



Nomination for What's Right with the Region Award

Focus St. Louis

Nominated by:

Dr. Sabrina Trupia

AB Mauri North America

Nominee:

“Grow Your Future: A Multi-Generational Approach to Breaking the Cycle of Poverty”

Title:

Building Illinois Bioeconomy Consortium and the SIUE East St. Louis Center

Address:

400 University Park Drive

City:

Edwardsville

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I would like to nominate for:

_____ Emerging Initiatives

Nominee is a new business, organization or initiative working fewer than 3 years developing practical solutions, responding to an identified need or challenge and is a catalyst for change.

Constituency served by nominee:

Trade-displaced workers (Trade Adjustment Assistance workers), long-term unemployed, underemployed, and rural workers, underserved minorities

Major accomplishments/events organized by nominee:

In 2014, the Building Illinois Bioeconomy (BIB) Consortium was awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor a \$10M Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training grant to deliver a highly-skilled, job-ready workforce to meet the needs of regional employers in a growing bioeconomy, including traditional manufacturing and emerging energy industries. BIB and the SIUE East St. Louis Center have also partnered on a number of proposals, including a funded “Constellation” grant, to directly connect families receiving services from the East St. Louis Center to TAACCCT-funded education program and industry employers.

Year Nonprofit/Company founded:

2014

Values this addresses (**Please check all on the application!**).

1. Give a general description of the nominee and identify the problem or project this nominee addresses.

The Building Illinois Bioeconomy Consortium and the SIUE East St. Louis Center have partnered to propose an intensive, multi-generational approach to breaking the cycle of poverty while also promoting regional growth. Employers across the St. Louis metropolitan area in Missouri and Illinois have immediate openings in bio-based and traditional advanced manufacturing positions. These are skilled, full-time positions that pay family-sustaining wages, yet employers struggle to fill open positions, particularly with minority candidates. Primary challenges are a lack of awareness of and preparedness for these jobs as well as misconceptions about what manufacturing and bio-based jobs look like in 2017. The “Grow Your Future” initiative connects East St. Louis students and families to educational programs at SIUE and its community college partners in order to help deliver a skilled workforce to regional employers and improve the quality of life for East St. Louis residents. “Grow Your Future” takes a multi-generational approach to addressing awareness of and preparedness for these careers by developing targeted activities at each level – from K-12 classroom modules and field trips for Upward Bound and Trio students to employer visits and informational sessions for Head Start parents and families.

2. What are the nominee’s primary objectives? Provide specific examples of this nominee’s activities and problem solving methods to meet stated objectives.

Grow Your Future's objective is two part: 1) to connect students, particularly those entering education at a disadvantage, with the career opportunities that exist across the St. Louis Metropolitan area today, and 2) to drive economic development and growth in the region through the development of a robust workforce and increase the diversity of the talent pool. On one hand are employers, particularly in advanced manufacturing and energy industries, with open positions in good-paying careers. On the other hand are the students and families affiliated with the East St. Louis Center, many of whom are already educated and working full-time, yet still earning below the poverty line. Grow Your Future aims to address these issues by introducing the career and employment opportunities at every level of the East St. Louis Center, from K-12 classroom education to connecting parents of Head Start students with employers in target industries.

3. Outline partnerships and/or collaborations with a brief explanation of how they function.

While the foundation of the Grow Your Future partnership includes the BIB Consortium and the SIUE East St. Louis Center, several other regional organizations have also collaborated with or otherwise impacted the initiative. Examples include the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois, whose "Craft and Manufacture Your Future" programs provide a model for connecting employers, educators, and communities, and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW), a nationally-recognized workforce consultancy. While the Leadership Council brings a regional lens and vision to the Grow Your Future partnership, as well as a foundation for effectively connecting employers and educators, CSW brings a national perspective to credentialing and equity issues in higher education.

4. How has the community changed because of the nominee's efforts? What is the impact? Is this accomplishment sustainable?

