

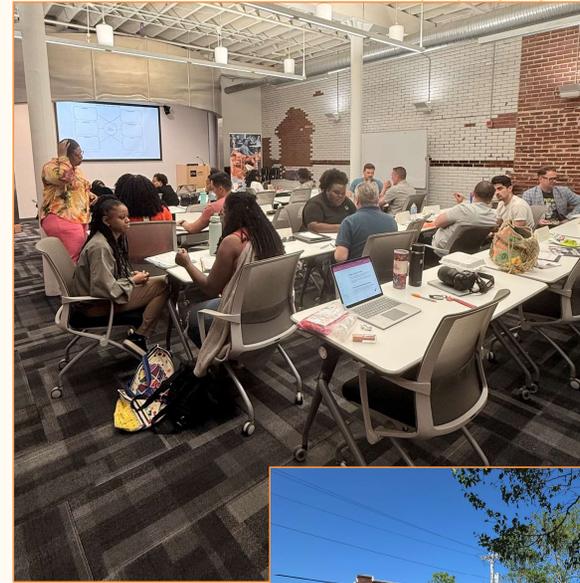
2025 CORTEX DISTRICT  
**ACTIVATION**  
**MID-YEAR**  
**OVERVIEW**



# CORTEX

Activation at the Cortex Innovation District results from a collaboration between multiple actors. Each actor has a specific audience, which may be based on physical location, sector of interest or other identities. All entities work well together and support each other's efforts. This support ranges from informal (attending and cross-promoting) to co-sponsoring and combining efforts to implement an activation. This group meets quarterly to idea on process improvement and preview future events.

Cortex the organization aims to be a facilitator, doer, support and sponsor of value-added activity in the District. We exist to support partners in their activation strategies, facilitate access for outside groups to the space and implement programming that we see as value-add to the activation activities that are already happening in the District.



# CORTEX CONTEXT AND ACTIVATION INFRASTRUCTURE

## DISTRICT TENANTS

The Cortex organization invested heavily in data and data infrastructure to enable more detailed, accurate and real time understanding of who is in the District. This level of detail allows us to tailor activations to the needs of our tenants and build more real-time relationships with them. At a glance, the Cortex District is made of:

- ✓ 391 companies, nonprofit organizations, governmental arms, research labs and divisions of larger corporations.
- ✓ 64% of the entities in the District are small businesses, startups or nonprofits with fewer than 5 employees in CIC co-working spaces.
- ✓ Small businesses (defined as for-profit businesses whose primary goal is to sustain its owners and workers, as opposed to high-growth exit-seeking) account for 35% of the District's entities. Startups (as defined as a for-profit company with novel technology that is seeking significant, rapid growth and focused on an exit) account for 27%.
- ✓ 39% of our tenant entities are life-science related: lab, startup, small business, government arm, or division of Washington University or BJC.
- ✓ The top 5 sectors represented in the District are business and professional services, technology & IT, general life science (does not fit other life science categories), life science-therapeutics, and community development.
- ✓ The top 5 life-science sectors are general life science, life science-therapeutics, healthcare delivery, life science-diagnostics and healthcare-medical devices.
- ✓ The top 5 cross-cutting technology areas are neuroscience, advanced manufacturing, AI, immunology and multi-omics.

*See Appendix A for additional details about District tenants.*

# CORTEX CONTEXT AND ACTIVATION INFRASTRUCTURE

## DISTRICT PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

Activation in the Cortex District happens through the combined effort of the following organizations:

Organization	Activation Type(s)	Frequency	Activation Target Audiences
BioSTL*	Activation	Monthly	Human health scientists and founders
CIC	Activation, amenity, anchors	Ongoing (amenities), monthly, annually (anchor)	Tenants of CIC spaces in 4240, 4220 and 20 S. Sarah, except anchor events, which are open to the public.
Cortex	Activation, anchor	Variable	All District tenants, anchor events open to public
Filament	Activation, anchor	Monthly, annually and variable	The public, with emphasis on District tenants for activations
Lilibridge	Activation	Quarterly	Tenants in 4240, 4220, Cortex 1, BioSTL building, IFF building
WashU OTM*	Activation	Variable	WashU researchers/technical founders

*\*Not included in District Programming Partners quarterly meetings but a goal for the rest of the year is to determine the best structure and cadence for routinely communicating. IKEA launched programing this year that is not included in this report. It will be included in future ones.*



## 2025 Q1 AND Q2 ACTIVATIONS

What follows is an overview of the activations for the first half of 2025. An at-a-glance activation listing and dashboard can be found in Appendix B.



