

Annual Report

FOCUS

St. Louis

1997-1998

*An Investment in  
FOCUS St. Louis  
is an Investment  
in the St. Louis  
Region.*

# FOCUS St. Louis

is a catalyst for direction-setting and action on issues to be tackled and opportunities to be seized by the citizens of the St. Louis region.

Board President's/Executive Director's

# Message

FOCUS St. Louis is a catalyst for direction setting and action on the issues that must be tackled and the opportunities that must be seized by citizens of our region. Our work is hard and it is important to pause at certain points to measure and celebrate the ground we have gained.

This has been a year of mileposts passed, forces joined, significant challenges met — good news on many fronts. Happily, we see substantial returns on the investments that funders, members and staff have made together through FOCUS St. Louis. Included in the 1997-1998 roster of events was the eye opening “What's Right with the Region” awards ceremony held as part of our annual meeting. We have won national recognition for our efforts to improve race relations in the region through our Bridges program, and we have participated in a number of projects - the city assessment/Inside City Hall project, Covenant 2004, the Carolyn W. Losos Regional Leadership Collaboration - that have renewed our sense of what can be achieved when people work together.

We may be on the threshold of a new millennium and a fresh start, but the challenges facing our region are still numerous and complex. If it is to thrive in the next century, it is still critical that the bi-state region makes changes on multiple fronts. The role of FOCUS St. Louis in this effort is clearly defined. We will continue to stimulate citizen involvement and develop citizen leaders; bring diverse interests together for inclusive, area-wide collaboration; serve as a catalyst for direction-setting and action on critical issues; and, develop and implement practical solutions that produce visible change.

Dee A. Joyner, President (1996-1998)

Christine A. Chadwick, Executive Director

An Audit of

# Successes & Achievements

at FOCUS St. Louis

More than 1,200 energetic members; scores of the area's leading companies and foundations; and, a dedicated board and staff are investing their time and energy with FOCUS St. Louis. What is the return on this investment? As preparers, facilitators and advocates, we create opportunities for citizens to make positive changes that will transform the region. Here are examples of our work as agents of change:

## **Challenge: Improving Racial Dialogue**

*FOCUS Response: Bridges Across Racial Polarization; the CommUnity St. Louis Regional Dialogue Initiative*

FOCUS' steadily expanding Bridges program, initiated in 1992, continued to involve citizens from across the region in interactive efforts to overcome racial prejudice. Bridges was hailed as a model by President Clinton's National Initiative on Race; recognized by the Center for Living Democracy; and, praised by the Peirce Report for planting "the seeds of the solution" to racial polarization. In 1997-1998, there were 17 Bridges groups serving approximately 200 participants. Also, working in partnership with the National Conference for Community and Justice, FOCUS helped launch the CommUnity St. Louis Regional Dialogue Initiative, designed to dismantle racism by establishing an intentional, ongoing process of personal and institutional change in the region.

## **Challenge: Ensuring Good Government**

*FOCUS Response: Inside City Hall Report*

FOCUS quietly disproved the old, ironclad maxim that you "can't change city hall". At the request of Mayor Harmon, FOCUS committed to staying involved in the work that was begun earlier in 1997 as part of the FOCUS study, *Inside City Hall*. FOCUS committed to hosting the implementation steering committee; facilitating city task forces; and, participating in the Mayor's strategic planning sessions. As a result, 1998 saw measurable progress toward enacting more than half of the 267 recommendations contained in the study.

### Challenge: Promoting Economic Development

*FOCUS Response: Welfare Reform - St. Louis as Partner; Covenant 2004*

The FOCUS St. Louis citizens' task force program and handbook for welfare reform coached businesses on how to become active partners (through training, education, and other avenues) in the welfare-to-work process. It also identified opportunities for businesses to proactively influence skill levels in the labor pool and play a broader role in the economy of the region. The handbook proved useful in engaging business leaders in welfare-to-work challenge areas such as transportation and childcare.

