

Dear Neighbor,

Please participate in the virtual town hall meeting I am hosting from **1 to 2:30 p.m. tomorrow (Saturday, March 27)** with two of my House colleagues from Kansas City – Representatives Michael Johnson and Yolanda Young.

The link and call-information for the ZOOM webinar is below, and we have set aside time to answer participants' questions.

While I try to focus primarily on positive things happening in state government and the legislature, I feel obligated to report to you about two legislative events this week that were very disheartening.

On March 25 the House passed legislation by the bare minimum number of votes required to allow parents beginning for the 22-23 school year to enroll their children in school districts they don't live in if those districts agree to participate in the transfer program. State and federal funding would follow the students to the receiving district.

I warned during House debate that this legislation could be extremely harmful to districts like Hickman Mills, my home school district that is now only provisionally accredited and surrounded by fully accredited school districts (Center, Grandview and Lee's Summit) that are now performing better on standardized testing and other scoring criteria if those districts are willing to accept significant numbers of transfer students.

Under this legislation (House Substitute for House Committee Substitute for House Bill 543) which passed 82-68, participating districts must publish each year the number of transfer students, if any, they are willing to accept. Receiving districts are not required to add space, staff or teachers to accommodate transfer students.

I'm confident that positive developments are occurring in the Hickman Mills School District that I attended from kindergarten through graduation from Hickman Mills High School that will lead to regaining full accreditation.

District voters last year overwhelmingly passed a major bond issue to upgrade all district schools and facilities, and its educational foundation has been awarding numerous college scholarships and teacher grants every year.

But allowing parents to transfer their children to nearby districts would encourage parents to abandon the district in hopes of obtaining better immediate outcomes for their children.

Wouldn't it be better for the state to adequately fund state aid to public education and to distribute such funding fairly to urban and suburban districts with large numbers of at-risk students instead of sabotaging those districts' improvement efforts?

The other disheartening development was this week's party line vote in the House Budget Committee not to fund Medicaid expansion approved by Missouri voters last year that is discussed in this week's Capitol Update.

When Missouri voters approved adding Medicaid expansion to our state constitution, making Missouri the 38th state to take advantage of the federal government funding 90 percent of the costs, that should have ended the argument on this issue since the legislature cannot overturn a constitutional amendment without approval of another statewide vote.

Hopefully, this decision will be reversed during the ongoing appropriation process.

Turning to more positive news please read the article about an area Highway Patrol officer whose compassionate action during a traffic stop likely saved the life of a teenager experiencing suicidal thoughts.

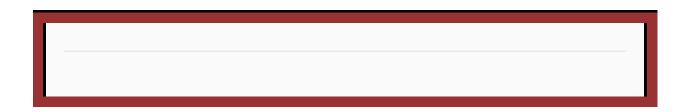
Please consider dropping off candy at the front desk of the South Patrol Police Station, 9701 Marion Park Dr., by Friday, April 2, for South Patrol officers to give to children at a church Easter event.

Email is probably the best way to reach my office. If you are unable to quickly reach me, my legislative aide, <u>Kaylee Bauer</u> is ready to help you.

Please scroll down to read about other state government matters and important upcoming local events.

Feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends and family who might want to know the latest news about what is happening in state government and about important local events. Be safe and God bless!

Yours in Service, Mark A. Sharp





Representative Sharp warns his House colleagues of the devastating effects open enrollment legislation allowing parents to enroll their children in public school districts they don't live in could have on underfunded or underperforming school districts even if they are rapidly improving during debate by the full House on March 25 which passed the legislation 82-68.



REP. MICHAEL JOHNSON | REP. YOLANDA YOUNG | REP. MARK A. SHARP DISTRICT 23 DISTRICT 22 DISTRICT 36

You are invited to a Zoom webinar. When: Saturday Mar 27, 2021 01:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada) Topic: Legislative Town Hall Description: Please join us for the first of this three-part series of Town Hall meetings offering important information and dialogue brought to you by Representatives Mark A. Sharp, Yolanda Young and Michael Johnson in partnership with the Black Archives of Mid-America, Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center and Concord Fortress of Hope Church.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82888625922?pwd=ajU4a2xzQUE5WjZxK

1lsUW5XaVc3Zz09

Passcode: 569361

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13017158592,,82888625922#,,,,*569361# or

+13126266799,,82888625922#,,,,*569361#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833 Webinar ID: 828 8862 5922

Passcode: 569361

International numbers available:

https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kiao5zTsO

WEEKLY CAPITOL UPDATE

Friday, March 26, 2021

MEDICAID EXPANSION FUNDING BLOCKED

The House Budget Committee on March 25 voted 9-20 to reject funding for Medicaid expansion, which is mandated under a constitutional amendment Missouri voters approved last year. The action came on a straight party-line vote, with Democrats supporting the bill and Republicans opposing it.

