

# **Jackie Joyner-Kersee Foundation receives \$25,000 grant from Ameren Illinois Funds to support "Winning in Life" program**

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EAST ST. LOUIS – A \$25,000 grant from Ameren Illinois will help the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Center expand services to area youth. The funds will be utilized by the JJK Center to support its "Winning in Life" Program.

"Our goal is to make sure that when young people come through the doors of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center, they gain confidence, critical thinking, risk taking, determination and grit," said Joyner-Kersey, Founder of the JJK Center. "They will not only use these tools today, but throughout life."

Joyner-Kersey launched the Winning in Life program more than 20 years ago. In the last three years, it was converted into a curriculum to teach young people tools for translating success in athletics to their off the field pursuits in the classroom and at home. Participants are taught teamwork, accountability, health and nutrition through various athletic and life-skills programs.

Richard Mark, chairman and president of Ameren Illinois, said the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center was selected for a grant because of Joyner-Kersey's passion, enthusiasm and perseverance in creating a vital community resource for the youth of East St. Louis. Mark also noted that the Foundation is growing and looking to expand its services to even more youth outside of East St. Louis.

"Jackie Joyner-Kersey epitomizes what it means to give back to the community," Mark said. "When you walk in the doors of the Center and see hundreds of kids engaged in productive activities, you realize the magnitude of what she has accomplished in this area. We know this grant will be put to use helping even more kids to succeed."

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to Richard Mark, Ameren CEO Warner Baxter, and the Ameren Board of Directors for this gift," Joyner-Kersey said. "Ameren has been a long-time partner with our Center and a supporter of so many youth organizations in the Metro East and St. Louis area. We appreciate their leadership in providing resources that help us build stronger local communities."

The grant was announced during Ameren's annual Shareholder Meeting last week.

### **About the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center**

Visit the Jackie Joyner Kersey-Center and you'll find Jackie in a warm-up suit taking phone calls or walking the halls of her Foundation she started in East St. Louis more than 20 years ago. Jackie, considered by many as the Greatest Female Athlete of the 20th Century, and owner of six Olympic Medals in track and field, still has the look of a champion with the burning desire to win.

Today, she works tirelessly to translate her competitive drive to build hopes and dreams in underprivileged youth in her hometown of East St. Louis. The Jackie Joyner-Kersey

Foundation serves 2,200 youths annually through summer camps, after-school programs, tutoring, recreation, art, year-round sports, cheerleading, and dance and character education.

## **About Ameren Illinois**

Ameren Illinois delivers energy to 1.2 million electric and 816,000 natural gas customers across 1,200 communities in central and southern Illinois. Each year, the company provides donations to hundreds of non-profit organizations throughout its 43,700-mile-service territory. For more information, visit [AmerenIllinois.com](http://AmerenIllinois.com), or find us on Twitter @AmerenIllinois and Facebook.