DEAR FRIENDS OF LITTLE BIT

When we moved into our new building in 2017, we dreamed of spaces alive with activity, excitement and purpose...of many different voices in harmony. Exactly what you’ll find today as you enter our doors, where an average 250 volunteers and visitors pass through each week. A spirit of love and passion for our city’s children that we each take with us into our households, businesses and communities. A desire for better and a commitment that doesn’t falter, so that the students we serve can find, build and use their voice to change the trajectory of their life…and the future of St. Louis.

In 2019 we realized another dream, several years in the making. Project Graduation was a natural progression of our evolution and when we began conceptualizing it, we knew we were on to something big. We made a promise to the Riverview Gardens School District that we would work alongside them in preparing their scholars for success by bringing Little Bit services to all 13 schools in the district. Building on our core programming and early interventions, we began adapting our model to the unique needs of middle and high schools, in order to create a continuum of support for students from preschool through graduation and beyond.

Leading us at every step was a vision of our students walking across the stage to receive their diploma – with a pathway laid out before them. Our entry into Riverview Gardens Senior High in the fall of 2019 completes our adoption of the district and moves this vision within reach. Poverty looks very different for the third grader who needs a warm coat from the teenager that must juggle schoolwork and after-school work alongside them in preparing their scholars for success by bringing Little Bit services to all 13 schools in the district. Building on our core programming and early interventions, we began adapting our model to the unique needs of middle and high schools, in order to create a continuum of support for students from preschool through graduation and beyond.

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None of these dreams would be reality today without you. You made it possible for us to serve 11,500 students in the 2018-19 school year, when 6,000 seemed like a lofty goal not too long ago! To deliver more than 355,000 essentials, in addition to 244,000 pounds of food, to 39 schools and communities. To strengthen our affiliations that bring nutrition resources to students and families, and to foster new partnerships, such as with Boniface Foundation, in which we will serve high school students that have graduated from Nativity-Miguel model middle schools.

You’ve also enabled a deep, longstanding partnership with St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS), which expands to two additional schools this year, bringing our total outreach to 13,500 students – or 21% of the child population living in poverty in our region. We stand with SLPS – and our many school communities - during an unthinkible period of violence against our children, and will never stop working to protect and empower our community’s most precious asset.

Our students will never be just a statistic. Our one-on-one relationships with them allow us to know the special, smart, caring, resilient and strong human beings they are. Through all the chaos around them, they are more than survivors...with the fortitude to break the cycle of poverty and marginalization for generations to come. They want and deserve better. We share a glimpse of them for you in the following pages.

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IN GRATITUDE
Rosemary Hanley CEO and Co-Founder
Tomea Mersmann Board President (2016-2019)

From the corporation that steps forward to sponsor a school, to the volunteer who faithfully reports to our distribution center each week to perform any task needed, you are equally valued and essential to this mission. Whether it’s steering a student in the direction of their dream or bringing a smile to their face, you are assuring them that they are important, cared for and heard. Thank you.
Our programming has expanded and evolved to address changing needs of students as they grow and to create a “whole child” model.

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<td>Focus is on providing basic essentials – such as winter coats, shoes and school supplies – and improving literacy by building students’ personal libraries.</td>
<td>Direct correlation between health and educational outcomes prompts partnerships to address nutrition, medical and behavioral health needs, as well as provide free eyeglasses.</td>
<td>STEM programming is introduced to bring desired curriculum to classrooms and encourage interest in this high-demand field.</td>
<td>Project Graduation is launched to create a continuum model of support from preschool through high school.</td>
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- 1:1 service delivery
- Basic needs
- Nutrition
- Health and wellness
- Vision care and eyeglasses
- Book fairs
- Books & Buddies
- Washer & dryer

- 1:1 service delivery
- Basic needs
- Nutrition
- Health and wellness
- Vision care and eyeglasses
- Book fairs
- Books & Buddies (through 2nd)
- Washer & dryer
- mSci Do
- Dental education (through 3rd)
- Behavioral health

- I:1 service delivery
- Basic needs
- Nutrition
- Health and wellness
- Vision care and eyeglasses
- Book fairs
- Washer & dryer

- I:1 service delivery
- Basic needs
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- 1st - 5th Grade
- 6th - 8th Grade
- 9th - 12th Grade

**40,000 STUDENTS IMPACTED SINCE 2001**

*Currently in Riverview Gardens School District*
As part of our Project Graduation initiative with Riverview Gardens School District, our High School programming supports students’ academic goals and development into successful members of the community. The intent is to help students navigate the uncertainties of adolescence, stay on track for graduation and plan for what’s next.