# JANUARY

## PITCHSTL

Every Wednesday morning, a rotating group of entrepreneurs pitch their business idea to volunteers and seek advice on solving a very specific business problem.



**Dates:**  
**Weekly**



**Location:**  
**20 S. Sarah**



**Total Q1+Q2 2025  
Attendee Count:**  
**147**

## OTM OFFICE HOURS: FUNDING YOUR START-UP

Washington University's Office of Technology Management hosts monthly office hours to provide specialized instruction in barriers uniquely faced by bioscience entrepreneurs.



**Date:**  
**January 15**



**Location:**  
**OTM @4240**



## CORTEX/CIC LUNCH AND LEARN: THE IMPROV SHOP-BREAKING THE ICE BY TAKING "GETTING TO KNOW YOU" TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The Improv Shop engaged attendees by practicing games and activities that improve the dreaded ice breaker and facilitate community building.



**Date:**  
**January 15**



**Location:**  
**Showroom at 20. South Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**50**

# JANUARY *CONTINUED*

## RETURN TO RUNNING SAFE & EFFECTIVELY

The team from BJC at the Commons provided tips and tricks to help those looking to run as a part of their New Year's Resolutions.



**Date:**  
**January 17**



**Location:**  
**Showroom at 20 South Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**12**

## BIOSTL'S INNOVATORS HOURS: OMNIOSE

Innovators Hours is a new monthly event for entrepreneurs, innovators, and anyone curious about St. Louis' vibrant bioscience innovation ecosystem. Each session features a conversation with a leading startup founder, hosted by Jim McCarter, Senior Managing Director of BioGenerator Ventures. Together, they explore the founder's journey from idea to groundbreaking technology — offering insights, lessons and inspiration. This first event featured Christian Harding, Founder of Omniose.



**Date:**  
**January 17**



**Location:**  
**BioSTL Building**



**Attendees:**  
**50**

## CORTEX GREEN TEAM: WINTER SOWING WORKSHOP

This workshop covered techniques on winter sowing with native seeds from Cortex's own native prairies. It also featured a hands-on winter sowing activity, and attendees were able to take home their own winter sowing kit.



**Date:**  
**January 30**



**Location:**  
**Havana @4240**



**Attendees:**  
**15**

# FEBRUARY

## MONTHLY SMALL BUSINESS LEGAL CLINIC

Cortex Square One and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri partner to provide free legal advice for a small number of entrepreneurs each month from February through December.



**Dates:**  
**Weekly**



**Location:**  
**20 S. Sarah**



**Q1 + Q2 2025 Total Attendees:**  
**19**

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH HEADSHOT HAPPY HOUR & KIVA LAUNCH

Cortex, WePower and CIC partnered to support local entrepreneurs learn more about Kiva's community-focused lending model while having fun and walking away with free professional headshots!



**Date:**  
**February 4**



**Location:**  
**20 S. Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**53**



## SUPERCOLLIDER + NEW SKILLS FOR WORK: MASTER YOUR MEETINGS

We spend so much of our time in meetings, so why do they have to be so bad? In the first New Skills for Work of the new year, Filament shared a mix of basic and advanced tactics to improve every meeting and provided attendees tools they could implement right away. Those that wanted to stay for free coworking were given space in CIC.



**Date:**  
**February 7**



**Location:**  
**Filament + CIC @4220**



**Attendees:**  
**15**

# FEBRUARY *CONTINUED*

## OTM OFFICE HOURS: IDEA TO ASSAY

This month explored the journey of diagnostics research, development, and the investment that makes it all possible. A panel of experts discussed the challenges of diagnostics research, development and investment, helping attendees better understand the nuances of diagnostics development and gain actionable insights.



