



Transforming Teens. Changing Communities.



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
UNIVERSITY CITY  
Transform the Life of Every Student Every Day!

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Kristin Gumper  
[Kristin.Gumper@WymanCenter.org](mailto:Kristin.Gumper@WymanCenter.org)  
314.630.5459

### **Wyman's Second Youth Impact Partnership Begins in University City with a \$500,000, Three-Year Investment from Missouri Foundation for Health**

**St. Louis, MO [Jan. 10, 2018]** – Today, Wyman Center, a St. Louis-based youth development nonprofit dedicated to serving youth from disadvantaged circumstances, is entering a new partnership with The School District of University City, thanks to a \$500,000, three-year grant from Missouri Foundation for Health. The grant will support the launch of Wyman's second Youth Impact Partnership in the region, which will begin this January to serve the district's 2,800 students and their community.

Wyman's Youth Impact Partnership model is an innovative, multi-front approach that leverages the organization's 120 years in youth development. This approach empowers teens, equips adults that work with those teens every day, and strengthens systems (like school districts), where young people spend much of their time. The result is that more youth are healthier and more successful. And, their school districts are stronger along the way.

"We know that providing great, evidence-based programming is vital and yet it is insufficient to change the trajectory of the more than 40 percent<sup>1</sup> of youth living in poverty in our region. We can only reach so many individuals." said Claire Wyneken, Wyman's President and CEO. "To make lasting change for youth, we must pursue collective, results-driven solutions at the systems-level, including education. We're thrilled and honored to partner with The School District of University City and Missouri Foundation for Health to create an environment and future in which every young person thrives. Together, we can empower youth with proven programs, equip adults to have an even greater impact with youth, and foster an environment that helps all youth build their assets. And this collective approach can help thousands of children and youth to live happier, healthier and more successful lives today – while creating the blueprint for how we will all sustain a bright and equitable path for generations of young people."

Once a Youth Impact Partnership is formed, Wyman works directly with Board members, district leaders, service providers, students, parents and community members to identify needs within the district and create a customized plan that:

- Identifies student and parent needs, root causes of challenges and school goals.
- Coordinates, aligns and fills gaps in services and programs to provide wraparound solutions.
- Leverages the strengths of existing research and evidence-based programs and practices that are already achieving results with youth.

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<sup>1</sup> Missouri Community Action Network

- Integrates quality and accountability measures for partners to ensure all programs and services are delivered effectively and reach a critical mass of youth in the district before, during and after school.
- Equips the adults serving students and their families with research-based tools, support and training to help youth build their strengths, create a culture that is sensitive to trauma and remove barriers to success.
- Builds the capacity of the district to sustain improved results over time through leadership, accountability and infrastructure.

“The School District of University City is eager to unlock the potential of all of our students. Together with Wyman, we’re on the frontlines of changing the future of our region,” said Dr. Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, Superintendent. “As educators, it’s no surprise to us that our nation continues to struggle with educational achievement and rising dropout rates. Navigating adolescence, and the increasingly complex social-emotional and mental challenges that come with it, can make it difficult for some students to thrive in school.”

In 2016, Wyman launched its first Youth Impact Partnership, starting with the Normandy Schools Collaborative (NSC). Wyman led the development of quality and accountability standards and a process that has instituted the beginning of a trauma-informed culture that values positive youth development and creates the right school environment for youth to succeed. Since that time, academic achievement in the district has steadily increased, and the district secured provisional accreditation from the Missouri State Board of Education on December 1.

Since then, Wyman has coordinated more than 35 nonprofit and health providers, created better alignment of services and filled gaps to fill unmet needs, including launching a new onsite, full service health center to serve all NSC students.

“We are committed to addressing issues in our region through research, strategic partnerships, and investments,” said Paula Ballew, program officer at MFH. “This Youth Impact Partnership in University City is exactly the type of project that can create substantial impact for communities and people in our region, particularly the underserved.”

Wyman has led leadership programs in The School District of University City since 2002 and the Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®) since 2010. Rooted in research and best practices in adolescent health and development, TOP helps teens improve academic performance and lower risky behaviors like truancy and suspension that often lead to dropout. TOP is provided to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the district. A hallmark of the program is helping teens build and hone social and emotional skills proven to help them be successful as teenagers and in the workplace, like managing emotions, problem-solving, decision-making and empathy. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, asset-based programs, like TOP, that help youth build their capacity to navigate the challenges of adolescence provide an \$11 return for every \$1 invested.

### **About Wyman**

[Wyman](#), a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit and proud member of the United Way, has been dedicated to serving youth from disadvantaged circumstances for more than a century. Wyman empowers teens, equips adults and strengthens systems. Wyman’s engaging, empowering and experiential programs and services help teens build skills, and develop a sense of self and connections to their world. As a result, teens achieve educational success, develop healthy behaviors and relationships, and exhibit life and

leadership skills. From thousands of teens in St. Louis – to tens of thousands nationally – Wyman programs and services make a difference in the lives of today’s teens and tomorrow’s leaders.

**About The School District of University City**

On February 21, 1911, with a city population of only 2,417, The School District of University City was officially established. Classes began in September 1912 with a total school population of 769. Today, you will find outstanding educational programs serving a student population of approximately 2,800 with a preschool, four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. In May 2017, University City High School held its 100th formal commencement ceremony.

**About Missouri Foundation for Health**

Missouri Foundation for Health is a resource for the region, working with communities and nonprofits to generate and accelerate positive changes in health. As a catalyst for change, the Foundation improves the health of Missourians through partnership, experience, knowledge, and funding. To learn more please visit [mffh.org](http://mffh.org).

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