



A Connection to Friends, Families and Supporters of United Inner City Services and St. Mark Center **Winter 2019**

Making our mark with memorable arts experiences



Handprint gallery at Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts reveals PNC Bank's Grow Up Great

An enriching community initiative to support early childhood education and school readiness for preschoolers

Sometimes making our mark is just that: sharing in a unique and memorable experience that stays with us forever.

That is the spirit of a gallery created by PNC Bank in partnership with the prestigious Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The gallery showcases hundreds of children's handprints - those of St. Mark Center students as well as students from an early learning center in Overland Park, KS. The Grow Up Great Gallery is PNC's initiative to inspire great futures for local children through memorable arts experiences.

The installation, revealed in November to students and their families, included dinner and interactive performances by StoneLion Puppet Theatre. After the meal, students and families participated in a Drum Safari demonstration in the Brandmeyer Great Hall.

"Early childhood education is about giving a child the right start to life," said Dale Klose, regional president for PNC Bank in Kansas City, noting that this is something that St. Mark Center does very well.

UICS CEO Deidre Anderson is grateful for PNC's commitment, not only to St. Mark Center, but to our greater community. "PNC's caring, generosity, and advocacy will undoubtedly enrich and influence the lives of our students. These are the kinds of experiences that touch hearts and minds, and develop an early and lifelong appreciation for the arts," she said.

The PNC Grow Up Great Gallery is in the Level 2 Plaza Lobby of the Kauffman Center. It's open for viewing for ticket holders 90 minutes prior to any performance and to the public, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.





Dear Friends,

Voters in April will be asked to consider the promise and potential of every 4- and 5-year-old in Kansas City, MO. A proposed 3/8-cent sales tax will expand access to quality early learning - a community investment that can forever change a child's future in the classroom and beyond.

It's well established that children receiving quality pre-K education are better prepared to enter kindergarten and to read proficiently by third grade. Pre-K education is also a key predictor of future educational success.

With only 35 percent of our city's 4- and 5-year-olds enrolled in quality pre-K education, greater access will make all the difference - not just for families, but for businesses, neighborhoods, and our entire city.

From small in-home programs and family providers, to school districts and center-based care providers, the entire system will be supported by the enhancements in quality. In every scenario, students are the winners.

Successful passage of the tax would:

- open doors to children on waiting lists to take advantage of the short window for kindergarten-readiness;
- reduce employee absenteeism when families have reliable, quality child care;
- reduce the risk of families compromising quality due to the high cost of care.

With quality comes confidence. When parents have trust in their children's educators and care providers, the benefits of early learning can last a lifetime.

Sincerely,

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

Small but mighty:

early learning inspires the promise
and potential of every 4- and 5-year-old.



➤ Did you know?

80% of a child's brain
is developed by age 3.

Children who enter
kindergarten having been
exposed to letter, print, and
phonemic awareness are 3
times more likely to read
and understand simple
sentences by 1st grade.

CONNECT



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Mary Jorgenson
(left) and Deidre
Anderson (right).

OUR MISSION

Building bridges. Inspiring minds. Impacting futures.

VISIT

Learn how we empower our students and families by providing high quality educational experiences. To schedule a visit, please contact Chief Engagement Officer Gene Willis at 816-994-5445 ▪ gene.willis@uicskc.org.

OUR VISION

We envision a community where children thrive and families flourish.

GIVE

Your time, talent and treasure make a difference! Visit uicskc.org/invest or contact Individual Giving Coordinator Cynthia Hoffman at 816-994-5432 ▪ cynthia.hoffman@uicskc.org



CEO Deidre Anderson honored with Evelyn Wasserstrom Award

A picture of compassion, an example of fellowship, and an advocate for education is how Rev. Dr. Robert (Bob) Lee Hill described Deidre Anderson, CEO of United Inner City Services, as he presented her with the 2019 Evelyn Wasserstrom Award.

Anderson graciously received the award on Jan. 13, 2019, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Service at Community Christian Church. Each year, the Kansas City chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference bestows the honor on a community leader who is committed to freedom and justice for minorities and oppressed people.

"Receiving this award is an affirmation that our community recognizes that the education of all children is essential to our future," Anderson said.

"I hope that as a city, state, and nation, we will look beyond our differences and make it a priority to fill a gap that exists for too many children – access to quality early childhood education."

Anderson voiced that access to quality early childhood education is a civil rights issue, challenging the audience to learn more about Pre-K education as it directly impacts our community.

"The early years are the formative years, and we have the opportunity to develop kind, compassionate, and well-informed citizens and leaders," said Anderson. "I am genuinely humbled and honored to be among the many exceptional recipients of the Evelyn Wasserstrom Award," she said.

Creating a culture of compassion

Developing social and emotional skills through conscious discipline has benefits that extend beyond the classroom.

Imagine a learning environment where teachers build and strengthen student connections to create a culture of compassion, and use discipline as an opportunity for social and emotional development.

With generous funding from the Health Forward Foundation (formerly the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City), St. Mark Center recently welcomed Theresa Meyer, a Student Support Coordinator, to help expand this approach.

"I'm excited to help enrich the social and emotional support of our students, and hope to provide effective behavior management strategies that both teachers and parents can use," said Meyer.

