

Calendar of Events

October 26, 2023

Operation Food Search: Healing Hunger through Strategy, Collaboration and Innovation

Operation Food Search

1644 Lotsie Blvd.

St. Louis, MO 63132

04:30 PM - 06:30 PM CST

Join us for a happy hour program about food insecurity led by Kristen Wild. Kristen will provide an overview of Operation Food Search's groundbreaking work to grow food and nutrition security in our region. Following the presentation attendees will rotate through breakout sessions featuring policy and advocacy work, child nutrition programs, "food is medicine" programs, and the St. Louis MetroMarket.

Kristen Wild

President and Chief Executive Officer

Operation Food Search

Kristen Wild is President and Chief Executive Officer of Operation Food Search, a hunger relief agency that provides food and services to 200,000 people each month in Missouri and Illinois. Kristen oversees the operations, programs and initiatives OFS sets forth in its work to heal hunger and strengthen the community. Kristen's push for innovation and collaboration has enabled the organization to grow substantially in the last few years, as it stepped up its response to meet the increased need due to the pandemic.

Kristen represented OFS in its role on the regional response task force that was created to ensure that the needs of the community were met during the pandemic. She has created or amplified impactful partnerships, such as a collaboration with St. Louis County Library, which has enabled OFS to distribute millions of meals to children. In addition, she has ensured the longevity of the organization by spearheading endowment efforts to raise more than \$7 million. She has overseen the hiring of new staff, recruitment of board members and the expansion of crucial programs to address the underlying causes of hunger.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Duke University, Kristen holds a bachelor's degree in political science and psychology. She joined OFS after serving as Executive Director of the Ladue Education Foundation & Alumni Association. She has extensive experience in advocacy and education environments, including Autism Speaks, Sylvan Learning Centers, Metro Nashville Public Schools, Houston Independent School District and St. Louis Public Schools.

Kristen was named a 2021 Most Influential Business Woman by the St. Louis Business Journal and a 2021 YWCA Leader of Distinction. She was recently named 2023 St. Louis Titan 100 by Titan CEO.

From Kristen: "Given my roots in teaching kids whose basic needs were not being met, I was drawn to the opportunity to meet one of the most basic needs of all: food security. For without food security, children are unable to thrive in the classroom . . . or in life."

Melissa Weissler

Chief Program Officer

Operation Food Search

As the Chief Program Officer, Melissa develops and implements programming that includes client-facing and community-based work, food distribution, supportive services, nutrition education and Food Is Medicine programs. She oversees partnerships with school districts, health systems, funders, and community organizations to advance the OFS mission of reducing food insecurity. Melissa serves on the senior leadership team and holds a Master of Public Health degree.

Melissa started her career as an insurance underwriter but quickly realized she wanted to be in a field that more closely aligned with her personal and professional interests. She transitioned to the non-profit sector after obtaining a Master of Public Health in Health Promotion and Policy degree from the University of Missouri, Columbia. She holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Missouri, Columbia as well. At OFS, she previously held the title of Director of Child and Community Nutrition.

The mother of two young girls, Melissa spends as much time as possible outdoors, going on nature walks and playing in the park. She loves cooking for family and friends and hosting people at her house.

*Beverly Isom
Director of Policy and Advocacy
Operation Food Search*

As the Director of Policy and Advocacy, Beverly develops and implements OFS's policy platform aimed at addressing long-term solutions to the problem of hunger. She oversees government and community relations, grassroots advocacy, policy research, and other relevant research studies designed to decrease child hunger and family food insecurity in Missouri. She and her team utilize evidence-based best practices in accordance with Independent Review Board protocols to ensure the Policy and Advocacy department delivers on its goals.

Isom is a communications professional with decades of experience as a leader in both corporate and government communications. Prior to joining OFS, she was a managing supervisor at Fleishman-Hillard and worked on digital transformation teams at Nestle Purina and Monsanto. She has also served as a communications professional for the City of Atlanta, Georgia, the Greater Atlanta United Way, FEMA and the CDC in Atlanta. Beverly served as communications director for the 2012 re-election campaign of civil rights pioneer John Lewis to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Beverly studied Journalism at the University of Missouri. She is a commissioner for the Regional Arts Commission and a Neighborhood Leadership Fellow. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., served as a City of St. Louis 27th Ward Voter Empowerment Chair, and was involved with Ashrei Foundation North City Photo ID Project aimed at helping unhoused and others attain photo IDs and voter registration.

Beverly is likely the first competitive sabre fencer at OFS and is an avid roller skater; however, she does not do them at the same time. She is the oldest and only girl in a family of four – which resulted in being outbid on what everyone watched on television growing up often acquiescing to Speed Racer and NCAA Men's Basketball.

*Quinton Ward
Senior Manager of MetroMarket*

Quinton oversees MetroMarket, a donated city bus that has been transformed into a grocery store on wheels restoring access to healthy, affordable food to St. Louis City and County. His focus is on working with members and organizations to bridge physical, financial, and educational barriers in neighborhoods with limited food access through programming, including the mobile market and produce delivery.

