



# Vision in Action

Creating a better future for children by informing, driving action and advocating

Spring 2016

## Upcoming Events

### Get involved!

All interested parties are invited to attend these events.

### 34th Annual Child Advocacy Day

Wednesday, April 6  
Missouri State Capitol  
www.childadvocacyday.org

### Child Abuse Prevention Month Healthy Kids Day & Family Resource Fair

Saturday, April 30, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
O'Fallon Park Recreation  
Complex YMCA

### Genetic Response to Toxic Stress: "Raising of America" Viewing and Discussion with John Constantino, MD, of Washington Univ. School of Medicine

Tuesday, May 3, 3:00-5:00 p.m.



Third Annual  
Give STL Day  
Tuesday, May 3  
Please support  
Vision for  
Children at Risk

### FOCUS St. Louis "What's Right With the Region!" Awards

Honoring St. Louis Family &  
Community Partnership  
Thursday, May 12, 5 p.m.  
The Sheldon

### Missouri Legislature 2016 End-of-Session Review

Wednesday, June 8, 9 a.m.  
The Heights

All meetings at Vision for Children  
at Risk unless otherwise noted.

For More Information:  
(314) 534-6015

www.visionforchildren.org  
Facebook: visionforchildren  
Twitter: vcrstl

## Confronting Trauma and Toxic Stress in Children and Youth

Childhood trauma and toxic stress recently have been the focus of public attention, especially with the publication of the Feb. 21 St. Louis Post-Dispatch special report, "The Crisis Within." More than 70 community professionals gathered to discuss ways to confront the problem on Feb. 29 at Vision for Children at Risk. The forum was presented by the St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council.



The program began with viewing of the "Wounded Places" segment of *The Raising of America* series, describing childhood trauma and toxic stress and sharing personal stories from Philadelphia and Oakland.

Following the video, a discussion was led by Nancy Spargo, AM, LCSW, chief executive officer and co-founder, St. Louis Center for Family Development, and chair of the Regional Early Childhood Council's Public Awareness & Advocacy Committee. She noted that trauma is an immediate event which is very treatable, while toxic stress is the result of prolonged exposure to stressors such as poverty and violence.



She emphasized how positive, healthy, affirming relationships are the best antidote to toxic stress. Breakout sessions further explored the impact on professionals who serve children and youth with toxic stress and trauma, and what strategies should be used in designing service delivery.

Future showings and discussions of *Raising of America* segments will be:

**Tuesday, May 3** – "DNA Is Not Destiny – How the Outside Gets Under the Skin," with John Constantino, MD, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at Washington University School of Medicine

**Tuesday, August 23** – "When Childcare for All Wasn't Just a Fairy Tale," with Katie Rahn, executive director of the SouthSide Early Childhood Center

Staffed and facilitated by Vision for Children at Risk, the St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council works to build a coordinated system promoting educational readiness

## In Brief ...

► Attendees at the March 16 **St. Louis Family & Community Partnership** meeting at Vision for Children at Risk heard two complementary perspectives in the battle against trauma and toxic stress. **Jennifer Brinkmann** and **Sean Marz** from **Alive and Well STL** and the St. Louis Regional Health Commission discussed their community-wide program. **Khatib Waheed** from the **Resilience Coalition** described front-line efforts to work with children and families in Ferguson. Both are based on the realization that trauma and toxic stress greatly affect the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals, as well as their physical health.

► The **Raise Your Hands for Kids** tobacco-tax campaign was the topic of the March 17 **St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council** meeting at Vision for Children at Risk. RYH4K Executive Director **Linda Rallo** and consultant **Brian Schmidt** provided an update on the campaign which would ask Missouri voters in November to approve a 60-cent-per-pack cigarette tax increase to generate revenue for early childhood programs. Linda and Brian also sought input from those in attendance on developing the spending plan. It was suggested that the RECC's work for Ready by 21 St. Louis, as well as the Ferguson Commission and *For the Sake of All* recommendations, provide a good starting point on early childhood needs and priorities.

## Project LAUNCH Kicks Off Community Cafés

Project LAUNCH kicked off the next step in its successful Parent Café program. At its annual parent/community leader recognition lunch on Feb. 18, LAUNCH introduced more than 80 parents and community partners in its 63106-63107 target area to the **Community Café**. Like the Parent Café, the Community Café engages parents and others in conversation and community



*Community Café training participants*

building. The Community Café is focused on what needs to happen in the community to support the health and well-being of children. Issues identified in the initial discussion included transportation, safety, employment, business development, and access to healthy food and nutrition. The Community Café discussion was preceded by LAUNCH's annual parent and community leader awards presentation, and a Black History Month observance that featured a stirring re-enactment of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech by Pastor Ron Stephens of Temple Church of Christ.

On Feb. 23, over 40 LAUNCH community members gathered for a training session in trauma and toxic stress by Patsy Carter of the Missouri Dept. of Mental Health. Vision for Children at Risk operates the federally funded Project LAUNCH in the 63106 and 63107 ZIP codes under contract to the Missouri Department

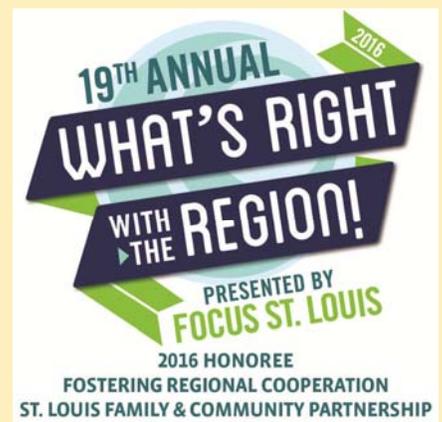


*Training in trauma and toxic stress*



## Family & Community Partnership to Receive "What's Right With the Region!" Award

The St. Louis Family & Community Partnership is pleased to be selected by FOCUS-St. Louis to receive the 2016 "What's Right With the Region!" Award. Presented in the category of "Fostering Regional Cooperation," the honor recognizes the Partnership's work over the past 11 years in promoting greater collaboration and coordination of services among child-serving agencies and the Missouri Children's Division in the area of child abuse prevention, foster/adoptive care and family support. The Partnership will receive the award at the annual "What's Right With the Region!" event on Thursday, May 12 at The Sheldon. The Partnership is staffed and facilitated by Vision for Children at Risk.



