PLTI-KC knows that parent leaders are the true agents of change in Kansas City and beyond. They are the voices of their communities, advocating for their children and shaping the future. This year has been an exciting year for our parents and we can’t wait to share their success stories. This year’s annual report includes an interactive component that allows you to hear directly from some of our parents, funders, and team members. As a result, we hope to provide a better understanding of our work and the impact of parent leaders.

**Our parent leaders are empowered to take action and make a difference across Kansas City!** We are proud of the collective impact of our work, including the 206 civic actions performed by our parents. Parent leaders applied what they learned during the 21-week course as some joined decision-making tables, launched community projects, received recognition from local officials, and testified to support policies.

In 2023, parent leader Clark Corogenes worked with Missouri legislators along with deaf and hard-of-hearing organizations across Missouri to pass LEAD-K. This is the first bill that will help parents identify and address language deprivation before their deaf and hard-of-hearing kids start school.

**We've continued working with legislators and child advocacy programs across Missouri to change child outcomes.** Hundreds of parents filled Missouri’s capitol building this March to support Child Advocacy Day. We had a great time connecting with Missouri legislators to share our stories and explore future collaboration opportunities. To improve school accountability in Missouri, PLTI-KC parent leaders partnered with the Quality Schools Coalition to gather parent feedback and help craft legislation that aligns school accountability with what matters most to parents: their children’s academic achievement and growth.

**PLTI-KC parent leader outcomes stand out across the nation!** Our cohort members made significant progress across the board according to the pre and post-survey conducted by the NYU Metro Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. PLTI-KC parent leaders were on par with or exceeded the national average of PLTI sites across the county in all four civic outcome areas and increased their participation in eight civic behaviors while completing the PLTI program.

**We couldn't do it without our community.** We’re proud to be an affiliate of the National Parent Leadership Institute. This has provided us with the training and resources to improve the landscape for children.

We are also grateful to our funders and supporters for providing PLTI-KC parents with access to the tools they need to effect change. Thank you for the support and collaboration of our families, schools, and local organizations. Together, we are making a real difference for Kansas City families.

Sincerely,

Julie Holland
Founder & Director

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**VIDEO**

Julie Holland talking about PLTI-KC’s Ripples of Impact
 Theory of Change
THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Parent Leadership Training Institute-Kansas City is a sponsored project of the Community Captial Fund (CCF)
OUR WHY  When parents are engaged in participatory democracy, child outcomes improve.

VISION  Parents are a valued and included constituency, enhancing the civic fabric of Kansas City.

MISSION  Parent Leadership Training Institute - Kansas City trains and mobilizes parents to be leading advocates for children.

VALUES

- **Parents are Assets.** Parents are assets and experts on issues affecting children.
- **Nurturing Community.** PLTI-KC fosters a nurturing community built through deep and meaningful relationships that support parents and their advocacy efforts.
- **Stronger through Diversity.** The diversity of our community fosters understanding, accountability, and inclusion. PLTI-KC brings together parents across differences (e.g., race, zip code, age, culture).
- **Parents’ Agenda is Our Agenda.** PLTI-KC is nonpartisan. We don’t tell parents which children’s issues they should care about or advocate for; they tell us.
- **Two-Generational for Lasting Change:** The civic activism of PLTI-KC parent leaders influences their children and grandchildren, who become leaders and advocates in their own right.

Civic Engagement is the core work of PLTI-KC. Through our programs and services, PLTI-KC increases parent leaders’ civic confidence, knowledge, and connections so they can effectively advocate for improving the lives of children and families.

As part of PLTI-KC, parent leaders do the following:

- Take part in a 21-week leadership and civics course (80 hours) taught by national-certified facilitators. PLTI-KC trains a new cohort annually.
- Identify and develop community projects to apply what they learn during the course to an issue they care about so parent leaders know they can effect change.
- Receive individualized civic and advocacy coaching from the Director and Senior Advisors.
- Participate in additional events, such as Civic Networking Night and Child Advocacy Day at the Missouri State Capitol.
- Lead collective-action initiatives on topics of concern to many PLTI parent leaders, such as structured-based literacy, early childhood education, and special education.
- Take civic actions and leadership opportunities, such as testifying to their state and local elected officials, joining boards, commissions, or advisory boards, or lending their voices to news articles and policy proposals. In addition, some parent leaders start new initiatives and organizations.

