

Celebrate Linden



United Way Launching Linden Neighborhood Leadership Academy

Everyone, regardless of where they live, can benefit from developing new skills that can lead positive action in their community.

That's the philosophy behind United Way of Central Ohio's Neighborhood Leadership Academies.

This year, United Way is partnering with St. Stephen's Community House to launch the Linden Neighborhood Leadership Academy.

"We are excited to deepen our relationship with the Linden community through the launch of the Linden Neighborhood Leadership Academy," said Ryan Edwards, senior impact director, Neighborhood Partnership, United Way of Central Ohio. "We know that Linden has a rich history and that many families have been in the community for generations. We want to honor that history and contribute to the future of Linden by investing in its people. The Neighborhood Leadership Academy is one way that we can do that."

The Neighborhood Leadership Academy provides training to current and emerging community leaders in the areas of advocacy, consensus building, effective collaboration and

activities of the people who want to make a positive impact in Linden.

"The team at St. Stephen's Community House is excited about hosting the Linden Neighborhood Leadership Academy and looks forward to partnering with the United Way of Central Ohio to develop and empower future Linden leaders," said Marilyn Mehaffie, CEO, St. Stephen's Community House.

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Successful Neighborhood Leadership Academies are already on the South Side and Near East.

Each class aims to build a network of leaders to meet the unique needs of that neighborhood. That could mean engaging residents who fill a void in terms of skills, age or experience — whatever is important to the community. United Way's role is to support and accelerate the passions and

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Open to any adult age 18 and older residing within the 43211, 43224 and 43219 zip codes who aspire to bring positive and productive change to Greater Linden
- Commitment: 5 months (June - November)
- Participants will be expected to complete group projects in the community.
- Applications accepted beginning March 19.

TO APPLY:

For more information or to apply contact De Lena P. Scales at dcales@saintstephensch.org

Rising Above Challenges: Ernie Sullivan's Story

Linden is a great community, filled with wonderful people and resources. But it has its challenges. Poverty. A food desert with the closing of Kroger. Crime. What can we do to rise above those challenges?

Ernie Sullivan has advice.

Ernie knows firsthand what it's like to rise above challenges. He spent his childhood in Linden, growing up in the Rosewind neighborhood (formerly Windsor Terrace). He lived there with his parents and 10 brothers and sisters.

"Families were so happy to be there and it was a pleasant community. I had lots of friends and at that time lots of parents," he said. "You see, back then it was a village and any adult could correct your misplaced behavior. And of course in school there was still the ability for physical discipline so there were not very many behavior issues in Windsor Terrace."

Ernie remembers walking to school, rain or shine. This created discipline and responsibility for him, as he was expected to be at school, on time — no matter what. That responsibility and discipline carried over at home. Each child had a schedule of chores they were accountable for.

Education played a key role in Ernie's life. Ernie's parents never graduated from high school. His dad had a fourth grade education and his mom ended her schooling in ninth grade. However, his parents insisted that he and his 10 siblings get an education.

All 11 graduated from high school, and four completed college. Ernie graduated valedictorian in his class of 512 students. He attended college where he received Summa Cum Laude honors. His success continued from there. He became one of the highest ranking African Americans in the Bank One System for 27 years. He now runs his own business, Sullivan Staffing Strategies, and the Who's Who Publishing Company.



Ernie Sullivan

To recognize his accomplishments, Ernie Sullivan Day was once held at Linden McKinley STEM.

Many services and people, including his parents, also contributed to Ernie's success.

One factor was mentors. Ernie particularly remembers Windsor Principal Merrill Stevens and his words to him as a third grader

"I was a troublemaker," Ernie confesses. "But he told me one day that I was very smart and I needed to start using it. I

listened. I started making good grades. I started speaking up more."

Ernie also learned boxing at the Windsor Recreation Center, which helped him control his anger issues.

St. Stephen's Community House was another influence in his life. St. Stephen's offered a healthy, nurturing environment to do homework or play with other kids.

So how can we help others rise up above the challenges?

Focus on the 5 Cs, Ernie says.

Those are:

- **Competence:** Be an expert in something. Know what you're talking about.
- **Confidence:** Look people in the eye when you talk. Don't hold your head down. Be passionate about something. Walk proud.
- **Communication:** Learn how to communicate in writing and in front of people.
- **Cooperation:** Learn how to be a team player. Learn how to listen to and respect the opinions of others even if they are different than yours.
- **Commitment:** Be known for keeping your word. Be known for doing what you say you are going to do. Your word is your bond.

Together, we can help today's youth. Just like all the people who helped Ernie Sullivan.

Read more on Ernie's accomplishments at <http://www.sullivanss.com/about.html>.