Creating a better future for children, whose geography does not determine their future.
A Message From Our Executive Director:

Over the past two decades, VCR has been committed to the well-being of children, families, and the communities in which they live. We have been advocating tirelessly to change the relentless inequities that persist in our region’s systems. The work of building a better future for children at risk has never been easy, but it’s always been rewarding. This year, we have made some amazing progress for the good of the region we serve. We were able to secure three major sources of funding for our region: Project LAUNCH funding through SAMHSA, PACT-STL through the Children’s Bureau, and System of Care through MHB/SAMHSA. That’s over 1.5 million dollars, all of which is being used to directly support our families and to engineer system-level change within our region.

We did it all by sticking to what we know works: engaging with the experience, passion, and creative voices of our community members.

This is the collaborative model that has acted as the foundation for all the work we have done, and it is the defining feature of the work we will continue to dedicate ourselves to looking forward. Our team is committed to empowering families and uplifting communities. We believe in engagement, and we cultivate active collaboration in the interest of developing new ideas, new methods for protecting our community’s youngest and most vulnerable members. We look forward to another year of meaningful work alongside our families, our community, and our partner organizations.

Sincerely,

Sanaria Sulaiman
Sanaria Sulaiman
Executive Director

About VCR

VISION
A community that values and supports the well-being of children and families, where the neighborhood they live in does not determine their future.

MISSION
Vision for Children at Risk (VCR) promotes the well-being of children, youth, and their families, with a primary focus on those impacted by socioeconomic risk and racial inequity.

We do this by:
- Informing the community with data and research,
- Promoting collaborative action,
- Engaging and supporting families, and
- Advocating for child well-being through policy and community investment.
2019 Highlights

LEAP Ahead STL

VCR continues to lead the LEAP Ahead STL collaborative that was established in 2018 to support regional systems building, and the subsequent coordination of resources and referrals, for developmental, social, and emotional screening. In just two years, the collaborative has seen much success towards widespread, coordinated screening and tracking of results across the St. Louis region.

In 2019, LEAP Ahead STL recruited and on-boarded five new child-serving agencies for a total of 16 organizational members. We also trained over 50 people on the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, screened 2,051 children with referrals facilitated as needed, and reached over 150 parents with educational material and/or activities regarding early developmental screening.

Our wonderful partner Books for STL Kids helped us meet our screening goals by providing books to over 400 children throughout the year at our events. Some of the events that LEAP Ahead STL participated in include:

- Young Child Wellness Council Baby Shark Themed Kickoff
- Healthy Family Festival
- Reading Village
- Outreach at libraries, churches, online, and more
- Summer Kids Kit Give-A-Way
Parent Cafes

Professional hats are off, parents and professionals come together to engage in peer-to-peer learning. This is what makes Parent Cafes so unique and impactful.

As part of Stronger Together Missouri, VCR equipped over 40 new Parent Cafe Hosts. In order to become a host, one must participate in an official two-day Parent Cafe Training Institute (PCTI). We are grateful to have three staff and several wonderful partners trained as “Train the Trainers”.

With each PCTI we very intentionally ensure there is a mix of organizations representatives and families, so that trainees leave the training fully equipped to host their own Parent Cafes with their connected families.

In 2019 alone, we trained members from six organizations and continued support through ongoing technical assistance.

This funding was made possible through the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0048-01-00, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, awarded to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

System of Care St. Louis Region (SOC)

VCR joined with the St. Louis Mental Health Board (MHB) back in 2017 as a backbone support for SOC. The initial federal grant came to a close towards the end of 2019, and the MHB received a Five-Year Expansion grant focused on strengthening and enhancing current infrastructure to connect juvenile justice involved youth and families with mental health service providers and Family Support Partners (FSPs) by utilizing the existing SOC Linkage and Referral platform. Because of VCR’s strong focus on family engagement, we remain a key partner for this, overseeing the Family Support Partners/Family Support Services.

2019 SOC Highlights:

- A partnership of SOC, Missouri Families 4 Families, and VCR led to the start of monthly Support Groups for parents and caregivers of children and youth with severe emotional and behavioral disorders. This included practice in meditation and breathing, as well as connection to a Missouri Department of Conservation Summer Day Camp. Parents (6) and youth (14) from SOC enjoyed activities such as fishing, canoeing, archery, hiking, tree identification, and more!
- This group was also the honored recipients of 50 new bikes and helmets thanks to a SSM Health Team Building Event!
- There is now 1 CONSOLIDATED PHONE NUMBER for behavioral health needs now, thanks to SOC! This is one number for all ages, and is a huge resource for families.
St. Louis Child Abuse & Neglect Network (STLCANN)

VCR continues to provide backbone support for STLCANN, and the cohesion in this partnership continues to grow. In 2019, STLCANN...

