



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Seed St. Louis Selects Savannah Rigley as Executive Director Ushering in a New Era of Community Growth and Food Access

Values-driven nonprofit leader joins Seed St. Louis as the organization expands its regional impact and advances plans for its new Food Demonstration Garden

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (August 4, 2026) — [Seed St. Louis](#), a nonprofit supporting a network of more than 250 community gardens, school gardens, and urban orchards throughout the St. Louis region, today announced **Savannah Rigley** as its new Executive Director, following a national search that attracted nearly one hundred exceptional candidates from across the country. Rigley brings more than 13 years of nonprofit leadership experience, including expertise in fundraising, strategic planning, community engagement, culture-building, and organizational growth.

Since 1984, Seed St. Louis has connected people to the land, to their food, and to one another by helping neighbors, schools, families, and community leaders grow food and cultivate stronger communities. In 2026 alone, Seed St. Louis has supported 228 gardens and orchards, delivered 43 classes, welcomed 1,044 class attendees, provided 203 cubic yards of soil, and engaged 1,849 volunteer hours, underscoring the organization's role as a vital partner in strengthening local food systems and neighborhood resilience.

“What drew me to Seed St. Louis was not only its mission, but the people who bring that mission to life every day,” said **Savannah Rigley, Executive Director of Seed St. Louis**. “This organization is helping answer one of the most important questions facing our region, how do we ensure more people have access to fresh, healthy food and the power to shape their own food future? Seed St. Louis provides practical, community-centered solutions by equipping people with the expertise, tools, and support they need to grow food, strengthen neighborhoods, supplement curriculum, and build lasting resilience. Community gardens are places of nourishment, learning, culture, connection, and self-determination. I am honored to build on Seed St. Louis' strong foundation and help lead this next era of growth, partnership, and impact across the region.”

Rigley succeeds Cheryl Adelstein, who served as interim leader during a complex time for nonprofits and helped position the organization for continued growth and provided a strong foundation for this next chapter.

Rigley joins Seed St. Louis at a moment of significant momentum. The organization is advancing plans for a new 26,000-square-foot Food Demonstration Garden near the Delmar DivINe campus, a

transformational community resource designed to provide hands-on learning opportunities for students, adults, families, volunteers, and community partners. The site will include an anticipated 7,500-square-foot food demonstration area, orchard trees and bushes, pollinator and native plant zones, chicken coop, a solar-powered greenhouse, stormwater management features, a pavilion, classroom learning, and gathering space.

For Seed St. Louis' longtime community and school garden leaders, Savannah's appointment represents both continuity and momentum. "Every garden tells a story about what is possible when people have the tools, knowledge, and support to grow," said **Dean Gunderson, Chief Programs Officer at Seed St. Louis**. "We see it every day, neighbors sharing what they know, children discovering where food comes from, families gathering around fresh produce, and communities becoming more connected season after season. Savannah understands that this work begins in the soil, but it grows into something much larger. Her leadership honors the relationships at the heart of Seed St. Louis, and I believe she will help us bring this mission to even more people across the region."

Before joining Seed St. Louis, Rigley served in nonprofit leadership roles focused on fundraising, operations, team development, donor engagement, and community outreach. Her background includes leading high-impact teams, expanding philanthropic support, building sustainable programs, and aligning mission-driven work with measurable outcomes.

"We were incredibly impressed by the caliber of candidates from across the country, but Savannah stood out because of her authentic leadership, strategic fundraising expertise, and genuine belief in the power of community," said **Melanie Bernds, Chair of the Seed St. Louis Board of Directors**. "Savannah understands that our mission extends far beyond gardening. Seed St. Louis helps create healthier neighborhoods, stronger connections, and more resilient communities, which is needed now more than ever as families face rising food costs and limited resources. Her leadership comes at a pivotal moment as we deepen our impact across the region and invite more people to grow with us during Seed St. Louis' next chapter."

The community will have an opportunity to meet Savannah and the Seed. Louis team while supporting Seed St. Louis at **Fair & Fare on the Farm**, taking place **Saturday, September 26, 2026, at Rung for Women**. The two-part event celebrates food, family fun, and the bounty of Seed St. Louis' garden network while raising support for programs that strengthen the local food system and empower residents to grow their own food.

The daytime fair, from **1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**, is free and open to the public and will feature family-friendly farm and fair activities, garden tours and demonstrations, local artisan and farm vendors, children's activities, and more. The evening ticketed event, from **5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.**, includes cocktails, a live auction and raffle, and a farm-to-table dining experience.

To purchase tickets for Fair & Fare on the Farm, support Seed St. Louis, or learn more about the organization's mission, visit seedstl.org/fairfareonthefarm.

About Seed St. Louis

Established in 1984, **Seed St. Louis** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people and communities to grow food through education, community gardening, urban agriculture, and environmental stewardship. Seed St. Louis supports a regional network of community gardens, school gardens, and urban orchards, providing resources, classes, soil, technical assistance, and hands-on support to help neighborhoods grow fresh food and strengthen community connections. Learn more at seedstl.org.