



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LISC Loan Gives Highly Successful Upper Room Funds to Operate and “Room to Grow”**

*Summer Learning Camp Reaches Record Number of Students in Need*

**KANSAS CITY, Mo. (June 18, 2009)** — Greater Kansas City LISC today announced a \$2 million loan to the Swope Corridor Renaissance Upper Room, Inc. (Upper Room) an eight-week summer educational program offered free of charge to elementary and middle school students in low-income Kansas City communities. Thanks to the critical funding, Upper Room kicks off the program this week with a record 2,000 students expected to participate (up 25 percent from 2008) across the 20 Upper Room sites.

“We are thrilled at the additional students who will enroll this year because it allows us to have an even greater impact on the education of children in Kansas City,” said Jerry McEvoy, Executive Director of the Upper Room.

Greater Kansas City LISC is a charitable lender that invests in projects vital to the community, most of which would not be possible without LISC support. This was the case with the bridge loan to the Upper Room. “Without LISC loan funding, our program would have never got off the ground this summer,” McEvoy explained.

This is the second year that Greater Kansas City LISC has provided the operational loan to Upper Room. This year’s loan is an almost \$700,000 increase over the 2008 loan of \$1,318,000 and will cover program operations, teacher salaries and field trips for all of the Missouri Upper Room sites, as well as expansion to several new sites.

“LISC is proud to help sustain and expand a program that so effectively provides essential educational services to the community,” said Julie Porter, Greater Kansas City LISC Executive Director. “Improving access to quality education is a major goal of our NeighborhoodsNOW initiative.”

NeighborhoodsNOW, which is Greater Kansas City LISC’s flagship program, is a multi-year initiative that leverages funding and resources to accelerate comprehensive redevelopment in six target neighborhoods in Kansas City, Mo., and Kansas City, Kan. Five of the new sites for Upper

Room will serve residents in NeighborhoodsNOW target neighborhoods: two in Scarritt Renaissance in the Northeast of Kansas City, Mo., and three supporting the Douglass-Summer and St. Peter/Waterway neighborhoods in Kansas City, Kan.

Upper Room's rapid expansion can be attributed to astounding success in improving the learning skills of its students. According to a 2007 study of the program by John Hopkins University, the average student gained nearly a full academic year in reading in just eight weeks. Additionally, the program has a 90 percent attendance rate during camp operations and a strong return rate among past students.

### **About LISC**

Greater Kansas City LISC is the local site for Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the nation's largest community development organization. Greater Kansas City LISC supports redevelopment in more than 100 square miles of Kansas City metro area neighborhoods and helps transform them into healthy, sustainable communities in partnership with their residents. Since 1981, Greater Kansas City LISC has invested over \$86 million in loans and equity investments towards urban-core redevelopment on both sides of the state line. For more information, please contact John Wood at 816-753-0055 ext 17 or [jwood@lisc.org](mailto:jwood@lisc.org).

### **About Upper Room**

Swope Corridor Renaissance Upper Room, Inc. provides high-quality education programs for low income families in the urban core offering a Summer Academic Camp, an after-school tutorial program, an Even Start Family Literacy Program, and technical vocational training. The Summer Academic Camp has grown from 90 students at one site in 1999 to 20 sites and approximately 2,000 students projected for the summer of 2009, due to the success of its reading program. In addition to working one-on-one with volunteer tutors to improve reading skills, students also participate in a variety of activities, including visits to swim parks, gymnastics, and lessons in art, music and dance. For more information, please contact Jerry McEvoy at 816-363-3819.

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