“ Using conscious discipline in the classroom encourages students to have healthy conversations, to work together to solve problems, to learn to take turns to resolve conflict, and to demonstrate the skills needed to be successful in kindergarten. **”**

Theresa Meyer, Student Support Coordinator at St. Mark Center

Conscious discipline is a trauma-informed approach that combines social and emotional self development with discipline and guidance. In the classroom, it can increase student achievement, decrease aggression, and improve school climate.

Nikki Crisman, Chief Programs and Operations Officer, said Meyer will provide one-on-one educational interactions for our students, extra coaching for our teachers, and additional support for our families.



Theresa Meyer (above) and with Pre-K students (right)..



EMBRACING STEWARDSHIP

Kansas City's Pro Athlete shares in stewardship and community at St. Mark Center.

Embrace Stewardship. This is a Pro Athlete Inc. core value that prompted the company to volunteer at St. Mark Center in December 2018. Pro Athlete runs two online baseball and softball retail websites and was named one of Kansas City's 2018 Healthiest Employers by the Kansas City Business Journal.

"We are very fortunate to be able to work at Pro Athlete and we love getting out in our community to volunteer," said Corporate Concierge Haley Walsh. "We chose to volunteer at St. Mark Center because we believe their early education program has a lasting impact on the community."



Pro Athlete Volunteer **Daveron Kennedy** (center) with students **LaToya** and **Robert**.

Pro Athlete volunteers worked with St. Mark Center students to create holiday cards for the students' family and friends using markers, cardstock, stickers, and other art supplies donated by Pro Athlete.

"I'm going to start by tracing your hand and you need to hold still," said three-year-old student LaToya to a very patient Pro Athlete volunteer named Daveron Kennedy.

In addition to volunteering in the classrooms, Pro Athlete donated supplies for the art studio and classrooms.



Volunteers go above-and-beyond at St. Mark Center

Kollin Battle (top) was one of three students from Rockhurst High School who volunteered in January. The volunteers assisted teachers with reading, creating art, and working with students.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was a day on, not a day off for Volunteer **Rick Gath** (bottom), who cleaned student chairs as part of a beautification project.

SNOW MUCH FUN!

It's a St. Mark Center tradition.

The annual Snow Much Fun holiday party featured food, festive tunes from the **Kansas City Civic Orchestra**, children's books donated by the **Kansas City Public Library**, and of course, opportunities to create art.

Sweet inspiration:

Teresa Adams, a volunteer from PNC Bank, encouraged students to express their creativity with gingerbread, frosting, and candies.



Holiday happiness:

Parent **Crystal Everett** opens a holiday card from St. Mark Center containing gift cards for Walmart, Price Chopper, and QuikTrip from our generous Secret Santas.



Recipe for fun:

Sensory snow made with cornstarch, baking soda, and water brings hands-on fun to the winter-inspired party.



Finding Balance



Yoga instruction and donations help students find balance through positive, healthy expression.

"I am happy. I am calm. I am strong."

Students sang these words as they stood in mountain pose during their yoga class at St. Mark Center.

"I like yoga because it helps me breathe out, breathe in, and be calm," said four-year-old student Samaria. "My favorite is tree, because it helps me work on my balance."

Yoga Instructor Amanda Gardner taught students how to use breathing, movement, and space to express themselves in positive, healthy ways. Gardner was the Artist in Residence at St. Mark Center for the month of January.

"It teaches students about their bodies and helps them gain a sense of self through breathing exercises and different poses. When we better understand ourselves,

we can better communicate what we need," Gardner said.

St. Mark Center Arts Coordinator Brianne Pegg said yoga is a natural fit for our arts-based curriculum, as it allows students to use self-expression to communicate what they know about the world through the poses they create with their bodies.

She also noted that it promotes social and emotional development because it teaches self-regulation through mindful exercises.

"Yoga teaches students how to be in control of their bodies through balancing and using the space of their yoga mats," Pegg said. "They learn to be still, to wait, and to breathe through adversity."

Thanks to the efforts of St. Mark Center volunteer and advocate Irv Dwork, students enjoyed new yoga mats donated by athletic performance industry leader Manduka.



“St. Mark Center is a good fit for the lessons of yoga because the ideas of health, peace, love, and respect are woven throughout the school in the food they serve, words they use, actions they display, and community they have created.

”

- Yoga instructor and St. Mark Center Artist in Residence Amanda Gardner

SPRING ART SUPPLY COLLECTION

Help us keep the creativity flowing!
Kindly deliver any of these items to
UICS for our distinctive arts programs:

shaving cream ■ plastic bottle caps
■ plastic or silk flowers ■
essential oils ■ baking soda
cream of tartar ■ cinnamon



St. Mark Center

UICS

2008 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64127

Visit UICSKC.org



ST. MARK CENTER
Funder
High Five

**The McGee Foundation's
generous gift transforms our
Art Studio environment.**



The newly-installed laminate flooring is a beautiful addition to the St. Mark Center Art Studio. We have our friends at Kansas City's caring McGee Foundation to thank for funding this much-needed project. The Art Studio is a hub of energy, creative expression, and activity every day at St. Mark Center. The McGee Foundation's gift makes possible an enriched and comfortable environment that is central to our distinctive arts-infused curriculum.

"The classroom is often referred to as the third teacher because it directly influences how children feel, interact, and ultimately, how they create," said St. Mark Center Arts Coordinator Brianne Pegg. "Our new floor brings a sense of warmth and allows our students to feel safe enough to express themselves, which is what the studio is all about."