



St. Mark Center ▪ Metro Center ▪ North Center

Making Our Mark | A Connection to Friends, Families and Supporters of UICS **Winter 2020**

Here we grow again: UICS-North Center expansion **UICS is building bridges for little learners in the Northland**

With the second expansion in one year, United Inner City Services (UICS) is proud to announce its third early education facility/school in the Northland, at 6600A Royal Street in Pleasant Valley, MO.

Nestled between I-35 and I-435 off of South Liberty Parkway, North Child and Family Development Center (UICS-North Center) will bring the established excellence of UICS' arts-based early education curriculum to serve families in Clay and Platte Counties.

"We are inspired to serve more families in a time of great questions about health, wellbeing, and job stability," said UICS CEO Deidre Anderson. "Our focus on the whole child, through social and emotional development along with a foundation for learning, is incredibly relevant today."

UICS-North Center opened in early September in a space formerly occupied by EasterSeals Midwest. Serving a capacity of 70+ students ranging from six weeks to five years old, the early education school will mirror the philosophy and curriculum of UICS-St. Mark Center and UICS-Metro Center.

Opening UICS-North Center has provided stability for children and families that would otherwise have been displaced with the closure of the former early learning provider. This continuity has been especially important to students with disabilities and unique needs. Additionally, UICS has been able to extend employment to educators and administrators of EasterSeals Midwest.

We are grateful for the opportunity to grow our impact in the Northland during a time where it is more important than ever to build bridges and inspire minds.



According to the **Center for American Progress**, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to a loss of **4.5 million childcare slots** nationwide. Opening UICS-North Center allows UICS to **expand its student body by 23%**.

A new student (top) starts his day with a smile; UICS-North Center (center) opens its doors in early September to serve little learners in Pleasant Valley, MO; friends (bottom) take turns building Lego cars.



On the Mark



UICS Board of Directors President Mary Jorgenson (left) and UICS Chief Executive Officer Deidre Anderson

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am happy to connect with you through this quarterly newsletter - and to also give Deidre a break from the many additional duties that nonprofit leaders have risen to this year.

For more than 15 years, my family and I have been a part of the UICS community. My husband, Mark, and I have served as citizen advocates for UICS-St. Mark Center's growth. It's been where I've seen creativity and education form life-altering relationships and opportunities, including those of our own grandchildren.

This year, UICS expanded to a third early education center, one that meets the needs of the differently abled along with continuing our early education excellence. Even during a pandemic, our mission of "building bridges, inspiring minds, and impacting futures" rings true.

UICS continues to thrive, but the COVID-19 pandemic has seen educators on the front lines of safety and sustainability, when this career path has historically been asked to give so much of themselves. Society is also learning how early education plays a key role in workforce infrastructure. Simply put: if our families don't have quality child care, they can struggle to maintain their jobs.

I implore you to support UICS with a year-end gift. According to the Center for American Progress, operational costs for early education providers have risen by 47% throughout the pandemic. The needs include more cleaning, more precautions, and virtual and in-classroom education.

Thank you for being a part of our UICS community. We hope that you enjoy this holiday season!

Sincerely,

Mary Jorgenson, UICS Board President

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OUR VISION

UICS envisions an empowered community where children and families flourish.

OUR MISSION

Building bridges.
Inspiring minds.
Impacting futures.

ADVOCATE

Contact your local or national elected representative about the importance of early childhood education!

GIVE

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

CONNECT

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Tiny Tuesdays: Music to our (little) ears

While the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our world dramatically in the past year, UICS continues to find ways to safely bring art and cultural experiences to our students. Even if it's from the parking lot!

Students from our St. Mark and Metro Centers recently enjoyed live performances from the [Kansas City Symphony](#) through our Tiny Tuesday Concert Series.

UICS is distinguished for its arts-based curriculum which not only enhances students' development, but also enriches their lives through exposure to the arts. Our Tiny Tuesday Concert Series brings the world of art and performance directly to students.



UICS-St. Mark Center students (left) enjoy riding to the parking lot for some fresh air and lively music; UICS students (center) play along to their favorite songs with the Kansas City Symphony; the Kansas City Symphony (right) plays two morning concerts, featuring a mix of classical pieces and children's favorites.