- Offered **Quarterly Trainings** for Child Serving Professionals, such as training on the Signs of Safety Framework, which is an approach to ensure children’s safety while more effectively engaging parents.

- Hosted the **6th Annual Stepping Up for Kids Luncheon** during which 9 individuals were honored in front of 300+ guests for the work and dedication they show to changing the lives of children in foster care for the better.

- Distributed and promoted yard signs and participated in Child Advocacy Day, during which our Advocacy Coordinator co-facilitated an Advocacy 201 Workshop as part of **Child Abuse Prevention Month**.

- Partnered with Unleashing Potential and Deaconess Foundation to host the **Healthy Family Festival**, a fun event for families with children where families can connect to resources while enjoying a fun family outing.

Head Start Community Assessment

We are grateful for the Head Start Community in our region that provides young children tremendous opportunities. In 2019, the four managing organizations entrusted us with the task of putting together the first joint St. Louis Area Head Start Community Assessment.

All four Head Start organizations came together for this report: Grace Hill, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Youth in Need, and YWCA Metro St. Louis. We provided them with data, maps, context, and more on indicators related to ten topics, including Demographics, Head Start Eligible Children and Families, Educational Needs of Eligible Families, Health & Social Service Needs, Nutritional Needs of Eligible Families, Housing & Homelessness, Child Care Availability, Transportation & Communication, Resources, and Community Strengths.

This was a great partnership that continues into 2020 for a second phase to the project. Contractual reports like this are a great opportunity for us to share the data and context that we have access to.
Collaboration & Expanding Work

This past year has been a great year for growing partnerships. We have worked closely with over ?? partners to apply for two five-year federal initiatives geared at strengthening families and lifting children’s well-being in the St. Louis region, and were honored to announce that we received both! We then quickly began building out our team, and started the work in October of 2019.

St. Louis Project LAUNCH

In 2012 VCR became closely integrated with Project LAUNCH, a federal initiative through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as a locally grounded site for the statewide MO Project LAUNCH. Through that opportunity, we grew into our new model of work that includes family engagement as one of our four key strategies in working towards children’s well-being.

We are excited that St. Louis Project LAUNCH is solely focused on the City of St. Louis, and allows us to grow and expand on many of the successes we have already seen.

St. Louis Project LAUNCH focuses on fostering the healthy development and wellness of young children (birth through age 8). We are working diligently towards:

- Improving coordination and collaboration across family and child serving systems;
- Enhancing the knowledge and behaviors of parents and children 0-8 years on topics of early childhood development and community resources; and
- Increasing capacity of child care and early child providers on topics of early childhood social and emotional development.

Key Partners:

- Affinia Healthcare
- BJC
- Behavioral Health Response
- Brown School Evaluation Center
- Cardinal Glennon/St. Louis University
- Delta Gamma Center
- St. Louis Public Schools
- United 4 Children
- Parents

Parents and Children Together-St. Louis (PACT-STL)

PACT-STL is funded through the Children’s Bureau/Administration for Children and Families (ACF): Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families.

VCR is leading this initiative to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of primary prevention strategies to improve the safety, stability, and well-being of all children and families through a continuum of community-based services and supports.

We are focused on three key objectives:

- Improving coordination and collaboration across family and child serving systems;
- Reducing entry into foster care by intentionally linking families to local, community-based resources/services; and
- Support the overall well-being outcomes of children and families, including changes in risk and protective factors.

Key Partners:

- Affinia Healthcare
- Almost Home
- Annie Malone
- Brown School Evaluation Center
- Children’s Division-St. Louis Regional Office
- Children’s Division-State-Level
- Epworth
- Family Court of St. Louis City
- Family Court of St. Louis County
- FamilyForward
- Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
- Missouri Children’s Trust Fund (CBCAP)
- One Hope United
- Parents
2019 Funders
Ameren
Cardinal Care
Children’s Bureau
Children’s Trust Fund
Deaconess Foundation
Department of Health and Senior Services
Mental Health Board
SAMHSA
STUPP Community Foundation
University of Missouri (Stronger Together Missouri)

Individual Donors
Thank you to all our wonderful donors. We would not be where we are today without your support. Help us to continue positively impacting the way we care for our children by investing today.
Donate at www.visionforchildren.org/donate or by mailing a check to:
Vision for Children at Risk
1000 N Vandeventer Ave. | St. Louis, MO 63113

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Katina Johnson

COMMUNITY LIAISON
Mia Daugherty

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
Bree Schubert

Financials
Revenue: $668,334

Expenses: $540,269

- Grants: Projects
- Grants: Operational
- Contributions
- Earned Income
- In-Kind Revenue
- Special Events

- Program
- Management
- Fundraising
- In-Kind Expenditures

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