



PUTTING  
**PURPOSE**  
TO WORK



2021

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT





**ORV KIMBROUGH**  
Chairman & CEO,  
Midwest BankCentre

**PURPOSE** profits the region,  
it profits the human spirit, it  
profits each one of us by doing  
right by other people.

For most, this past year allowed us to take a step back from the chaos and calamity caused by the pandemic. Many of us came away with a deeper awareness of our interconnectedness and a yearning to bring more meaning into our lives.

Every person has a “why.” “Why do I exist? What brings me meaning and satisfies my soul?” And, maybe most important of all, “What makes me feel like I am making a difference in the world?” Likewise, every business and organization has a “why.” What problem were they created to solve?

Corporate purpose is ultimately about tapping into and unleashing the soul power of a company. **Purpose and profits are the only sustainable path forward for any enterprise over the long term. At Midwest BankCentre, our purpose is to help our regional communities thrive. We believe that access to opportunity and capital is the starting line for every person to live a meaningful and self-determined life.** Purpose profits the region, it profits the human spirit, it profits each one of us by doing right by other people.

Our 2021 Community Impact Report showcases what’s possible when businesses, nonprofits, anchor institutions and individuals are guided by purpose. What’s possible when we act on the belief that everyone should have the chance to **DREAM BIG.** What’s possible when we work together to create a more vibrant region.

My sincerest hope is that in reading the 2021 Community Impact Report you see the difference you are making by choosing to do business with Midwest BankCentre. With each loan to start or scale a business, there is a ripple effect. Businesses create jobs and generate tax revenues, which in turn support local schools and public services. And, because of you, Midwest BankCentre can democratize access to opportunity and capital, helping more working men and women get on the path to social and economic mobility.

Thank you for being a part of Midwest BankCentre’s Network for Good. And, if you aren’t yet a customer, I invite you to put your money where your heart is and partner with Midwest BankCentre on your checking, savings and loans. By Banking Your Values, we can all **RISE TOGETHER.**



**ORV KIMBROUGH**  
Chairman & CEO, Midwest BankCentre



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# GROWING

## WITH PURPOSE

Main Street businesses are considered the backbone of our economy. But they are so much more. They are the heart and soul of our communities. They are guided by purpose, an essential ingredient in their success.



George (Butch) Welsch, a third-generation owner



## People Over Profits

**Welsch Heating and Cooling** has been a Main Street business before there was even a Main Street. Established in 1895 in St. Louis, they began by heating homes with pot bellied stoves.

Over their 127 years, they have remained family owned and have grown into an industry leader installing residential and commercial heating, cooling and ventilation systems and providing maintenance and repair services. In addition, they perform all types of architectural sheet metal work fabricating and installing everything from gutters and downspouts to bay rooms and chimney caps. Today, their 95 employees service customers in a 50-mile radius of their Maryland Heights headquarters.

**George "Butch" Welsch**, a recently minted octogenarian, has been running the company for 58 years. When he started in the business in the late fifties he didn't want to tell people what industry he was in. At the time, there were companies in St. Louis who were less than reputable. "They would knock on people's doors, give them a free furnace check and if there wasn't something wrong with the furnace when they got there, there would be before they left."

One of his goals has been to raise the level of professionalism in the industry. "We provide a tremendous service to the public." The company is involved in the community and Butch and his leadership team serve on a number of industry boards including the board of the Better Business Bureau.



**We need a banking partner who understands that we are sticking around. Midwest BankCentre does and we appreciate it." — BUTCH WELSCH**



The team at Welsch Heating and Cooling has been serving customers in a 50-mile radius for over 127 years.

Their purpose is to be the best heating and cooling company in St. Louis. That doesn't necessarily mean the most profitable. Welsch Heating and Cooling has put its focus on people over profit. That is reflected in how they treat their customers and their employees.

"I always want to be a level ahead of the competition in what we do and what we stand for — sometimes that rings true to profits and sometimes it doesn't," he says.

"We empower our employees to make it happen — if our serviceman has to work overtime to get it done, he knows we trust him to make the best decision to make it right for the customer."

As a family-owned business, the company treats employees like family. When Butch had an opportunity to become part of an industry consolidation, he said no. It would have put money into his own pocket, but he could see that it did not bode well for his senior employees. "These are the very people who helped build the company's reputation. They shouldn't be thrown to the wolves."

That helps explain the loyalty and longevity of the team. Nearly half of the employees have been with of the company for 20 years or longer. "There are endless opportunities for anybody who believes in what we are trying to do and who supports our vision," says Paul Heimann, a 35-year veteran of the company who explains his title as Controller, Vice-President, CFO, janitor at times...whatever it takes.

This roll-up-your-sleeves attitude points to the successful, decade-long relationship with Midwest BankCentre. "I feel like they personally invested in us. It's not just a banking opportunity. They're a locally owned bank, so I think that means something to them when they see family-owned businesses. Bankers have a very wide variety of businesses that they represent. Midwest BankCentre has taken the time to understand our industry, our concerns and our business needs," Paul says.

"The housing crash was a complete disaster for us," says Butch. They needed a banker that was willing to trust the way they were managing through the crisis. They needed a banker who believed in the legacy and the future of Welsch. "We need a banking partner who understands that we are sticking around. Midwest BankCentre does and we appreciate it."



## A Reputation for Quality Spans Three Generations

**Brad Schwartz** grew up planning to be an actor and director. He studied the Meisner Acting Technique in New York in a two-year intensive training program. One of his classmates and good buddies was James Gandolfini, who played Tony Soprano in “The Sopranos,” which he jokingly calls his one claim to fame. He toured with Broadway legend Tommy Tune and directed over 100 shows including for the Goldenrod Showboat and many local theatre companies. When time permitted, he worked at his family’s business, **Liberty Auto Salvage** in North St. Louis.

“I never planned on taking over the company, but as I got older, got married and started a family, I wanted stability, which you don’t have when you live out of a suitcase.”