Planting seeds of knowledge, exploration, and fun

Excitement for nature blooms as UICS-Metro Center students explore their new outdoor classroom space

Thanks to generous UICS community partners, UICS-Metro Center's outdoor play space has experienced an incredible transformation and further ignited our students to learn and thrive.

UICS supporter and early childhood education advocate [PNC Bank](#) graciously supplied funding to enable UICS-Metro Center's playground to become a certified Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom. It's one of three PNC-supported outdoor classrooms in the nation. Nature Explore is a national nonprofit program that helps schools and organizations incorporate nature into children's daily

learning. PNC's generosity also included training for teachers/staff to teach students in the space throughout all four seasons.

[The Greensman](#) provided landscaping services, while [Kansas City Community Gardens](#) offered discounted seeds, plants, soil, materials, and helpful instructions for raised garden beds. [Home Depot](#), [Suburban Lawn & Garden](#), and [Soil Service Garden Center](#) donated compost and plants to fill the garden spaces. Our little learners have been eager participants in planting and caring for the gardens, along with expressing their creativity toward the outdoors.



Let's grow!

UICS-Metro Center student Rhyder (left) plants seeds in one of the raised flower beds.

Students tend to vegetable plants (right) in new raised beds at UICS-Metro Center. They grew broccoli, green beans, carrots, spinach, radishes, and sugar snap peas this past spring and summer.

Dare to be different!

Celebrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at UICS

Diversity can come in many forms. We welcome and expect these differences in UICS classrooms and schools.

To embrace our abilities and uniqueness, Ms. Shunta Winston (Ms. Taye) led an initiative at UICS-Metro Center to embrace individuals with different abilities and from various parts of the world.

"It's all about inclusion. I want to show the kids it's okay to be different."

- Ms. Shunta Winston (Ms. Taye), educator at UICS-Metro Center



Ms. Taye (above) teaches pre-K students at UICS-Metro Center about different places in the world with a new globe granted in a recent [DonorsChoose](#) project.

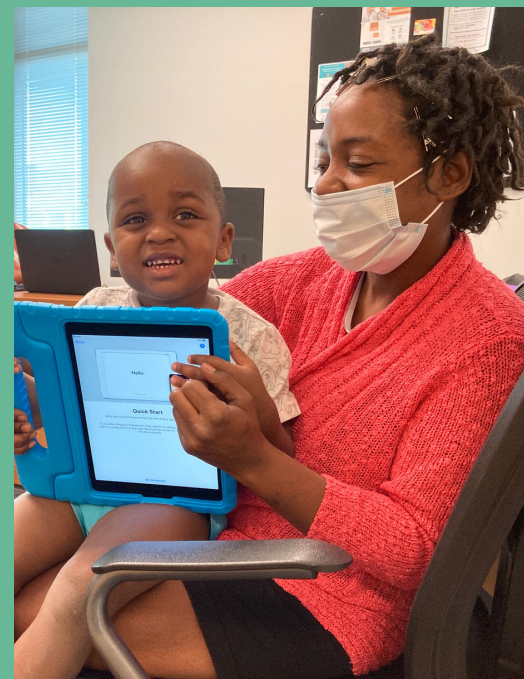
UICS-St. Mark Center celebrated ethnic diversity by recognizing [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) in September and October, with students learning about history, culture, and generations of Hispanic Americans who have positively enriched and influenced our society.

Rather than viewing difference as a separating factor, UICS embraces them, celebrates them, and encourages them to unify us.



Norma Monreal (above), sous-chef at UICS, shares Sopapilla Cheesecake with students at UICS-St. Mark Center to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. The traditional recipe is one her family makes for a quinceañera, which is a celebration of a girl's 15th birthday.

All around UICS



Clockwise from top left:

[Swope Health](#) visited UICS-St. Mark Center for Dental Day. They understand going to the dentist can be intimidating for young students and work to ensure positive health/dental care experiences early in life.

Thanks to our friends at [Suburban Lawn & Garden, Inc.](#), playgrounds at all three UICS centers transformed into pumpkin patches in honor of the changing fall season.

During the pandemic, our incredible partners at [SchoolSmartKC](#) and the [Hall Family Foundation](#) have worked to bridge the digital divide by providing iPads and internet access to some of our students and families.

