



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

As you read the feature on education this month, hopefully you see the need for committed volunteers to come alongside parents, teachers, and staff at St. Louis Public Schools and help kids achieve more academically. Attend the Educational Training on August 6th and find out exactly what it looks like to start serving with Mission: St. Louis in the city schools. [Register here](#) for training, or contact [Emily Whitworth](#) to find out more about the opportunities available.

A MESSAGE FROM Emily Whitworth, Director of Education



WHAT YOUR MONEY DOES

It costs \$51 for a child to attend our [Morning Reading program](#) for one week. As we gear up for the new school year and increase our number of Morning



EDUCATION: A VISION OF TRANSFORMATION

There is more than one reason "education" is among the three core values firmly held by Mission: St. Louis. Emily Whitworth, Director of Education, can rattle off statistics that she knows first-hand from her previous teaching experience in St. Louis Public Schools. During a casual encounter at Shaw's Coffee, Whitworth informs me of some of the significant obstacles for low-income children as they enter elementary school. Studies show that by the age of 3, children from affluent families have typically heard 30 million more words than children from low-income families, an alarming statistic that helps explain why low-income children entering kindergarten are 12-14 months below national norms in language and pre-reading skills. Additionally, due to lack of early interactions that lead to language development, including being read to and having access to books in the home, low-income children are shown to have one-fourth the vocabulary of children from wealthier homes.

These bleak figures are the fuel behind what Mission: St. Louis seeks to do in St. Louis Public Schools. Whitworth builds relationships with key academic leaders, earning trust and respect, which allows Mission: St. Louis to come alongside their schools and offer assistance. Volunteers are then recruited and equipped to invest in the lives of kids and teachers through programs such as Adopt-a-Classroom and Morning Reading.

Adopt-a-Classroom addresses the tangible need that city schools face in being under-resourced. Mission: St. Louis utilizes volunteers who can commit to a consistent weekly time during the school day and pairs them with a specific teacher and classroom. The responsibilities for each volunteer vary depending on the needs of his/her assigned class, but they range from helping kids one-on-one with specific assignments to participating in teaching the day's lesson. For Hannah Wysong, spending time in Ms. Betts's classroom at Adams Elementary this year was rewarding. "It was

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Hamilton Heights is going through some changes as Ford Elementary is no longer a Community Education Center. This will provide exciting opportunities for Mission: St. Louis to work with the community in new ways and partner with new organizations. One great way to get involved in this neighborhood is through our [Adopt-a-Classroom program](#), which will allow you the chance to get to know students as well as teachers and staff. Show Hamilton Heights how much you appreciate them! Contact [Jennifer Nefzger](#) for more information.

MERCY QUARTERLY MOVIE NIGHT

Join us for our next Mercy Quarterly on August 7th at 7:00pm. We will be showing the film [The Pruitt-Igoe Myth](#) followed by a panel discussion. Tickets are free but in limited quantity - check out our [website](#) for more information and to get your tickets.

BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPING

As you inevitably peruse the aisles of Wal-Mart and Target in the upcoming weeks, consider picking up some extra school supplies to donate to Mission: St. Louis.

Reading days, know that your dollars are going to excellent use.

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

This summer, many volunteers have given their Tuesday nights to pour into the lives of kids in the Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood. THANK YOU to those who came to Sports Camp on a weekly basis and for those who provided meals for kids throughout the summer. It has been a tremendous time to build relationships with parents and kids in the neighborhood, while just playing and having a blast together!

definitely a learning experience for me to enter into these kids lives, many of them lack basic things I took for granted during my school years. I really developed a bond with some of the students as I helped them with their assignments and showed them different ways to view their math problems. I even got to participate in a step routine with the kids at a school assembly, I think the kids were shocked I knew how to step!"

Perhaps the most disturbing statistic on the subject is from Packard and McArthur Foundation, which found that a child growing up in a middle class family is exposed to 1,000-1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, as opposed to the average lower-income child who is exposed to a mere 25 hours. In response to this grim reality, Mission: St. Louis developed its Morning Reading Program as a tool to increase literacy among these capable but disadvantaged kids.

[\(Click here for full story\)](#)

There are hundreds of kids in our city schools that are in need of basic supplies to aid in their education. [Click here](#) to find out exactly what items are needed most. You can drop purchased school supplies off at our office (4366 Manchester Ave.) or at all Journey and August Gate church locations in the designated drop boxes after services the weekends of August 6/7 and 13/14.

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