Beginning freshman year, students have the opportunity to meet with a trained Little Bit mentor on a biweekly basis. Through career fairs and exploration, internships, skills development and help with course selection, we assist students in planning for their next steps after graduation. Students learn the importance of their own civic responsibility and working together to effect the change they wish to see by planning and participating in service learning projects.

According to the National Dropout Prevention Center, graduating high school sets the stage for the next 50 years of a person’s life. The social and economic ripples of dropping out are far reaching and long term. EARLY DEATH RATE FOR THOSE WITH FEWER THAN 12 YEARS OF EDUCATION IS 2.5X HIGHER.

YOUNG MEN WITHOUT A DIPLOMA ARE 47X MORE LIKELY TO BE INCARCERATED.

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS PAY ABOUT $60,000 LESS IN TAXES OVER A LIFETIME.

DROPOUTS ARE LIKELY TO EARN AN AVERAGE $7,000 LESS/YEAR.

For the Sake of All, Washington University and SLU Alliance for Excellent Education Report from Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University
BUILDING IMPACT

10 AMAZING THINGS YOU MADE POSSIBLE IN 2019

1. **6 NEW SCHOOL ADOPTIONS**

2. **1,800 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS**

3. **11,500 STUDENTS SERVED IN 39 SCHOOLS**

4. **355,000 ESSENTIAL ITEMS DELIVERED**

5. **16,176 VOLUNTEER HOURS**

6. **400 STUDENTS, FAMILIES, SUPPORTERS PARTICIPATED IN 2ND ANNUAL LAURA’S RUN 4 KIDS**

7. **525 FAMILY MEAL BOXES DISTRIBUTED DURING ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUMMER SCHOOL, IN COOPERATION WITH ST. LOUIS AREA FOODBANK**

8. **27 ACADEMIC MENTORS RECRUITED FOR NEW SOAR HIGH SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM**

9. **24 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN PILOT SUMMER READING PROGRAM AT MEADOWS ELEMENTARY, AND SHOWED AN INCREASE IN READING SCORES**

10. **PARTNERSHIP CREATED WITH CIGNA AND ST. LOUIS AREA FOODBANK TO OPEN FOOD MARKETS IN 2 ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
BUILDING IMPACT

51,208 SCHOOL SUPPLIES

67,249 BOOKS, INCLUDING 8,861 BOOKS & BUDDIES

252,000 POUNDS OF NUTRITIOUS FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

116 EYEGLASSES

2,793 HEALTH SCREENINGS

2,062 STUDENTS ENGAGED IN MYSCI DO

7,497 SHOES

2,941 STUDENTS RECEIVED DENTAL EDUCATION

13,045 COATS AND WINTER ITEMS

43,079 SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR

33,373 UNIFORM PANTS AND SHIRTS

67,153 HYGIENE ITEMS

230 STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING, 74% SHOWING IMPROVED FUNCTIONING

7,497 HYGIENE ITEMS
“I am here to make a difference in the world.”

“Today I study hard so tomorrow I can make a difference.”

“I really believe I can overcome and help others overcome whatever they’re going through.”

“I look at my future different now with Little Bit’s help.”

“You make me believe in myself.”

“I like how you think about us.”

“With a little love, the sun will shine.”

“Little Bit is a friend I can count on.”
SHANIYA PERRY

“This is my calling,” it’s a statement that took Shaniya Perry awhile to embrace. For the 14-year-old at Westview Middle School in the Riverview Gardens School District (now attending Innovation School at Cool Valley), to be an inspiration to others through her gift was too great of a responsibility. But singing was a way she could overcome insecurities and connect with people, and it was most certainly in her blood.

“I remember singing to her while I was pregnant, and then hearing her sing along to the radio – word for word – when she was about 3 and thinking, ‘is that her?’” says Shaniya’s mom, Jessica, who had been offered a spot with the St. Louis Symphony Chorus as a girl but turned it down, eventually becoming a teenage mom. “I walked away from it, but I was determined to beat the odds and give my daughter the opportunity to pursue her dream.”

“It was automatic that Shaniya was going to be part of signing,” says grandma, Sheryl. “At age 5, she began signing in the church youth choir and her voice would really stand out. We told her as long as she wanted to do it, we’d let her go for it, but if she started something, she needed to see it through.”

“She won’t practice in front of us, but I’ve learned to trust her process because it’s so impressive to see how she transforms on stage.”

With only church performances on her resume, Shaniya landed her first lead role in 2017 in a COCA production of The Lion King, in which she also had to act and learn choreographed dance moves. When the performer set to play Evillene in The Wiz became ill a week before the show, Shaniya was asked to step into the role and “nailed it,” says Sheryl. “She became a different person before our eyes.”

