

Loud and Clear



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Indiana Transition Ceremony

Another school year at the Indianapolis campus comes to a close with a joyful and heartfelt celebration of the students moving on to new schools next year. (Story continues inside)

Listen.
Speak.
Support.

“Set Up for Success”

Transition Ceremony at the Indianapolis Campus

On May 30, Indiana preschool and primary school students celebrated the end of another successful school year.

Parents, siblings, and grandparents joined us for a parade through the school as students prepared to transition to their new classrooms. Teaching staff and LSL providers commemorated the school year with poster displays and pictures.



Archer R. poses with teacher Jen Bragg during the Transition Ceremony.

Whether they’ve been with us since they were babies in our Early Intervention services or joined us for preschool, we’re so grateful for the time we’ve shared with these students! We look forward to receiving updates from children and families as they transition into their new schools.



Connor M. holds up his Transition Passport during the Transition Parade.

After the parade, families headed outside for our annual Transition Ceremony, led by LSL Program Coordinator Kelsey Showalter. The 15 students transitioning into their new school programs sang a song and received certificates for completing St. Joseph’s school program.

“It was a beautiful send-off filled with pride, love, and sweet music,” Showalter says.

“Families and staff came together to reflect on the incredible growth and community support that made this milestone possible.”

“Thank you all so much for loving our son. Many tears were shed today, but we know you all have set him up for success!”

Bridgett Russell to St. Joseph staff

Empowered by Supporters

Spring Events Raise Money to Support Programs

After a busy spring, our 2024-2025 event season has come to a close. April and May welcomed our signature St. Joseph events: Sound of Speed and 100 Holes for Hearing. Friends, supporters, and community members in both Indiana and Missouri came out to make both occasions a rousing success.



Susan Sehgal poses with past Heroes for Hearing Award winners and members of the DeVault Otologic Research Lab at Sound of Speed.

Our annual Celebration of Hearing, Sound of Speed, occurred in downtown Indianapolis. Professionals from across the Listening and Spoken Language field gathered to celebrate Susan Sehgal, the 2025 Heroes for Hearing Award winner. We also honored the life and work of Mary Boucher Jones with the inaugural presentation of the Mary Boucher Jones Compassionate Service Award. By the end of the evening, attendees helped to raise more than \$60,000 to support St. Joseph's education and intervention programs.

In St. Louis, dedicated golfers including Dick Schul, Gary Stein, John Fisher, and Mark Bulanda, teed off at sunrise for our 28th annual golf marathon. It was a blustery day at Glen Echo Country Club, but the stalwart crew stayed out from sunrise until nearly 6PM, raising money from friends, family, and their networks all day long. Devoted players, including Steve and Mary Ann Hallemann and Jessie and Kelli Fisher, participated at other times throughout May. When all was said and done, our golfers raised more than \$22,000.



Dick Schul putts it in to complete his 65th hole at 100 Holes for Hearing.

“Our supporters empower our mission- to help children with hearing loss find their voice, their confidence, and their place in the world,” says Chief Development Officer Zareena Koch, CFRE. “Together, we are changing lives one sound, one child, one family at a time.”

Listen. Speak. Support.

Helping Students Grow

Garden Volunteer Creates Educational Opportunities

If you stop by the Indiana campus, you may see a man working in the garden. That's Kevin Dempsey, St. Joseph's own Master Gardener.

Several years ago, Dempsey spotted a piece in the Indianapolis Business Journal, requesting volunteers for our garden. "I cut out the article and saved it in a 'Things To Do When You Retire' folder," Dempsey says. When he retired in 2022, he completed the Purdue Extension Master Gardener training, a program designed to develop horticultural skills and volunteer in green spaces around central Indiana. "When I completed the training, I 'cold called' St. Joseph and we were off and running."



2023: Kevin and Pam in the rejuvenated children's garden.

Although the garden was in rough shape, Kevin knew there was potential. "I saw a chance to have a big impact in a short time," he says. Dempsey spent the fall working with Pam Hillman, fellow Marion County Master Gardener's Association member, to overhaul and redesign the garden. The pair successfully applied for various grants to fund the process. The following spring, Dempsey began collaborating with teaching staff to develop garden-based curriculum and get the students outside.



Dempsey delivers a lesson to students.

"The first year we focused on 'quick' vegetables like lettuce and carrots that students could experience from planting to harvest. That spring planting has become a tradition," Dempsey says. As student enthusiasm grew, the program expanded based on teaching staff recommendations. Now, they plant pumpkins, gourds, and annual flowers, as well as highlighting garden wildlife. "We started with a few birdhouses and have added a beneficial insect house, a bird bath, and two window-attached bird feeders," Dempsey says. "These recent additions should help make the garden area interesting to students even when planting and harvesting is over."

