

Making Our MARK



A Connection to Friends, Families and Supporters of UICS

Spring 2020

Another "Super" story to tell in KC: UICS-Metro Center Inspiring minds is at the heart of growth and expansion at 39th & Troost

The opportunity to serve more families and young students can change the narrative for a generation of lives. That's why the newest chapter in our UICS story is taking place at one of the metropolitan area's busiest public transit locations. Our new Metro Child & Family Development Center (UICS-Metro Center) at 39th and Troost is destined to be a game-changer.

In partnership with the facility owner, the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), UICS-Metro Center opened last fall in an existing multi-use transit center/pre-K structure. The location is key, in that it addresses transportation and child care as core tenets to a family's success.

"In a city where only 34% of four-year-olds are enrolled in a quality pre-K program, UICS will meet a need that transcends economics and social structure," said CEO Deidre Anderson.

With capacity for 116 students ranging in ages from six weeks to five years, the UICS-Metro Center curriculum mirrors successes at our 12th Street facility, the St. Mark Child and Family Development Center (UICS-St. Mark Center). Long recognized as an industry leader in early childhood learning, a UICS education promotes social and emotional development, stimulates brain development, inspires creativity, and encourages collaboration.

"Metro Center continues the UICS vision of serving Kansas City's needs by addressing factors that often prevent families from reaching their full potential," said Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II, a longtime UICS supporter.

It's a story of hope, inspiration, and bright futures - and it's only just beginning!



A blue ribbon kind of day: Representatives from **KCATA**, the **Baum Family Foundation**, the **Kauffman Foundation**, and **The Family Conservancy** joined UICS leadership and UICS-St. Mark Center founder **Rev. Samuel Mann** in the opening festivities of UICS-Metro Center.

From top: A father and daughter on opening day at UICS-Metro Center.

UICS-Metro Center front doors are steps away from the KCATA bus stop.

Three of our youngest students in a sensory lesson in our Infant classroom.



On the Mark



Dear Friends,

As we were about to go to press, this letter was focused on the impact of our recent expansion - the first in our organization's history - and opportunities to further impact the lives of Kansas City's youngest students. While grateful for this opportunity, the world as we have known it has changed.

As UICS has always been committed to the safety of students, families and staff, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic shifted our focus to protecting all from the virus. As a result, the decision was made to close our two centers for the time being.

Great thought has been placed into a new way of operating that causes the least amount of harm to all that are connected to us. Empowered by our supportive Board of Directors, our quick planning and adaptability resulted in many changes for students and families that you will read about in this issue. The last thing that we would want is to create an additional hardship for our loyal employees, many of whom also have children enrolled at UICS.

As a result, all UICS staff continue to be compensated during this time. Additionally, they are not being charged tuition during the closure.

Learning continues, as we provide families with a new e-learning option each weekday through social media and virtual platforms. Additionally, teachers are accessing continuing education and training through online forums.

It goes without saying: now, more than ever, we need your help! If your circumstances allow, a donation of any size allows us to continue these services, along with offsetting the loss of tuition fees. The easiest way to give is by visiting UICS.org/Donate.

As we do our part to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask you to remember our mission of "Building Bridges. Inspiring Minds. Impacting Futures." You've chosen to be a part of our community and have valued our commitment to high-quality early childhood education. Thank you for supporting us in these uncharted waters.

With gratitude,


Deidre Anderson
Chief Executive Officer, UICS

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OUR VISION

UICS 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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UICS responds to COVID-19 crisis with consistency and caring.



All hands on deck:

UICS team members **Norma Monreal**, **May Grace Yancey** and **Theresa Brandt** assist in preparing to-go meals and snacks for students to eat at home while school is temporarily suspended.



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our world in ways we could not have imagined a few weeks ago. Our efforts to provide consistency and to be true to our mission has never been more relevant.