FOCUS St. Louis created a citizen's implementation committee that collaborated with the St. Louis Minority Business Council to promote minority business development through Covenant 2004. Civic Progress, the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, the St. Louis County Executive and the Danforth Foundation made a commitment to the Covenant which is now being implemented by the St. Louis Minority Business Council. Covenant 2004 represents a major commitment to the growth of minority-owned business in the community.

### Challenge: Preparing Leaders

*FOCUS Response: Leadership St. Louis; Youth Leadership St. Louis; Community Leadership for Teachers; Experience St. Louis; Impact St. Louis*

For more than 20 years, FOCUS St. Louis has been developing citizens for active leadership roles in regional decision making. Through *Leadership St. Louis*, up to 60 existing or emerging leaders are chosen annually to participate in a rigorous September to May curriculum that guides a selected group of diverse community professionals through an interactive series of cutting-edge seminars on critical regional issues. The seminars include opportunities to enhance self-awareness, on-site visits and interactions with decision makers that inspire participants to address community issues.

FOCUS also provided more concentrated leadership seminars for young people, teachers, corporate executives new to the St. Louis area, professionals and civic leaders.

*Youth Leadership St. Louis* is an eight-month program developed for high school juniors from public, private, and parochial schools throughout the region. The curriculum introduces, nurtures, and develops leadership skills and strategies by involving the students in the issues facing our region. In 1997-1998, 106 students participated in YLSL.

...we create opportunities for citizens to make positive changes that will transform the region.

*Community Leadership for Teachers* is a ten-month program created for teachers, preschool through high school. In 1997-1998, 39 participants examined their own leadership roles and engaged in dialogue with a variety of regional leaders to gain a deeper understanding of what it takes to address the concerns of our community. The teachers, in turn, prepared their students to understand the opportunities, needs, problems, and resources of the bi-state region.

*Experience St. Louis*, an orientation program for executives and their spouses new to the St. Louis region, was held exclusively in Fall and Spring. The objectives are to broaden their knowledge of the community, acquaint them with its formal and informal decision-making channels, inform them of issues facing the region, and challenge them to become involved. Forty-nine individuals participated in ESL.

*Impact St. Louis*, an intensive 2-1/2 day program held in the Spring for 26 area professionals, civic leaders, and interested citizens who want a better understanding of the community in which they live and work. The program introduced issues and opportunities in the region and encouraged participants to play a role in the success of the region.

### **Challenge: Defining Quality in Education**

*FOCUS Response: Desegregation Task Force*

In September 1997, FOCUS St. Louis convened a special 16-member task force of diverse citizens from the region to study the potential outcomes and impacts of a settlement of the city's court-ordered desegregation program and to serve as an independent community educator on the issue.

### **Challenge: Facilitating Community Involvement in Decision-Making**

*FOCUS Response: St. Louis 2004 Community Forums*

When St. Louis 2004 needed to involve the entire St. Louis bi-state region in its decision-making process, FOCUS St. Louis made it happen by organizing and leading 50 Community Forums in all 12 counties of the region. FOCUS recruited and trained 250 volunteers to serve as facilitators and recorders during the meetings, which attracted more than 1,500 people across the region. These meetings sparked a vigorous exchange of ideas; tested scores of priorities against each other; and, gave St. Louis 2004 a clear sense of what the citizens in the region were interested in for the present and the future.

### **Challenge: Applying Technology to the Process of Citizen Engagement**

*FOCUS Response: Regional Citizens Web*

Planning began for a new FOCUS St. Louis web site ([www.focus-stl.org](http://www.focus-stl.org)) that would provide information that will create a better understanding of regional issues and challenges offer interactive vehicles that significantly enhance the ability of concerned citizens to communicate interactively and engage in debate. A regional bulletin board, issue surveys, chat rooms with access to regional leaders, and on-line leadership forums are in the works.