Brad learned all the aspects of the auto salvage business from his father, Arthur, who learned it from his father, Emanuel. Liberty Auto Salvage has been in the same location since 1933, and at this point, Brad says, they are pretty much a historic landmark. “Everybody who works on cars knows us.” And they know Liberty’s reputation for quality. “We guarantee our parts. We will replace any part if it turns out to be bad.”

The industry, like most industries, has changed dramatically. “To buy a car, you used to go to a local auction and there might be 100 guys there bidding on them. You raise your hand, and the highest bidder gets



**We are able to give back to the community by extending the usefulness of cars and making repairs affordable.” — BRAD SCHWARTZ**

the vehicle.” Today, it all takes place virtually, and 40 percent of the vehicles are purchased by other countries with bidding wars happening across continents.

Liberty Auto Salvage is a Main Street business that is giving back to the community in a number of ways. They are extending the usefulness of cars that have been declared totaled by insurance companies after an accident or have been donated to charities. They reclaim everything from doors and tires to engines and transmissions and all the parts in between. “This is a depressed area. Instead of a guy from a local repair shop having to purchase brand new parts, he can buy a used part at 1/4th of the cost.” It makes repairs affordable.

In addition, Brad feels good about the environmental impact of recycling salvageable components. “These vehicles just as easily could be crushed; instead, a lot of parts are being reused.”

His third-generation business has earned its reputation by changing with the times while maintaining its strong commitment to community. In part, that led Brad to rethink where he banked. He moved to Midwest BankCentre because of the warmth of the service and the shared belief that when Main Street businesses and a values-based partner work together, they can build stronger communities.



**EYEWEARHAUS**

## The Eyes Have It

Michelle’s golden ticket came in the form of an SBA loan from Midwest BankCentre. Prior to her move to St. Louis, **Michelle Burghart** and her family lived in Florida where she worked as an optometrist in private and commercial eye practices.

There is a clinical side of optometry, seeing patients and taking care of their eyes, but there is also the retail and style side. As a person who



Michelle Burghart

**AJ WELLNESS PHARMACY**



## A Formula for Success

Take one experienced pharmacy manager, plus a line of credit, plus a desire to do good in her community, and you have the essential ingredients of **Amira Jahic’s** story. Amira ran a pharmacy in the Central West End for 15 years when it suddenly closed.

It took her exactly one day to figure out her next step: open her own pharmacy. A line of credit from Midwest BankCentre helped make it possible. Amira’s business savvy and determination to serve made it a reality.

In just six short weeks, **AJ Wellness Pharmacy** opened its doors in the heart of one of the most diverse areas of St. Louis. The pharmacy serves the Hispanic, Vietnamese, African American, Bosnian, Russian and Afghan communities. Her staff speaks English, Bosnian, Vietnamese and Spanish to ease communication concerns.

The name of her business was carefully chosen and speaks to its purpose. AJ Wellness delivers prescriptions free of charge in a 30-mile radius of her South City location. The delivery area stretches as far as Arnold, Imperial and St. Charles and includes all communities in between.

In addition to running a pharmacy, Amira supports the wellness of the community. AJ Wellness Pharmacy helps their customers navigate health insurance problems and sees seniors through the complexities of the Medicare prescription sign-up process. If needed, they will help patrons get to a



Fredbird joined Amira (third from left) and her team at the grand opening celebration of AJ Wellness Pharmacy.

doctor appointment. Amira also has an agency that will provide a home health aide.

A wife and mother of three, Amira sums up her decisions this way: instead of just being a pharmacy, she wanted to be seen as part of the community. “I love my job. When you love your work, you can do more and give more.”

“When you love your work, you can do more and give more.” — AMIRA JAHIC

loves art and fashion, Michelle had always wanted to be involved in both. In an unlikely moment, it would all come together. “I’m in the midst of the pandemic. I’m in my 40s. I’m experiencing my mid-life crisis or mid-life opportunity as my husband called it.”

As Michelle was pondering her purpose, an opportunity was unfolding. “I’ve always wanted to be a part of something bigger, like owning a business and giving back to the community.” This is where mid-life angst and opportunity converged. **Eyewearhaus**, a boutique eye care business, came up for sale.

So, with a little nudge from her husband and help from Midwest BankCentre to secure the loan, Michelle stepped into life as an entrepreneur.

Becoming a business owner comes with its challenges. Michelle has embraced it all from bookkeeping to accounting to performing eye exams to addressing her love of fashion. Customer service and VIP patient care continue to distinguish Eyewearhaus in the marketplace, as well as their selection of eye glasses. “Our unique eyewear transcends trends. Each is a little piece of art that you can wear on your face.” Michelle’s golden ticket is Main Street’s gift.



## Building Community by Building Homes

**Sean Flower** and **Don Fendler** build homes. Lots of them. In fact, they have developed properties and built more than a thousand homes ranging from starters to million dollar residences in St. Louis County and as far west as Pacific, MO.

Like many successful business ventures, the path included lots of twists and turns. Sean grew up in the industry working on construction sites alongside his dad, who is also a builder. "I went to law school to get away from home building."

"Don was a client of the law firm I worked at when I was practicing law. When I went in-house at a large homebuilder, Don was one of the first guys I called. We needed a CFO, and I recruited him over to the company."

In 2008, the two decided to strike out on their own as partners. "We thought we were getting into the business at just the right time," says Sean. They were wrong: the housing market collapsed in 2009. "It was a real test to figure out how to survive in the worst-case scenario x10."

It took 5 years for the industry to recover. "You learn a lot about how to run a business in tough times."

In spite of the rough start, Sean knew home building was his real passion.

"I love seeing undeveloped ground and visualizing

what is going to happen as we turn it into a subdivision or home. The process provides employment for hundreds of people from architects to trades people who have valuable skills. And these are all local jobs."

While they chose not to go into business together, Sean and his father value their relationship and share advice. "Dad has banked with Midwest BankCentre forever. The Bank has always been a strong real estate and homebuilder lender because they understand our industry so thoroughly. They make decisions quickly and are true partners."

On this road to building a successful enterprise, Sean sees another important purpose in the work he and Don manage. "Once a project is complete, I drive through the neighborhood. I see kids at the school bus stops and parents talking with each other. We are building communities where people can grow friendships and raise their families."