Under the federal Affordable Care Act, states can expand their Medicaid eligibility threshold to 138 percent of the federal poverty level and the federal government will pay 90 percent of the cost. After years of the legislature refusing to implement expansion, supporters took the issue directly to voters, who supported requiring expansion, making Missouri the 38th state to approve expansion.

An estimated 275,000 uninsured Missourians will become constitutionally eligible for Medicaid with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. In January, Gov. Mike Parson included funding for expansion in his proposed budget for the upcoming 2022 fiscal year. House Budget Committee Chairman Cody Smith, R-Carthage, engineered the defeat of the expansion funding by removing it from the appropriations bill for the Department of Social Services, which oversees the state's Medicaid program, and placing it in a stand-alone measure, House Bill 20. Smith then led his fellow Republicans in defeating the bill which he had introduced.

Supporters could attempt to add the expansion funding in House Bill 11, the social services' budget measure, when it comes before the full chamber for debate. But because of the House's highly restrictive rules governing budget amendments, success is doubtful. As a result, it likely will be up to the Senate to approve the funding for that to occur, and the House would still have to vote for it to win final approval.

If the legislature passes a final budget without Medicaid expansion funding, a lawsuit forcing the state to implement expansion anyway is virtually guaranteed since the new Medicaid eligibility threshold is now fixed in the state constitution, and lawmakers have no discretion to lower or ignore it through the budget process.

LIMITING HEALTH OFFICIALS' POWER REJECTED

A bipartisan group of senators on March 24 defeated legislation

pushed by some of the chamber's more conservative Republican members that sought to severely restrict the authority of local officials and health departments to respond to pandemics and other public health emergencies.

The legislation (Senate Substitute 2 for Senate Bills 12, 20, 21, 31, 56, 67 & 68) failed on an 11-19 bipartisan vote when it came up for tentative approval.

Local officials have borne the primary responsibility for imposing and enforcing containment measures during the current COVID-19 pandemic since Gov. Mike Parson repeatedly has said local officials are best positioned to address issues such as mask mandates and limitations on school or business operations and public gatherings so such restrictions can best meet the needs of their particular communities rather than the state adopting uniform statewide restrictions.

ABUSE ALLEGATIONS LEAD TO LEGISLATION

The House of Representatives on March 23 granted first-round approval to bipartisan legislation that would provide some state and local oversight of religious-based boarding schools, which currently are allowed to operate in Missouri with no regulation. A second vote is required to advance the bill to the Senate.

Problems with unregulated religious boarding schools operating in the state came to the forefront last fall following a <u>Kansas City</u> <u>Star</u> investigation that revealed allegations of abuse at the Circle of Hope Girls Ranch in Cedar County. Earlier this month, the state Attorney General's office charged the couple who owns the now-closed ranch with 101 felony counts, including statutory rape, statutory sodomy, child molestation and child abuse or neglect.

On the same day the House approved HB 557, Gov. Mike Parson appointed the attorney general to assist Cedar County officials in investigating a second religious facility, Agape Boarding School, over allegations of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Missouri and South Carolina are the only states in the nation that completely exempt religious boarding schools from regulation.

HB 557 would require religious boarding schools to notify the Missouri Department of Social Services they are in operation and follow basic safety requirements, such as submitting to fire, safety and health inspections and maintaining medical records for all residents. The bill also requires the schools to conduct background checks on all employees and volunteers and allow parents access to the facility. The bill's lead sponsors are Representatives Rudy Viet, R-Wardsville, and Keri Ingle, D-Lee's Summit.

BILL WOULD LIMIT JUDGES' AUTHORITY

The House of Representatives on March 22 voted 109-44 to prohibit Missouri courts from changing false or misleading ballot language written by lawmakers for proposed constitutional amendments or laws the legislature places before voters. The measure, which I voted against, now moves to the Senate.