**Date:**  
**February 13**



**Location:**  
**OTM Offices  
@4240**



**Attendees:**  
**56**



## BIOSTL INNOVATORS HOURS: AGRAGENE

This month's conversation featured Stephanie Gamez, PhD (Director of R&D), and Bryan Witherbee (President & CEO) of Agragene Inc. a company transforming pest control with CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing — no insecticides needed.



**Date:**  
**February 20**



**Location:**  
**BioSTL Building**



**Attendees:**  
**56**



# FEBRUARY *CONTINUED*

## CORTEX/CIC LUNCH AND LEARN: SOCIAL STORYTELLING FOR BUSINESS

Entrepreneur Ebbi Young shared simple yet effective video strategies with small business owners and nonprofit professionals on how to showcase their brand, tell compelling stories, and drive results without a big budget or fancy equipment.



**Date:**  
**February 27**



**Location:**  
**Showroom at  
20. South Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**15**



## GREEN TEAM GREEN BIZ CHALLENGE KICKOFF

Together with the Missouri Botanical Garden, Cortex hosted the annual kickoff for The St. Louis Green Business Challenge. This Challenge assists companies with integrating sustainable measures into the kinds of daily operations common to every business. Cortex hosts a District-wide where Green Team whose members identify and voluntarily adopt strategies that can reduce the District's environmental impact.



**Date:**  
**February 27**



**Location:**  
**@4240**



**Attendees:**  
**100**



# MARCH

## NAVIGATING A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

Cortex hosted a series of open dialogues facilitated by Claire Schell of Claire Schell Consulting to help tenants build community navigate a rapidly changing sociopolitical environment. Topics included identifying activities in our locuSts of control, active listening skills, the impact of personal identity on community work and general community building skills.



**Dates:**  
March 4 and May 1



**Location:**  
Showroom at 20 South Sarah and Havana @4240 Duncan



**Attendees:**  
17



## CORTEX/CIC LUNCH AND LEARN-HOTWORX 3D TRAINING

Attendees learned about the newest workout in town - the HOTWORX workout method, which combines three key elements to enhance the workout's effectiveness and efficiency.



**Date:**  
March 5



**Location:**  
Showroom at 20 South Sarah



**Attendees:**  
8

# MARCH *CONTINUED*

## CIC PRESENTS: FOR THE WOMEN

CIC, Cortex and Filament hosted an anchor event in honor of Women's History Month. Lauren Colbert from Filament presented a mini Empower-HER session on personal branding. After, women-owned small businesses provided self-care services and food and drink for a community social event.



**Date:**  
**March 7**



**Location:**  
**Havana and 2nd floor,  
@4240**



**Attendees:**  
**100**



## SUPERCOLLIDER + NEW SKILLS FOR WORK: STRATEGY & CLARITY 1

Filament tools helped attendees find their organization's purpose, articulate its principles, and craft its priorities in this two-part series. In the first session, attendees learned to connect their purpose to strategy. Those that wanted to stay for free coworking were given space in CIC.



**Date:**  
**March 7**



**Location:**  
**Filament + CIC  
@4220**



**Attendees:**  
**33**



# MARCH *CONTINUED*

## OTM OFFICE HOURS: THERAPEUTICS-IDEA TO DRUGS

This panel of industry and research veterans explored the translation of ideas to clinical drug validation and the roles of scientists from target validation to clinical proof of concept. Speakers pulled from their years of drug-hunting experience shared the challenges of biopharma drug discovery from resources to competition.



**Date:**  
March 13



**Location:**  
OTM  
Offices  
@4240



## GOLF PERFORMANCE LUNCH & LEARN

Staff from MOVE by BJC provided hands-on instruction, tips and tricks for golfers looking to get back into the swing of the game as the weather warmed up.



