

# 'A remarkable educator'

**St. Charles County teacher to be honored by the St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired for his lifetime of work as a blindness professional**

By Brett Auten

Kevin Hollinger has been a beacon to those living with visual impairments.

Since 1911, the St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been enhancing, empowering, and enriching the lives of those who are blind or visually impaired to the tune of nearly 1,200 people every year.

This spring, the St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired will present the Community Light Award to Hollinger, a blindness professional working in the Francis Howell School District as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

The award will be presented to Hollinger at the 2023 Visionary Gala on April 15. The Community Light Award is presented to an individual or group whose accomplishments have an immeasurable impact on the visually impaired and blind communities.

Hollinger is a National Board-Certified Teacher as an Exceptional Needs Specialist for Visual Impairment and he is a Certified Assistive Technology Information Specialist. He also has his own company, Hollinger Consulting, LLC., through which provides instructional and consultative services, workshops, evaluations, university preparation adjunct professor, and he has multiple experiences as an expert witness in the field of visual impairment and blindness.

"One of the most appealing aspects about this job is that we are with these students across their lifespan," he said. "For some, it's from three-years-old until they reach



Kevin Hollinger, a blindness professional working in the Francis Howell School District as a teacher of the visually impaired, will be given the Community Light Award by the St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired at a ceremony this spring. Hollinger presents and teaches across the country and at international conferences while authoring and co-authoring numerous publications and was the lead author for a chapter in the "Foundations of Orientation & Mobility" textbook.

21. I saw early on that I could have an immediate and lasting effect. Whether it was teaching someone to go to the bathroom on their own for the first time or walking to a friend's house in the neighborhood, just like any other middle schooler would, I wanted to be a part of it."

Mary Morgan-Corbitt is a former co-worker of Hollinger's while at FHSD.

"His education, level of expertise and dedication to the area of low vision is unmatched," Morgan-Corbitt said. "As some-

one who is also impacted by vision loss, Kevin has provided me with resources, guidance and support. He is a remarkable educator, and his presence is vital to this community."

"Seventy-eight percent of individuals who are legally blind are unemployed," Hollinger said. "The teachers here work their tails off to get our students into that 22%."

Hollinger, 46, is a homegrown FHSD

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## Weather

**FRIDAY**  
Partly Cloudy  
52/32

**SATURDAY**  
Cloudy  
50/37

**SUNDAY**  
Rain  
46/32

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**'EDUCATOR' from cover**

product through and through. He's a graduate of Francis Howell North and got his first teaching job at Becky David Middle School.

The FHSD program for the visually impaired is larger than the Missouri School of Blind. It started with six students in its first year in 1999 and doubled the year after that. Currently, it has over 45 students.

"Families moved here because of our certified teachers," he said. "There is a huge shortage."

Hollinger presents and teaches across the country and at international conferences while authoring and co-authoring numerous publications and was the lead author for a chapter in the Foundations of Orientation & Mobility textbook.

The Visionary Gala is the Society's premier fundraising event and will be hosted by Jasmine Huda of Fox Channel 2 News and chaired by Betsy Kauffman. The Leslie Dana Gold Medal Award will also be presented to Dr. Russell Van Gelder. The Gala will take place on, April 15 at the Donald Danforth



*Submitted photo*  
**Kevin Hollinger, a blindness professional working in the Francis Howell School District as a teacher of the visually impaired, will be given the Community Light Award by the St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired at a ceremony this spring.**

Plant Science Center. For information, contact Megan Connelly, Director of Development at [development@sbsvi.org](mailto:development@sbsvi.org) or call 314-968-9000.

"Kevin and I worked together at the national level earlier in our careers," Laura Park-Leach, St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired President and CEO, said. "I am thrilled to see his tremendous impact on a local level, too. He is most certainly deserving of this award for improving the lives of so many people in Missouri and across our nation."

**ORU scholarship program moves to online application**

Cuivre River Electric Cooperative is proud to offer financial support to graduating high school seniors and current college students.

New this year, applications are being accepted through an online format to help streamline the process. No paper applications will be accepted as the entire application is now available online.

The deadline to apply is April 14. The online application can be found at [cuivre.com/scholarships](http://cuivre.com/scholarships).

The criteria for applicants remains the same as previous years. Students are eligible to be considered if they permanently reside in the Cuivre River Electric service area and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 while attending undergraduate courses at an accredited college, university or technical school. Applicants are required to upload a transcript and two letters of recommendation, a complete copy of their Student Aid Report (SAR), write a narrative to highlight their academic achievements and community service, state their career goals and demonstrate a financial need.

The scholarship may also be used for adult continuing education courses in an applicant's career field.

Scholarships will be awarded in an amount not to exceed \$1,000 per academic year. The scholarships are not renewable and applicants who choose to reapply must submit a new completed application each year.

Incomplete and late applications will not be accepted. Scholarships will be awarded in June. Checks will be made payable to the educational institution and mailed to the students. Funds should be used for on-campus expenses only, such as tuition, books and campus housing.

In 2022, a total of \$85,500 was awarded. The Cuivre River Electric Community Trust Board has awarded 2,479 scholarships totaling \$1.5 million since 1997.

Scholarship funds are donated by Cuivre River Electric members who participate in Operation Round Up by rounding up their electric bill payments each month to the next highest dollar. The funds, administered by a seven-member volunteer board, are available to help individuals, families and organizations.

For more information contact Tim Schmidt, Operation Round Up coordinator, at [tschmidt@cuivre.com](mailto:tschmidt@cuivre.com) or 636-695-4837.

**St. Peters franchise tax refund returns to in-person application process**

The city of St. Peters is moving back to an in-person application process for the annual utility franchise tax refund distribution. Eligible residents must come into city hall, provide documentation and apply for the refund in-person with the Citizen Action Center at the front desk.

The application process changed in 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic so that residents who previously qualified for a franchise tax refund would not have to apply in person. The staff looks forward to seeing all applicants at city hall this year and ensuring that qualified residents receive their maximum refund.

St. Peters residents who are 62 years and older, or those considered totally disabled by Social Security, may be eligible to apply in person for a refund of their 2022 St. Peters utility franchise tax. Applications will be accepted between April 3 and May 31, during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Please note that city hall will be closed on Good Friday, April 7, and on Memorial Day, May 29.

The utility franchise tax includes the St. Peters tax listed on 2022 electric and gas bills and franchise fees on your

cable bills. To be eligible, your maximum 2022 adjusted gross income (excluding any taxable Social Security income) must not exceed \$53,150 if single or \$60,750 if married.

All eligible residents, whether they received refunds in previous years or are new to the program, will be required to apply in person at city hall.

Everyone will need to bring the following items to complete their application:

- Proof of 2022 Income
- Proof of Age/ID
- 2022 Letter of Award from Social Security (if disabled)
- 2022 Electric, Gas, and Cable Bills

The application process should take about five minutes with a Citizen Action Center Representative.

After you complete your application, you will be mailed your refund. Please note: you are only eligible for a refund for the months when you were at least 62 years old or considered totally disabled.

For any questions about the Utility Franchise Tax refunds or process, call 636-477-6600 x1225.