PLTI-KC is an affiliate of the National Parent Leadership Institute, a family civics initiative created by the Connecticut Commission on Children.
PLTI-KC selects a cohort of up to 25 parents each year and supports a growing alumni network. We currently serve **93 parent leaders**. The cohort builds up parent power by creating a safe space where parent leaders from diverse backgrounds can share experiences and insights to prepare them for the next step in their advocacy journeys.

**Race/Ethnicity**

- Black or African American: 41%
- White or Caucasian (Non-Hispanic): 39%
- Latinx or Hispanic: 10%
- Native, American Indian or Indigenous: 3%
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 2%
- Multi-Ethnic or Multi-Racial: 2%
- Arab or Middle Eastern: 1%
- Prefer Not to Disclose: 1%

**Gender Identity**

- Cis Man (gender identity matches sex assigned at birth): 12.9%
- Cis Woman (gender identity matches sex assigned at birth): 86%
- Genderqueer or Gender Non-Conforming: 1.08%

**Highest Education Level**

- Graduate or Professional Degree: 39%
- Bachelors Degree: 30%
- Associates Degree: 15%
- High School Diploma/GED: 9%
- Vocation Degree or Trade Certification: 6%
- Some High School: 1%

**Economic Situation**

- Living Comfortably: 25%
- Doing Ok: 45%
- Just Getting By: 24%
- Finding it Difficult to Get By: 4%
- Prefer not to disclose: 2%

**Generation**

- Gen Y or Millennial (1981-1996): 51%
- Gen X (1965-1980): 38%
- Baby Boomer (1946-1964): 10%
- Gen Z (1997 or later): 1%
- Prefer Not to Disclose: 1%

**Number of Parent Leaders by Zipcode**

- Zipcodes with only 1 PLTI-KC Parent Leader:
  - 64012
  - 64016
  - 64018
  - 64025
  - 64028
  - 64030
  - 64068
  - 64082
  - 64108
  - 64110
  - 64111
  - 64112
  - 64128
  - 64130
  - 64136
  - 64137
  - 64144
  - 64146
  - 64148
  - 64150
  - 64151
  - 64154
  - 64166
  - 64173
  - 66213
  - 66215
  - 66216
  - 66217
  - 66218
  - 66230
  - 66234
  - 66236
  - 66238
PLTI-KC parent leaders performed 206 civic actions in 2023. They are making a difference in their community in the following ways:

**SEAT AT THE TABLE**

Parent leaders joined 40 decision-making tables, directing policies that impact children and families in Kansas City and beyond. Tables include:
- Advisory boards for national, state, or local initiatives
- City and county boards and commissions
- Nonprofit boards
- Neighborhood associations
- PTA/PTO of their children’s schools
- Public charter school boards

**USING THEIR VOICE**

Parent leaders shared their expertise and lived experiences 123 times to influence policies and media coverage of children’s issues. Opportunities at the local, state and national level include:
- Being interviewed by the media
- Writing blogs or letters to the editor
- Testifying at public meetings
- Talking to elected officials and civic leaders
- Speaking on panels and podcasts
PARENT LEADERS IN ACTION

GROWING THEIR LEADERSHIP

Parent leaders facilitated or took 21 additional courses, certifications, or training to grow their knowledge and skills. Training topics include:

- Community organizing
- KC Community Engagement University
- Conflict resolution
- Mental health first aid
- Running for office
- KC Community Wellness Ambassador
- Trauma awareness

PURSUING THEIR PASSIONS

Parent leaders took significant steps to advance 22 PLTI-KC community projects on the following issues:

- Food security
- Community resource access
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Special education
- Youth mental health
- Elections and voter registration
- Language acquisition for deaf and hard-of-hearing children
- Affordable housing

VIDEO

PLTI-KC parent leaders Jacob Schwartz, Jillian RainingBird, and Tiffany Price discuss how PLTI-KC trained them to be better advocates.
PLTI-KC parent leaders stand out among PLTI programs nationwide! NYU Metro Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools is an independent, outside evaluator assessing PLTI-KC’s outcomes. Parents’ civic skills, engagement, knowledge, and experiences are assessed using a pre and post-survey. This survey measures beliefs or behaviors using constructs and weighted questions.