In the years since joining the St. Joseph community, Dempsey's impact has expanded beyond the bounds of the children's garden. For the past three years, he's helped to plan and execute a campus-wide day of work with volunteers from Salesforce. This year, nine volunteers braved a rainy morning to help with various projects in the garden, on the playground, and in the mulch beds surrounding the building's parking lot. The beautification efforts came just in time for Indiana's Transition Ceremony. "I'm thrilled that with the help of the Salesforce team we have the campus looking sharp," Dempsey says.

For Kevin, working with students is the best part of his service to St. Joseph. "They are excited to plant, really excited to water, and willing to try the produce they grow," he says. "One of my best memories is sitting with a class very quietly while we watched a bird carrying caterpillars into one of the birdhouses to feed its young. I've never seen six preschoolers so attentive!"

Beyond the children's garden, Dempsey volunteers at Newfields, Holliday Park, and the soup kitchen at his church. He sits on the Board of the Marion County Master Gardener Association. We are so thankful for Kevin's dedication to our organization, his work with our students, and his efforts to make the Indiana campus a little more beautiful.



2025: Salesforce volunteers help with gardening projects.



Before and after: St. Joseph children's garden in 2022 and 2025.

Combined Strengths

Partnership Program in St. Louis Seeing Early Success



Since its founding in 1837, the staff and leadership of St. Joseph have been on the cutting edge of the deaf education field. The Sisters of St. Joseph laid a foundation of innovation and advancement that continues to inspire today. Their inventive spirit is alive through Sound Partners, a collaborative program with Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD). The program, designed to provide robust family support and an extension of LSL coaching for children ages 3-5, has already had a tremendous impact in the area around our St. Louis campus.

The need for a program like Sound Partners arose when St. Joseph and SSD leadership noticed a gap in support for parents and caregivers once children aged out of Early Intervention services. They realized they could create a program that combines the strengths of both organizations. "We could provide robust family coaching and support in a way that that equips families for transition and growth in language," explains Missouri Campus Coordinator Audrey Nemeth. SSD leadership and St. Joseph agreed to collaborate and jointly support the families receiving direct Listening and Spoken Language intervention through placement in the Ladue Early Childhood Center. "It felt like a good fit," Nemeth says.

From there, the program began to take shape. Primary objectives include increasing parents' and caregivers' understanding of LSL strategies to incorporate in their daily routines as well as building their confidence in their ability to support their child's LSL development. Overall, the program is designed to facilitate a child's smooth transition into their mainstream school to ensure the start of a successful academic journey.



Professional Learning Coordinator Barb Meyers delivers a virtual parent coaching session.

Listen. Speak. Support.

Since kicking off in February, seven families have enrolled in Sound Partners. Once a family expresses interest, Nemeth meets with them to survey their needs. From there, St. Joseph provides support through monthly parent coaching sessions and access to the resources available through St. Joseph's Parent and Professional Education Program (PEP).

For Nemeth, the biggest surprise so far is how popular the program has already become, given how busy the spring season can be for families with young children. "Families are seeing value in the program and continuing to register," she says. She's even had a few families sign up, even though their child is a rising kindergartener and will age out of the program in the fall. "They'll only get three to four sessions, but they're still taking the time to do it, which I think says something about how families feel like they need this support, and they're willing to do it even though it's for a short amount of time."

"As Board members, we comprehend the importance of a collaboration like this. We are deeply grateful for the partnership between St. Joseph and SSD."

St. Joseph Board Member Mark Prange



Although it's only been running for a few months, program leadership, Ladue Early Childhood staff, and families alike can see what a success it has been. "It just shows that this is a worthwhile program," Nemeth says. "Families are seeing that value and wanting the support." She feels that there's plenty of untapped potential, especially once the 2025-2026 school year begins. "I anticipate that we'll have many more kids sign up once they come into Ladue."



St. Joseph Board members and Emerson employees Nicole Lankist and Mark Prange, who helped to secure funding for Sound Partners.

Sound Partners is made possible by Emerson. "We are so thankful for the St. Joseph and SSD employees who make this collaboration work," says St. Joseph Board member Mark Prange. "As employees of Emerson, we applaud this generous investment in shaping a brighter academic future for all St. Louis' children."

Up Next @ St. Joe's:

2025-2026 Event Schedule

Check out our website for more details!



Club Cochlea
July 19, 2025



Charity Golf Classic
September 12, 2025



188th Anniversary
September 27, 2025



Christmas Gala
December 5, 2025



Sound of Speed
April 30, 2026



100 Holes for Hearing
May 2026

Support Us

Our services would not be possible without support from donors like you. We are so grateful to have you in our community as we strive to be a preeminent resource for Listening and Spoken Language solutions.

If you haven't given this year, please consider supporting an upcoming event or making a donation to help fund our classrooms, Early Intervention, Outreach programs, and other services for children with hearing loss and their families.

Questions about estate planning or leaving St. Joe's in your will? Contact Chief Development Officer Zareena Koch to learn how.
zkoch@sjid.org | (314) 651-9535: text or call



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