



2021-2022 Impact Report

1818 Community Engagement Grants

Saint Louis University

*Sponsored by
Lux Living of St. Louis*



The 1818 Community Engagement Grant program received 34 applications in its fourth year. 18 were selected and provided with up to \$1,800 each to implement a project that would positively impact the community. This was the first year since the launch that the program was able to be fully completed, as the previous two cycles were interrupted by COVID-19. The return to a full program was buoyed by strong campus involvement - more groups collaborated on projects than ever before.



SLU students work with children at Flance Early Learning Center on the Outdoor Garden project.



33

Campus groups and departments involved with the projects.



27

Non-profits in the St. Louis community that were partners.



~1,300

People in the community directly impacted by a grant.

Project Focus Areas



Healthcare Support



Community Resource Development



Mental Health and Well-being



Youth Development

Healthcare Support

Healthy & Accessible Cooking on a Budget

- Interdisciplinary collaboration between Spanish and Nutrition and Dietetics students and faculty to deliver a set of cooking classes to low-income Hispanic families served by LifeWise STL. 18 households completed 10 classes, learning how to cook healthy on a budget.
- Prior to the classes, 33% of families said it was "very hard" or "hard" to cook healthy; afterwards only 5%.
- Additionally, 100% of participants indicated they had prepared a meal at home during the last month, compared to only 60% prior to the start of classes.



Parent participant's child eating una ensalada de frutas prepared during Class #1.

"This program has been one of the most stunning programs that we have had during my six and 1/2 years at LifeWise. Collaborating with the various student groups at SLU has been rewarding for me and for LifeWise participants."

Eileen Wolfington, Coordinator of Wellness at LifeWise STL

Mother's Helping Hand

- Partnership between students in the School of Public Health and faculty in the Department of Epidemiology.
- Series of courses taught by healthcare professionals for the new and expectant mothers living at Haven of Grace, a shelter for pregnant women experiencing homelessness.
- Courses focused on a combination of pre/post partum education and skills, as well as mental well-being and self-care strategies to deal with the stresses of becoming a new mother.



No-Cost Pregnancy and HIV Testing Project

- In partnership with the St. Louis City Dept. of Health, SLU students were able to distribute over 400 at-home pregnancy and HIV tests to people who could not otherwise afford them.
- A safe, secure method via automated screening form was developed by SLU students to greatly improve accessibility among the low-income population.

"This self-testing HIV program provides young people with a convenient, discreet, and empowering way to know their HIV status due to its innovative approach to improving access to HIV testing for these hard-to-reach populations."

Natalie Torres-Negron, Program Manager of City of St. Louis Department of Health

Support for Local Mothers

- Partnership between SLU's Students For Life chapter and multiple non-profits serving new mothers.
- Collected thousands of items - diapers, wipes, formula, and strollers - that were distributed to new mothers in need. This was coupled with resources and education on how to utilize these items.



Community advocates with Our Lady's Inn women's shelter receive donations.

"My team and I learned how difficult it is for low-income communities to access childcare resources. Women are disproportionately affected by these issues, and it reminded us of the need for safety nets in our society."

- Isabelle Hotard, President of SLU Students for Life

Community Partners

- Birthright St. Louis
- Haven of Grace
- Our Lady's Inn
- City of St. Louis Health Department
- LifeWise STL
- WISH Center

Community Resource Development

The Closet

- The goal of The Closet is to provide accessible and free gender-affirming equipment to students in need.
- Hundreds of items, including binders, gaffs, make-up kits and other accessories were provided.
- When surveyed, 100% of clients expressed that they would not have been able to find these items elsewhere, indicating the importance of this resource on campus.



"I've wanted a binder for years, but it's always been too expensive; seeing my flat chest in the mirror for the first time made me cry."

Student client at the The Closet

View of the entrance to The Closet, located in the Billiken 2 Billiken Resale Shop.

Winter Emergency Outreach

- Provided dozens of cots, blankets, toiletry packages, and other items to people temporarily living at the Safe Haven.
- Safe Haven was a pop-up winter emergency shelter for unhoused individuals, for when night time temperatures fell below 20 F.
- The shelter was located at Saint Louis University's Il Monastero facility, and staffed largely by SLU by students, faculty and staff.



SCAN TO READ COVERAGE ON THE SAFE HAVEN BY STL TODAY.