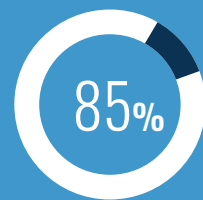


Sean Flower & Don Fendler

“The Bank has always been a strong real estate and homebuilder lender because they understand our industry so thoroughly. They make decisions quickly and are true partners.” — SEAN FLOWER

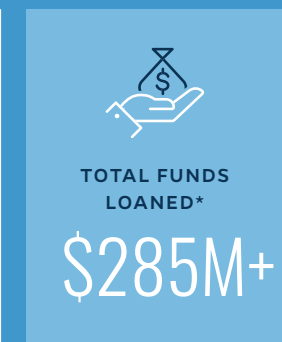


## PPP Loans PROVIDE A LIFE LINE



OF PPP LOANS WENT TO BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH 25 OR FEWER EMPLOYEES

As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the federal government established Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans to keep small businesses afloat. MBC teams worked around the clock to ensure that small business owners could obtain the critical funding they needed to keep their businesses running and their teams employed. In the end, we serviced an outsized number of loans impacting 30,000 area employees.



\* Rounds 1 & 2 Combined

## HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES THROUGH EDUCATION & SUPPORT



### Small Business Academy Launches Spring 2021

Launching a small business is a big task. Together with **Lindenwood University**, Midwest BankCentre created the Small Business Academy, designed to teach the participants how to “think like a banker.” The goal of

the Academy is to help small businesses understand how to access capital, which will ultimately help them scale, bringing more jobs to our region.

Midwest BankCentre launched its first Small Business Academy in conjunction with **Ameren**, which offered the series to its diverse suppliers. Michael Moehn, Executive Vice President & CFO of Ameren, shared, “Ameren believes it is critically important that we invest in education and development to support the long-term growth and development of diverse businesses.

We believe investing our resources and partnering together with a community-based financial institution, like Midwest BankCentre, can provide valuable training on principles for financial success.”

The curriculum focuses on practical topics that affect all small businesses. The modules are taught by specialists at the Bank and include understanding financial statements, cash flow, personal credit, banking options, and underwriting considerations. The instructors are as diverse as the topics they cover and each provide guidance from a unique perspective.

One graduate from the session conducted with **The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis** put it this way: “In the minority community, most don’t have banking relationships and don’t understand how to build one. This program helped me better understand how to build a relationship with a bank.”

“In the minority community, most don’t have banking relationships and don’t understand how to build one. This program helped me better understand how to build a relationship with a bank.” — SMALL BUSINESS ACADEMY GRADUATE



Fifteen entrepreneurs with burgeoning, minority-owned businesses attended the Small Business Academy held in conjunction with The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

“Ameren is committed to nurturing a more inclusive environment for small, local and diverse businesses in our region to grow and expand. We are excited to collaborate with Midwest BankCentre to provide valuable training on principles for financial success.

— MICHAEL MOEHN, EVP AND CFO, AMEREN

# SERVING WITH PURPOSE

Anchor institutions, nonprofits and faith-based organizations serve an invaluable purpose. These community partners help make our neighborhoods more livable. Their impact is felt one person at a time, one family at a time, one block at a time.



Feeding body and soul with a visit to a resident in the Beyond Housing senior community.

## A Holistic Approach to Community Building

It was a simple question, followed by a simple answer. And that is how the relationship between **Beyond Housing** and Midwest BankCentre began more than a decade ago. As **Chris Krehmeyer**, President and CEO of the nonprofit recalls, the Bank was remedying some regulatory matters and asked how they could help Pagedale and the surrounding communities. Chris answered, “Open a full-service branch here.”

When you consider that Pagedale had never had a bank in its 63-year history, that was a big ask. Chris knew how important this was and how it would support Beyond Housing’s mission of helping communities become better places to live.

People in unbanked communities are at the mercy of predatory lenders and check cashing services. For example, it was not unheard of for someone to pay as much as \$100 simply to cash a paycheck.

The Midwest BankCentre Pagedale branch opened with much fanfare in November 2012. It represents a unique partnership between a nonprofit and a community bank that is part of Beyond Housing’s holistic approach to community building.

“Thriving communities support healthy families and children,” Chris said. “They offer a sense of pride and ownership. They see people through a crisis and help them build their dreams into realities.”

The ripple effect of Beyond Housing’s partnerships is evident throughout the community that includes 23 municipalities that make up the Normandy School District.

Some families have purchased or rehabbed a home or were finally able to find a decent place to live in one of Beyond Housing’s rental homes. Once a food desert, Pagedale now has a grocery store which gives the community much-needed access to affordable, healthy food. Doctors’ offices are part of a health



**Thriving communities support healthy families and children. They offer a sense of pride and ownership. They see people through a crisis and help them build their dreams into realities.”** — CHRIS KREHMEYER

facility that operates across the street from the Bank. Safe playgrounds, a three-screen movie theater,

and newly-opened Carter Commons bring people together. Pagedale Town Center, a major economic development project, provides space for offices for local businesses and retail shops. Every year, well over 5,000 families are touched in ways big and small through Beyond Housing’s thoughtful approach to addressing community needs. That approach begins by listening. “No one knows more about their community than the people who call it home.”

Now in his 29th year of leading Beyond Housing, Chris is fueled by not only knowing that they are improving the lives of so many people in the region, but also that there are so many others that still need help.



The Beyond the Backpack event provided the back to school necessities to more than 2,000 children in the Normandy School District.

He feels very lucky that his life’s work and his passion align. “You can meander around and wander the desert trying to figure out how to be happy, but once you find your purpose, that’s where you find your happiness.”

While much of his days are filled with big picture concerns, Chris is acutely attuned to each of the individuals that he meets and the generational impact of Beyond Housing’s work. He recalls a single mother with four girls who was suffering a lot of ups and downs and reached out to the organization. They helped with housing and eventually she was able to become a homeowner.