The Missouri secretary of state typically is responsible for writing ballot language explaining what proposed ballot measures would do. However, lawmakers have the statutory prerogative to write their own ballot language for measures that come through the legislature, although until recent years that power was exercised sparingly.

But when the legislative sponsor of a ballot measure also writes the ballot language, the result sometimes is slanted in favor of the measure and is sometimes outright deceptive. When such language is challenged and found deficient, in order to allow the underlying ballot measure to still go before voters, Missouri courts have rewritten only the portion necessary to ensure it is sufficient, fair and nonargumentative as required by state law. House Bill 850 would strip the courts of the authority to alter ballot language drafted by legislators. As a result, the only remedy left to a court if it determines ballot language is false or misleading would be to issue an injunction barring the underlying measure from the ballot.

If this bill had been law last year, it likely would have prevented a vote on a proposed constitutional amendment pushed by some Republican lawmakers to undo redistricting reforms voters had approved in 2018. The 2020 measure, Amendment 3, contained legislatively crafted ballot language that omitted mentioning this and instead focused on other minor changes being proposed, which two courts found insufficient and unfair, prompting them to rewrite the defective language. Voters ultimately ratified the 2020 amendment with 51 percent support.

STATE DELAYING TAX DEADLINE TO MAY 17

As I announced in last week's Capitol Report, after the federal government delayed this year's income tax filing deadline from April 15 to May 17, Gov. Mike Parson announced on March 19 that Missouri also will push back the state income tax deadline to the same date. Because the state income tax filings in Missouri are closely linked to federal filings, any delay in the latter usually results in the state following suit.

The short delay shouldn't cause the state major financial problems, unlike last year when the tax deadlines were postponed to July 15 due to the pandemic. That date pushed the deadline into the next state fiscal year, thus contributing to a collapse in state revenue collections during the final quarter of FY 2020.

However, this year's one-month delay means Missourians who owe state income taxes must still pay up during the current fiscal year, which runs through June 30. As a result, no late-year budget cuts are expected.

The Internal Revenue Service said this year's delay was necessary due to the agency's current focus on distributing the latest economic stimulus checks authorized by Congress, which created a need for additional time to process tax returns.



Representative Sharp (center in red tie) joins fellow House members wearing white on March 24 to honor our state's healthcare workers during Spirit Week which recognized a different cause or group every day.

Missouri Governor — Michael L. Parson

Office of Communications

March 22, 2021

Governor Parson Announces \$300 Million Transfer of Coronavirus Relief Funds to State's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

(JEFFERSON CITY, MO) – Today, Governor Mike Parson announced that he has authorized a transfer of \$300 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) from the State Treasury into the state's UI Trust Fund to help keep the Trust Fund balance above the level that would trigger an increase in contribution tax rates for Missouri businesses.

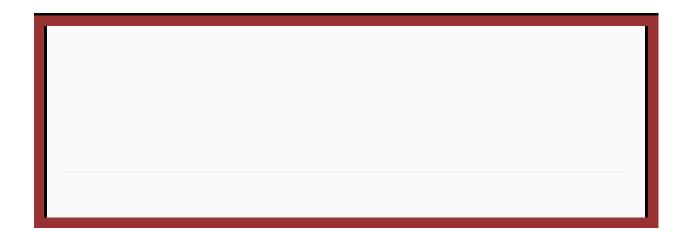
"With over 96 percent of Missouri's businesses employing 50 or fewer employees, these additional funds will help prevent tax increases for our small businesses and strengthen the UI Trust Fund," **Governor Parson** said. "Despite the unprecedented rise in unemployment caused by COVID-19 this past year, our economy continues to come back strong as businesses reopen and Missourians get back to work. We have come a long way since the early days of this pandemic, and an increase in taxes is the last thing Missouri employers need as we continue our recovery."

Missouri employers wholly fund the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust Fund from which state unemployment benefits are provided to eligible workers who have lost their jobs. With thousands of Missourians unemployed during the pandemic, Missouri businesses would have likely seen an increase in their unemployment taxes to replenish the Trust Fund, without this action. "Small businesses employ over 45 percent of our workforce here in the state. These funds will provide those employers a better sense of economic security encouraging them to employ or re-employ workers. These efforts are critical to allowing small businesses to reopen, recover, and grow," **Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Director Anna Hui** said. "We continue to look for ways to be fiscally responsible in assisting businesses and individuals in the state in recovering from the pandemic. Today's action helps businesses by enabling them to employ more workers and create sustainable economic prosperity across Missouri."