While UICS is temporarily closed for the safety of families and staff, we are focused on doing right by our students and families. We're collaborating with Kansas City Public Schools and Ewing Marion Kauffman School to provide free meals at sites around the city. We're also offering a weekly drive-up distribution of food and school supplies, and delivering them to families with transportation challenges. These are all efforts to stay connected to our students and families, while meeting their most basic needs.

Until we resume, UICS will provide e-learning opportunities from our partners on our social media channels. Students have access to Sesame Street in Communities, PNC Grow Up Great, Messner Puppets, and views of the nation's aquariums and national parks.

Our families are resilient, our staff is focused, and our supporters have been incredible in providing resources, services, and advocacy. We're grateful for this amazing teamwork and collaboration.

Now performing at UICS:

Artists in Residency share the art of creative expression through theater, music, and dance.

A vibrant Artists in Residency program is a distinctive benefit of a UICS education. Here, students have the opportunity to interact with creative professionals as they experience the art and joy of self-expression,

A recent residency featured hip hop dancer and instructor James "SugEasy" Singleton who spent a month with UICS-St. Mark Center's pre-K students. With professional performance credits including LL Cool J, Dave Matthews Band, and The Roots, SugEasy's energy and unique style brought hip hop dance and B-Boy culture to life at UICS.



Artists in the house: In partnership with **Starlight Theatre's** "Just Imagine" acting troupe, five professional actors shared the art of improvisation with UICS students. The interactive fun included singing songs and chants, and learning about costume changes and taking bows.



Every hand helps!

Volunteers make all the difference.

Volunteers (left) from **PNC**, **GEICO**, and **Everygy** made our Fall Festival a spectacular success, with over 650 attendees.

UICS-St. Mark Center student **Lindley** (right) is excited about the brand new playground sidewalk, made possible by the construction volunteers and supporters at **Superior-Bowen**!



SAY
hello!
TO

Meet Porsha Locke

Director of Early Learning and Inclusion | UICS-Metro Center

What is the best part of your work at UICS-Metro Center? We have the best resources and tools to support children and families on their journey. It is a gift to work in an organization committed to exploring and refining its approach to supporting families and developing little learners.

UICS is living the value of promoting growth and lifelong learning for children, families, teachers, and leaders.

Why is inclusion important at UICS?

Representation matters. Validating marginalized groups matters. Making space for everyone at the table of success is the product of a focus on inclusion. Our "school family" is a true reflection of Kansas City.

What is your favorite quote you try to live by? "Life is not about how fast you run, or how high you climb, but how well you bounce." -Tigger

About Porsha

School Days I'm a Kansas City girl. I attended St. Paul's Episcopal Day School and The Pembroke Hill School, and I'm a graduate of Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph. Go Griffons!

Weekends! I love to find new restaurants, visit outdoor markets, and enjoy live music events.

My ideal vacation I love the water. Last summer I was able to be with my boys and family on Martha's Vineyard. I really enjoyed that part of the country so I am working on a trip to the Carolinas this summer.



LITTLE LEARNERS luncheon

presented by



Grow Up Great



Little Learners. Big Futures!

Friends of UICS rally together for early learning at its best!

It's good to have a circle of friends, and even better when it's filled with many of our community's greatest advocates for early childhood education.

Last fall, a dedicated host committee led by Phyllis Stevens welcomed more than 200 friends to the Little Learners Luncheon presented by PNC Grow Up Great. Sarah and Jon Baum, longtime friends of UICS, served as co-chairs. Wearing aprons that our teachers use daily to welcome students to school, these civic leaders lit up the room as gracious advocates of our work.

With live music, student artistry, and an all-star cast of caring Kansas Citians, it was a celebration of all things UICS, and an opportunity to raise more than \$85,000 for early learning.

Photos - clockwise from top left: UICS Board Chair **Mary Jorgenson**, PNC Bank Regional President **Dale Klose**, PNC Bank Senior Vice President **Kyle Myers**.

Baum Capital Partners Managing Partner **Jonathan Baum**, UICS CEO **Deidre Anderson**, UICS Director of Family and Community Engagement **Rhonda Nolen**, James B. Nutter Executive Vice President **George Lopez**.