Through counseling, the support of her family, and reaching out to classmates that also may need a friend, Shaniya has found her voice, says Jessica. “She’s developed a willingness to learn and receive opportunities – like the ones from The Little Bit Foundation – and she’s able to tell other kids not to give up. She knows she can help motivate them and it’s not a burden anymore.”

“Too many kids are dying or feel hopeless,” says Shaniya. “But we all have something to offer; even a hug can really help someone. When we connect with others, we find ourselves. So don’t be scared to try something new and put yourself out there.”

The transformation has been more than what’s visible to an audience, says Shaniya. “I’m finally ok with myself – how I look – and with being in the spotlight,” she says. A plus-size girl with a special gift, Shaniya has dealt with bullying by classmates since the third grade. “People can stereotype you without really knowing you, but the main thing is to accept who you are and to follow where God wants you, because it’s all leading you somewhere.”

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LATRECE SMITH

Sibling love. LaTrece Smith, a behavioral therapist embedded at Herzog Elementary and Yeatman-Liddell Middle School through a partnership between Little Bit and Saint Louis Counseling, says sibling love is one of the strongest bonds that Little Bit students have.

“If we provide something to a student, they’ll ask if they can have one for their little brother or sister.”

Smith recalls a young man whose mom died unexpectedly while lying next to him in bed. “As the oldest child, he instantly became a parent figure to his younger siblings,” she says. “Yet, he was still a child and going through all of the stages of fear and grief. We spent time together talking about his mom, celebrating her so that he didn’t feel he needed to put all of his feelings aside.” During trauma, it takes just one good adult to help a child heal, she adds, “and it’s very fulfilling when they say to me ’I’ve never told this to anyone,’ because I know I’ve earned their trust.”

In spending time with students, Smith also has learned that there usually is a why behind a bad choice. “We will go 10 steps back to determine how we got here – and sometimes a student is acting out because he’s hungry, or she doesn’t understand the changes to her body and how to have good hygiene.”
JANA KIPP

Strong. It’s a word echoed by many when describing students served by Little Bit. “Trauma is their norm, yet they continue to push past it. It really gives you a whole new outlook on your own life,” says Jana Kipp, social worker for three Riverview Gardens elementary schools and a Little Bit liaison.

In her role – helping to identify resources to support student attendance and counseling them through events and emotions that impact classroom behavior – Kipp has been able to build positive relationships with many of them. “They feel comfortable coming to me, and that’s important,” she says, adding that the Little Bit volunteers have had the same effect. “Their whole demeanor changes after being with Little Bit because they’re feeling better about themselves. Teachers will tell me that students have even become more talkative and engaged in class.”

Now in her fifth year with the district, Kipp says she continues to learn from her students. “Their parents are working very hard to give them a better life, and they have some pretty big dreams. One little boy told me he wants to be a paleontologist. I don’t think I even knew what that was when I was his age!” What stands out most of all, she says, is how much they care about the wellbeing of their families and classmates.

DR. MELISSA NASH

“Everyone has a different outlook on life based on their experiences, but I have to say that despite their many hardships, our students have a great deal of drive and motivation,” says Dr. Melissa Nash, Full Service School Coordinator at Yeatman. Dr. Nash solidifies community partners for the roughly 350 students of Yeatman, in an effort to drive attendance, academics and positive behaviors.

She says Little Bit has helped make it possible for students to attend class and be “present” mentally while doing so. “Many of our students are challenged with adult responsibilities, take public transportation to school, are in transition without a permanent address, live in communities with high death rates… these are heavy burdens to carry at 12 and 13, at any age. Providing them with one less thing to worry or be teased about when they walk through our doors is a burden lifted.”

Little Bit is an essential for families struggling to get by, she adds. “We have a father raising two daughters on his own, who acknowledges he needs Little Bit’s help in supporting the unique needs of his girls, especially when financially he’s compelled to sometimes choose between buying them a meal or hygiene products, for example.”

Dr. Nash often relates well to her students because she too grew up in the city and is a product of St. Louis Public Schools. “They want to know how I got here, about the path I took,” she says, “and over the last few years of partnering with Little Bit, they’ve become interested in working in the helping field because of the services that have been provided to them.”
We have built a community of program partners, supporters and volunteers working to improve the education experience and futures of students across St. Louis. Thank you for your passion, commitment and generous spirit.
FINANCIALS

JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019

TOTAL REVENUE
$5,526,092

EXPENSES

82% PROGRAMS RELATED
18% ADMINISTRATIVE

24% IN-KIND DONATIONS AND SUPPORT
18% SPECIAL EVENTS
57% CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTS
1% OTHER INCOME
YPB

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BOARD

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NICK BAHN

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ASHLEY ULRICH
CORTNEY VAUGHN