**Date:**  
March 20



**Location:**  
MOVE by BJC  
@4220



**Attendees:**  
15



# MARCH *CONTINUED*

## BIOSTL INNOVATORS HOURS:

This month's conversation featured Blake Marggraff, co-founder and CEO of CareSignal and current CEO of TCARE, Inc. CareSignal is a deviceless remote patient monitoring platform that reduces hospitalizations and improves care for patients with chronic conditions.



**Date:**  
**March 20**



**Location:**  
**BioSTL Building**



**Attendees:**  
**56**



The flyer for BioSTL Innovators Hour features a blue and white color scheme. At the top, it says 'BIOSTL Center of Local Innovation' and 'Innovators Hour'. Below this is a circular portrait of Blake Marggraff. The text reads: 'Insights & Networking for Bioscience Entrepreneurs', 'Thursday, March 20', 'BioSTL - 4340 Duncan Ave. 4:30-6:30 PM', and 'Blake Marggraff Co-founder and CEO of CareSignal and current CEO of TCARE, Inc.'. A 'Register Now' button is at the bottom left, and the CareSignal logo is at the bottom right.

## STL PUBLIC RADIO WELCOME KIT HAPPY HOUR

This new event was created to welcome new residents to St. Louis. It's an extension of the STL Welcome Kit news series, which provides resources and information about the city. The happy hour offered an opportunity to connect new neighbors, learn about local organizations, and enjoy food, drinks, and activities.



**Date:**  
**March 26**



**Location:**  
**20 S. Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**40**



# MARCH *CONTINUED*

## EMPOWER HER: DECLUTTER YOUR DOUBTS

Filament facilitated this session aimed at female leaders looking for practical ways to focus on their strengths.



**Date:**  
**March 20**



**Location:**  
**Filament  
@4220**



**Attendees:**  
**40**



## CURB OPEN HOUSE

This open house celebrated the new home of The Carbon Utilization Redesign for Biomanufacturing (CURB) Engineering Research Center (ERC). CURB is a \$26 million initiative funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) over five years. Established in 2024, CURB will create bio-manufacturing systems that use CO<sub>2</sub> as a feedstock for a broad range of products much more efficiently than current state-of-the-art engineered and natural systems. This event included presentations focused on the key research thrusts as well as social time.



**Date:**  
**March 28**



**Location:**  
**CURB @4220**



**Attendee:**  
**75**



# APRIL

## SUPERCOLLIDER + NEW SKILLS FOR WORK: STRATEGY + CLARITY 2

Filament tools helped attendees find their organization's purpose, articulate its principles, and craft its priorities in this two-part series. In the second session, attendees learned to connect their newly articulated strategy to action. buildingvolunteers and seek advice on solving a very specific business problem. Those that wanted to stay for free coworking were given space in CIC.



**Date:**  
**April 4**



**Location:**  
**Filament + CIC  
@ 4220**



**Attendees:**  
**25**



## OTM OFFICE HOURS: A CASE STUDY IN PATENTING

Director of Patent Management, Michael McCay, PhD, and WashU inventor Matthew Lew, PhD, provided a real-life overview of the patent process. Based on their success in obtaining patents for Dr. Lew's phase mask designs, they covered the steps beginning-to-end – from the initial invention disclosure to the final patent award - and everything in between. Co-hosted by WashU's Graduate Association of Latinx, Native American and Caribbean Students (GALNACS).



**Date:**  
**April 9**



**Location:**  
**Virtual**



# APRIL *CONTINUED*

## OTM OFFICE HOURS: COMMERCIALIZING IP

Commercializing intellectual property from a university typically involves a license from the tech transfer office. This special edition of Office Hours featured former and current tech transfer professionals from Emory University and Stanford University to discuss: “How do you license an invention from a university?”, “What is the role of the founder in a license?”, “What is a license?”, “Does my startup have to get a license?”, “How do other universities approach licensing?”, and “Is there a template for a license?”



**Date:**  
**April 11**



**Location:**  
**Online**

**THIS IS YOUR  
CORTEX**

Plug in to your District with Cortex Current

Where you learn, work, build, gather and live.  
For the latest news and happenings in your District,  
sign up to receive **CORTEX Current**, a new  
monthly newsletter.