The following are excerpts from the evaluation of PLTI-KC’s fifth cohort compared to the entire PLTI parent leader class that graduated in 2023. As a whole, the survey results indicate that PLTI is an invaluable resource for parents!

**CIVIC OUTCOMES**

Parent leaders showed growth in all four civic outcome areas.

**CIVIC BEHAVIORS**

Parent leaders increased their participation in eight civic behaviors over the course of participating in PLTI-KC.
PERSONAL GROWTH
A majority of parents made significant changes in their personal lives.

PLTI-KC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>PLTI-KC</th>
<th>NATIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running for public office</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting a new group, club or organization</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing or advancing my career</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furthering my education</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making changes in my financial situation</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making changes in my family situation</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making changes in my mental, emotional, or</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for my child and for other children</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency (%)

VIDEO

Julie Holland, PLTI-KC Director, providing insight into PLTI’s evaluation process.
¿Cómo fue la experiencia de aprender esto junto con otros padres de familia de fondos diferentes y de otras partes de la ciudad?

What was it like learning alongside parents from different backgrounds and other parts of the city?

ES: Fue muy divertido e interesante conocer otras culturas, tener la oportunidad de poder hablar con otros padres sobre lo que ellos piensan acerca de diferentes proyectos de la comunidad y en diferentes áreas. Y al final darse cuenta de que todos estamos con la misma finalidad, que es apoyar a nuestros niños y mejorar nuestras comunidades.

EN: It was very fun and interesting to learn about other cultures, to have the opportunity to talk with other parents about what they think about different projects in the community and in different areas. And in the end to realize that we all have the same purpose, which is to support our children and improve our communities.

¿Hay alguna otra idea sobre PLTI que nos quisieras compartir?

Are there any other thoughts that you want to share about PLTI-KC?

ES: Que si en tu corazón hay la energía de apoyar a tu comunidad, intégrate a este programa. Porque este programa te ayuda a sentirte seguro. Conoces muchas áreas que si yo no hubiera cursado aquí, no me sentiría con el mismo poder o las energías de seguir siendo un padre líder en la comunidad. Pasas por muchas experiencias las cuales te dan la oportunidad de saber que tu palabra tiene poder y que no importando tu condición legal, económica o social todos tenemos los mismos derechos.

EN: If there is the energy in your heart to support your community, join this program. Because this program helps you feel safe. You know there are many areas that if I had not studied here, I would not feel with the same power or the energy to continue being a parent leader in the community. You go through many experiences that give you the opportunity to know that your word has power and that no matter your legal, economic, or social condition, we all have the same rights.

VIDEO

Hear more from Bertha
Tell us about your community project.

My community project is called Man Up 4 Kids. It is focused on getting more people who identify as male involved in early education and early learning and development. The Early Learning Space is mainly seen as a space for women. Data from Kansas City Public Schools and other districts in the Kansas City Metro Area show that, on average, early learning is typically staffed by 80% women and 20% men. I want to do an image campaign of men caring for their little ones to get rid of the perception that early learning is a space only for women.

What are some learnings from PLTI-KC that will stick with you?

There are so many things that I’ve learned in PLTI-KC that I’m going to carry with me not only as a parent, but also as a person, at work, at home, with my spouse, and with my co-workers.

One of the things that we learned very early in the session is I over E. That’s intellect over emotion. One of the things that we like to do at home is Conscious Discipline. As a parent, when you are disciplining your child, you first regulate your own emotions before you even try to discipline them. Because if your emotions aren’t regulated, your child’s emotions are never going to get there either. So I over E, intellect over emotion, is something that I’m going to carry with me for the rest of my life.
What are some learnings from PLTI-KC that will stick with you?