Quinton earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts with an Emphasis in Graphic Design from Webster University. Outside of MetroMarket, you can find him co-hosting the podcast "Speak Up St. Louis." Additionally, Quinton enjoys working out, catching St. Louis Symphony performances and checking out local art galleries and museums.

November 16, 2023

Ally is a Verb

Lunch

Even though speaking about and supporting LGBTQ people has increased, most of our St. Louis community members still experience discrimination, bias, hate crimes, and barriers to healthcare. This conversation focuses on better understanding the challenges faced by members of our community around marriage equality. Learn how you can better support the LGBTQ+ community and ensure "ally" is a verb!

*Matthew R. Kerns, MFA (he/him)
President & Artistic Director
St Lou Fringe*

Matthew is a John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts award-winning educator, critically acclaimed theatre performance artist featured in American Theatre Magazine, and a 2020 St. Louis Business Journal Diverse Business Leaders Award recipient.

Matthew has been an Executive Producer, Director, and Artistic Director for Off-Loop Theatre [Chicago], Off-Broadway Theatre [New York], Repertory Theatre [California], Regional Theatre [Iowa, Missouri, Colorado] and Educational Theatre [Chicago, California, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri].

Students that have trained with Matthew have gone on to work in television, film, major motion pictures, and on Broadway. From Saturday Night Live to Gotham, and from Six: The Musical to Jake, the State Farm Guy and beyond.

Matthew holds an Associate degree in Communications and Theatre from St. Louis Community College, a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Eastern New Mexico University, and Master of Fine Arts degree from Naropa University.

He is married to the love of his life, Mr. Sean Gottlieb. They reside in the Lafayette Square neighborhood with their dogs Louis Armstrong, Harvey Milk, and Ella Fitzgerald.

December 7, 2023

Reserve a seat at our table for the YWCA Leader Lunch 43

1820 Market St.

St. Louis, MO 63103

10:00 AM - 02:00 PM CST

Join us in celebrating three St. Louis Forum members at the YWCA Leader Lunch 43 held at Union Station Hotel on December 7, 2023.

Akberet Boykin-Farr, Vice President of Human Resources, Emerson

Nalini Mahadevan, Principal Attorney, MLO Law, LLC

Natalie Self, Senior Vice President, Equitable Economic Impact, Cortex

Single Ticket: \$100

A private Holiday Bazaar featuring women-owned businesses will precede the program. Doors open at 10:00am.

Parking Directions: Enter at the Midway (Mall) entrance on Market Street (for valet parking) or self-park in the lot behind Union Station. Parking is \$7.00 per car for Self Parking and \$12 for Valet Parking.

As this is is not a St. Louis Forum event, please do not use prepay funds to purchase your tickets.

December 14, 2023

2023 St. Louis Forum Holiday Party

05:30 PM - 08:00 PM CST

Save the date for our annual holiday celebration! Details coming soon!

The Power of Personal Energy for Women: Reclaiming Mental Capacity and Redefining Potent

11:00 AM - 01:00 PM CST

Feeling depleted? Tired? Feel you can be more or as if you are simply not thriving? You are not alone. For many people, especially women, you're expected to do it all: work hard, have a successful career, take care of your family, maintain your health, and make it all appear effortless. It is no wonder that women are suffering from a stress gap, an exhaustion gap, and a mental wellbeing gap. How do you take time to understand and prioritize yourself when so often it feels like there's no space for that? With the right tools, it's easier than you think.

We have teamed up with MEvolution, an organization that specializes in helping people better direct, manage and optimize their personal energy, to provide YOU an Energy Booster workshop. So, get ready to restore your energy, reclaim your mental capacity, and redefine your potential!

Through a combination of self-reflection, science-based content, and hands-on practice of powerful techniques, you will engage in a guided growth experience for this interactive session. You will explore internal challenges, discover a 4-part framework for a positively energized life, and learn key skills to better manage and optimize personal energy and capacity to flourish in all aspects of life.

*Sarah Deane
CEO and Founder
MEvolution*

Sarah Deane is the CEO and Founder of MEvolution. As an expert in human energy and capacity, and an innovator working at the intersection of behavioral and cognitive science and A.I., Sarah is focused on helping people and organizations relinquish their blockers, restore their energy, reclaim their mental capacity, and redefine their potential. Her company, MEvolution, is a scalable, science-based, personal development system that measures and systematically increases human capacity by teaching people how to manage, direct, and optimize their personal energy, which makes living life at full capacity a reality for everybody. The breakthrough assessment reveals what is draining a person's energy, and creates a personalized roadmap of modules, to train the brain to unlock greater human capacity and potential.

*She holds a Master of Engineering in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, has traveled the globe studying human behavior, authored *The Wellness Formula* based on her research and has presented at various conferences such as SXSW, Gartner and HRWest. Sarah's thoughts and commentary can be seen on numerous platforms including *Fast Company*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *Today.com*, *Huffington Post*, *Thrive Global*, *HR.com*, *SHRM*, *CMSWire*, *Reworked*, *CIO Magazine*, and many more. She teaches her highly-rated course at Stanford University Continuing Studies on *The Power of Personal Energy*, works with numerous women focused ERGs to tackle the internal challenges that women face, and consults with leaders to become positively energized leaders themselves as well as on their workplace strategies to create positively energized cultures.*