Family Breakfast at St. Mark Center.



Breakfast is served.

Planning Committee members Michelle Horst (left in apron) and Grant Horst (right) share tableside hospitality with Friends & Family.

A good morning with Friends & Family at St. Mark Center



Wordsmith

Guest Jeff Barry's name tag explains why he always showed up for English class.



Meet & Greet

Cindy Martin and Janet Payne welcomed guests.



Friends & Family Breakfast Planning Committee

Bottom row from left: Frances Baszta, Irv Dwork, Cindy Martin, Phyllis Stevens, Co-Chair, and Alex Basalo, Organizational Giving Coordinator.

Top row from left: Deidre Anderson, CEO, Bailey Barry, Kim Klein, Co-Chair, Michelle Horst, Grant Horst, and Gene Willis, Chief Engagement Officer.

Not pictured: Janet Payne

Breakfast with a side of smiles

Janet Payne extends a warm St. Mark welcome to our guests.



Tablescapes

Student art adorned tabletops, right, giving a glimpse into the distinctive creative curriculum at St. Mark Center.



Say "hello" to Gene Willis

Chief Engagement Officer

St. Mark Center • UICS

Like peanut butter and jelly, and cookies and milk, some things were meant to be together. That's exactly Gene Willis' philosophy about community engagement at St. Mark Center.

"Our success relies on our connectedness with the community. Our mission comes alive when people become part of our purpose," he says..

As the Chief Engagement Officer at St. Mark Center, Gene is a natural at cultivating meaningful relationships with individuals, businesses, and foundations.

"In engaging our community, we develop friendships with advocates, volunteers and supporters - partners who believe whole-heartedly in high-quality early education, and more specifically, a St. Mark Center education." he says.

Gene has long displayed a commitment to youth development in Kansas City. He is in his 15th year of being a Big Brother/Big Couple for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kansas City, including being named Big Brother of the Year in 2014.



CATCHING UP WITH GENE

On food:

I'm a breakfast hound. From cold cereals and juices to lemon-centered French toast and hot chocolate, it's by far my favorite food category.

Last good read:

"The Other Wes Moore" by Wes Moore. Two boys with similar names and roots both grew up in the Baltimore area, but forks in the road led them in different directions. It's a book about choices, socioeconomics, education, crime, and poverty, demonstrated in two lives.

The perfect Saturday is:

...watching my Gamecocks win a great football game, time loving on our two dogs, a workout, a nap, and a concert date night with my wife.

St. Mark Center welcomes GEICO KC for a Day of Caring on the UICS campus



It goes without saying: our campus is a happening place!

With 110 students and more than 40 staff, our facilities are brimming with activity. That's why a generous offer to clean, spruce, and repair a few areas of the campus is always gratefully accepted.

The United Way Day of Caring on September 15th was the perfect opportunity for 15 members of the GEICO KC team, including visiting members from Buffalo, NY, to tackle some much-needed projects.

Handywork included painting playground equipment, as well as restrooms, deep cleaning classrooms and main hallways, and restocking and organizing our art studio.

We salute you, GEICO KC. Your work here is amazing!

Have an interest in an individual or group volunteer opportunity? Email gene.willis@uicskc.org or visit UICSKC.org for more information.



Choose to give. Choose St. Mark Center.

DonorsChoose.org is an organization that links caring people to classrooms. Like teachers all over the nation, the faculty at St. Mark Center can always use support in bringing their classroom dreams to life.



DonorsChoose.org

Support a classroom. Build a future.

DonorsChoose.org gives individuals the opportunity to select a school and project that inspires them, and then donate any amount to help fund the project.

Items on the St. Mark Center wish list include:

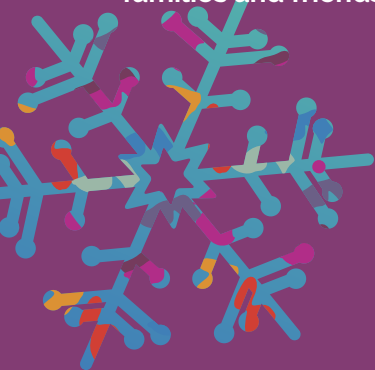
- Biology equipment such as a microscope and slides
- Legos, Hot Wheels, and toy cars
- An aquarium or nature-themed supplies
- A kitchen playset, pots and pans, and cash register
- Shelving and organization totes

Please visit bit.ly/UICSDonorsChoose to choose and donate.

Save the date • 12.20.18

Snow Much Fun!

A winter festival of
epic proportions for our students,
families and friends.



Join us! • UICS Fall Festival
Saturday, October 27, 2018 • 12-4 pm
UICS • St. Mark Center Campus

Fall is for fun!

Be a part of this
family-friendly
day of fun, cultural
celebration, and
community outreach
on the grounds
of St. Mark Center.



Food.
Games.
Art.
Live Entertainment.
Interactive Fun!

Outdoor tent village with arts/educational activities:

- family puppet making • pumpkin decorating • face painting
- program-based class studies • community partner interactive booths
- free food and drinks • outdoor fun and games

Live performances by local artists at the Fall Festival Main Stage

Sponsor and in-kind opportunities:

Please contact Rhonda Nolan, Director of Family and Community Engagement,
rhonda.nolan@uicskc.org or call 816.994.5400.



Tutu much fun!

There's nothing quite like the first day of school. For St. Mark Center students Sariahah (top) and Sa'Miyah (below), it was a day for imaginative fun and creative exploration.