Our friends at [PNC Bank](#) provided wonderful Lakeshore Learning take-home kits to our students! We are grateful for PNC's partnership in supporting UICS and early childhood education in our community.

UICS helped facilitate **two COVID-19 testing events** in May and June, totaling 225 people tested at or near UICS school sites. The June test, along the Troost Corridor, saw the most participants that our partner, [Heart-to-Heart International](#), had experienced at a testing site to that point.

UICS COMMUNITY STARS



Church of the Resurrection

UICS is the beneficiary of generous community support to promote inclusion of the arts for our little learners. In addition to monetary support, COVID-19 relief, and on-site volunteerism, [Church of the Resurrection](#) supplied and prepared individual art kits for our at-home learners. Additionally, church volunteers sent notes of appreciation and encouragement to our teaching staff at all three UICS schools. Thank you for your support!

Local creative professional [Katie McNeil](#) has been integral in telling UICS' story through impeccable design and communication initiatives. She creates exceptional signage and marketing materials for our centers and offers great expertise with UICS communications.

Katie's pro bono work helps keep our families and communities safe and spreads the word about early childhood education. UICS' mission is close to Katie's heart, given that her daughter is the age of our pre-K students. We couldn't be more grateful for her advocacy and incredible design talents. Thank you, Katie!

Katie McNeil



Superior Bowen

Our friends at [Superior Bowen](#) have truly adopted our mission to further quality early childhood education in the city. From volunteering and in-kind donations, to infrastructure projects, they have truly made their mark on our learning experience. Their latest project at UICS-St. Mark Center offers students a fun Mud Kitchen where they can practice imaginative play and, of course, get dirty!

Family Engagement at UICS

Family Meal Partners

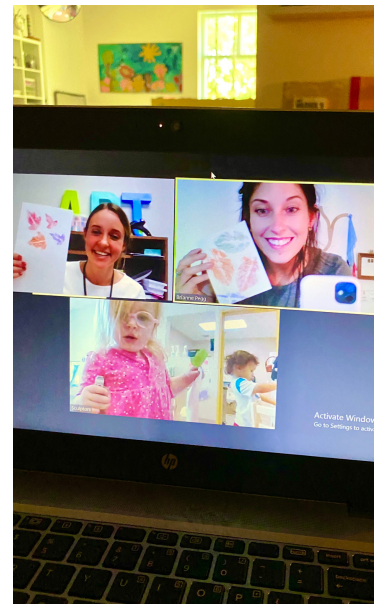


With the help of several generous partners throughout the city including [Jewish Family Services \(JFS\)](#), the [Ewing Marion Kauffman School](#), [Mid-America Regional Council \(MARC\)](#), [Pete's Garden](#), and [American Dining Creations](#), our UICS families have been able and continue to receive food every week through our curbside pick up program.

Arts at Home

A part of our secret to success at UICS is a commitment to the arts. Whether in classrooms or at home, students and parents expand their minds when it comes to creativity.

Join us for our **Zoom, Play, and Learn** series, a free, virtual, arts-based session for students who are learning at home, every Thursday at 3:00 p.m. Follow us @uicskc on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) for more information and the Zoom password.





2008 E. 12th Street ▪ Kansas City, MO 64127

UICS Arts & Crafts Wish List



All-purpose flour
Aluminum foil ▪ Corn
starch ▪ Baby wipes
Crayons (new)
Food coloring
Glue sticks ▪ Mason
jars ▪ Paper plates
and more!

View the full list at
UICSKC.org



RoundUp

Spare your change to make CHANGE!

UICS has partnered with a new mobile app and website that allows you to automatically donate the change from your card purchases to support our work. Search "RoundUp App" in the App Store or Google Play Store to download.



Want to learn more about
these stories and so much more?
Visit [our blog](#) for all things UICS!

Give the gift that keeps on
growing and GROWING!

Your gift brings quality early education to a little learner.

On any given day, more than 30% of our families require assistance with their early education fees, yet funding is not available.

Your gift to UICS helps to ease the burden for working families that are economically vulnerable and unable to pay market rate for a quality early education. Support KC's Little Learners NOW with [a gift to UICS!](#)



Give at UICSKC.org