Family Essentials Initiative



- Partnership between SLU School of Social Work and Lift for Life Academy, which offers STL city youth a safe place to strengthen their mind, body and spirit.
- Project established a permanent Family Resource Closet at the gym, so families with youth enrolled can also have access to basic necessities like formula, diapers, toiletries, and clothing.

Global Brigades, Local Volunteering

- Responded to community need identified by Freedom Schools, in conjunction with LifeWise STL.
- Provided schools with first aid kits for all of their summer sessions, camps and programs - helping to keep nearly 400 children safe this upcoming summer.



SLU student pose with assembled first aid kits.

"The first aid kits are such an asset to the summer program. There are enough kits for each classroom which allows for minimal disruption during the day."

Emma Patterson, Coordinator of Young Scholars Program

Students for Refugees

- Born out of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan that brought over 1,200 new refugees to the St. Louis area, this project collected household goods and items to distribute.
- SLU campus groups such as Micah Program, Alpha Phi Omega, Alpha Epsilon Delta, the Hindu Student Community, and several others partnered with St. Louis humanitarian organization Christian Friends of New Americans to provide hundreds of much-needed items to recently-arrived refugees.



Community Partners

- Christian Friends of New Americans
- LifeWise STL
- Metro Trans Umbrella Group
- Freedom Schools
- Lift for Life Academy
- St. Louis Winter Outreach

Mental Health Movement

- Program designed to de-stigmatize seeking assistance for mental health issues, specifically among high-school students from under-represented backgrounds.
- Youth who participated reported that, through sharing personal struggles and accomplishments, they felt a new openness in discussing mental health with both their peers and families.

"Particularly with our South Asian community there is such a silence and stigma around receiving treatment for mental health - this event was important to let them know it's okay to do so, and what is available."



- Areeb Shah, Program Participant

Accompaniment in Mental Health Care

- Students from the Ethics and Practice of Community Mental Health partnered with the Independence Center, which operates a "clubhouse" model and provides a safe and supportive environment for people with severe and persistent mental illnesses.
- Students and clubhouse members worked together, engaged in group discussions and activities, and formed meaningful connections through learning from each other. Clubhouse members often served as teachers for the SLU students, educating them on issues they face and obstacles to overcome.

"You are a wonderful group of smart and capable young students. It was a pleasure leading discussions with you all."



Independence Club Member

Putting Care in Healthcare: Providing Psychosocial Support to Pediatric Patients

- A continuation of a 20-21 grant, this project sought to reduce feelings of isolation among residents of the Mary Ryder Nursing home due to COVID-19.
- Student hosted regular dinners, activities and events - including a "Senior Prom" - for residents and established a permanent "senior buddy program."



"Such a fun prom night! You ladies are terrific! Thank you for being so wonderful to the residents and creating lasting memories. It's the small things that make a big difference for these ladies and you showed them that they are loved today and all year! We can't wait for next year!"

- Keryn Shipman, Support Coordinator at Mary Ryder Homes

SLU Mental Wellness Fair

- Partnered with Better Family Life to host a wellness fair for families and youth, to educate them on current mental health strategies and practices.



40 Families participated in this first of its kind event.



The fair brought together volunteers from SLU and other mental health non-profits from around St. Louis.

Community Partners

- APPNA St. Louis
- Independence Center
- Mary Ryder Home
- Better Family Life
- National Alliance on Mental Illness - St. Louis
- Project Downtown of St. Louis
- CHADS Coalition

Youth Development

Science For and With the Community

- Program for middle and high school youth from under-represented population to stimulate interest in pursuing a STEM-related field.
- Youth participated in weekly science lessons delivered by various SLU faculty and members of the St. Louis science community.
- Students went on to present 10 different projects at either a local or national science fair. They also presented as a team at the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Engineers (NOBCE) and won 2nd place.

Thank you for your investment and influence into the lives of our children. I appreciate your time and energy! Your presence and influence will be a great asset in their lives.

- Kiya K., parent of participating youth

Flance Early Learning Center - Outdoor Classroom Creation

- Partnership between SLU's Criminal Justice students and youth, teachers and board members of a local early childhood center to create an outdoor learning environment.
- Garden will teach children on the importance of sustainability and environmental care-taking.



"Being in the community, spending time with the children and their families, and being a part of such a special project was amazing. I had so much fun while realizing how what I learned in class connected with our community's day-to-day lives."