It was truly eye-opening to see how many people had the same thoughts and desires to make change that I did and really just needed to have a little bit of uplifting to get there. I’ve just been really inspired by the other parents and the changes that they would like to see and make in the city. The lesson that will stick with me the most is that being a parent gives me a seat at the table, and it is my responsibility to use my voice in those spaces to make the changes.

Prior to PLTI-KC, I knew about the importance of local politics, but I didn’t really see it. One of the things I really enjoyed learning and seeing was the work that people were doing on the ground, how that was changing from the bottom up rather than the top down, how to reach out and make those connections, how to grow a network and to use a coalition to make changes together and how much stronger we are when we all come together.

Tell us about your community project.

My community project is increasing the impact of a nonprofit that I have been a part of for a long time. I now have the pleasure of serving as the executive director for that nonprofit. Working with PLTI-KC has enabled me to restructure the organization and work towards growth and visibility in the community. My time at PLTI-KC taught me better strategies for that, especially with networking and coalition building.
Being able to get an in-depth understanding of how cities and governments run and what we can do as parents to make changes, was my favorite part of PLTI-KC.

What is a children's issue you are most passionate about right now?

The children's issue that I'm most passionate about is parent education. What I mean by that is supporting positive parent-child interactions, understanding brain development, and understanding what things your child should be able to do that are developmentally appropriate. In other words, knowing how to interact with your child to bring out the best relationship that you can have with your child. That's really the issue that I'm most focused on.

Why did you want to join PLTI-KC?

I joined PLTI-KC because I was looking to increase my advocacy skills. I had a number of unsuccessful run-ins with schools where I got stuck trying to advocate for my child. I needed something to help me better learn the system that we were in and how to deal with different situations. I came to PLTI-KC looking for that.

What did you like most about PLTI-KC?

There's so much that I liked about PLTI-KC. The part that I like most is the education on how states and cities run. We had civics class when we were in high school, but that was a long time ago for me. So being able to get an in-depth understanding of how cities and governments run and what we can do as parents to make changes, was my favorite part of PLTI-KC.
I also appreciated the space held for questions and reflections. The facilitators created an environment that allowed thought-provoking conversations about power, influence, and capacity to make an impact in our community.

Any other thoughts you want to share about PLTI-KC?

I would just say do it sooner. My kids are older, and I kind of felt a little out of place because I felt like it was targeted at families with younger children. That was my own mental block; that’s not the reality. But I would love to see parents get involved when their kids are younger because that gives them more time to make a difference.

Why did you want you join PLTI-KC?

I had heard from a few other parents sharing bits and pieces of their journey on social media and knowing that parent voices were needed. Knowing these parents and knowing what they were doing in and after their training with PLTI-KC, I felt very strongly that I would both have perspective to offer and an opportunity to learn new skills and new information.

I think anytime that you can bring evidence-based, best practices to your community, that’s always going to be worth somebody’s time. I’m a parent with children who have disabilities. So there’s a lot of education, parent education, learning how to advocate for your child, learning how to interact with all of the systems and it’s overwhelming. Building and strengthening parent networks allows collaboration.

Having resources and having a community that says we are going to provide you with this information and we’re going to walk with you, we’re going to grow with you, we’re going be with you as you strengthen yourself as a leader- that felt incredibly supportive.

What did you like most about PLTI?

I really love the relationship building. We can access information. It’s readily available. But I think as social media has attempted to connect us it has also disproportionately unconnected us. [I liked] having the opportunity, especially after COVID, of coming together and building that community with people that live and play and work here among you, but maybe you wouldn’t have otherwise met.
As a result of these sessions, the QSC updated the bill language and introduced new legislation for the 2024 legislative session. The bill proposes that the Missouri Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) should make a school accountability report card for every school that is clear and easily accessible, and student growth should account for the majority of a school’s accountability score.

PLTI-KC believes parents are experts on children’s issues and should have a seat at tables where decisions are made. Their insight and guidance help nonprofits and policymakers develop more equitable policies that support all families. To that end, organizations contract with PLTI-KC to provide paid parent-leader consultants.

