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April 2021

# Business

JOURNAL

## Q&A with Dr. Charlotte Warren

Nonprofits adapt to COVID-19

Teacher shortages

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# Build a bridge

When I moved to Springfield two years after graduating from college, back when I still had free time, I enrolled in a master's program at University of Illinois Springfield with a focus on nonprofit management. I had recently started working for *Springfield Business Journal* (under the original owners), but I was already serving on several boards for local nonprofits and interested in finding ways to be more effective in my charitable endeavors.

All the other students in the program either worked for a state agency or nonprofit – I was the only one from the business sector. About a year in, I went to my adviser and told him I felt conflicted; I wondered if I should quit my job so that I could work for a nonprofit agency and have more of an impact. His response was immediate and absolute. "Do-gooders are a dime a dozen in the nonprofit world. They're much harder to come by in the business world," he told me. "Your role is to be as successful as you possibly can in the private sector and then build a bridge to connect the people who need help with those resources."

I've tried to follow his advice over the years, and I've come to see that there are many ways businesses can do good, even beyond writing checks to charitable causes. As nonprofits struggle to recover from a lack of in-person fundraising events over the past year, it is more important than ever that businesses that are in a position to do so find ways to help meet these increased needs (pg. 18).

Businesses can also help support our educational institutions by providing apprenticeship opportunities, which has the added benefit of giving the company a chance to try out a potential employee before hiring someone. The new director of apprenticeship programming at Lincoln Land Community College, Brenda Elliott, told *SBJ* about her goal of expanding the program to include additional industries (pg. 28).

Those of us who are fortunate enough to have access to the resources and opportunities available through the private sector can help build a bridge to other people and organizations who might be able to benefit, too.



Michelle Ownbey, publisher



**Editor:** Fletcher Farrar  
fletcher@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

**Publisher:** Michelle Ownbey  
michelle@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

**Associate Publisher:** James Bengfort  
jbengfort@illinoistimes.com

**Copy Editor:** Stacie Lewis  
stacie@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

**Production Design:** Brandon Turley  
bturley@illinoistimes.com

**Advertising:**  
Yolanda Bell  
yolanda@springfieldbusinessjournal.com  
217-679-7802

Beth Parkes-Irwin  
beth@springfieldbusinessjournal.com  
217-679-7803

Ron Young  
ron@springfieldbusinessjournal.com  
217-679-7807

**Subscriptions:**  
springfieldbusinessjournal.com/subscribe  
subs@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

## April Contributors:

Keshia Barbee  
Kristina Barbee  
Cinda Klickna  
Thomas C. Pavlik  
Sarah Delano Pavlik  
Janet Seitz  
Lana Shovlin  
Carey Smith  
Holly Whisler

**Address:** P.O. Box 398, Springfield, IL 62705

**Phone:** 217-726-6600

**Email:** info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

**Facebook:** facebook.com/SBJIllinois

**Twitter:** twitter.com/sbjmonthly

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# Q & A with Dr. Charlotte Warren

By Lana Shovlin

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Dr. Charlotte Warren became the first female president of Lincoln Land Community College in May 2006. While it was her first community college presidency, she had previously served as vice president of the Virtual Campus at Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio, as well as provost of a campus of Georgia Perimeter College and had 30 years of teaching experience in research universities and community colleges. She studied nursing and worked as a psychotherapist in private practice before transitioning to the academic world, in addition to serving in the Georgia National Guard, achieving the rank of Colonel, Retired and Honorary Brigadier General. Since moving to Springfield, Warren has served as the chair of the Mid-Illinois Medical District as well as on the board of directors for numerous professional organizations and nonprofits.



## Where did you grow up?

I was born at Portsmouth Naval Hospital and grew up in Virginia. My father was in the Navy and my mother worked as a bookkeeper and a controller for a major bread company. On Saturdays, she would take me into work with her. I would help her keep books and sometimes she would let me be the operator. We also had family in North Carolina, and I used to spend summers on my grandparents' farm just outside of Chesapeake.

## What did you want to study in college?

My parents had a meager income, but from the moment that I was born, they were determined that I was going to be the first person in my family to attend college. Like kids these days, I wasn't sure what I wanted to study. I played the piano in high school and church, so I thought I would major in music. My mother, who was always the voice of reason, told me that I wasn't that good and that I might want to start thinking of something that would earn an income. To her, it was about making sure that I could support myself and never be dependent on another person.

Dr. Charlotte Warren, LLCC president, presents a plaque to Evan Miller, the 2018 student commencement speaker. PHOTO COURTESY LLCC



LLCC board chair Wayne Rosenthal, Ag Club president Skye Kretzinger and Dr. Warren at the September 2019 groundbreaking for the Kreher Agriculture Center on the LLCC campus. PHOTOS COURTESY LLCC



Dr. Warren accepts a check for \$100,000 from Evelyn Brandt Thomas on behalf of the BRANDT Foundation to establish student scholarships in precision agriculture/agronomy.

Dr. Warren with 2018 Outstanding Graduate Terrelle Jackson at the annual Student Recognition Ceremony.



## How did you end up interested in nursing?

Nursing was a pragmatic choice because I could get jobs, live anywhere and do anything I wanted. While in nursing school, I took various clinicals and I found that the psychology rotations really spoke to me. After I graduated, I got my masters and doctorate degrees in psychology and eventually moved to Atlanta where I opened a part-time private practice.

## Do you miss living in the south?

I miss the weather, sometimes, and I certainly miss my friends. Interestingly enough, though, I find that people here in Springfield have what you would call Southern hospitality. Since moving here, I've never felt like a nameless face. I actually know the people that are impacted by my work at LLCC and through the organizations that I work with. To work with these amazing people and continue to grow our community is really wonderful.

## How do you balance work and volunteering?

It's always nice to be asked to do things and to feel like people think you have something to offer, but it's all about balance. If you begin to feel consumed, you know that you've taken on too much, and when you get to a point where you feel like you "have" to go to a meeting instead of feeling like you "get" to go, that's when you have to ask yourself if your interests have changed. Once you feel like you've personally done as much as you can, it might be time for some new blood.

## Did you ever imagine you'd be the first female president of LLCC?

I feel privileged to be part of this community. I work with an amazing faculty and staff whose hearts are so much into making a difference in the lives of their students, but it was never on my radar. I've always loved being involved, but I've never had ambition to climb a ladder for a title. I've been fortunate that I've always had mentors who pushed me to the next level and encouraged me to try something different. There are a lot of opportunities in the world, and for me, it's always just been a matter of keeping my options open.

## How has COVID affected life at LLCC?

It's been really challenging. We've tried to stay in contact with students and keep them connected with the resources they need. Our faculty and staff have spent a lot of time training and getting ready for the unknown, and that's really challenging, but we want to go the extra mile for our students. It's been absolutely amazing to see how everyone is constantly evolving, but we're tired! I hope everyone comes back from spring break feeling rejuvenated and ready to finish off the rest of the semester on a high note.

## What advice would you give your younger self?

To try and understand that we all make mistakes, but they are only mistakes if you don't use them as a learning opportunity. Don't beat yourself up, forgive yourself, realize that you're only human and give yourself permission to reach out, take risks and go further than you ever imagined.



# Teacher shortage could get worse

By Cinda Ackerman Klickna

Finding teachers to fill positions in the 853 Illinois school districts has been a growing problem, and it is getting worse.

Data from the 591 districts responding to a survey in October indicates that 77% face a shortage. In these districts combined, 938 positions – out of 5,414 open – went unfilled or had to be staffed by an unqualified person. Special education classes have been hit the hardest, but others have been affected: science, math, elementary grades and physical education. Some districts have canceled classes.

The shortage looms largest in rural areas where 87% of the respondents, compared to 75% of suburban and 62% of urban districts, reported a shortage. Finding substitute teachers poses an even worse situation: 93% of those responding report they cannot find enough subs.

In Springfield District 186, the shortage this school year has been similar to other years, although positions in speech pathology, special ed, elementary PE and middle school art were difficult to fill. Retired teachers have filled in or agreed to be substitutes. Next year, three high school science positions will be open. Springfield, though, is faring better than other districts.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released the Educator Preparation Profile in December 2020, reporting that of the 52 colleges and universities in the state, there are 700 approved teacher prep programs. These produce 5,000 teachers a year, but that falls short of the need. Some who graduate with a teaching degree decide not to pursue a teaching position, and many others leave the profession within the first five years of teaching, often due to the workload. This increases the shortage.

Other reasons for the decrease in teacher candidates include low salaries, the lack of respect given to education and educators – not just in Illinois but across the country – the demands of the job and the needed resources that many districts cannot afford.

Around 4,500 teachers retire each year, per data from the Teachers' Retirement System, a number that has remained steady for the past five years. Yet, data shows retirements are rising – between July and December 2020, 968 teachers retired, the most applications in the last six months of a calendar year since 2003. The 4,461 retirement applications for calendar year 2020 represents a 9.2% increase over calendar year 2019, the first increase in retirement applications since 2012.



Data for retirements expected this June, the time most teachers retire, is not yet known.