## Please Support Vision for Children at Risk

VCR relies on the support of generous donors in the community to help us sustain our work. Here are ways you can help:

- Make a donation. Use the envelope included with this newsletter, or visit [www.visionforchildren.org/donate](http://www.visionforchildren.org/donate)
- Donate your used vehicle. We take care of the towing. There is no cost to you.
- Consider including Vision for Children at Risk in your estate plan.
- Support VCR with your purchases at Schnucks via eScrip.
- Support VCR with your purchases on Amazon Smile.
- Contribute to VCR on Give STL Day, Tuesday, May 3, 2016.

Your gifts to VCR are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. To learn more, contact VCR Financial Development, 314-534-6015.

*Vision for Children at Risk brings together people and organizations across the St. Louis region to create a better future for the area's children, especially the most disadvantaged socioeconomically.*



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[www.visionforchildren.org](http://www.visionforchildren.org)  
Facebook [visionforchildren](https://www.facebook.com/visionforchildren)  
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## Advocating for Missouri's Children

As the 2016 Missouri Legislature session is well under way, the Missouri Children's Leadership Council is active in working for programs, policies and funding benefiting children. Staffed and facilitated by Vision for Children at Risk, the MOCLC has 145 stakeholders across the state, and it is represented at the Capitol by experienced advocate Judy Dungan. During the annual legislative session, all are invited to join in weekly conference calls providing updates on current legislative activity. You also can keep up with the most recent legislative news related to children through weekly email updates during the session. Legislative alerts are disseminated on urgent action issues. For more information or to be included on the MOCLC weekly conference calls and email list, contact Ruth Ehresman, 314-534-6015, [rehresman@visionforchildren.org](mailto:rehresman@visionforchildren.org). See the Children's Leadership Council 2016 Legislative Agenda and weekly conference call notes. Follow the MOCLC and Judy Dungan on Twitter @JudyDunganMO. The MOCLC website is [www.kidswinmissouri.org](http://www.kidswinmissouri.org).



## Child Abuse and Neglect: 2016 Facts

Just in time for 2016 April Child Abuse Prevention Month, here are current facts about child abuse and neglect in the St. Louis region.



- In the state fiscal year ended June 30, 2014, a total of 14,772 reports of abuse and neglect involving 21,360 children were made in the four Missouri counties of the St. Louis region, according to the Missouri Children's Division. Of these cases, 929 (6%) were substantiated as abused, 7,806 (53%) received family assessments and preventive services, and 4,417 (30%) were unsubstantiated.
- In the three Illinois counties of the St. Louis region, 5,810 children were alleged as abused in FY2014, with 1,178 of these indicated (Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services).
- A total of eight children died from substantiated abuse and neglect in FY2014 in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, St. Charles County and Jefferson County.
- Statewide in Missouri, 68,234 reports were made and 4,439 cases involving 6,439 children were substantiated in FY2014. There were 32 child deaths from substantiated abuse/neglect.
- The number of substantiated cases in the region has grown steadily since 2008 when there were 846 such cases, increasing to 893 in 2010 and 929 in FY2014.
- Younger children are more likely to be abused. In Missouri, 48% of abused children are age 6 and under (substantiated cases, FY2014).

**Please join the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership and Vision for Children at Risk in observing Child Abuse Prevention Month. See story on the back cover for suggestions on how you can get involved. For more information: [www.visionforchildren.org](http://www.visionforchildren.org) or [www.stlfamilycommunity.org](http://www.stlfamilycommunity.org).**



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## Vision in Action Newsletter



www.visionforchildren.org

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### April Child Abuse Prevention Month: How You Can Help

Join the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership in supporting April Child Abuse Prevention Month:

- Post a **“Strong Families, Safe Children”** yard sign at your agency or in your yard. Signs are available from Vision for Children at Risk. In the past two years, hundreds of yards signs have been posted around the area.
- Wear **Child Abuse Prevention Month pins and stickers**, and distribute these along with **Child Abuse Prevention bookmarks** to children and families. These also are available from Vision for Children at Risk.
- Visit the **Vision for Children at Risk Facebook page** (visionforchildren) daily in April to see pictures of organizations participating in **Child Abuse Prevention Month** and for relevant links to prevention information.



- Support the **“Healthy Kids Day & Family Resource Fair”** on Saturday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the O’Fallon Park Recreation Complex YMCA, 4343 West Florissant Ave.



There will be entertainment for children, along with information tables from community agencies. Encourage families to attend, or set up a table for your agency.

To order yard signs, pins, stickers or bookmarks, or to request a table for your agency at the April 30 Healthy Kids & Family Resource Fair, contact Ruth Ehresman, 314-534-6015, rehresman@visionforchildren.org. The St. Louis Family & Community Partnership, staffed and facilitated by Vision for Children at Risk, is dedicated to reducing child abuse and neglect, promoting strong families, and providing safe, supportive homes for all children.