For over a year, Quality Schools Coalitions (QSC), a Missouri education advocacy organization, has contracted with PLTI-KC and our parent leaders to gather parent perspectives related to school accountability. PLTI-KC parent leaders have been chief advisors on what to include in legislation and how to engage more parents in the process.

In the fall of 2023, PLTI-KC parent leaders led parent feedback sessions with Revolucion Educativa - RevEd and Show Me KC Schools, where more than 50 parents engaged in conversations on their current frustrations and hopes about the information they receive on the quality of schools and their child’s academic success. The sessions allowed parents to speak directly about what matters most to them: their children’s academic achievement and growth.

As a result of these sessions, the QSC updated the bill language and introduced new legislation for the 2024 legislative session. The bill proposes that the Missouri Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) should make a school accountability report card for every school that is clear and easily accessible, and student growth should account for the majority of a school’s accountability score.

Read more on the next page from Roosevelt Lyons, QSC’s Vice President of Advocacy, about their partnership with PLTI-KC.
Why did QSC want to work directly with parents?

Parents are the closest to the problem. They, and their families, are the most affected by an inadequate education system. This means they also have the most knowledge and insight into some of the problems. It makes sense to center parents in these conversations.

Education reform is an adaptive challenge. Adaptive challenges are big sticky problems that have no easy answer. There are no quick fixes to education and no manual you can consult. Adaptive challenges are long-term problems that can only be solved by bringing all stakeholders to the table and mobilizing those who are most affected.

What have been the benefits of partnering with PLTI-KC to engage parents?

I wouldn’t be overstating it by saying my partnership with PLTI-KC has been awesome. It exceeded my expectations and the parent advocacy consultants have offered me a lot of insight into the parents’ experience regarding their families’ education journey. They've helped me organize and facilitate some of our engagement sessions. We’ve made several changes to our legislation because of feedback we've heard. Getting parents in other parts of the state on board has been difficult but in KC, that's not the case. PLTI-KC is largely responsible for that.

How has working with PLTI-KC parent leaders influenced how QSC approaches policy change?

QSC is a relatively new organization. Almost a year ago, we did not have much of a parent constituency when I started. As an organization, we knew parents were important to the goal of getting legislation passed but I don’t think we understood how impactful parents can be if you engage them early and often in the process. I remember how excited my boss was after our first advocacy day at the Missouri State Capitol. He said it was one of the best experiences of his career. Last year, QSC filed an accountability bill before getting parent feedback. This year, we've taken the time to gather parent feedback on the front end, and that feedback has helped us make significant changes to our bill language. Our goal is to continue to engage and mobilize parents throughout the legislative session to help pass our bill.
A PLTI-KC community project gives parent leaders the opportunity to put what they are learning in class into action. Among the projects, our parent leaders gain knowledge about a particular children’s issue, expand their network and connections, build a new initiative, and testify before public officials. The projects vary, but all aim to improve children’s lives.

### 2023 COMMUNITY PROJECTS

- **Bertha Aldape** - Supporting families with children with special needs in our Latinx community.
- **Bethany Zaiger** - College opportunities for young adults with cognitive disabilities
- **Chris Roady** - Man Up 4 Kids
- **Danielle Holcomb** - Local Control of the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department
- **Denise M. Hart** - Holmes Garden Neighborhood Revitalization
- **Jennifer Wilson** - Nonprofit Growth: Restructuring Modern Family Alliance to Increase Visibility
- **Kelli Phillips** - Increased safety signs and signals around Foreign Language Academy
- **Kimberly Miller** - A Model for Neighborhood Transformation
- **Maleika Robinson** - Parenting Memoir: Adding Diverse Voices to the Narratives of Parenting
- **Megan Nickell** - Local control of the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department
- **Melissa Funaro** - Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum for Students K-3rd Grade
- **Sarah Rotert** - Engaging in conversation and collaboration to advocate with the community to improve social outcomes.
Read their amazing bios on our website:  
https://www.pltikc.org/team