The Illinois Education Association (IEA) offers a student program for those studying to be teachers. As seniors, they can post their resumes through the database used widely by districts to seek candidates for open positions. Students often have their pick of jobs since so many districts are seeking some of the same positions. But, therein lies another problem. The poorer districts struggle to attract candidates because of low pay and other lack of resources.

Those who have earned a teaching degree in Illinois don't all stay here. A law passed in 2011 that requires teachers to work longer (until age 67) or receive drastically reduced benefits has driven teacher candidates to other states with better pension provisions.

The shortages have been creating problems for several years; the pandemic has made it worse. In November 2020, the IEA polled 1,300 members, posing the question: Thinking about this year and everything that has come along with it, how has this experience affected your plans to be an educator or teacher? The most common responses were: "Don't want to be a teacher anymore" – 12%; "Considering early retirement" – 10% and "It made me re-evaluate my career path" – 13%.

When asked to compare their workload between this fall and last, 76% said this year's workload was either somewhat, or much heavier, than last. And, when asked to select from a list of descriptions that apply to them, 66% said "I have

been burned out more than usual this year."

The IEA helped pass the \$40,000 minimum teacher salary law in June 2019, which is to be fully implemented by 2025 to help attract new teachers. Another recent effort is the IEA, ISBE and the Illinois Federation of Teachers created the Illinois Virtual Instructional Coach and Building Mentor Program, which pairs new teachers with trained virtual coaches to help provide wraparound professional support.

Other ideas that could be implemented are districts offering a high school-to-teacher-prep pipeline to grow their own teachers. Districts could provide student loan payments to help alleviate the burden for incoming teachers, especially in areas where salaries are so low that teachers need to find second jobs to make ends meet.

However, the biggest impact on attracting more teacher candidates would be a change in attitude about education and the role of teachers. Hopefully, the pandemic has helped many see the hard work of teachers and the need for education as not only preparing students academically, but also as a social-emotional support network. **SBJ**

*Cinda Ackerman Klickna taught in District 186 for many years and served as the president of the Springfield Education Association and the Illinois Education Association. She entered teaching in the 1970s when there was a glut of teachers and such low funding that teachers were given pink slips each spring and waited to be rehired over the summer.*



# Private schools adapt to the pandemic

By Holly Whisler

Administrators for many area private schools began planning to reopen for in-person learning when allowed as soon as Governor JB Pritzker executed the stay-at-home order last spring that shifted schools to remote learning.

Principals had similar methods of approaching this challenge, starting by evaluating all available space on campus and comparing it to their student population. The goal was to see if students and staff could be six feet apart and still be in a classroom, hallway or cafeteria per their usual schedule, based on guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health regarding COVID-19.

This unique challenge allowed planning teams the opportunity to view their schools through a new lens. Kara Rapacz, principal at Sacred-Heart Griffin High School, with an enrollment of approximately 600 students, said she had more space to work with once she considered that their fine arts auditorium and gymnasium could double as lunch areas.

Schools not having abundant space made other modifications. Nick Roscetti, principal of Routt Catholic High School in Jacksonville, with an enrollment of 134 students, said they added an extra lunch period and allowed only half of the student body to pass through the halls between classes.

Some schools have the teachers change classrooms or have gone to a block schedule to reduce the number of times students pass through the halls.

Roscetti said their classrooms are on the smaller side and he commended two of the teachers for developing a system that keeps students in pairs throughout the year so that if one contracts COVID, that student potentially exposes no more than seven students. However, Roscetti reported that Routt has had only one case of COVID since resuming classes in January.

Many safety measures implemented by the schools are similar to what would be seen at a place of business – temperature and symptom checks, masks are worn except during lunch, Plexiglass dividers used where necessary and arrows on the floor to indicate the flow of traffic.

Specific to the school setting are longer passing periods, which allow teachers time to sanitize their rooms, desks placed six feet apart, locker assignments spaced out so students are not



While musical performances had to be put on hold during the pandemic, SHG music students helped promote the Giving Tuesday fundraising campaign. PHOTO COURTESY SHG

next to each other and staggered dismissal times to avoid congestion in the halls.

Outdoor space was also considered in the calculation of keeping students six feet apart. Stephanie VanDeVelde is principal of Our Saviour School in Jacksonville, a K-8 school with a student population of over 300. She said they eat lunch and hold classes outdoors on days when the weather is nice.

Sue Harris, director of the Montessori Children's House of Springfield, has approximately 64 students ranging from preschool to sixth grade. Last spring, she worked with her teachers to quickly put a plan in place in order to be able to host their annual summer camp for children ages 3 years through fourth grade.

Harris said, "Materials are a strong part of the way children learn, so we developed systems for labeling materials that needed to be sanitized and when they were clean and ready to be used again."

Harris and her team kept in mind the social and emotional needs of the students, which prompted a change to the way they start each day. Children have scheduled arrival times and after temperatures are taken and symptom checks completed, the students go to the acre-and-a-half playground so they can play and connect with one another before going inside where they have to remain six feet apart.

The Montessori Children's House of Springfield remained open even during times when other schools transitioned to remote learning, such as in late October and early November when cases of

COVID-19 hit the 50,000 mark in Illinois.

Christ the King School, with an enrollment of 435 students ranging from preschool to eighth grade, transitioned smoothly to remote learning when cases were high, according to principal Pam Fahey. Each student has their own electronic device and was prepared for the possibility of learning from home.

However, "Students really wanted to come back to school, and they have expressed their appreciation in cards and letters," she said. Fahey said it was also very encouraging to see everyone working together to make it possible to remain at school, with even the preschoolers wearing their masks all day without issue.

Rapacz said SHG made the decision to go remote for two weeks last fall and had students quarantine during that time so they could safely resume classes in-person.

Our Saviour School has also alternated between in-person and remote learning, depending on metrics. VanDeVelde said, "When we needed to go remote it has been very smooth." She attributes their success to all involved—students, parents and staff.

"We knew it would be a difficult year with many unknowns, and we've worked through it with great success. Our faculty and staff have given their all." **SBJ**

*Holly Whisler is a freelance writer from Springfield who frequently worked as a substitute teacher prior to the pandemic.*

# INDEPENDENT PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Sources: Sangamon County School Directory; the individual schools.  
Ranked by current enrollment – Spring 2021.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE/EMAIL	CURRENT ENROLLMENT	PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR	GRADES	AFFILIATION	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Sacred Heart-Griffin High School</b> 1200 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-787-1595	shg.org	557	Sr. Katherine O'Connor, O.P., President, Kara Rapacz, Principal	9-12	Catholic	1895
2	<b>Springfield Christian School</b> 2850 Cider Mill Lane Springfield, IL 62702	217-698-1933 217-787-7673 (Preschool)	scs.school scs@scs.school	483	Sonya Sims, K-5 Principal Racheal Thurman, 6-8 Principal	Preschool-8	Christian	1951
3	<b>Christ the King Elementary</b> 1920 Barberry Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-2159 217-546=2159	ctkcougars.com	435	Pam Fahey	Preschool-8	Catholic	1957
4	<b>Blessed Sacrament Elementary</b> 748 W. Laurel Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-522-7534	bssbruins.org	421	Dawn Klinner	Preschool-8	Catholic	1925
5	<b>Our Saviour School</b> 455 E. State St. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-8621	oursaviourshamrocks.com	320	Stephanie VanDeVelde	Preschool-8	Catholic	1872
6	<b>Calvary Academy</b> 1730 W. Jefferson St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-546-5987	caspringfield.org	300	Dr. Jay Hinckley, Principal Donna Squires, Education Director	Preschool-12	Christian Nondenominational	1977
7	<b>St. Agnes Elementary</b> 251 N. Amos Ave. Springfield, IL 62702	217-793-1370	stagnescatholicschool.org	250	Rachel Cunningham	Preschool-8	Catholic	1897
8	<b>Little Flower Catholic School</b> 900 Stevenson Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-4511	little-flower.org	244	Dr. Wm. Moredock	Preschool-8	Catholic	1948
9	<b>Our Savior's Lutheran School</b> 2645 Old Jacksonville Road Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-4531	oursaviors-school.org	219	Nancy Bray, Interim Principal	Preschool-8	Lutheran	1962
10	<b>Lutheran High School</b> 3500 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62711	217-546-6363	spiluhi.org	153	Glenn Rollins	9-12	Lutheran	1979
11	<b>St. Aloysius Elementary</b> 2125 N. 21st St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-544-4553	saintalloysius.org	145	Denise Reavis	Preschool-8	Catholic	1928
12	<b>Trinity Lutheran School and Preschool</b> 515 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-2323	trinity-lutheran.com	143	Zachary Klug	Preschool-8	Lutheran	1860
13	<b>Routt Catholic High School</b> 500 E. College Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-243-8563	routtcatholic.com	120	Nick Roscetti	9-12	Catholic	1902
14	<b>Montessori Children's House</b> 4147 Sand Hill Road Springfield, IL 62702	217-544-7702	montessorispringfield.org	65	Sue Harris	Preschool-6	Nonsectarian	1977
15	<b>St. Patrick Catholic School</b> 1800 South Grand Ave. East Springfield, IL 62703	217-523-7670	st-patrick.org	62	Jan Williams	Preschool-5	Catholic	1910
16	<b>Concordia Lutheran School</b> 2300 Wilshire Road Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-3309	concordiacares.org school@concordiaspfld.org	30	Donalyn Vinlove, Interim Principal	Preschool-8	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	1931



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You created time, space and routine for learning at home. You've readjusted your lives for hybrid schedules. And, you've invested in masks, soap and hand sanitizer to keep us all safe. Thank you!