(Continued on Next Page)



“Her daughter is now in her 30s. She earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree and has been working at Children’s Hospital for ten years. She remembers that we gave her backpacks with school supplies and gifts during the holidays. She knew that we cared about her and her sisters, and that caring made all the difference for her. She plans to carry that kindness forward as she opens her own children’s therapy program in one of our buildings.”

Chris, Beyond Housing, and community partners like Midwest BankCentre have created a virtuous cycle

that benefits all of St. Louis. The region wins when people and places that have been struggling do better.

“I love having a job where I know what we do makes a difference. When more people have a chance at an education and can bring their talents to the workforce; when more people have economic earning capacity and choose to stay in the region and own a home and start or scale a business, then we have more parts of our region that are healthier, safer and more vibrant. We all win as a region.”



When more people have a chance at an education and can bring their talents to the workforce; when more people have economic earning capacity and choose to stay in the region and own a home and start or scale a business, then we have more parts of our region that are healthier, safer and more vibrant.

**We all win as a region.”**

— CHRIS KREHMEYER

Community gardens serve as nature’s classroom.

## BJC Puts Economic Power Behind Improving Health



Rich Liekweg, President and CEO of BJC HealthCare, Dr. Jason Purnell, VP of Community Health Improvement at BJC and Orv Kimbrough, Chairman and CEO of Midwest BankCentre\*

BJC HealthCare is the largest employer in the St. Louis region and one of the largest nonprofit healthcare organizations in the U.S., with 15 hospitals and nearly 5,000 physicians serving hundreds of thousands of patients annually. In short, BJC is BIG. So when BJC leadership wanted to have a BIG impact on addressing health disparities in their service area, they chose to partner with Midwest BankCentre.

It is well documented<sup>1</sup> that economic and financial wherewithal is a major part of what separates people in good health from those in poor health.

“If we’re actually going to have an impact on health disparities at the community level, it is going to require changing conditions in the community,” explains **Dr. Jason Purnell**, BJC’s Vice President of Community Health Improvement. “The ability to build wealth is actually a health intervention.”

As an anchor institution in the region, the leadership team at BJC asked, “How do we leverage our balance sheet in a way that it actually accrues to the benefit of the community and still meets our business needs?”

It developed a depository relationship with Midwest BankCentre so that their deposits can

then be lent in the community, particularly in those areas where there has been historical underinvestment. These deposits get deployed in the form of loans for people to buy homes, to start or scale a business, to educate their children or to have emergency funds available when life happens.

“The Bank has the track record, an infrastructure and the will to make loans and capital available in areas that we know are impacted both by limited economic opportunity and health disparities,”

explains Dr. Purnell.

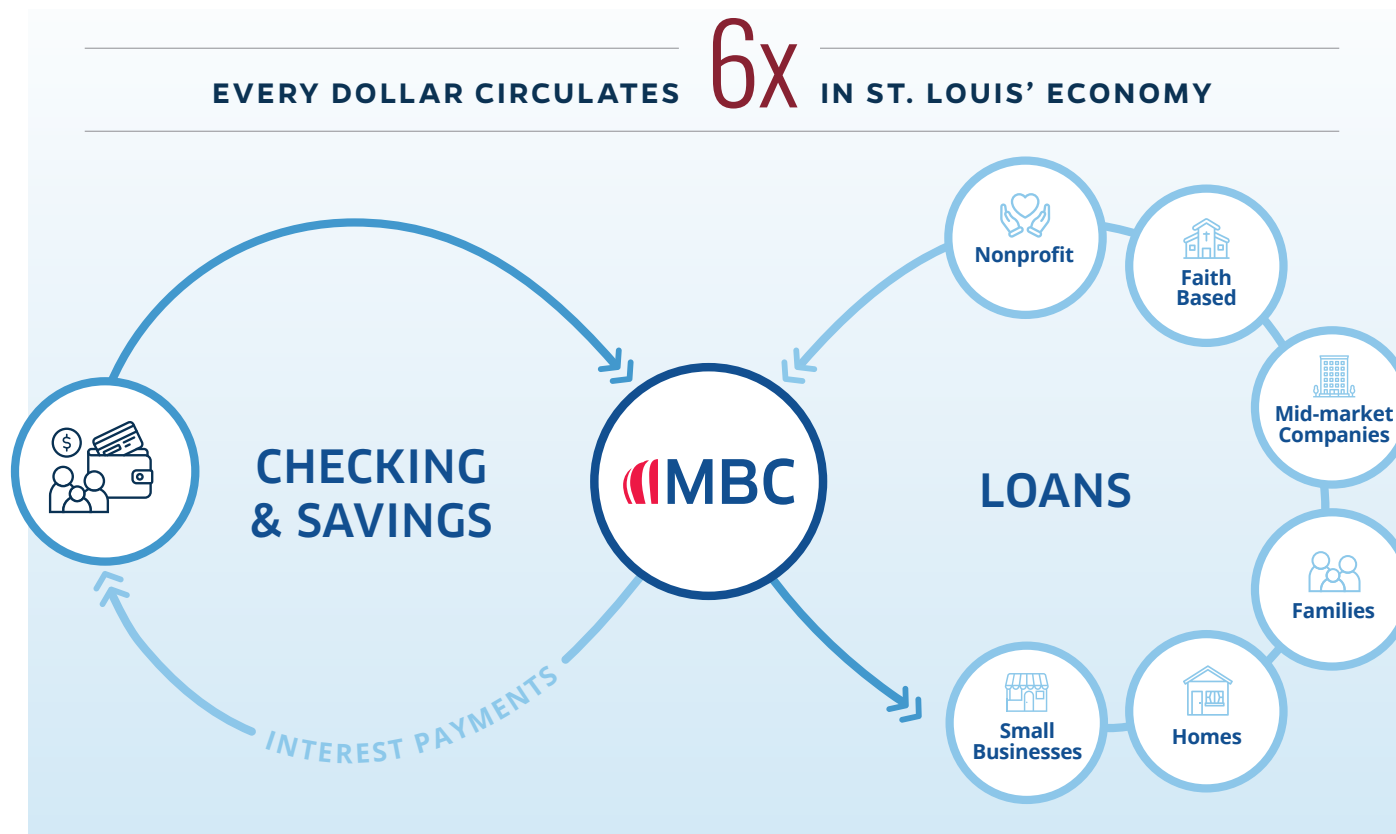
“Think about what wealth allows you to do. You have a greater ability to afford the things that are conducive to health, like a healthy diet or physical activity. It creates a cushion during economic crisis. It allows you to invest in the

future and gives you more control over your life and destiny. These have direct impacts on your level of stress. By the time someone gets to clinical care, disparities in wealth are already baked in. We want to be part of creating the opportunity that allows people to be healthy and thriving, long before they’re in need of clinical care.”