As of February 2021, Missouri's unemployment rate stands at 4.2 percent, below the national average of 6.2 percent. While February rankings are not yet available, Missouri ranked twelfth lowest in the nation in unemployment in January 2021.

The transfer of CRF funds to the UI Trust Fund accompanies the Public Order that the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations issued last December under the Governor's Executive Order to prevent increases in unemployment tax rates that are triggered when the average Trust Fund balance dips too low.

This fund transfer will help Missouri not follow the twenty other state who have depleted their UI Trust Funds and are borrowing money to pay unemployment benefits.



Drive Through Free Food Distribution



St. James UMC South Campus New Location 9420 James A Reed Rd Kansas City, MO 64138 816.763.8444 St. James UMC South Campus New Location 9420 James A Reed Rd Kansas City, MO 64138 816.763.8444

Saturday, March 27

10 am to 12 pm **7205 Longview Road** Kansas City, MO 64134

Fresh produce is available to the community. No income or zip code restrictions



St. James UMC South Campus has moved to a new location. Visit us at 9420 James A. Reed Rd, KCMO 64138 or call 816.763.8444 for more information.



Connecting people with God in practical ways

Highway Patrol corporal named Missouri State Employee of the Month for unique handling of traffic stop for speeding

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 26, 2021

JEFFERSON CITY – **Jeffrey W. Huff**, a corporal in the **Missouri State Highway Patrol's Troop A**, has been named Missouri State Employee of the Month for March for the care and compassion he demonstrated while responding to a teenager experiencing suicidal thoughts. Huff became eligible for the state recognition after being named Department of Public Safety Sworn Employee of the Month for February.

In August 2020, Huff stopped a vehicle traveling 113 miles an hour on Interstate 70 east of Kansas City. When he learned the driver was 16 years old, Huff had the boy call his parents. While the boy was on the phone, Huff learned the teen was experiencing depression and was suicidal.

Huff decided to share his own personal experience of loss. The corporal's own brother had died by suicide. He explained to the boy how the loss of his brother had affected his entire family. He talked about the benefits of talking with others and working with medical

professionals. The teen's parents came to the traffic stop scene, talked with Huff, and then informed him they would take their son directly to the hospital.

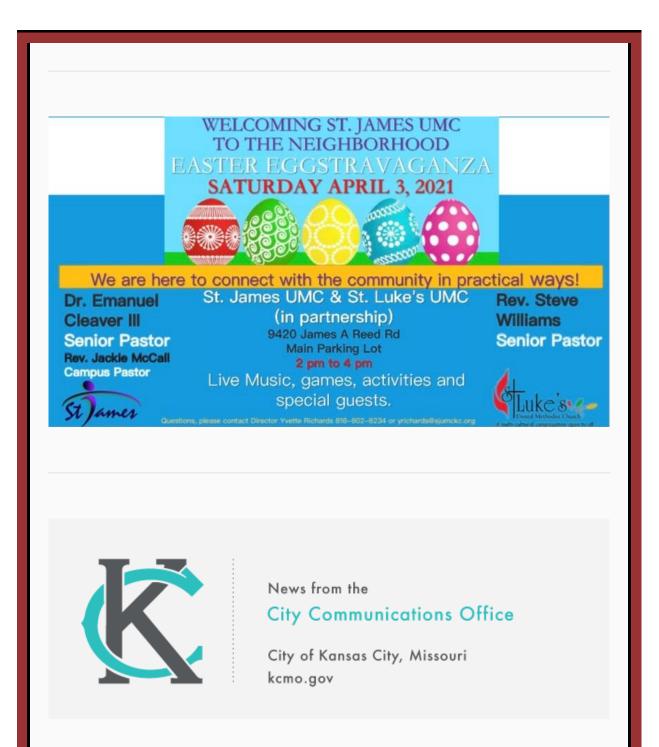
Later, Huff was contacted by the teen's mother. She told him she could never thank him enough for what he had done for her son. She explained that as they had driven away from the traffic stop scene, her son explained his plan to take his own life. He told his parents, "That trooper saved my life tonight."

"One of the core values of the Missouri State Highway Patrol is compassion," **Department of Public Safety Director Sandy Karsten** said. "That is clearly what Corporal Huff demonstrated that night in his interactions with this young man. Corporal Huff's concern went beyond dangerous driving; he made a conscious decision to share his own personal experience to help the teen get through a difficult time and seek assistance. This is an excellent example of the difference law enforcement officers can make in a person's life."