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*— Maria Montessori*



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# COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Sources: The individual colleges and universities. Ranked by 2021 enrollment.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE/EMAIL	TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CURRENT ENROLLMENT	TUITION	PRESIDENT/CHANCELLOR	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>Lincoln Land Community College</b> 5250 Shepherd Road P.O. Box 19256 Springfield, IL 62794-9256	217-786-2200	llcc.edu info@llcc.edu	Community college	5,239	Summer 2021 \$133/credit hour Fall 2021 \$134.50/credit hour (in-district residents)	Charlotte J. Warren, Ph.D., President	1967
2	<b>University of Illinois Springfield</b> One University Plaza Springfield, IL 62703	217-206-6600	uis.edu admissions@uis.edu	Public university offering bachelor's and master's degrees, one doctorate and graduate certificates in Springfield, Peoria and online.	3,878	\$9,503 per year/full-time undergraduate, \$5,981 graduate	Karen M. Whitney, Ph.D., Interim Chancellor	1970
3	<b>Illinois College</b> 1101 W. College Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-3030	ic.edu admissions@ic.edu	Four-year private, liberal arts college offering campus and online degrees.	1,150	Tuition is \$34,070 and includes books. Room, board and fees, \$9,924	Barbara A. Farley, Ph.D.	1829
4	<b>SIU School of Medicine</b> 801 N. Rutledge (main bldg.) Springfield, IL 62702	217-545-8000	siumed.edu admissions@siumed.edu	Public education for medical students, graduate students, medical residents.	925	\$16,737 per semester tuition (no out of state)	Jerry Kruse M.D., MSPH Dean/Provost	1970
5	<b>Lincoln College</b> 300 Keokuk St. Lincoln, IL 62656	217-732-3155	lincolncollege.edu	Private, liberal arts college. Associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees as well as accelerated bachelor's degree program for working adults. Locations include Normal, Oglesby, Peoria and Lincoln.	833	\$18,300 per year \$25,500 with room and board	David Gerlach, Ph.D.	1865
6	<b>Lincoln Christian University</b> 100 Campus View Drive Lincoln, IL 62656	217-732-3168	lincolnchristian.edu info@lincolnchristian.edu	Four-year and postgraduate, private, offers associate, bachelor's, master's degrees and Doctor of Ministry.	696	\$14,520 per year/full-time, \$22,310 with room and board - undergraduate; \$484 per credit hour - graduate and seminary	Silas McCormick, Ph.D.	1944
7	<b>Blackburn College</b> 700 College Ave. Carlinville, IL 62626	217-854-3231	blackburn.edu admissions@blackburn.edu	Four-year, private, liberal arts work college, Presbyterian affiliated.	521	\$24,950 per year including fees, \$8,600 room and board. (\$5,000 tuition work credit if participating in Work Program)	Dr. Mark L. Biermann, President	1837
8	<b>St. John's College</b> 729 E. Carpenter St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-5628	sjcs.edu information@sjcs.edu	Private, nonprofit, upper division, two year program of Bachelor of Science in nursing, graduate MSN program.	99	\$11,925 / semester - BS nursing - 2 yr. program / second degree accelerated prelicensure; \$417 / hour - online RN to BSN program. \$916 cr hr- MSN.	Charlene Aaron, Ph.D., R.N.	1886





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# The year of the comeback:

What COVID-19 means for associations in 2021

By Jeanne M. Dee

For industry associations, recent shifts from the physical space into the digital have brought a serious blow to their highest revenue stream: in-person events like trade shows and conferences. Nearly 60% of association executives report having cancelled or postponed events as a result of the pandemic – often incurring additional loss due to cancellation fees, ticket refunds, lost exhibitor fees, and more. At the same time, the function of associations as a source of networking, support, and connection for their industries makes them more valuable than ever to their members in a landscape where disconnection is ever-present.

This seems to portend the triumphant return of the association. It also adds additional pressure to associations already struggling financially: they must provide value to members in innovative ways while balancing the in-person/virtual hybrid environment 2021 demands.

## Challenges

For years, associations have been consulting with their advisers and accountants on issues like member retention, relevancy and ancillary revenue. Today, the effects of the pandemic have exaggerated some of those concerns and completely flipped the script on others:

**Cash flow:** Aside from membership dues, meeting and convention registration fees are the highest source of revenue for associations. Although more than 65% of association leaders reported a projected revenue loss of at least one quarter of their total budgets in 2020, they were previously ineligible for financial support like PPP Loan funding. Thankfully, things are looking up with the passing of the most recent COVID-19 Relief Legislation, which expands PPP Loan Eligibility to qualified 501 C (6) organizations.

**Cybersecurity:** When the onset of the pandemic swept a critical revenue stream out from under them nearly overnight, associations had little choice but to try to take as many events virtual as possible. With this switch came new and heightened security concerns. Member privacy has always been paramount for associations; in a virtual setting, with members logging in from multiple locations and conveying and submitting information through digital channels, ensuring the security of everyone involved has become an even greater concern. With additional

cybersecurity requirements come additional costs – creating a need for funding that associations haven't had access to.

**Relationship management:** Simply converting events from one format to another isn't enough. When events go virtual, it's more than the literal physical connection that is lost. There is also a loss of opportunity: no chance for water-cooler small talk, no chit-chat over dinner, no truly natural moments for good old-fashioned getting to know one another. For associations, this has been a two-pronged challenge: how to make sure virtual events are still providing networking and support value for members, and how to maintain close relationships with members and other stakeholders when those in-person moments have been removed from the equation.



## Considerations for associations in 2021:

With vaccines being distributed and a positive global economic forecast as the U.S. heads toward economic reopening in 2021, businesses and organizations can approach this year with a more hopeful eye, as market forces give them a chance to breathe after months of strategic pivoting and recurring uncertainty. For associations, this means an opportunity to rebalance their sheets and consult with their advisers and CPAs on reducing spending and recovering lost revenue. It also means time to take a step back and proactively plan for what's ahead.

**Increased Spend:** Integrated programming will also give associations an opportunity to marry revenue streams, which will be crucial as they continue to take on an increased tech spend for things like cyber security, virtual communication tools, and more. Associations should consult with their financial advisers on ways to curb these added expenses with strategies like increased event sponsorship opportunities and applicable loan and credit programs.

**Regulatory Issues:** Associations also need to consider ongoing regulatory and compliance matters – especially as they pertain to virtual meetings and shows. For example, the IRS has safe-harbor provisions in place for in-person meetings and trade shows, so associations that follow these provisions can feel confident these events are not subject to Unrelated Business Income Tax. However, the changing format of these meetings calls into question whether the safe harbor provisions still apply. Also, many states are still evaluating and changing their nexus rules with regard to activities conducted at conferences and trade shows, a result of the landmark Wayfair vs. South Dakota decision. Associations should consider careful consultation with their CPAs and attorneys to mitigate any overlooked risks in these and other areas.

## Final thoughts

Despite the challenges they have faced in an increasingly virtual landscape, associations are more important now than ever. This year finds members hyper-focused on two of associations' most defining functions: connection and opportunity. Professionals in every industry are both open to and eager for collaboration, and associations are in a unique position to create valuable spaces for members to connect. After months of distance and uncertainty, now is the critical comeback moment for associations: they must leverage the opportunity to optimize and emphasize the value that only they can provide. **SBJ**

*Jeanne M. Dee is the audit and assurance practice leader for the not-for-profit group at Anders CPAs + Advisors. A member of the firm's CARES Act Research and Response Team, she advises nonprofits on the latest legislation on COVID-19 relief.*



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# MAJOR ASSOCIATIONS

Sources: The Associations.  
Ranked by numbers of members.

	NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE	MEMBERSHIP	PRESIDENT	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
<b>1</b>	<b>Illinois Education Association</b> 100 E. Edwards St. Springfield, IL 62704	844-432-1800 ieanea.org	135,000	Kathi Griffin	To effect excellence and equity in public education, to be an advocate for public education employees and to serve as a voice for our students across the state.	1853
<b>2</b>	<b>Illinois Federation of Teachers</b> 700 S. College St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-544-8562 ift-aft.org	103,000	Daniel J. Montgomery	Members fighting powerfully for a strong union and the future we all deserve.	1936
<b>3</b>	<b>Illinois REALTORS®</b> 522 S. Fifth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-529-2600 IllinoisRealtors.org	50,000	Sue Miller	We protect property rights and advance the real estate profession.	1916
<b>4</b>	<b>Illinois State Bar Association</b> 424 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-525-1760 isba.org	28,000	Dennis Orsey	Promote the interests of the legal profession and improve the administration of justice, the quality of members' professional lives and their relations with the public.	1877
<b>5</b>	<b>Illinois CPA Society</b> 524 S. Second St., Suite 504 Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-7914 icpas.org	22,600	Todd Shapiro	To enhance the value of the CPA profession.	1903
<b>6</b>	<b>Illinois State Medical Society</b> 600 S. Second St., Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62704	217-528-5609 isms.org	12,000	Robert W. Pantan, M.D.	Represents and unifies its members, represents the interests of member physicians, advocates for patients, promotes the doctor/patient relationship, the ethical practice of medicine, the betterment of the public health.	1840
<b>7</b>	<b>National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB)</b> 600 S. Second St., #101 Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-5471 nfib.com/Illinois	10,100	Mark Grant State Director	The voice of small business, advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is nonprofit, nonpartisan and member-driven.	1943
<b>8</b>	<b>Illinois State Dental Society</b> 1010 S. Second St. P.O. Box 376 Springfield, IL 62704	217-525-1406 isds.org	6,600	Stacey K. Van Scoyoc DDS	Ensuring professional success of our members and optimizing the oral health of Illinois citizens through education, legislation and communication.	1865
<b>9</b>	<b>Illinois Principals Association</b> 2940 Baker Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-525-1383 ilprincipals.org	5,900	Dr. Amy Dixon	To develop, support and advocate for innovative educational leaders.	1971
<b>10</b>	<b>AIA Illinois</b> 201 East Adams St., Suite 1A Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-2309 aiaill.org	4,250	Fred Brandstrader	Empowering our members to create more vibrant and equitable communities through architecture.	1946
<b>11</b>	<b>Mid-West Truckers Association</b> 2727 N. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-0310 midwesttruckers.com	4,070	Don Schaefer Exec. Vice President	To promote the economic and safe operation of trucks and provides safety training, drug and alcohol testing, insurance, licensing and permit services.	1961
<b>12</b>	<b>Illinois Manufacturers' Association</b> 220 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-1240 ima-net.org	4,000	Mark Denzler	The IMA is the unifying voice for manufacturers in Illinois working to strengthen the business climate for innovators and creators in the manufacturing field.	1893
<b>13</b>	<b>Illinois Nurses Association</b> 911 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-0783 illinoisnurses.com	3,600	Doris Carroll, R.N.-B.C.	To work for the improvement of health standards and availability of health care services for all people in Illinois, foster high standards for nurses, stimulate and promote professional development of nurses and advance their economic and general welfare.	1901
<b>14</b>	<b>Illinois Chamber of Commerce</b> 215 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-5512 ilchamber.org	3,500	Todd Maisch	The unifying leader of policies that support growth in Illinois' dynamic and diverse economy.	1919
<b>15</b>	<b>Illinois Trial Lawyers Association</b> 401 W. Edwards St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-789-0755 iltla.com	2,000	Larry R. Rogers Jr.	Achieve high standards of professional ethics, uphold laws and secure and protect the rights of those injured in their persons or civil rights.	1952
<b>16</b>	<b>Illinois Society of Professional Engineers</b> 100 E. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-544-7424 illinoisengineer.com	1,550	Glenn Clayton, P.E.	Advance and promote the public welfare in connection with construction, environment, licensing, public health and transportation.	1886
<b>17</b>	<b>Home Builders Association of Illinois</b> 112 W. Edwards St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-753-3963 hbai.org	1,200	Bryan Wenthe	The voice for home building in Illinois.	1956



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Jen McMillin, executive director of Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery, says there has been an increase in people requesting assistance with basic needs such as diapers, formula and infant supplies. PHOTO BY KESHIA BARBEE

# Nonprofits adapt to COVID-19

Demand for services increases while fundraising options are reduced

By Lana Shovlin

For many Americans, leaning heavily on social service agencies has gotten them through the pandemic. But how have these nonprofits adapted and coped with the increased demand but often reduced fundraising opportunities?

For Midwest Mission Distribution Center, which specializes in disaster relief, the transition was fairly smooth. The organization distributed three times the number of supplies as it did in 2019, despite a decrease in available volunteers. Executive director Chantel Corrie

says at the beginning of the pandemic the center jumped right in to supplying N95 masks to first responders and then to hospitals and daycares as needs became apparent.

Donations remained steady throughout the year, and with the addition of state and federal grants, Midwest Mission Distribution Center was able to keep up with not only the demand caused by COVID, but also the usual work of responding to natural disasters. "It was not an option to shut down," states Corrie.

Marcus Johnson, quality assurance research

and reporting officer for Springfield Urban League, said his organization saw an increase in needs in all areas of service: employment, education, housing, health and justice. "With COVID, the needs of those who have struggled have increased in all those areas," said Johnson. The Urban League provided everything from WiFi hotspots and tutoring to personal protective equipment and rental assistance. Johnson notes they are working hard so "COVID doesn't increase disparity between those who have and those who have not."



Unfortunately, COVID restrictions have prevented in-person fundraisers from taking place, including the annual dinner, which raises money for youth education scholarships. The Urban League has relied on an increase in funding from state and federal grants to bridge the gaps.

While Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault also relies on grant funding, it has been a challenge to raise the matching funds required. According to executive director Catherine Walters, it has been a difficult year financially. Donations are down by 30%, with their donor base being mostly “the average Joe who sends \$50-100.” The nonprofit has struggled to raise the funds required to match 10% of federal and state monies it receives. “We’ve risen to the challenge, trying to be resilient,” said Walters. “The hardest part is in deciding what to cut or what to do, because you don’t know if you’ll have the match.”

Walters says she was surprised to see an increase in demand for services during the pandemic. They normally meet with recent victims of sexual assault in hospitals, but had to switch to telephone assistance during the most restrictive period of the pandemic. The organization also provides counseling to adults and children who were previously victimized, and Walter said demand for those services remained steady.

A grant from the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln for operating expenses got them through 2020. The biggest fundraiser, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, is normally held in April to coincide with Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The event was canceled in 2020 and will be held virtually in 2021.

AgeLinc’s executive director, Carolyn Austin, said her organization has always relied on state and federal dollars to provide services for seniors, including Meals on Wheels, respite services, educational programs and referrals to other agencies. While AgeLinc has never done fundraising before, Austin said, “That will be changing in 2021 because of what we saw with COVID.”

The demand for meal delivery services rose 20%, and there was an increased need for transportation services as well as helping seniors enroll in Medicare. To battle social isolation, AgeLinc began the Friendly Caller Program, recruiting volunteers to check in on seniors weekly.

“We were able to get lots of grants to help with gap services: helping people with groceries, paying rent or utilities and getting assistive devices,” said Austin, who explained that the organization wants to be able



Carolyn Austin, executive director of AgeLinc, with Sadie, the office therapy dog in training.  
PHOTO BY KESHIA BARBEE

to continue offering those services post-COVID. Though fundraising efforts have started slowly, the hope is to add more events as COVID restrictions ease, including a gala next February.

Other Springfield-area health and human service providers also report an increase in people struggling to meet basic needs such as housing, food and child care.

Inner City Mission provides housing for homeless families, but Caleb Payne, director of community engagement, said that COVID limited the number of families they could shelter, despite an increase in demand for services. During the shelter-in-place order, Inner City Mission took advantage of the reduced capacity to renovate vacant rooms, since they had never before been empty.

Currently, the shelter is operating around 60% capacity and will continue to add two families weekly until ICM is once again full. According to Payne, the organization receives four to five calls every day from people seeking housing.

While financial contributions initially declined during the first six weeks of the pandemic, giving rebounded and then leveled off. Payne said the organization relies almost entirely on monthly donors and one-time givers, rather than events, so the financial impact has not been as great.

“We have seen an increase in our basic needs pantry – diapers, wipes, infant formula and infant supplies,” says Jen McMillin, executive director of Mini O’Beirne Crisis Nursery. As people are getting vaccinated and things are opening back up, the nursery is providing an increasing number of hours of child care.

In-person fundraising has been replaced with some virtual events. “We are a very giving community here in Springfield and central Illinois,” affirms McMillin. “It feels we’re starting to hit unpauses on some of our fundraising efforts. We’re cautious, but optimistic.” **SBJ**

*Carey Smith appreciates nonprofit agencies as the helping hands and heart of our community.*

# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Sources: IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Forms provided by Guidestar.org • Ranked by net assets.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NET ASSETS/ ANNUAL REVENUE	CALENDAR/ TAX YEAR	PRINCIPAL	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
<b>St. Joseph's Home</b> 3306 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-5596 saintjosephshome.org	22,415,621 6,949,583	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	TBD	To provide the aging and their families with compassionate and individualized care in a respectful environment that welcomes and supports each resident's religious beliefs and reflects the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.	1903
<b>Hope</b> 15 E. Hazel Dell Lane Springfield, IL 62712	217-585-5104 217-553-2099 hope.us communicatinghope@hope.us	\$20,932,203 \$38,561,585	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Clint W. Paul, President /CEO	To provide state-of-the-art services in the most inclusive environment to encourage persons to fulfill their individual potential though evidence-based treatment, advocacy and community education.	1957
<b>Girl Scouts of Central Illinois</b> 3020 Baker Drive Springfield, IL 62703	217-523-8159 getyourgirlpower.org	\$18,024,395 \$5,574,216	10/1/2018 - 9/30/2019	Pam Kovacevich, CEO	Builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.	1956
<b>YMCA of Springfield</b> 601 N. Fourth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-9846 springfieldymca.org	\$15,771,788 \$9,975,056	1/1/2018- 12/31/2018	Angie Sowle, CEO	To serve the community by reaching out to everyone in a spirit of inclusion and fellowship.	1874
<b>Catholic Charities Diocese of Springfield in Illinois</b> 1625 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-9201 cc.dio.org	\$13,472,073 \$8,676,890	7/1/19- 6/30/20	Steven E. Roach, Executive Director	To extend to all the healing and empowering presence of Jesus.	1925
<b>Central Counties Health Centers, Inc.</b> 2239 E. Cook St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-788-2300 centralcounties.org info@centralcounties.org	\$12,319,392 \$10,562,253	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Heather Burton, President/CEO	To provide high-quality, affordable, non-discriminatory and accessible primary medical and dental care that meets the personalized needs of the underserved people of central Illinois.	1999
<b>Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois</b> 610 N. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-528-3314 rmhc-centralillinois.org kthompson@rmhc-centralillinois.org	\$10,944,818 \$5,662,431	1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018	Amber Kaylor, CEO	Provides a supportive place for families to stay while their child is receiving medical care, and supports programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children.	1986
<b>Sparc</b> 232 Bruns Lane Springfield, IL 62702	217-793-2100 spfldsparc.org	\$9,060,676 \$10,063,938	7/1/2019 - 6/30/2020	Greg O'Connor, CEO	To help individuals with developmental disabilities improve the quality of their lives.	1951
<b>Central Illinois Foodbank</b> 1937 E. Cook St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-4022 centralilfoodbank.org foodlist@centralilfoodbank.org	\$8,178,686 \$17,721,594	6/1/2019 - 5/31/2020	Pam Molitoris, Executive Director	To provide food, and develop awareness of and creative solutions for food insecurity.	1982
<b>Midwest Mission Distribution Center</b> 1001 Mission Drive Pawnee, IL 62558	217-483-7911 midwestmission.org office@midwestmission.org	4,606,247 4,957,380	1/1/2019 - 12/31/2019	Chantel Corrie, Executive Director	Bringing the hearts and hands of God's people together to transform resources into humanitarian relief.	1999
<b>Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries</b> 1220 Outer Park Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-789-0400 llgi.org info@llgi.org	\$4,377,786 \$28,271,967	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Ron Culves, President/CEO	Providing people the skills and resources to become self-sufficient through the power of work.	1938
<b>Brother James Court</b> 2508 Saint James Road Springfield, IL 62707	217-747-5905 brotherjamescourt.com development@brotherjamescourt.com	\$3,871,410 \$4,951,524	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Sonia Bartels, Administrator	To serve developmentally disabled men in need of intermediate care.	1975
<b>Abraham Lincoln Council Boy Scouts of America</b> 5231 Sixth St. Road Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-2727 alincouncilbsa.org askabe@scouting.org	\$3,613,199 \$1,049,521	1/1/2018- 12/31/2018	Jeff Whitten, Scout Executive CEO	To prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.	1920
<b>Senior Services of Central Illinois, Inc.</b> 701 W. Mason St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-528-4035 centralilseniors.org	\$2,304,984 \$3,378,213	10/1/2018 - 9/30/2019	Carol Harms, Executive Director	Supporting and serving seniors with non-medical services to promote independent living and enrich quality of life.	1976
<b>Jewish Federation of Springfield, Illinois</b> 1045 Outer Park Drive Suite 320 Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-7223 shalomspringfield.org sjf@shalomspringfield.org	\$1,774,079 \$426,838	1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018	Nancy Sage, Executive Director	To serve the Jewish people through coordinated fundraising, community-wide programming, services and educational activities.	1941





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CEFCU  
Central Counties Health Centers  
Central Illinois Community Blood Center  
Combined Federal Campaign  
Comcast  
Community Connection Point  
Compass for Kids, Inc.

Concordia Village  
Contact Ministries  
Cornerstone Title Group  
Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.  
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CSI  
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Principal Financial Group  
R.K. Dixon  
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Rutledge Youth Foundation  
Schnucks  
Security Bank  
Senior Services of Central Illinois  
SIU School of Medicine  
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# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Sources: IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Forms provided by Guidestar.org • Ranked by net assets.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NET ASSETS/ ANNUAL REVENUE	CALENDAR/ TAX YEAR	PRINCIPAL	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
<b>Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County</b> 2744 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-523-2710 habitatsangamon.com executivedirector@habitatsangamon.com	\$1,747,992 \$2,075,404	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Colleen Stone, Executive Director	Dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness worldwide and to making adequate, affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action.	1989
<b>Sojourn Shelter &amp; Services</b> 1800 Westchester Boulevard Springfield, IL 62704	217-726-5100 sojour shelter.org sojdirector@gmail.com	\$1,607,144 \$1,464,004	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Angela Bertoni, CEO	An emergency shelter, crisis management services, education and court advocacy for adult and child victims of domestic violence.	1975
<b>Contact Ministries</b> 1100 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-753-3939 contactministries.com	\$1,136,674 \$705,086	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Cindy Drum, Executive Director	Providing emergency and transitional shelter with life skills and training, as well as food, clothing, financial assistance and referrals.	1979
<b>Fifth Street Renaissance</b> P.O. Box 5181 Springfield, IL 62705	217-544-5040 fsr-sara.org	\$1,101,964 \$1,955,173	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Penny Harris-Powell, Executive Director	Assists individuals and families in difficult situations by providing transitional housing and opportunities to acquire education, employment and housing.	1979
<b>Helping Hands of Springfield</b> 1023 E. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-522-0048 helpinghandsofspringfield.org	\$896,525 \$1,000,953	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Erica Smith, Executive Director	To identify problems facing the poor and homeless in Springfield and to implement and coordinate services to help address those problems.	1989
<b>The James Project</b> 907 Clocktower Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-3532 thejamesproject127.com office@thejamesproject127.com	\$825,812 \$214,719	1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018	Janice Williams, President	Recruits and supports dedicated foster parents through the provision of homes and services.	2012
<b>Springfield Center for Independent Living</b> 330 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	217-523-2587 scil.org scil@scil.org	\$813,851 \$591,038	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Pete Roberts, Executive Director	A service and advocacy organization for anyone with a disability.	1985
<b>M.E.R.C.Y. Communities</b> 1344 N. Fifth St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-753-1358 mercycommunities.org info@mercycommunities.org	\$655,293 \$856,808	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Amy Voils, Executive Director	To provide housing and supportive services to foster the independence of homeless women with children and at-risk women with children.	1999
<b>AgeLinc</b> 2731 S. MacArthur Blvd. Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-9234 aginglinc.org	\$648,263 \$4,612,305	10/1/2018- 9/30/2019	Carolyn Austin, CEO	To help older adults live and age well. We work to create an awareness of aging and caregiving issues and encourage development and coordination of services to address those issues.	1974
<b>Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery</b> 1011 N. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-6800 miniobeirne.org	\$608,191 \$596,636	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Jen McMillin, Executive Director	To prevent child abuse and neglect by providing emergency, temporary care, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for children who may be at risk or whose parents are experiencing some type of crisis.	1988
<b>Springfield Urban League</b> 100 N. 11th St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-0830 springfieldul.org	\$592,424 \$11,904,021	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Nina Harris, President/CEO	Empowering those who struggle to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.	1926
<b>Youth Service Bureau</b> 2901 Normandy Road Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-8300 ysbi.com	\$556,766 \$927,847	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Katina Kooi, Executive Director	Provides services to at-risk youth who are, or are at risk of becoming, runaway, abused, neglected and/or homeless.	1977





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# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Sources: IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Forms provided by Guidestar.org • Ranked by net assets.