(Continued on Next Page)

**“We want to be part of creating the opportunity that allows people to be healthy & thriving, long before they’re in need of clinical care.”**

— DR. JASON PURNELL



<sup>1</sup> For The Sake of All: Improving Health and Well-Being of African Americans in St. Louis; <https://forthesakeofall.wordpress.com/>

\* This photo was taken when local COVID-19 case numbers were low, and all individuals pictured were fully vaccinated.

Intentionality is key to this new banking relationship. “BJC is a true transformer and leader in the region. They have a clear intention to have positive social impact through banking,” says **Orv Kimbrough**, Midwest BankCentre Chairman and CEO.

The concept of impact banking is built on a virtuous cycle. “BJC is leveraging the power of its balance sheet to do more good, while getting a modest financial return on their deposits. More capital invested with Midwest BankCentre means more home and small business loans, resulting in more opportunities for these underinvested communities.

“You need capital to build more capital and wealth. In the past, these constituents were unbanked,

denied access to capital or at the mercy of predatory lenders. BJC’s deposits allow us to take on a bit more credit risk to make and serve our constituents responsibly,” Kimbrough explains.

Dr. Purnell hopes other anchor institutions will see the **transformative power of impact banking**. “The region has enough muscle to make real and lasting change by simply choosing where they bank.”

Purnell sees the real heroes of this effort as the folks who are going to secure these loans and do the hard work of building

businesses and buying homes and supporting families and rebuilding communities. “We are just happy to be able to partner with MBC to help make that happen.”

**“The region has enough muscle to make real and lasting change by simply choosing where they bank.”**

— DR. JASON PURNELL, BJC

## Returning People to Wholeness

“Loving or Nothing. It is as simple as that,” says **Dr. Bryan Moore**, Senior Pastor of **Jubilee Community Church**. His mission is to develop a safe place for all to worship in North City, St. Louis. But that in itself is no simple task. According to FBI data, the stretch of North Grand Boulevard where the Church resides is the most murderous mile in the United States.

Dr. Moore is undeterred. His approach is unconventional. “It is not just about prayer. Think about prayer in my community. It is abundant; everybody has a praying grandmother. Look around you. My people don’t see the evidence of prayer in their lives.”

“You will see 100 people go past my window— 99 of them are either mentally ill, addicted to something, or they are homeless. So, we have had to have a very practical approach, not based on traditional religion, but true spirituality that works.”

### JUBILEE COMMUNITY CHURCH



The Church has created a reentry system for those people who are hopeless and have become helpless and in bondage to their addictions. The goal is to bring people back into a purposeful life. Theirs is a new approach to ministry and is threefold: biological, psychological and theological. Jubilee Community Church provides two recovery houses for men battling addiction, so they don’t have to go through withdrawal alone. The Church also houses a medical clinic where people in recovery receive ongoing medical support.

“Nobody is born planning to be a drug addict, so we have to look at the root causes. We have to change the question from ‘What is wrong with you?’ to ‘What has happened to you?’ How do we minister to minds that have been traumatized?”



### FRIENDLY TEMPLE CHURCH

**2022 WILL MARK THE FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY** of Midwest BankCentre’s partnership with Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church.

“[The partnership with Midwest BankCentre] allows us to continue to **create pathways for current and future community business owners** and entrepreneurs, and those wanting to purchase their first homes or restore their properties for future wealth and investment.”

— PASTOR MICHAEL JONES, FRIENDLY TEMPLE

The Church put in an organic garden not only to feed people in the community, but also as a tool for recovery. “The men till the soil and work the ground and see that they have given life to something. They care about it, nurture it and love it. Loving something makes all the difference in recovery.”

“The next question they ask is, ‘Pastor, what am I going to do? I don’t have money.’” The Church has partnered with a packaging company to provide good paying jobs to men in the program. “They care about us; they care about the people we send to work there, and they themselves want to make a difference.”

The Church also runs **Jubilee Trucking Academy** for men who would like to pursue a career in the high-paying trucking industry.

“Now this man is medically supervised. He has a job. He has spiritual guidance because this is all

happening within the ministry of the Church. He has been taken care of biologically, psychologically, theologically. And financially he is able to take care of himself. Back into life. We have reentered the person who was walking up and down the street homeless, sick, a drug addict.”

“This neighborhood is the poster child for benign neglect.” The community lacked for investment and starved for lack of capital. Dr. Moore was turned away by dozens of banks before Midwest BankCentre partnered with the Church.

Dr. Moore tells it this way: “The folks at Midwest BankCentre said, ‘Pastor, we love that you pray, but let’s be practical. How can we help you practically?’ Instead of ‘no,’ they came back with ‘How might we?’ They started a financial literacy program at the Church and have opened second chance checking accounts for dozens of men. They have made the loan process for acquiring the clinic and a second housing unit easy and uncomplicated. They continue to give us sound economic advice and show us the path to get to ‘yes.’”

Jubilee’s next big project is to convert a vacant neighborhood school into a rehabilitation center that can house and help more people. Midwest BankCentre will provide capital to seed Dr. Moore’s vision. Loving or Nothing. It is that simple.



Facing Page: Back into life...job training opens the doors to well-paying careers. Left: Dr. Bryan Moore (center) with members of this leadership team, Pastor Andy Krumsieg, and Bishop Leroy Gill Jr.



# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Wes Burns

## Q&A

WITH WES BURNS  
EVP of Community & Economic Development

In 2021, Midwest BankCentre announced a commitment to lend \$200 million over a five-year period to the people, nonprofits, faith-based institutions, community development projects and small businesses residing in or benefiting historically divested communities. Wes Burns was tapped to lead the effort. He brings 20 plus years in banking to this role.

**What is the purpose of MBC's initiative?** The purpose of our efforts is to work with like-minded partners to solve for the problems that have haunted historically marginalized communities. We are being intentional in deploying capital to be reflective of our entire region, specifically including the 22 zip codes that are often overlooked by financial institutions.

Our goal is more than simply doing \$200 million in loans. That is the easy part. We invest a considerable amount of time and resources working through the challenges that unfortunately aren't just surface level complexities. They are deeply rooted, systemically rooted, with the end result being the exclusion of individuals and communities from accessing reasonably priced capital. We tackle these complex problems with creative solutions that result in sustainable change in these communities without putting undue risk on the Bank or its shareholders.

**How do you identify partner organizations?** We're looking at small businesses, organizations and institutions who are striving to solve problems in our communities. They are wanting to create change and to restore those communities. One great example is what Jubilee Community Church (see page 13) is doing in an abandoned neighborhood in North City. They're there, and they're doing hard, hard work with drug rehabilitation, job training and many other areas of ministry, trying to repurpose lives. They could very

easily be doing their work within other communities and it would likely be easier. But they are taking the challenge to make meaningful impact in a community that needs it the most.

**What are some of the challenges our community partners face?**

It is best explained through actual stories. In a discussion with a ministry that's looking to provide safe, affordable housing in their community, our conversation centered around the regulatory challenges of appraisals. Banks make home loans based on the market value of a property. That is determined by finding comparables, or "comps" — the prices of similar homes recently sold in the area. In a neighborhood that has been disinvested, there are no comps. So, if someone rehabilitates a home and has a buyer who wants to buy it, it is difficult to get an appraisal to support the sales valuation. Because of this, banks have their hands tied from a regulatory perspective. We put our time and energy around tackling these kinds of complicated issues so that our partners can build these communities back up.

In another example, we were able to provide access to capital for a Black-owned, female-owned business. She was experiencing success. A popular national television show featured her product on a "favorite things" list. That was both the best and the worst thing that could happen to her. She was getting notoriety. Orders were pouring in.

But she had previously faced challenges in obtaining adequate loan terms for her growing capital needs.

# \$200M

REINVESTMENT  
IN ST. LOUIS  
OVER THE NEXT  
5 YEARS

Our lending goal was to solve for all these complexities. It was a lot of hard work, but through creative problem solving, we were able to find a way to provide her access to capital so she could scale her business.

**What's ahead?**

Community and economic development is a Bank-wide initiative with full support and involvement from our leadership and ownership. This allows us to be a player in scalable community impact developments and to attract strategic partnerships with large institutional nonprofits and anchor organizations.

We are also broadening our outreach to include multicultural communities. They may not experience the same difficulties as inner city or rural white residents do, but they face their own set of barriers when it comes to accessing banking services. It may be a language barrier. Or it may be how they perceive the banking industry based on what they experienced as refugees when their assets were frozen as they fled their homeland. We are being very intentional in reaching out to multicultural communities to understand and meet their needs.



A clean sweep.  
(L to R) Chris Kelly,  
Jaimie Lance and  
Dean Stegmann

15,000  
MEALS TO PEOPLE  
IN NEED

---

1.5  
TRAILERS FULL  
OF FURNITURE

REPURPOSE  
FOR A  
PURPOSE

## Annex Clean Up Helps Fight Hunger

Purpose is always personal. Sometimes it is deeply personal. And, if you are lucky, your personal "why" aligns with your work. That is certainly the case for **Jaimie Lance**, Midwest BankCentre's Senior Vice President/Director of Facilities.

"I personally want to be kind to our environment." Her department strives to lessen the Bank's operational impact on the environment, which in turn helps the communities it serves. They are committed to recycling paper and repurposing furniture and equipment. They source cleaning and sanitizing supplies that are as green as possible. Efforts are in place to conserve energy. "We want to do everything we can to minimize our environmental footprint."

Jaimie also has a deep appreciation for food relief programs and compassion for the families who rely on them. She walked in those shoes earlier in her life, remembering a time decades ago when she needed help. Following a difficult marriage, Jaimie was completely on her own with three young boys. "I was trying to get myself back on my feet and received

help from a food bank for a short time. I have always tried to pay it forward."

In May her facilities team, including **Chris Kelly**, **Dean Stegmann**, and **Shawna Spirk**, was given the task of clearing out the second floor annex of the flagship bank building in Lemay. It was a big project, one we can all relate to. Think about that gently used chair that you couldn't bear to part with, so you moved it to the basement. It sits next to the slightly tattered sofa and the old television set and everything else that is now piled high and deep. Multiply that by a 14,000-square-foot space and you have a rough idea of the challenge Jaimie and her team faced.

Undeterred and with clear objectives in mind, Jaimie began researching places that would accept used furniture. It was then that she happened upon **Repurpose for a Purpose**, a program run by **Operation Food Search**. Their slogan is: "Metal for Meals & Furniture for Food." Operation Food Search partners with **Warehouse of Furniture** and **Becker Iron & Metal** who recycle the items. A significant portion of the proceeds go to Operation Food Search to help heal hunger in our region. By the end of the 14-week effort, 1.5 tractor trailers full of furniture and eight 40-yard dumpsters of metal provided 15,000 meals for people in need.

"Not only did our donation make a difference in food donations, but our partners assisted us with diverting these items from landfills. The Repurpose for a Purpose program afforded us the ability to help our community."

For Jaimie, the project was part of her job. But it's also a reflection of who she is and a testament to the power of living and working your purpose.