One of the most significant outcomes to date is the connection of Associate's in Applied Science, a traditionally "terminal" degree, into four year Baccalaureate programs at SIUE. This is a critical accomplishment because it extends the career pathway options available to students, or in other words, creates more seamless options for students to move between the workforce and higher education, increasing their earnings as they earn additional certifications or degrees. This also helps address a significant equity issue in higher education, because minority and other disadvantaged populations may be steered early on into vocational programs that limit their earnings later down the road. This approach ensures that students are able to get the education they need for a good-paying job today, without limiting their educational options down the road.

5. What makes the nominee's work otherwise worthy of recognition in this category?

"Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." While any social service support is a critical safety net for society, not all investments in impoverished areas lead to long-lasting returns that extend beyond the initial support. By connecting students and families to in-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages, and then supporting them through their studies and into the workforce, Grow Your Future truly takes a holistic approach to simultaneously lifting families out of poverty and lifting our region into greater economic growth opportunities.

Announcing the 2017 What's Right with the Region Honorees

Monday, February 20, 2017



On May 11, 2017, FOCUS St. Louis, the region's premier leadership organization, will honor 20 organizations, individuals, and initiatives making a difference at the [20th Annual What's Right with the Region](#) awards celebration. The honorees were nominated by the public and selected by a panel of community judges for their impact and service to the community.

FOCUS St. Louis will recognize the following outstanding honorees in five categories:

Demonstrating Innovative Solutions

Honorees in this category have demonstrated innovation and vision in making the St. Louis region a better place to live, work or visit.

[City of St. Louis Treasurer's Office College Kids Children's Savings Program](#)
[Prosperity Connection](#)
[ready + willing](#)
[St. Louis MetroMarket](#)

Fostering Regional Cooperation

Honorees have brought entities together to create a new synergy and improve efficiency and effectiveness.

[Affton School District](#)
[Forest Park Forever](#) and the [City of St. Louis Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry](#)
[Normandy Schools Collaborative](#)
[Veterans Business Resource Center](#)

Improving Racial Equality & Social Justice

Honorees have shown a commitment to promoting diversity, access and opportunity for all.

Sophie Bernstein, founder of [Go Healthy St. Louis](#)
The Ferguson Collaborative
[North Side Community School](#)
[Saint Louis University Family Medicine Residency](#)

Promoting Stronger Communities

Honorees have worked to address problems, develop initiatives, or make lasting improvements that result in stronger, more stable communities.

[Arch Grants](#)
[Kids Rock Cancer](#), a program of [Maryville University](#)

Myrtle Hilliard Davis Comprehensive Health Centers
St. Louis Mosaic Project

Emerging Initiatives

Honorees are new organizations that are developing practical solutions, responding to identified needs and serving as catalysts for change.

Natalie DuBose, owner of Natalie's Cakes & More
SIUE's Grow Your Future: A Multi-generational Approach to Breaking the Cycle of Poverty
Seniors Count of Greater St. Louis
We Stories

FOCUS will also present the prestigious board-designated **FOCUS St. Louis Leadership Award** to **Dr. Kelvin Adams**, Superintendent of Schools for Saint Louis Public Schools, and the District's Special Administrative Board.

All in the community are invited to help recognize these outstanding leaders at the 20th annual *What's Right with the Region!* awards celebration.

What: *What's Right with the Region!* Awards Reception and Celebration
When: Thursday, May 11, 2017 – 5 p.m. Reception; 6:30 p.m. Awards Presentation
Where: Sheldon Concert Hall, 3648 Washington Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108
Tickets can be purchased at www.focus-stl.org/WRWR or by calling 314-622-1250.

Co-chairs of this event are:

Ann Marr	Al Mitchell
President, WWT Foundation	President, Monsanto Fund
Vice President, Human Resources	Vice President, Community Relations
World Wide Technology	Monsanto Company

Lead sponsors for the event include [Edward Jones](#), [Monsanto](#), [Wells Fargo Advisors](#), and [World Wide Technology](#).

Media sponsors for the event are [FOX2](#) and [KPLR 11](#), the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) and [St. Louis Public Radio](#).