UICS parent **K.C. Cadenhead** and his band **Project Seven 1** kicked off the festivities with energy and style.

Kansas City Royals owner **John Sherman**, Bryan Cave attorney **Jon Otto**, and former Kansas City Mayor **Sly James**.

UICS COMMUNITY STAR | Kansas City Chiefs



Super Bowl champions. Local heroes. Athletic legends. Philanthropic-minded citizens. Education enthusiasts.

These are all words that describe members of the Kansas City Chiefs organization who have made as big an impact with UICS families as they did during their historic run for the Lombardi Trophy.

Super Bowl LIV MVP QB Patrick Mahomes chose UICS as one of his inaugural 15 nonprofit beneficiaries in launching his "15 and the Mahomies" foundation. He and partner Brittany Matthews provided UICS with a gift of \$15,000 and art smocks for Metro Center and St. Mark Center students.



Recently, the Chiefs Ambassadors, a group of retired red-and-gold players, visited UICS-St. Mark Center to host an "NFL Play 60" activities session with students.

"This place is special," said Chiefs Ambassadors President Tim Grunhard. "I love visiting the students and families at UICS."

During the playoffs, the Chiefs returned to UICS with an impromptu visit by the Patrick Mahomes bobblehead and KC Wolf bearing a \$2,500 donation. The result was a lot of student cheering and enthusiasm, as expected for a group that does so much for so many.



Photos clockwise from top left: **KC Wolf** presents a check to UICS from the **Kansas City Chiefs Football Club**.

A **Chiefs Ambassador** with UICS-St. Mark Center student **Xachariah**.

UICS-St. Mark Center student **Nakota** was all smiles when he got to try on former Chiefs tight end **Keith Cash's jersey**.

The Team: **Kansas City Chiefs** and **UICS!**

Former Pro Bowl safety **Deron Cherry** encourages students on the NFL Play60 mini agility course.

COMMUNITY HERO | Moulton Trust

Holiday gifts warm hearts, bodies and spirits at UICS

Warm coats with hats and mittens. Games, puzzles and books. New denim jeans, shirts, socks, and under garments. These were more than packages beneath the tree for children and families at UICS, these were affirmations of caring and hope!

Thanks to the generosity of the Moulton Trust, many of our families benefited from much needed clothing, winter essentials, and other holiday gifts.

"The holiday season often prompts feelings of anxiety and stress," said Rhonda Nolen, UICS Director of Family and Community Engagement.

The Moulton Trust eases hearts and minds of families who may be struggling. "These gifts were the reason for many happy hearts and our families are very grateful for this caring and generosity," said Nolen.



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

UICS Wish List



We're always grateful for donations of arts and crafts supplies for the arts-infused curriculum at UICS.

Play-doh ▪ Markers ▪ Construction Paper ▪ Jumbo Stamp Pads
▪ Finger Paint ▪ Dry Erase Markers
Blunt Tip Scissors ▪ Googly Eyes
▪ Shaving Cream ▪ Chalk
Dabber Markers ▪ Sponges ▪
Cardstock (white and multi-color)
Rhinestones ▪ Elmer's Wood Glue ▪
Ribbon ▪ Straws (multi-color)
▪ Felt Fabric (multi-color)

During our closure, please contact Gene Willis, Chief Engagement Officer, 816.994.5445, to make an in-kind or monetary donation.

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UICS PHOTO GALLERY



Photos clockwise from left:
PNC volunteers visiting UICS-Metro Center captured pre-K student handprints for the **PNC Grow Up Great Gallery** at **The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts**.

Super Bowl Champion Travis Kelce with UICS-St. Mark Center alumnus **Antoine** at the inaugural **"15 and the Mahomies"** gala.



UICS students were part of the halftime experience at **Sporting KC's** final game of the 2019 season, with each scoring a goal while being cheered by The Cauldron.

UICS and community students take to the stage with dancers from the **Alvin Ailey Trio**.