**We want to do everything we can to minimize our environmental footprint.** — JAIMIE LANCE



**GIVE JOY!**

**THE "GIVE JOY" PROGRAM** is a pillar of the DICE initiative. Throughout the year, the Bank provides cash for employees to go out in teams to perform random acts of kindness. The acts are as simple as dropping quarters into the washing machines at a neighborhood laundromat, to paying it forward in a fast food line, to showing a little love to a local fire department, or surprising an unsuspecting recipient with a 20 dollar bill. As employees fan out across the community to Give Joy, they receive big smiles in return and a connection to the people they serve.



# ABOVE & BEYOND

HANDS-ON INVESTMENTS IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

<p><b>2,000</b> VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED</p> <p><b>\$22K</b> RISING TOGETHER FUND Donations for MBC Employees in need by MBC Employees</p>	<p><b>80%</b></p> <p><b>PARTICIPATION IN THE 2021 UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN</b></p> <p><b>United Way</b></p> <p>Over 80% of our team members participated in this year's United Way of Greater St. Louis campaign! Midwest BankCentre invests in the communities we serve in many ways, including coming together as a team with a mission to donate generously. Thank you to all our team members who participated!</p>	<p><b>50+</b> MBC EMPLOYEES SERVE ON</p> <p><b>80+</b> NONPROFIT BOARDS</p>
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**TOWER GROVE**

**THROUGH MBC'S VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE,** green thumbs showed up at Tower Grove Park to help with summer plantings.



**OLD NEWSBOYS DAY**



**SALVATION ARMY**

## Diverse Backgrounds, One Team

MBC prides itself on the diversity of its workforce. It is not only the right thing to do, but it makes good business sense. Diversity sparks innovation that allows the Bank to better understand and serve all of its clients.

The Diversity, Inclusion, Culture, and Engagement Committee (DICE) is an internal initiative to create a cohesive team. The all-volunteer efforts build bridges between employees with different backgrounds and lived experiences.

"We relaunched DICE in 2019 and placed a heightened focus on it this year to promote and support a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming environment and to recruit and retain top talent," explains Nicole Ursch, Senior VP-Sales Enablement and Culture Development.

The "I Am" program creates a safe space for employees to go beyond the superficial and share a little bit more about themselves. The "Common Ground" program builds relationships among employees with shared interests, be it cooking, crafting or hiking to name a few. "We can be in different places in our lives, but we have common interests that connect us."

In employee-led activities, team members learn about each other, about the richness of various cultures, and the realities of different life experiences. From a celebration of Bosnian Independence Day to activities centered around Disability, Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ awareness, the programs are as varied as the team itself.

For Veterans Day, a colleague shared her story as the wife of a Missouri National Guard veteran who was deployed to Afghanistan. To raise awareness about the issues veterans face on returning home, she invited fellow employees to participate in the 22 Push Up Challenge. For each participant, Midwest BankCentre made a donation to an organization that supports St. Louis veterans.

More than a third of employees participate in DICE programs. This gives team members the opportunity to develop relationships with their colleagues, many of whom they would have never had the chance to interact with. There is no question that DICE is a bridge builder.

“We can be in different places in our lives, but we have common interests that connect us.” — NICOLE URSCH





# FLOURISHING

## WITH PURPOSE

DREAM BIG. When we live our purpose, families and business owners are able to live theirs. Purpose profits each one of us by doing right by other people. This is how we RISE TOGETHER.



Angel Jiménez-Gutiérrez

## What Started as an Adventure Turned into Much More

**Angel Jiménez-Gutiérrez** had just completed his accounting degree and was about to enter the corporate world in his home in Mexico City. But before he did, he longed for an adventure.

Angel landed in St. Louis by mere happenstance. “One of my neighbors in Mexico City married a girl from St. Louis. I told him I wanted to take a year off after finishing my degree. So he got me a job at a Mexican restaurant.” Now, 20 years later, that adventure has turned into a family and a portfolio of successful businesses.

Angel is clearly a man with agency and energy. Within weeks of coming to St. Louis, he started his job as a cook. Within months, he fell in love with a woman he met on the job, and within a year, they became life partners. That changed everything. At the same time, Angel was falling in love with the food industry. He took on more assignments to learn the business inside and out.

Hospitality, he learned from his parents. “They held lots of parties and were very good hosts, but I never thought about owning a restaurant.” Angel and Janet Jiménez-Gutiérrez began saving so they could open their own business. They worked extremely hard and saved every penny they could. “The only luxury we allowed ourselves on weekends was to rent a movie from Blockbuster and eat some popcorn.”

They ran Señor Pique from 2005 to 2017. In 2019, they opened **Malinche**. The restaurant was named after a historical figure who was considered the mother of modern Mexico. “She represented the birth of a new culture. To me, it was very magical because Mexicans are the mixing of two great cultures, the Spanish and the American Indigenous people.”

Angel captures that magic in this menu, which he created with his mother. It is built around traditional Mexican flavors. “Some years ago, I heard a very famous and successful chef saying something about challenging our ancestors and creating a new era for Mexican food. We are avoiding that route. We are cooking as if our grandmothers are keeping an eye on us in the kitchen.”

Angel served on the board of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce where he first connected with Midwest BankCentre. He knows what good hospitality feels like, so he was drawn to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the Bank. As he makes plans to expand his restaurant into his own building, he is looking to MBC as a trusted advisor.

Angel has also developed the **Profundiza** brand, which consults in two areas. One provides workshops and classes for Mexican restaurant owners. The other grew out Angel’s growing awareness that success does not always lead to happiness.

It promotes the use of self-inquiry, a methodology that separates truth from what is opinion and what is fact. It has been eye-opening for Angel to explore and share with others.

“I believe every day we are given an opportunity to connect with ourselves and with our world. As a business owner, therefore, I have the opportunity to give something to the community, to contribute to society, to my team and to our customers.”



**I believe every day we are given an opportunity to connect with ourselves and with our world.”**

— ANGEL JIMÉNEZ-GUTIÉRREZ

## Home Sweet Home

**Ahmad and Imani Young** had a plan and a deadline. They wanted to have their family of four settled into a home and a community so they could put down roots. They wanted their sons to be able to walk to their neighborhood school with kids who would become lifelong friends. And they wanted to fulfill this dream by the time they turned 30.