A photograph of four diverse individuals smiling. From left to right: a woman with dark hair, a man with a beard, a woman in a white lab coat holding a beaker with orange liquid, and a man in a suit.

Cortex relaunched a District-wide newsletter in January, 2025 with a current readership of 572.

**CORTEX**

# APRIL *CONTINUED*

## STL VEGAN MARKET

Cortex and the nonprofit Project Animal Freedom host the St. Louis regional Vegan Market the second Saturday of the month from April to October. At each event, 50-60 vendors offer a celebration of sustainable, ethical, plant-based living.



**Date:**  
**April 12**



**Location:**  
**2 Acre Park**



**Attendees:**  
**1,300**



## OTM OFFICE HOURS: CAREERS IN TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

This event, aimed at individuals working towards a PhD, studying law, or completing postdoctoral programs, previewed the wide variety of technology transfer careers. Members of the OTM team shared the pathways that led them to the exciting and challenging world of translating technologies into societal impact. This event was co-hosted with the Graduate Association of Latinx, Native American and Caribbean Students (GALNACS).



**Date:**  
**April 16**



**Location:**  
**Virtual**



# APRIL *CONTINUED*

## BIOSTL'S INNOVATORS HOURS: WUGEN

This month's conversation featured Matthew Cooper, co-founder and chief scientific officer of Wugen, a biotechnology company developing ready-to-use cell therapies that help the immune system fight cancer.



**Date:**  
April 17



**Location:**  
BioSTL Building



**Attendees:**  
56

The flyer for 'Innovators Hour' at BioSTL features a blue and white color scheme. It includes the BioSTL logo at the top left, the event title 'Innovators Hour' in large white text, and a circular portrait of Matthew Cooper. Below the portrait, it lists the event as 'Insights & Networking for Bioscience Entrepreneurs' on Thursday, April 17, from 4:30-6:30 PM at BioSTL - 4340 Duncan Ave. A 'Register Now' button is at the bottom left, and the Wugen logo is at the bottom right.

## PLAYDAYS: AI FOR INNOVATION + IMPACT

Filament kicked off the programming series PlayDays by exploring how even novices can use ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and similar tools to save time, unlock innovation, accelerate work and grow impact. Attendees experimented with AI tools in a low-pressure, lightly facilitated setting, shared insights and challenges with a room full of peers and walked away with practical ways to leverage AI at work.



**Date:**  
April 18



**Location:**  
Filament @4220



**Attendees:**  
43



# APRIL *CONTINUED*

## CIC/CORTEX LUNCH + LEARN: BUILDING PERSONAL RESILIENCE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Attendees in this interactive Lunch and Learn heard powerful stories of resilience and gained practical strategies to build their own personal resilience.



**Date:**  
**April 20**



**Location:**  
**Showroom at 20 South Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**9**

## SUCCAS FOR SUCCULENTS

The Lilibridge team provided desk-size succulents and pot decorating materials for their tenants to create a plant of their own.



**Date:**  
**April 22**



**Location:**  
**Havana @4240**



# APRIL *CONTINUED*

## CORTEX SPRING FORUM

Twice a year, the Cortex Operations Team and partners provide quick updates on construction, infrastructure other operations-related goings-on in the District. At this Forum, attendees provided feedback on draft District-wide wayfinding signs, to be installed starting in 2026.



**Date:**  
April 23



**Location:**  
Showroom at 20  
South Sarah



**Attendees:**  
10



## EMPOWER HER: GENERATIONAL TUITION

A diverse panel of women shared their stories about things they have learned the hard way, and what that "tuition" makes possible for others' leadership in the workplace.



**Date:**  
April 25



**Location:**  
Filament  
@4220



**Attendees:**  
52



# MAY

## SUPERCOLLIDER + NEW SKILLS FOR WORK: INNOVATION + CREATIVITY SESSION 1

This session, the first of two, equipped attendees with tools build transformational innovation into an everyday organizational habit. This session helped attendees unlock ways to reimagine challenges, unlock a team's creative potential, experiment fearlessly, and turn bold ideas into actionable solutions.



