

# FIFTYFIVE *forward*



Fall, 2016

## Kids, seniors partner up as 'Book Buddies'

### New summer program promotes literacy through interaction between kids and seniors

Vivid tales from Dr. Seuss and the "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," coupled with adventures through Candy Land, echoed through the Northeast Senior Center on Thursday morning.

Eighteen kids from the Boys and Girls Club of South Central Kansas and seven Wichita-area seniors joined together as "Book Buddies." As buddies, the kids and adults read to each other, play games and get to know each other through a biweekly program.

"It's really a way to help bring value to both the kids and the seniors, recognize the diversity that they have with the generations and then do something that will help to keep the literacy retention high for kids because so much of it is lost over the summer months," said Amy Hamilton, Book Buddies co-creator.

Book Buddies launched Tuesday and will continue every Tuesday and Thursday through July 28. About 40 kids are currently enrolled in the program through the Boys and Girls Club, said Lorylyn Bailey, club summer literacy program facilitator.

The kids meet at the club to practice reading to each other and to get comfortable with the other children. Then they travel together to the Northeast Senior Center, 2121 E. 21st St., where they join their reading buddies.

"The seniors can provide value, and also the kids can bring value to the seniors through interaction that may not normally have taken place," Hamilton said.

The kids are divided into two groups. Students who will be first- or second-graders in the fall visit the center on Tuesdays, while



those who will be in third or fourth grade visit on Thursdays. They are accompanied by older students, Bailey said.

The idea for Book Buddies originated through a program called Advance Kansas in which community members with diverse backgrounds come together for "diversity leadership in action," said Hamilton, of Meritrust Credit Union.

Hamilton and eight other people from various organizations were grouped together and charged with identifying a need in the community.

The group partnered with three nonprofit organizations to create Book Buddies: the Boys and Girls Club of South Central Kansas, Senior Services of Wichita and Plaza North Senior Residences. Hamilton said the goal through Advance Kansas is to then create a program to satisfy a need that the nonprofits can sustain going forward.

"As a group we decided we wanted to do something that would be impactful to children," Hamilton said. "We came to the  
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## A Galaxy Of Stars Draws Crowd To Honor Dawson Grimsley

It was a night of fellowship and laughter, fine dining and elegance, as more than 450 people turned out at the Wichita Hyatt August 20th to honor Dawson Grimsley at A Galaxy Of Stars. The celebration focused on Dawson's recent retirement while honoring the countless years of community support and corporate citizenship which has defined both Dawson and his company.

The crowd mingled during the Red Carpet Ceremony before being treated to an elegant meal of beef tenderloin and roasted chicken. The roast began shortly after 8:00pm with local celebrities Don Hall, Jeff Johnson, Charlie Stark, Susan Peters and Bucky Walters. Rene Steven of Spangles returned for the 9th consecutive year as the evening's roast master. All "roasted and toasted" Dawson with laughter and love. Dawson's youngest brother, Kelly Grimsley, was also on hand and offered up a "surprise" roast of his brother, reminiscing on their childhood antics. During his rebuttal, Dawson offered a heartfelt tribute to his mother Joane who was present in the audience. Joane raised Dawson and his two brothers as a single parent.

Davis-Moore Auto Group served as the Presenting Sponsor. Other major sponsors included: Brand Plumbing/Cook's Heating & Air, Spirit Aerosystems, Foulston-Siefkin, Mr. Horst Hiller, Janet Johnson/Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, Eddy's Everything, Sharpline Converting and KOCH Industries. "A Galaxy of Stars" generates significant funding and awareness for the 10 programs operated by Senior Services. All revenue generated



supports the operations for all programs and allows Senior Services the opportunity to serve over 9,400 senior citizens each year.

This year's event did not disappoint! Early estimates indicate "The Retirement Roast & Tribute to Dawson Grimsley" will be the second largest fundraising event ever for Senior Services! Everyone is anxiously awaiting next year's event!



## Senior Employment Fair Attracts Job Seekers, Employers

A large crowd waited eagerly for the doors to open for the job fair hosted by the Senior Employment Program Aug. 16. Nearly 200 people took advantage of the opportunity to meet with 29 potential employers.

Many thanks to the employers who participated in the fair:

Amedisys, Arby's, Burlington, Catholic Care Center, Cintas, David Moore, First Student, Foster Grandparents, Hamilton Relay, Heartland Research, KETCH, Kansas Department of Health, Manpower, Meadowlark Adult Care, MHA, NORC, Right at Home, SCSEP, Sedgwick County, SER, Senior Services IH Program, SER, Starkey, USD, Veterans Affairs, Vocatuonal Rehab, Walgreens, Winston Brands, WSU and WKFC.



## Book Buddies

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decision that this one was one that we all felt very passionate about, because not only does it help the children, it helps the seniors, and I think it will bring value to the entire community through those interactions.”

Alma Taylor, 83, said she recently moved to Wichita to live with her son for the summer. She said she thinks Book Buddies is a great program, and she likes coming to the senior center to participate.

“I like the way the kids are very interested in doing reading, and whatever they have to offer they’re ready for it,” Taylor said. “I love every bit of it.”

*(Editor’s note: Reprinted from the June 17, 2016, Wichita Eagle)*

## 48th Annual Meeting September 20

The Board of Directors of Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita invites you to attend the 48th annual meeting from 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 20, at the Downtown Senior Center, 200 S. Walnut.

The meeting will acknowledge the achievements of the last year, address the challenges ahead, and recognize employees and volunteers who make it all possible. In addition, new board members and officers and outgoing board members Sarah Feiertag, Carla Shepherd and Bruce McMullen will be acknowledged.

Dawson Grimsley will be the keynote speaker.

Please join us for a complimentary appetizer and beverage reception immediately following the meeting.



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### Tillie's Celebrates 140th Anniversary With Gifts to Nonprofits

Aug. 12 was Rose Day in Wichita. Tillie's Flower Shops thanked the people of Wichita for their 140 years of support by distributing 60,000 free roses.

"We wanted to celebrate our 140th year in business and thank our loyal customers for their many years of patronage," said Ken Denton, owner of Tillie's Flower Shops. "We also wanted to show our appreciation to community service organizations like Meals On Wheels, Ronald McDonald House, and Hospice for their outstanding contributions to our community."

Tillie's also offered its Thank You Wichita Roses in bunches of a dozen on a first-come, first-served basis to any past customer visiting one of its two locations - 3701 E. Harry and 715 N. West Street.

Tillie's offered to deliver 200 roses to each of 12 community service organizations. Meals On Wheels received 900 roses, then delivered them to clients who receive a hot meal.

Tillie's Flower Shops began business as the Harry Street Greenhouse, founded in 1876 by German immigrants, Amos and Elise



Kuechenmeister. Amos and Elise had eight children, the youngest of whom was Matilda (Tillie). In addition to working in her parent's greenhouse, Tillie also helped her brother Sonny operate his restaurant located next door to the greenhouse. She was forced to take over the restaurant when bandits shot and killed her brother during a robbery.