### **Challenge: Providing Comprehensive and Unique Information**

#### *FOCUS Response: St. Louis Currents*

The third edition of St. Louis Currents, the respected community resource book, was published in 1997 and involved more than 24 regional leaders as authors. The CD-ROM of Currents, also available, provided immediate access - through a powerful search engine - to the contents of the 220-page book and to a wealth of additional issues-related tools.

### **Challenge: Facilitating Unified Regional Problem Solving**

#### *FOCUS Response: The Carolyn W. Losos Regional Leadership Collaboration*

The Collaboration, created out of an endowment of more than a quarter of a million dollars, is a unique area-wide partnership that combines the resources of FOCUS St. Louis, 16 area colleges and universities, the Regional Commerce and Growth Association, and the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. The group is looking at a variety of projects that would affect major economic and social decisions to be made in the region. In 1997-1998, planning and development began for the group's first project.

### **Challenge: Identifying Best Practices and Recognizing Progress**

#### *FOCUS Response: What's Right with the Region Program*

Amid the relentless pressures to address regional issues and solve complex problems, we often allow best practices to go unrecognized; lose sight of valuable lessons that are being learned; and, provide too little fanfare for deserving efforts. To call attention to and celebrate the ground that was gained on many fronts, FOCUS St. Louis devoted its 1998 annual meeting to a celebration of "*What's Right with the Region*". Using a ballot, attendees selected and honored programs in six categories that had demonstrated new ways of doing business; shifted paradigms or expectations; broken new ground; taken risks wisely; or, created hope through the sharing of resources. The efforts of 36 programs and initiatives were honored; winners included the Regional Jobs Initiative; Downtown Now!; St. Louis 2004; the Partnership for Children and Youth; Pyramid Construction and City Property Company; and, the St. Louis Clergy Coalition and the Interfaith Partnership. Bob and Gail Cassilly, founders of the City Museum, and Coach Robert Shannon received the Leadership Award.

# FOCUS St. Louis

## An Outstanding Return on Investment

### Income and Expenses

1997-1998 saw energetic efforts by hundreds of FOCUS St. Louis volunteers in multiple program areas, plus the commitment of a dedicated Board of Directors and rigorous management by the Executive Director and staff. The results included successful fund raising and a healthy overall financial picture founded on support from corporations, foundations and members; program fees; and contract services.

**Income:** **\$1,326,832**

**Expenses:** **\$ 992,735**

### Achievements

- Contributions from members increased by nearly 23 percent.
- Twelve corporations, foundations and other organizations contributed to FOCUS St. Louis for the first time.
- The Roast for Carolyn netted a total of \$288,911.
- Entrepreneurial and fee-for-service projects accounted for nearly 50 percent of our income.
- Classes of trained leaders joined graduates already working for change in the community, bringing the total number to more than 3,480.
- Out of a total of 1,144 FOCUS St. Louis members, 39 percent (450 people) worked as active volunteers to support of FOCUS programs and projects and implement change in the community.
- Staff worked a total of 23,400 hours in support of programs to benefit the region.

### Funding Sources

Funding for FOCUS St. Louis, as shown in the chart, came from a variety of sources.

### Return on Investment

One of the best indices for calculating the value to a community of an invaluable resource is the cost/benefit ratio represented by the quantifiable level of volunteer hours that go back into the organization's efforts to meet community needs. The total hours contributed by FOCUS volunteers climbed faster than our revenues. More than 450 volunteers spent 4,800 hours working to improve the St. Louis region. Conservatively valued at \$50 per hour, this represents \$240,000 in volunteer benefits to the bi-state region.

Corporate & Foundations	26%
Special Events/Fund Raisers	30%
Program Fees	21%
Contract Services	7%
Memberships	6%
Sales - <i>Currents</i>	5%
Special Gifts	3%
Other	2%

## **Current Staff**

Our staff is one of our most important resources.

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**Tammy Bristoe - Director, Finance & Administration**

**Cindy Follman - Director, Community Policy**

**Craig Jones - Director, Communications & Marketing  
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**Kalimba Kindell - Program Consultant**

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**Kathy Kreisman - Executive Assistant**

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# Report

1997-1998

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