**Date:**  
May 2



**Location:**  
Filament + CIC  
@4220



**Attendees:**  
33



## CORTEX GREEN TEAM CLOTHING SWAP

Community members and District tenants were encouraged to donate their high quality, gently-used professional wardrobe. After all clothes were checked for quality and arranged, anyone could refresh their professional wardrobe the eco-friendly way by shopping these pieces for free. All leftover clothes were donated to Independence Center members working to reenter the workplace.



**Date:**  
May 7



**Location:**  
Restaurant  
@4220



**Attendees:**  
15



CORTEX

# MAY *CONTINUED*

## STL VEGAN MARKET

Cortex and the nonprofit Project Animal Freedom host the St. Louis regional Vegan Market happened the second Saturday of the May. At each event, 50-60 vendors offer a celebration of sustainable, ethical, plan-based living.



**Date:**  
**May 10**



**Location:**  
**2 Acre Park**



**Attendees:**  
**800**



## CORTEX/CIC LUNCH + LEARN: GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH AI POWERED TOOLS BY GOOGLE

District tenant Keisha Mabry shared some Google-developed content on AI and how small businesses and nonprofits could easily integrate AI-related tools into their organizations.



**Date:**  
**May 13**



**Location:**  
**Showroom  
20 S. Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**20**

<b>Lunch &amp; Learn:</b> Grow Your Business with AI Powered Tools by Google  Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful technology that can help simplify business tasks and create new opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs - but knowing how to use it may seem out of reach. Developed with input from experts at Google, this workshop will explain the basics of AI and how AI-powered tools by Google can help small businesses be more efficient, enhance customer experiences, and drive growth.  Lunch will be provided!	<b>CIC</b> CORTEX COMMUNITY IMPACT CENTER   <b>Keisha Mabry Haymore (she / her)</b>
<b>THE SHOWROOM MAY 13   12PM - 1PM</b>	

# MAY *CONTINUED*

## FOOD TRUCKS

Together with the St. Louis Food Truck Association, each Tuesday during the summer, Cortex tenants and community members were able to purchase lunch from a local food truck vendor.



**Date:**

**Weekly from May 13 to June 24**



**Location:**

**Cortex Commons**



**Q1 + Q2 2025 Total Attendees:**

**300**



## BIOGENERATOR SBIR/STTR PROPOSAL PREPARATION WORKSHOP

BioGenerator and BBCetc offered this workshop to cover all aspects of writing and submitting an SBIR/STTR proposal to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This workshop covered SBIR/STTR program basics, a deep dive into NIH proposal preparation with a detailed explanation of each section of the proposal, and required elements of NIH's commercialization plan.



**Date:**

**May 13**



**Location:**

**BioSTL Building/Virtual**

# MAY CONTINUED

## CORTEX GREEN TEAM: NATIVE SEED SERIES PART III-PLANT INSTALLATION

In the final event of this series, attendees planted seedlings across the District that they started during the previous native seed overwintering



**Date:**  
May 14



**Location:**  
District wide



**Attendees:**  
10



## CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY: A CALL TO ACTION

Soon after the devastating tornado in St. Louis, Cortex and Anavo provided an open space for collective care, coordination, and action. Those directly impacted shared their immediate needs, attendees learned how to support ongoing relief, and the group set plans for future Cortex response activities grounded in care, mutual aid, and solidarity.



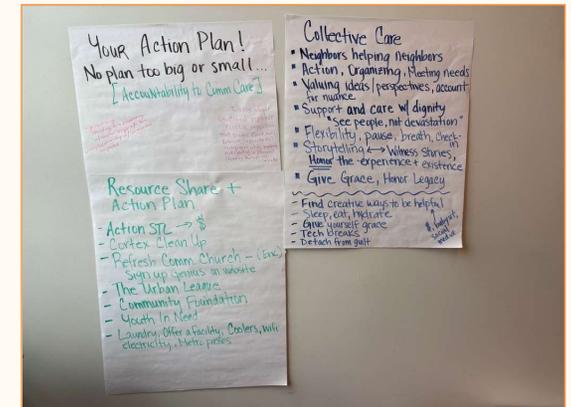
**Date:**  
May 21



**Location:**  
Havana @4240



**Attendees:**  
7



# MAY *CONTINUED*

## CORTEX CLEAN UP IN NORTH CITY

Cortex worked with North Newstead Neighborhood Organization to organize a morning of hands-on cleanup, resident moving and general support. Attendees included Cortex tenants, neighbors and individuals new to the region who just wanted to help.



