



UpLink®

The Ultimate Tomorrow for Kids

UpLink—Frequently Asked Questions

What is UpLink?

UpLink is the first-ever comprehensive community hub connecting the workplace to the classroom in order to further students' academic skills in math, engineering, technology and science (METS), enhance teacher skills and improve academic achievement. The hub includes four core components, YouthFriends, LaunchPad, TeacherTech and Classroom Speakers.

YouthFriends

YouthFriends, in partnership with school districts, connects young people with caring adult volunteers in schools to promote success, encourage healthy behaviors and build stronger communities. What began as a pilot in six Greater Kansas City School districts with 613 volunteers has grown to include a network of 105 school districts and thousands of volunteers in Missouri and Kansas.

LaunchPad

LaunchPad links students to job shadowing and internship opportunities with local employers with primary focuses on math, engineering, technology and science.

TeacherTech

TeacherTech connects teachers to paid summer positions in area businesses, academic and research facilities, linking them to real-life applications and advancements in the fields of math, engineering, technology, science and business to bring back to the classroom.

Classroom Speakers

The Classroom Speakers program connects area educators with volunteer speakers who can share details about their professions, bring relevance to subjects being taught in classrooms, stimulate student thinking and enlighten students about a wide range of careers.

Why was YouthFriends chosen to develop and manage UpLink?

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation chose YouthFriends because of its nationally-recognized leadership in the fields of school-based mentoring and volunteerism, its prudent risk management protocol, and its proven operating system of tools, training and technology being used by hundreds of school districts and organizations throughout the country.

Why is this program important to the Kansas City community?

Statistics show that students' proficiency in math and science drops from elementary school to high school. There is also a growing lack of interest among students to pursue careers in math, engineering, technology and science with only 5 percent of today's U.S. college students majoring in engineering and related fields.

How will UpLink impact Kansas City businesses and organizations?

By connecting students with dynamic mentors, more informed teachers and real-world learning experiences, UpLink helps promote workforce development and inspires students to seek careers in math, engineering, technology and science.

Will the YouthFriends organization solely become part of UpLink?

No, the YouthFriends mentoring program is a component of UpLink, while YouthFriends remains the overarching umbrella for UpLink programs.