Ahmad and Imani grew up very differently. Imani’s parents and grandparents were military families who moved often and lived in different countries

and states. Ahmad’s family had roots in the area for generations. For all their different lived experiences, the couple knew what they wanted for their family.

To talk with Imani is to know that she is determined and persistent. Yet, until she met **Alisa Vaughn**, Loan Officer at Midwest BankCentre, she felt defeated. She would have to put their goal and their deadline on hold because lender after lender, realtor after realtor told her they were not qualified for homeownership. And even worse than that, they would not educate her

*(Continued on Next Page)*

on the steps they would need to take.

"I was reading article after article, bumming tips from homeowners, attending bank workshops, and using silly mortgage calculators on credit apps, all the while not seeing any examples that looked like my situation."

She was frustrated by the process that presented obstacles at every turn. "I could get connected to a realtor, but they would tell me I needed a lender. So I would reach out to a lender who would take down my social security number and tell me I was not ready."

To make matters worse, she was added to email lists advising her of homes that were for sale or interest discounts. "I got ghosted and told I'm not ready so many times, with no further directions on how to GET ready." As far as Imani was concerned, the process of buying a home was a mystery, and no one was interested in decoding it.

Imani was ready to give up and delay their dream were it not for her father-in-law, who urged her to call Alisa Vaughn. Imani wasn't interested in one more rejection. She wasn't interested in one more tip. She had heard them all. But Imani called anyway.

Thinking Alisa might be a realtor, Imani let her know upfront, "We are not pre-approved by anyone. We'll contact you again in two years." End of conversation!

Not so fast. Alisa Vaughn is a loan officer who helps make home ownership possible. She helps families get to "yes."

Alisa didn't ask for her social security number. She didn't run her credit. During that first conversation, she just listened.

Then Alisa walked her through the steps that would enable the Youngs to secure a loan. "It was a blessing to work with Imani. She followed my advice with no questions asked."

The rest is history.

By December 2020, the Youngs had an approved loan, a realtor, and showings scheduled. "Alisa was a guiding light. She takes you through the process and puts the customer in the driver's seat. With Alisa, home buying was no longer a mystery. It wasn't some scary man behind a curtain. It was one strong woman teaching and explaining what once seemed too complicated to even attempt."

Ahmad, Imani and the boys are settled in their home. The couple exceeded their goal of owning a home by age 30 by two years.

Sadly, Clarence Young, the mortgage matchmaking father-in-law, passed days after the purchase and before seeing his children's new home. Ahmad and Imani Young want to dedicate this great accomplishment to his legacy.

Ahmad and Imani Young



Alisa was a guiding light. She takes you through the process and puts the customer in the driver's seat. With Alisa, home buying was no longer a mystery." — IMANI YOUNG

FIRST TIME & FOREVER  
**MORTGAGE™**  
By Midwest BankCentre



KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



Wes Burns, Karlos Ramirez, Marsha Benney at the Award Ceremony.

Hispanic Lifetime Achievement Award

**Karlos Ramirez**  
VP, Community and Economic Development

Congratulations to Karlos for being awarded the Hispanic Lifetime Achievement award by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis. This award is given to individuals who have significantly contributed to the development and advancement of the Hispanic community in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Karlos is deeply rooted in our community and has a track record for driving the business success that uplifts neighborhoods.

Board Chair Recognition Award

Midwest BankCentre was honored to be recognized with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Board Chair Recognition Award. Midwest BankCentre has worked to reach members of the Latinx community to ensure everyone in St. Louis has access to opportunity and capital, purposefully increasing our engagement with diverse communities and nonprofit organizations through the strength and flexibility of our financial services. From a full line of ITIN products to small business development programs, Midwest BankCentre demonstrates its commitment to making St. Louis a more inclusive region, helping to create pathways to prosperity for all within our reach.

RISING TO THE TOP

CELEBRATING AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021



St. Louis Post-Dispatch recognized Midwest BankCentre as one of St. Louis' Top Workplaces!

All employees gathered to celebrate Top Workplace at Westport Social in July.

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR EMPLOYEES reflects our belief that values and culture are inextricably linked. Our employee satisfaction is among the highest in the region because our team sees the positive impact their work has on our customers' faces every day. We work with purpose and our purpose is to help our regional communities thrive.



MBC was also recognized by Top Workplaces on a national level with two awards. The first was for **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Practices**, acknowledging how we embrace diversity, equity and inclusion as a competitive edge.

Who we are as colleagues is a reflection of our community. Our commitment is to serve all of the St. Louis region.



The second award in the **Remote Workspace** Category speaks to how we work with one another and how we serve our customers. We've embraced remote work as we think it helps us be more agile, allows our team to optimize their professional and personal lives and will position us to win the war on talent — so that we can best serve our clients.



Congratulations to Orv and Julie on being Recognized by the St. Louis Business Journal!



40 UNDER 40 HALL OF FAME

**Orv Kimbrough**, Chairman & CEO

Orv Kimbrough was honored as one of three former 40 under 40 award honorees. At the time of his honor in 2010, Orv was the Senior Vice President, Major Gifts at the United Way of Greater St. Louis.



TOP HUMAN RESOURCES EXECUTIVES

**Julie Tuggle-Nguyen**, Executive Vice President, Human Resources

Julie focuses on people, purpose and innovation to help Midwest BankCentre continue to be an employer of choice in the region.



Recognized for Best Customer Service

As trusted advisors, we focus on offering customized financial solutions to help our clients DREAM BIG.

Best Small Bank (Finalist)

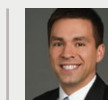
We don't try to be the biggest bank, just have the biggest impact in our clients' lives and in the communities we serve.

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Small Business Monthly  
**100 ST. LOUISANS TO KNOW**

**David Warning**  
Executive Vice President & Chief Credit Officer



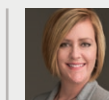
Small Business Monthly  
**BEST BANKER IN ST. LOUIS**

**Chris Imming**  
Regional President, Commercial Banking



Missouri Bankers Association  
**YOUNG BANKERS LEADERSHIP AWARD FINALIST**

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