The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Lifeline provides crisis resources and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-8255 or go to <u>suicidepreventionlifeline.org</u>.

A photo of Corporal Huff is below.





Land Bank Dollar Sale, new Housing Department highlight City's commitment to helping unhoused persons

Long-term solutions will help KCMO's most vulnerable residents

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 25, 2021

The Land Bank will soon be helping provide homes for those who are unhoused or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Properties would be sold for \$1 provided that the new property owners fully rehabilitate the property, eliminate all blight, and provide housing to the homeless and to individuals who make \$18,000 annual income or less, or families who make 30% or less of the federal guide to annual median income.

"This is part of our work to provide long-term and affordable solutions for those experiencing homelessness and those in need of affordable housing," said City Manager Brian Platt. "This initiative will dramatically increase our affordable housing supply and focuses on the most vulnerable families in our community."

The next step in this process is community outreach to neighborhoods where current Land Bank properties exist and to finalize the specific details of the program with council and community input. This includes a community meeting on April 1 at 6 pm. Details are available on the Land Bank website at <u>kcmolandbank.org</u> The City owns over 100 vacant homes at the Land Bank.





In Conversation with Sr. Jeannette Londadjim

Join Us for a Special Event with the 2017 Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence Activist in Residence.

Avila University and the Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence welcome you to join them at **2 p.m. CST on Wednesday, April 21** for a special bilingual Zoom conversation with 2017 Buchanan Initiative Activist in Residence **Sr. Jeannette Londadjim** as they discuss her recently published collection of essays, *Chadian Sister Engages Kansas City Youth about Peace and Justice*. Chadian Sister Engages Kansas City Youth about Peace and Justice Citoyenne du monde en construction à Kansas City

Nelkem Jeannette Londadjim

About the Book

Chadian Sister is an intimate, emotional series of explorations of faith, social justice and community. Written before, during and after her three-month residency in Kansas City, Sr. Jeannette details how she connected with Avila students to discuss their aspirations and to encourage them to be "artisans of peace and justice." Featuring an introduction by Carol Coburn, Professor Emerita of Women's and Gender Studies at Avila, the book is a shining example of the power of the global CSJ family.

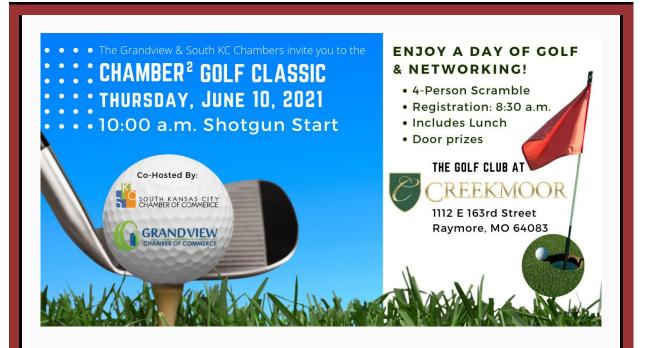
As a special bonus, **the first 25 registrants will be eligible to receive a free copy** of *Chadian Sister Engages Kansas City Youth about Peace and Justice* after the event!

Register Today!

Our Mission

The Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence engages Avila's academic community and stakeholders throughout the region to interrogate harms and injustices, elevate the voices of the marginalized, and apply methods for building positive sustainable relationships. The Initiative's works is consistent with Avila University's recognition of the "worth, dignity and potential of each human being" and its mission to educate "lifelong learners who make meaningful contributions to the global community." The Buchanan Initiative brings students, academics, and activists together to raise a generation that has the nonviolent tools it needs to make peace social change possible.





The South KC and Grandview Chambers of Commerce encourage you to participate in our Chamber2 Golf Classic to be held at The Golf Club at Creekmoor on Thursday, June 10th!

Use the Golf Tournament to Grow Your Business!

Company participation in golf tournaments has declined in recent years as business owners and managers question the "business value" of participating. In other words, does the time and money invested in participating in a community golf tournament provide direct ROI?

Here are a couple of suggestions to help maximize your return:

- Reward Employees Give four of your employees the opportunity to spend the day on the golf course as a way to say "thank you" for their hard work.
- Build Customer/Prospect Relationships Invite two of your best customers or prospects to play with two employees from your company who can best maximize the value of building a stronger relationship with them. Spending 4-5 hours on the golf course building a stronger relationship with a key customer or prospect is a priceless opportunity to build your business.