NAME/ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	NET ASSETS/ ANNUAL REVENUE	CALENDAR/ TAX YEAR	PRINCIPAL	MISSION	YEAR EST'D
<b>Compass for Kids</b> 501 S. Fourth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-691-8103 compass4kids.org molly@compass4kids.org	\$517,681 \$1,397,238	6/1/2019- 5/31/2020	Molly Berendt, Executive Director	Provide academic and social-emotional support to empower at-risk children and families.	2016
<b>Boys and Girls Club of Central Illinois</b> 300 S. 15th St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-0548 bgccil.org info@bgccil.org	\$486,263 \$1,821,684	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Tiffany Mathis CEO/ Executive Director	To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.	1956
<b>Rutledge Youth Foundation</b> 151 N. Bruns Lane Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-7757 rutledgeyouthfoundation.org	\$476,334 \$3,156,704	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Martin Michelson, Executive Director	Assist abused and neglected youth in becoming productive, independent members of society.	1952
<b>Family Service Center of Sangamon County</b> 730 E. Vine St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-528-8406 service2families.com fsc@service2families.com	\$460,502 \$1,479,273	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	Karen Cox, Executive Director	Committed to improving the lives of families in central Illinois through foster care, adoption and counseling services.	1863
<b>Community Child Care Connection</b> 901 S. Spring St., Suite B Springfield, IL 62704	217-525-2805 4childcare.org	\$455,240 \$1,905,311	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Erica Romines, Executive Director	Assisting families and child care providers in obtaining education, and quality, affordable child care to help children and families reach their greatest potential.	1994
<b>The Parent Place</b> 314 South Grand Ave. West Springfield, IL 62704	217-753-8730 tppos.org bhammen@tppos.org	\$450,427 \$289,478	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Bridgett Hammen, Executive Director	To teach positive parenting skills and techniques to nurture the families in our community and aid in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.	1974
<b>Phoenix Center</b> 109 E. Lawrence Ave. Springfield IL 62704	217-528-5253 springfieldpride.org	\$390,121 \$457,582	1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018	Jonna J. Cooley, Ph.D., Executive Director	To support central Illinois' LGBT community with programming for promoting equality, health and well-being, and social and educational growth.	2001
<b>Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault</b> 3 W. Old State Capitol Plaza Suite 206 Springfield, IL 62701	217-744-2560 prairiecasa.org	\$281,303 \$1,035,930	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019	Catherine Walters, Executive Director	To alleviate the suffering of sexual assault victims and to prevent sexual violence by providing emergency room response, medical advocacy and trauma counseling.	1978
<b>Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Illinois Capital Region</b> 928 S. Spring St. Springfield, IL 62704	217-753-1216 bbbscil.org	\$211,778 \$518,318	1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018	Jeanne Stahlheber, CEO	To create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.	1972
<b>Inner City Mission</b> 714 N. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-525-3940 innercitymission.net	\$159,291 \$562,409	1/1/2018- 12/31/2018	Scott Payne, Executive Director	To help the homeless find their way home.	1984





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Sources: The individual Service Organizations.  
Ranked by number of members.  
Many groups are meeting online at this time.  
Contact the groups for more information.

# COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

	NAME/MEETING ADDRESS	PHONE WEBSITE/EMAIL	MEETING TIME(S)	# OF MEMBERS	CONTACTS	DUES	MISSION STATEMENT	YEAR EST'D
1	<b>King's Daughters Organization</b> 205 S. Fifth St., Suite 530 Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-4431 kdospringfield.org	Once a month	350	Sandra Bellatti	Varies by circle	To aid the elderly in our community through both direct volunteering and financial support by way of our grant program.	1893
2	<b>American Business Club of Springfield</b> Inn at 835 835 S. Second St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-553-4244 abcspringfield.com jackson@growthcorp.com	First and third Thursday, 12 p.m.	275	Susie Jackson	\$360 annually includes lunches	Inspiring mobility and independence.	1925
3	<b>Junior League of Springfield</b> Varies 2800 Montvale Dr. Springfield, IL 62704 (Main office)	217-544-5557 jlsil.org presidentjlsil@gmail.com	Second Tuesday Sept. - June	110	Lisa Williams	\$135 active members, \$145 new members	An organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.	1939
4	<b>Rotary Club of Springfield</b> Maldaner's Restaurant (2nd Floor) 222 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-566-4326 springfieldilrotary.org	Mondays, 5:30 p.m.	75	David Kromphardt	\$360 annually	Service above self. Projects that promote literacy and combat hunger in our community, working with Rutledge Youth and sponsoring student participation in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards program and providing grants to numerous nonprofits and international projects.	1913
5	<b>Sertoma Club of Springfield</b> On Zoom	217-546-2782 spfldilsertoma.com album1@aol.com	First and third Monday, 12 p.m.	42	Cheryl Pence	\$180 annually plus meals	SERTOMA = SERVICE TO MANKIND. Areas of service: Projects to benefit hearing impaired in the Springfield area including annual "Celebrate Sound" walk for hearing health; Boys & Girls Club; national heritage projects, Golden Laurel Awards.	1954
6	<b>Springfield Noon Lions Club</b> Visit the website for meeting information.	springfieldnoonlionsclub. com spfnoonlionsclub@gmail. com	Tuesdays, 12 p.m.	40	Steve Frankenstein	\$125 annually, plus meals	Mary Bryant Home for the blind and visually impaired, Heartland Lions Eye Bank, Camp Lions for Blind and Deaf Youth.	1919
7	<b>Springfield Jaycees</b> On Zoom	springfieldjaycees.net spfldjaycees@gmail.com	Third Wednesday 6:30 p.m.	36	Jenna Broom	\$68 1st year \$63 annually	To provide development opportunities that empower young people to create positive change.	1939
7	<b>Rotary Club of Springfield - South</b> Engrained Brewing Co. 1120 W. Lincolnshire Blvd. Springfield, IL 62711	217-370-4677 rotarysouth-spi.org dop.ehrhardt@gmail.com	Thursdays, 12 p.m.	36	Brian Schutz	\$140 annually, plus meals	Service above self. Youth literacy and health.	1966
8	<b>Rotary Club of Springfield - Sunrise</b> Hoogland Center for the Arts 420 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-652-4371 springfieldrotarysunrise. org springfieldrotarysunrise@ gmail.com	Wednesdays, 7 a.m.	32	Roni Mohan	\$100 quarterly plus meals	Service above self. Grants to local nonprofits that serve youth. Literacy projects at Graham School. This I Believe essay contest for high school youth in collaboration with WUIS - NPR IL. Rotary Youth Exchange. Support for Rotary Foundation efforts to eradicate polio and fund other international projects that change lives.	1987





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# LLCC apprenticeship program builds tech skills

By Cinda Ackerman Klickna

"Let's build talent, not buy talent," says Brenda Elliott, director of apprenticeship programming at Lincoln Land Community College. The program, only in existence for a year, was developed as a way for local businesses to fill needed information technology positions while offering LLCC students a path for a career or career enhancement. Elliott explains, "Instead of a business paying for advertising a position, taking time to collect and read resumes, then do interviews, we can work with a business to help identify needs and create an apprenticeship program for them. This helps both the business and the students."

It is common to have apprenticeship programs connected to the building trades. However, this is a new approach in creating a bridge to information technology (IT) occupations, which could be in the areas of banking, graphics, cybersecurity, health care data, coding or more.

Elliott came on board in July 2020 and planned extensive meetings with business leaders to identify their IT needs. COVID has forced some workers to find new jobs, and IT work opens up many opportunities. Elliott emphasizes, "This is a new venture that can be developed to meet the needs of businesses and students."

A business might have someone already employed who is interested in increasing their skills or advancing into a different position. Other companies might be looking for a new employee, so the apprenticeship program would offer a way to help both the worker and the business.

LLCC also offers many training programs for those interested in the health care field. Capital City Training Center on Mason Street has recently been renamed LLCC - Medical District, reflecting the focus on training in health care certifications.

Everything is customized to the needs of the business and the skills of the students. Students can attend classes either full or part-time as well as fulfill hours on the job. Some may earn credits toward a degree; others may focus on earning one or more certifications. The program combines employability skills along with communication skills.



Brenda Elliott is the director of apprenticeship programming at LLCC, a new venture to help businesses fill needed positions. PHOTO COURTESY LLCC

She says, "Students are learning more technology these days. Computer skills are no longer just for entertainment." One unintended benefit of the pandemic and virtual schooling is that it has increased technology skills among youth, something the business community has wanted for many years.

Elliott has a background in both business and IT. She graduated from Milliken University in Decatur with a degree in business marketing and has worked in tech sales, computer training and management of training centers. She worked for her alma mater and then at Hanson Professional Services in customer relations before joining LLCC. Elliott says, "This new role gives me an opportunity to meld my corporate business work with academics."

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 97% of businesses that have

incorporated an apprentice program recommend other businesses do the same. Of students who complete an apprenticeship program, 91% end up staying at that place of business after the apprenticeship is complete.

Right now, the goal is to promote the opportunities for IT careers to students through coursework and on-the-job apprenticeships. Elliott says she hopes to grow the program and eventually offer apprenticeships in more areas.

Businesses are encouraged to contact LLCC at 217-786-2326 to find out how to get involved. There are many opportunities for businesses to participate, and it serves as a way to build talent in our area. **SBJ**

Cinda Ackerman Klickna is a freelance writer and author of *Out of the Beaks of Birds: Our Crazy, Pesky...Verbs*.



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# Central Illinois Golf Outings



## APRIL

**11** – The Master Nine-Hole Shotgun. Long Bridge Golf Course, 217-744-8311.

**17** – Spring Two-Person Best Ball. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

## MAY

**22** – Red, White, Blue Two-Person Scramble. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

**29-30** – Memorial Weekend Scramble. Country Hills Golf Club, 217-632-7242.

## JUNE

**5** – Mason County Democrat Outing. Country Hills Golf Club, 217-632-7242.

**5-6** – Central Illinois Amateur. Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

**19** – Four-Person Shamble. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

**20** – Father's Day Tournament. Country Hills Golf Club, 217-632-7242.

## JULY

**3** – Over 50/Under 50 Tournament. Country Hills Golf Club, 217-632-7242.

**4** – July 4th Flag Event. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

**15-18** – Lincoln Land Championship. Panther Creek Golf Club, 217-546-4431.

**24** – Shootout at Piper Glen. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

**24-25** – Men's City Tournament. Bunn Golf Course, 217-522-2633. Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

## AUGUST

**1** – Men's City Tournament. Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111. Panther Creek Country Club, 217-546-4432.