SLU Student Volunteer

Parks on the Move: Enhancing K-12 STEM Education w/ Drones



Pictured to the left: Young children flying drones at the AirCRAFT Lab Drone cage, organized by faculty and students in SLU Parks School of Engineering.

"This was a great addition to The Saint Louis Science's Centers Sci-fest: Engineering Expo. We appreciate all the effort Srikanth and his students invested in serving our community."

- Saint Louis Science Center Director

- SLU students and faculty created a mobile exhibit where children attending the St. Louis Science Center Sci-fest event could learn to fly a drone.
- Over 3,000 individuals attended that day's Sci-fest, and over 200 youth engaged in flying and learning about drones.

Med"U"Cation

- Program organized by SLU pre-med students to encourage and stimulate interest in careers in the medical field amongst under-served middle school students.
- 15 youth from the Boys and Girls Club participated in bi-weekly classes, listening to presentations from leaders of color in the medical field.
- Students also participated in hands-on learning activities, and at the conclusion each received a Medical Whitecoat with their name embroidered, as "graduates" of the Med"U"Cation program.



Community Partners

- Boys and Girls Club of Greater St. Louis
- Circle of Excellence
- Flance Early Learning Center
- St. Louis Science Center
- The Water Institute
- Teen Center of Excellence

Student leaders highlighted multiple areas of growth and development gained through the grant process:

- Improved communication skills
- Ability to collaborate with various groups
- Improved organization skills
- Ability to respond to challenges; adaptability
- Increased professionalism
- Non-profit management
- Budget management and fundraising

"I learned about how much time can go into planning and organizing an event - something that lasted for a half-day took hours of planning, meetings, agenda settings, and more."

"Our project had multiple moving parts, and our members were able to work quickly with our community partners to address unforeseen issues - I learned to be much more adaptable when challenges arose!"



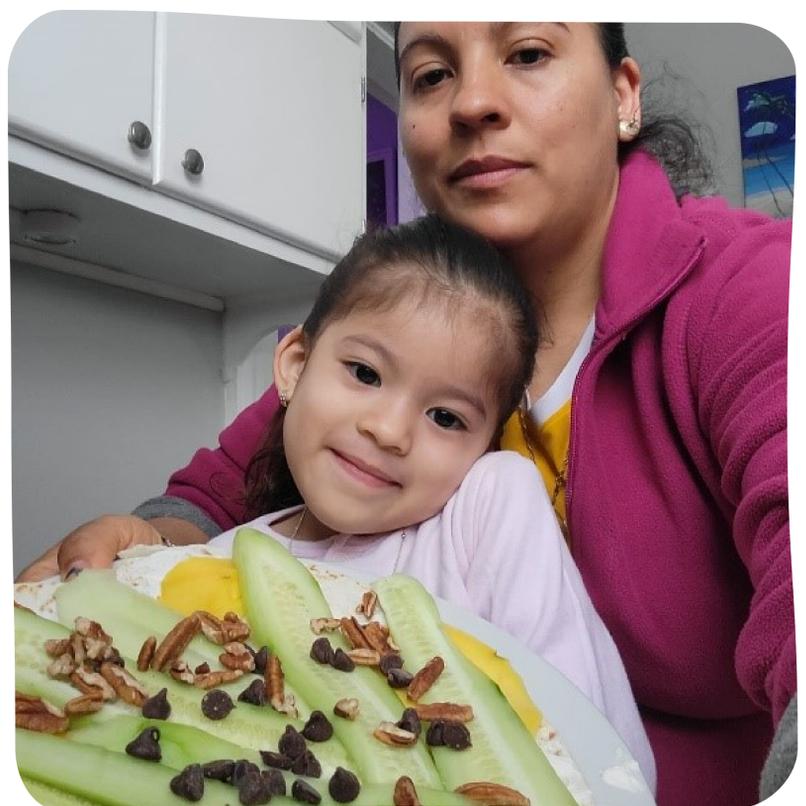
Responding to Crisis

14 of the 18 projects responded directly to needs identified by the community as a result of COVID-19, economic hardship, and a worsening mental health crisis amongst youth.

Importance of Community

"To make an impact on individuals in the community that we directly live and attend school in was life-changing. We were able to learn about the true power of empathy while working with people who are impacted by the disparity that exists in St. Louis."

Sustainability



These include such plans as:

ALL 18 of the grants have a plan in place to continue the project next year.

- Embedding the project in department or student organization operations.
- Creating social media and awareness campaigns.
- Pursuing seed grants for continued funding.