Hope to see you on the course on June 10th!

Vickie Wolgast President

Register Now

Download Complete Details

DONATE BLOOD









Nearly 600 units of blood products are needed daily in CBC's service area.

A single car accident victim can use as many as 100 units of blood products.



donation has the potential to save up to three lives.

OINTMENT REFERRED

South Kansas City Chamber Thursday, April 8th 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM St Peter & All Saints Episcopal Church 100 E Red Bridge Rd. Kansas City, MO 64114

For information regarding CBC's response to COVID-19, visit savealifenow.org/coronavirus.



Book your appointment today at **savealifenow.org/group**, enter **Group Code: EH36**. For additional details contact Angela Alesi at (816) 761-7660 or aalesi@southkcchamber.com.

Medical eligibility questions? Call 1.800.688.0900



MISSOURI EMERGENCY RENTAL ARREARS PROGRAM

The state of Missouri's new rental assistance program using funding through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) was passed by Congress in December 2020. On February 11, 2021 Governor Parson signed HB 16 into law, which provides more than \$324 million in funding for rental and utility assistance for Missourians. Missouri Housing Development Commission will administer this funding under the State Assistance for Housing Relief (SAFHR) program. Please click below for more information.

Please Click Here For Program Information

Please note that the Missouri Emergency Rental Arrears Program (ERAP) is a separate program from above, and is utilizing ESG-CV

funding authorized through the CARES Act. This program is open to landlords seeking rental arrears for qualified tenants.

Please Click Here For Program Information

COVID-19 VACCINE CLINIC



(877) 435 - 8411

https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/navigator/

VACCINATIONS FOR THOSE 65 AND OLDER BY APPOINTMENT ONLY 4401 E. BLUE PARKWAY, KANSAS CITY, MO 64130

> SWOPE HEALTH



To Register for Vaccination Use your smartphone camera on this code.

UILDERS KANSAS CITY

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE

South KC Mobile Food Pantries

With so many people out of work due to the coronavirus pandemic, a growing number of families in south Kansas City are being forced to rely on community food pantries such as Community Assistance Council's to have enough to eat.

Fortunately, Harvesters (the community food network) brings the semi-truck that serves as its mobile food pantry to five sites in south Kansas City monthly to distribute fresh produce and other healthy food to families in need. The sites are:

Center District Warehouse, 8701 Holmes Rd., from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. the second Friday of each month. Persons should go to the entrance to the Center Administrative Office and drive through the bus parking lot to the warehouse where volunteers will load the food. Persons should take the Troost Ave exit. The event is sponsored by the Center Education Foundation in partnership with the Center School District.

Evangel Church, 1414 E. 103rd St., from 7 to 8:30 a.m. the second Saturday of the month. Persons may remain in their vehicles, and food will be brought to them.

United Believers Community Church, 5600 E. 112th Terr., with vehicles lining up at 8:30 a.m. and contactless food distribution running from 9 to 11 a.m. the third Wednesday of the month.

Ruskin High School, 7000 E. 111th St., from 4 to 5:30 p.m. the third Thursday of the month. Vehicles should line up on Ruskin Way on the east side of the school, and food will be loaded in the vehicles when they reach the school by staff and student volunteers. This event is sponsored by the school and Community Assistance Council.

Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and food distribution running from about 8:30 to 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month. Families are asked to bring two cardboard boxes for volunteers to put the food in.

Center High School, 8715 Holmes Rd., from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. as long as food is left on the third Saturday of the month. The event is sponsored by Three Trails Community church in partnership with the Center School District.

Coronavirus Facts and Resources

Kansas City

If you would like to receive updates about what the City is doing in response to the coronavirus, **text COVIDKC to 888777** or go online to <u>kcmo.gov/coronavirus</u>

Missouri

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is operating a <u>hotline</u> for residents and health care providers to call for information and guidance about COVID-19.

The statewide hotline number is <u>877-435-8411</u>. The hotline is being operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



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11PS HOTLINE 816-474-8477

KCcrimestoppers.com



State Representative Mark A. Sharp

Missouri House of Representatives Room 102-BA 201 W Capitol Ave Jefferson City, Mo 65101 Phone 573-751-9469

Email

mark.sharp@house.mo.gov

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any feedback, questions or ideas!