**14** – Two-Person Triad. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

## SEPTEMBER

**4-5** – Two-Person Scramble. Country Hills Golf Club, 217-632-7242.

**11-12** – Round the Town. Bunn Golf Course 217-522-2633. Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

**12** – NFL Kickoff 9-Hole Shotgun. Long Bridge Golf Course, 217-744-8311.

## OCTOBER

**10** – Chili Man. Lincoln Greens Golf Course, 217-786-4111.

**16** – Hard Course Day. Piper Glen Golf Club, 217-483-6537.

## NOVEMBER

**TBD** – Turkey Shoot. Long Bridge Golf Course, 217-744-8311.





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# Raising readers

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library helps children prepare for school

By Janet Seitz

Experts say it is never too early to start reading to a child. Besides bonding, reading to babies can immerse them in the sounds and rhythms of speech, which is crucial for language development. From there, books play an essential role in every child's life by introducing a world of imagination and knowledge of the outside world while improving reading, writing and speaking skills and boosting memory and intelligence.

Reading readiness is key to kindergarten preparation. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library helps children nationwide become kindergarten ready by sending them one book a month in the mail until they turn 5 years old, at no cost to the families. The program is made available through funding shared by Dolly Parton and local community partners.

No child is turned away from the opportunity to receive books through the program. The only criteria for eligibility are a child's age and place of residence. Parents of children with hearing and vision impairments can access audio and braille books for expanded access.

Locally, the United Way of Central Illinois launched the program in Sangamon County in September 2011 with a major gift from Scheels. Since then, more than 160,943 books have been mailed in Sangamon County and more than 6,835 kids have been served. United Way of Central Illinois was able to extend the program to Menard County through partnerships with Athens Lions Club and Town & Country Women's Club in Petersburg. Scheels, American Business Club and Susan J. Cook House Foundation have provided sustaining support for children in both Sangamon and Menard Counties.

The program quickly became popular, creating a demand that was difficult to meet. "We quickly had to learn how to calculate what the true costs of the program were," said UWCI's Michelle Graven, explaining the reasoning behind the waitlist. "Because of this process, we can ensure a child's participation through graduation. We have seen other communities close their programs altogether because they could no longer support the true cost. We want children to have access to high-quality books, but we were disappointed seeing families wait up to two years before receiving their first books."

The cost of the program per child is about \$26 per year or \$130 per child for all five years if registered at birth, said Graven. Donors can provide a year of books to a child for just \$25.



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library sends children one book a month from birth to age five at no cost to the family. PHOTO COURTESY UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS

The program recently received a boost with a major gift. An anonymous \$70,000 donation allowed more than 700 children to be removed from the waiting list here and receive their first book in February.

"This gift, especially now, is much needed to be able to continue offering this program in Sangamon County," said John Kelker, United Way of Central Illinois president. "Dolly Parton's Imagination Library guarantees access to books and inspires parents to read to their children. This simple task has a big impact on a child."

"We're excited to help all the children of our community have the opportunity to begin reading and learning before they start formal schooling," said the anonymous donors.

"When I was expecting my daughter, I had a few friends who shared the program with me on social media," recalled Lacey Pollack. "I looked into how the program worked and applied to be on the list in my local area. I knew that any opportunity to expose my daughter to books, reading and learning was a must."

Pollack said she remembers her mom reading her when she was growing up and wanted the same for her daughter. "Since she was born, we

have spent time together reading books and exploring the experiences and worlds they give us access to, even though she is still small and it is me reading to her. Reading has given us bonding time together and something to share. I know that as she gets older, literacy and reading will continue to be important to our family dynamic."

Pollack's hope is that the program and books affect her one-year-old daughter in many positive ways. "It will give her the opportunity to explore and use her imagination and to see diversity in characters and stories. It will also give her a way to spend quality time with her family and friends and even enjoy her independence and reading alone."

Children are registered on a first-come, first-serve basis, Graven said, to keep access to this program as equitable as possible. Children's registrations are activated once funds are secured to support their enrollment through age five.

For more information on how to contribute to the program or to register, visit [www.springfieldunitedway.org/dpil](http://www.springfieldunitedway.org/dpil).

SBJ

Janet Seitz is a local communications professional, writer and artist. To share your story, contact her at [janetseitz1@gmail.com](mailto:janetseitz1@gmail.com).





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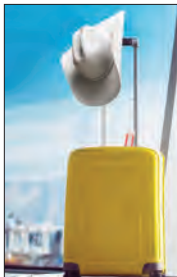
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# Ask an attorney: How do I keep my business dealings confidential?

By Sarah Delano Pavlik

## Q: How can I keep information about myself and my company private?

A: First, don't try to hide income or assets from the government, creditors or your ex. You can end up owing much more and/or spend time in jail. There are legitimate reasons for wanting to keep your information private; however, the combination of the internet and increasing government regulation makes this more and more difficult.

Let's start with real property ownership. It was always possible for someone to go to the county building and review real property records, but now anyone can do so from the couch for property in many counties, including Sangamon. A user can enter a name and find out what that person owns or enter an address and find out who owns the property. If you don't want people to know you own the property, what are your options?

You can use a trust. Land trusts are used commonly, but any trust will do. A trust can have virtually any name, such as "The 123 Trust," meaning that the name will not reveal who you are. It is also important that you not serve as trustee of the trust. A deed transferring property to the trust will name the trustee, such as "XYZ Bank, Trustee of Trust 123."

You can also use a business entity, such as a limited liability company. An LLC can also have virtually any name, but it must not be substantially the same as the name of an existing LLC or corporation registered with the state of Illinois. A review of the Illinois secretary of state website shows 123 Corp., 123 Inc. and 123 L.L.C. have been used, so you will have to come up with something else. If you use an LLC, you

cannot serve as a manager of the LLC because all managers are listed on the secretary of state website. If you use a corporation, you cannot serve as an officer, as the names of the officers are listed on the website. You will also need a neutral registered agent listed for the LLC or the corporation.

Some states, including Nevada, New Mexico and Wyoming, don't disclose ownership information of LLCs. However, if your New Mexico LLC wishes to do business in Illinois, it will have to register with the Illinois secretary of state and reveal who its managers are. So, if you are willing to use someone else as trustee of a trust, as manager and registered agent of an LLC or as officers and agent of a corporation, you could make your identity difficult to find.

However, using third parties will not keep your ownership a secret from the federal government. The Corporate Transparency Act (part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021) became law on Jan. 1, 2021. This act requires corporations, LLCs and "other similar entities" formed within any state to disclose certain information regarding their beneficial owners (that is, someone with ownership rights to property although the title is in another name) to the U.S. Treasury. The Act will become effective on the date that the Treasury issues regulations, which can be no later than Dec. 31, 2021.

Bank and brokerage firms are already bound by strict "know your customer" laws designed to reduce money laundering. Financial institutions are required to "verify the identity of each beneficial owner of a legal entity customer," i.e., members of an LLC, ben-

eficiaries of a trust, etc. They must verify the names of the beneficial owners, their addresses, dates of birth and tax identification numbers.

Under the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA), financial institutions are required to assist U.S. government agencies in detecting and preventing money laundering by keeping records of cash purchases of negotiable instruments, filing reports of cash transactions exceeding \$10,000 and reporting suspicious activity that might signal criminal activity, such as money laundering or tax evasion. If a bank files a suspicious activity report (SAR) regarding your transaction(s), it is prohibited from telling you that it is doing so.

The U.S. government has also used its power and influence to pressure most legitimate foreign financial institutions to disclose information about their customers, making the legendary Swiss bank account much less useful than before.

In short, it is much more difficult to hide ownership now; however, you can at least make it more challenging than a simple internet search. **SBJ**



Sarah Delano Pavlik is an attorney with Delano Law Offices in Springfield.

Send your legal questions to [tpavlik@delanolaw.com](mailto:tpavlik@delanolaw.com) for possible inclusion in a future column.

This article is for informational and educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

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## Newly expanded NICU opens at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital

The new neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) has open at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital. The new unit is more than double the original size at 28,000-square feet. Innovative features of the new family-centered unit include:

- Single family rooms where parents can stay overnight.
- Expanded rooms that allow NICU twins and their families to stay together.
- Dedicated rooms to meet the highly specialized needs of the smallest patients.
- A milk lab where infant feeding technicians will prepare individualized human milk and formula feedings.

Phase II of the renovation project, which will include a family respite lounge and overnight sleep suites, is scheduled to open later this year.

This new NICU will also offer couplet care, which enables moms and their NICU babies to heal together in the same space while the mother is still a patient in the hospital. St. John's is one of only a few hospitals and medical centers in the United States to offer this innovative concept.

"These rooms really are state-of-the-art and allow families to journey through the NICU in their own way, at their own pace and in their own personal space," said Dr. Beau Batton, director of newborn services, St. John's Children's Hospital NICU. "Some of our patients and their families are with us for months. This



The newly remodeled NICU at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital has more than doubled in size.

PHOTO COURTESY HSHS ST. JOHN'S CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

new space will allow them to have quiet time with their baby in a way we couldn't provide before."