**Date:**  
May 22



**Location:**  
Newstead Neighborhood Association



**Attendees:**  
100



## BIOSTL'S INNOVATORS HOUR: MEDIBEACON

This month's conversation was with Steve Hanley, CEO and co-founder of MediBeacon. Based in St. Louis, MediBeacon is developing non-invasive tools to help provide vital and actionable measurement of organ function. Steve shared about MediBeacon's journey from startup to FDA approval.



**Date:**  
May 22



**Location:**  
BioSTL Building



**Attendees:**  
56

**BIOSTL**  
**Innovators Hour**

*Insights & Networking for Bioscience Entrepreneurs*

**Thursday, May 22**  
BioSTL - 4340 Duncan Ave.  
4:30-6:30 PM

**Register Now**

**Steven Hanley**  
Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of MediBeacon

**MediBeacon**  
Life Illuminated.

# MAY *CONTINUED*

## EMPOWER HER: REINVENT. REIMAGINE. RISE.

Collectively attendees built from strength to uncover the layers of their personal power. Together, attendees realized they each have so much more to offer the world than any one title, role, or past experience could suggest.



**Date:**  
May 30



**Location:**  
Filament @4220



**Attendees:**  
46



## MOVE BY BJC YOGA IN THE COMMONS

MOVE by BJC provided beginner-friendly gentle yoga for District tenants and community members.



**Date:**  
May 31



**Location:**  
Cortex Commons



**Attendees:**  
40



# JUNE

## GREENWAY WALK AND DANCE HOSTED BY GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY

Attendees at this event boosted their mood and got some fresh air on the Cortex portion of the Brickline Greenway. The event started with a 30-minute greenway walk, then YES Honey Studio led attendees in 30 minutes of fun movement!



**Date:**  
**June 2**



**Location:**  
**Brickline Greenway**



**Attendees:**  
**22**



## SUPERCOLLIDER + NEW SKILLS FOR WORK: INNOVATION + CREATIVITY SESSION 2

This session, the second of two, equipped attendees with tools build transformational innovation into an everyday organizational habit. This session helped attendees unlock ways to reimagine challenges, unlock a team's creative potential, experiment fearlessly, and turn bold ideas into actionable solutions.



**Date:**  
**June 11**



**Location:**  
**Filament + CIC @4220**



**Attendees:**  
**51**

# JUNE *CONTINUED*

## CORTEX/CIC LUNCH + LEARN: “TELL ME ABOUT A TIME” TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING OR HIRING

Whether you're trying to land your dream job or recruiting for an important role, interviewing skills are critical. In this Lunch & Learn session, attendees learned best practices for both hiring managers and those in the “hot seat.”



**Date:**  
**June 12**



**Location:**  
**Showroom at 20 S. Sarah**



**Attendees:**  
**12**

## BIOSTL'S INNOVATORS HOUR: PANOME BIO

June's conversation was with Edward Weinstein and Dave Smoller of Panome Bio. Panome Bio provides advanced metabolomics and proteomics services to biomedical researchers - using proprietary technology to deliver deeper biological insights that accelerate drug discovery and disease research.



**Date:**  
**June 12**



**Location:**  
**BioSTL Building**



**Attendees:**  
**56**

**BIOSTL**  
**Innovators Hour**  
*Insights & Networking for Bioscience Entrepreneurs*  
**Thursday, June 12**  
BioSTL - 4340 Duncan Ave.  
4:30-6:30 PM  
**Edward Weinstein**  
Co-Founder and CEO  
**Dave Smoller**  
Co-Founder and Board Member  
[Register Now](#)  
**panomebio**

# JUNE *CONTINUED*

## STL VEGAN MARKET

Cortex and the nonprofit Project Animal Freedom hosted the St. Louis regional Vegan Market the second Saturday June. At each event, 50-60 vendors offer a celebration of sustainable, ethical, plan-based living.



**Date:**  
**June 14**



**Location:**  
**2 Acre Park**



**Attendees:**  
**500**

## KALEIDOSCOPE MARKET PRESENTED BY CORTEX SQUARE ONE

A celebration of innovation, identity, & community, the Kaleidoscope Market featured chances to support Black & queer-owned businesses and celebrate our communities with food, music, and dancing!



**Date:**  
**June 25**



**Location:**  
**@4240**



**Attendees:**  
**100**



## EMPOWER HER: CULTURAL SCALPEL- SLICING THROUGH SOCIETAL HUSH

Some conversations still hide behind closed doors. At this month's EmpowerHER, attendees brought them into the light — and learned better ways to talk openly about menopause, motherhood, ageism, and the weight of the questions we ask.



**Date:**  
**June 27**



**Location:**  
**Filament @4220**



**Attendees:**  
**27**

# ONGOING ACTIVATIONS

## HOLIDAY LIGHT RECYCLING

The Cortex Green Team sponsored its second annual Holiday Light Recycling Initiative in January. District tenants dropped their used holiday lights in any of 4 locations across the District, and the Green Team ensured they were responsibly recycled instead of thrown into a landfill.

## CORTEX HELPS OUR NEIGHBORS: DONATION DRIVE

After May's tornado in North St. Louis City, Cortex went back to the drawing board and received community feedback on how our District can continue to collectively support tornado relief efforts. As a result, Cortex sponsored a District-wide monthlong food and supplies drive. Each week, the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis issued a list of their most requested goods, and Cortex tenants donated in turn. As a result, nearly 1,600 essential items were donated between June 9 and July 3, 2025.



## DISTRICT AMENITIES

Cortex and partners have negotiated exclusive discounts and promotions for District tenants. A full list of promotions is available on Cortex's website, and the list is always growing.

# LEARNINGS

**The Cortex team, as well as our activation partners across the District, are committed to continuous quality improvement. As such, below is a sample of learnings we gathered during the first half of the year:**

- ✓ **The people leading activations matter.** With new leadership at IKEA and BioGenerator, as well as additional staff capacity at Washington University's OTM, the District increased its activations immensely. These new partners are a welcome addition to the District.
- ✓ **Activations featuring small business marketplaces provide value across tenants, vendors and community partners.** Given this, we will continue to plan them. In the future, we need to consider providing stipends (or provide value another way) to business owners if they do not make sales, as they often take time off work to vend at our events.
- ✓ **Personal outreach is always best.** It will always be necessary to gather information in one spot and disseminate it broadly, especially as we look to increase the broader community's interactions with Cortex. But the personal text or email invitation almost always prompts or a stop-by to the activation in a way that a mass message does not.
- ✓ **Event follow-up is often overlooked.** We need to thank people for attending, gather their feedback and remind them of other District amenities.

# WHAT'S COMING UP

Quarters 3 and 4 are full of activations from each organization responsible for activating the District. With the continuation of monthly programs from OTM, BioGenerator and Cortex/CIC, there will also be:

- ✓ **An expansion of food-related amenities.** Given the success of the summer food offerings, we will have food trucks weekly and a coffee truck monthly through the fall.
- ✓ **District ambassador planning.** The District is filled with tenants excited about being in Cortex. To increase tenant enthusiasm and build a continuous feedback loop between more tenants and Cortex, we will plan to launch a District Ambassador program in 2026. We are looking forward to learning from other efforts similar to this in other Districts as we get started!
- ✓ **A community-facing Jefferson dinner.** Building on the feedback for additional opportunities to interact with local residents and other tenants in a structured manner, Cortex is going to pilot a community-facing Jefferson-like dinner in the fall.
- ✓ **Additional anchor activations.** We will have three large-scale activations: two in the Commons and one in 4240 Duncan.