As the only level III NICU in the region, the hospital cares for about 700 babies annually from 39 counties across an approximate 80-mile radius.

The NICU project was the centerpiece of hospital-wide fundraising campaign, Imagine Tomorrow, which raised money in support of patient care, education and research.

"We are extremely grateful to the more than 600 individuals, families, businesses and organizations who supported this very special project for our community," said Bev Neisler, chief development officer for HSHS St. John's Foundation. "Thanks to their generosity, St. John's Foundation was able to raise more than \$5.6 million to help fund this project."

Kahler Slater served as the architect on the project and O'Shea Builders served as construction manager.

## Ryan Croke elected president of Mid-Illinois Medical District

Ryan Croke has been elected president of the Mid-Illinois Medical District, established in 2003 by the Illinois General Assembly to help promote growth in a one-square-mile area just north of downtown Springfield. Dr. Charlotte Warren, president of Lincoln Land Community College, had served as the MIMD president for the past 10 years.

Croke is the chief of staff for the Illinois Department of Human Services. He also serves as an adjunct instructor for University of Illinois Springfield, teaching a graduate

seminar for the Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Program. Croke previously served as the executive director of the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living and chief of staff for Governor Pat Quinn.

In addition, Abby Powell with the City of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development has been appointed to serve as the staff liaison for the MIMD. Powell has served as the city's economic development operations coordinator and TIF manager since 2014.





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Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI) will hold a lunch meeting on Wednesday, April 14 at the Village Tea Room, 3301 Robbins Road, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The topic will be "Flex Your Sales Style to Win Buyers." Visit [wecispringfield.org/events](http://wecispringfield.org/events) for more information or to register.

WE-CI is a nonprofit organization with the goal of supporting women entrepreneurs through promoting economic development, creating innovative changes in business culture and building strategic affiliations. Monthly meetings promote networking and feature speakers with topics relevant to women in business today.

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# White employees' role in dismantling workplace racism

Eradicating racism is not just the job of your Black colleagues

By Kristina Barbee

For the past several years, the United States has been at the precipice of a large-scale civil rights movement. In 2020, racial injustice was as common of a headline as the newest coronavirus development. Everyone was thrust into conversations, many for the first time, on how institutionalized and personal racism are still prominent in our communities and organizations more than 400 years after British colonizers and their slaves landed on the shores of the East Coast.

Institutionalized racism (also known as systemic racism), much like personal racism, is not always overt and intentional, it can also be unintentional and unconscious. Many of our civic structures, company policies and societal norms have been in place for so many generations that their racist roots have been lost over time, causing many of us to uphold them without knowing the harm they still cause to Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC).

For some companies, systemic racism takes on the look of hiring practices that lead to the prevalence of unconscious bias and discrimination. A 2004 study completed for *American Economic Review* found that white-sounding names received 50% more callbacks for interviews than Black-sounding names.

Racial discrimination is ingrained so deeply into our hiring practices that, according to a meta-study published for the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 2017, hiring discrimination against Black applicants hasn't improved in the last 25 years.

Systemic racism does not end once a person of color is hired. Racial disparities in pay structures

and C-suite level promotions are prevalent within many organizations still fighting unconscious biases. Additionally, according to information gathered by the Toigo Foundation, many Black employees have reported being expected to be the "cultural ambassadors" tasked with taking on the added responsibility of championing diversity, equity and inclusion programs alongside addressing the needs of their lower-level Black colleagues.

While some Black colleagues may feel energized and excited to take on this added work, the outright assumption and expectation that they want to take on the labor because they are Black is, while not always ill-intended, an act of workplace racism.

To begin to dismantle systemic racism within our establishments we must first understand that this is not a Black or white issue, it is an issue that affects every single person. As a white employee, our role must be to listen and learn, while also taking on the weight that our Black colleagues have carried for so long in the fight for racial equity.

For many Black employees, the fear of being fired or reprimanded for speaking out against the racism that they encounter is a constantly overwhelming experience. As unfortunate as it is, when white employees speak up about racism, it falls on fewer deaf ears than when our Black colleagues speak up, as they often report being dismissed, accused of creating drama or being overly sensitive.

Aside from calling out racism and reporting it to leadership, white colleagues can aid in anti-racism work by bringing to the forefront the demand and

need for true diversity, equity and inclusion.

Many companies worked to save face in 2020 by implementing surface level changes that give the illusion of inclusion and diversity. As employees, we must fight for true structural change through championing analysis and alterations to our recruitment and hiring practices, holding leadership accountable for creating equitable opportunities within the chain of command and continuing the dialogue consistently, alongside other long-term structural changes.

Dismantling racist systems is work that is meant to make change, which will not necessarily make white people feel comfortable. Confronting systemic racism will likely lead to feeling frustrated and facing resistance. Attempting to keep the narrative and change within the parameters of our own comfort levels will not only lead to a lack of impactful change, it is an act of racism and oppression.

It is no one's job, especially our BIPOC colleagues, to make us feel comfortable about the racism we may unconsciously, or consciously, hold in our hearts or allow in the workplace. As white colleagues and allies, we must understand that systemic change is important, not our own comfort. **SBJ**



Kristina Barbee is the founder and CEO of The CEO.Co, a leadership and career training company in Springfield that creates a workplace culture of excellence.

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# Many main attractions at Main Gate Bar & Grill

By Thomas C. Pavlik Jr.

Long before I moved to Springfield in 1999, a group of guys (who've since become friends) began meeting once a month to sample Springfield's different tavern chili. When I, along with another mutual friend, were invited to join the group it was like I was asked to eat at the cool kids' table in the high school cafeteria. That was a few years ago, and I've been fortunate to try many different tavern chilis in the interim – some excellent, and some not so much. The engineer in the group volunteered to play scribe and has detailed tasting notes for each expedition – truly a wealth of knowledge.

Main Gate's chili was right up there with the better offerings on the list. But, as we found out, there's a lot more to Main Gate than just chili.

First, as you might guess from the name, it's located directly across the street from the State Fair's main gate. There's not much to see from the outside – a cramped parking lot (made even smaller with the requisite outdoor dining

tent) and a chopped up, non-descript building that yields a surprising amount of internal square feet (nice for social distancing). Inside, it's your typical Springfield tavern – replete with video gaming, pool tables and other amusement games.

The day we visited, diners were spaced at safe intervals and we observed appropriate COVID protocols being carried out. Our server, who pulled double duty behind the bar, could not have been more welcoming or accommodating – especially with our special requests.

Main Gate's menu is about what you'd expect from a tavern, with some unexpected surprises like breaded cauliflower bites (1/2 pound - \$7.99), portobello mushrooms (1/2 pound - \$7.99) and a large variety of fried chicken options that looked pretty tempting. Besides that, Main Gate offers the usual fare of sandwiches, pizzas and more traditional appetizers.

Breakfast is available seven days a week from 6 a.m. until 11 a.m., at which point the lunch and dinner menu takes over until the kitchen closes at midnight. We spoke to some friends who went there the following weekend, and based on their experience, posted hours may be somewhat affected by COVID.

We all decided to start, of course, with a bowl of "Todd's Famous Homemade Chili" (\$3.99 for cup, \$5.99 for bowl, with fries \$6.99). Cheese, onions and oyster crackers came on the side. The group was unanimous in the opinion that the chili was at the upper end of the spectrum. Individual comments included:

"Good cumin - like chili I make at home."

"This is good – has a little pop – good fat content – spoon too small!"

"Good taste, good color – not enough meat, good spice, this could rank in top 10."

"Onions give it a new dimension – that's good stuff."

"I like it – could be warmer and greasier, but





PHOTOS BY STACIE LEWIS

good.”

For our main entrees, the six of us split three dishes. We appreciated that the staff brought us extra plates to accommodate the ask and otherwise made the process as simple as could be.

One friend and I went for the six-ounce breaded pork tenderloin sandwich (\$7.99) with tater tots, two others went for the BLT on Texas toast with crinkle cut fries (\$6.99) and the last pair ordered the grilled chicken sandwich with sweet potato fries (\$7.99). All sandwiches are served in baskets and come with your choice of crinkle cut fries, fresh cut fries, buffalo tater tots, potato wedges, sweet potato fries or waffle fries. We appreciated the variety, and in retrospect, were saddened that we didn’t try the buffalo tots – maybe next time.

The BLT on Texas toast looked delicious, and I admit to being a bit jealous. The toast had an appropriate amount of butter and was

golden brown, which reportedly added some additional texture against the lettuce and tomato. The bacon also looked nice and crispy – something we all agreed was necessary for a good BLT. The fries, just like our tots, were perfectly cooked, crisp on the outside while fluffy on the inside, and with appropriate seasoning.

The breaded pork tenderloin was generously sized and juicy with a nice crusty exterior. Thankfully, the bun was well-toasted. It was delicious, and more than enough to share when combined with a bowl of chili.

The chicken sandwich had nice grill marks and was also well-sized. The lettuce, tomato and onion looked fresh, and the fries were reported as tasty.

All of us agreed that Main Gate was well worth the visit, and we praised the group member who made the selection. I, like the other members, will be back again. SBJ

## Restaurant information

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