



# fiftyfive Forward

A publication of Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita

SPRING 2016

## Volunteers Needed For Young Moms Mentoring Program

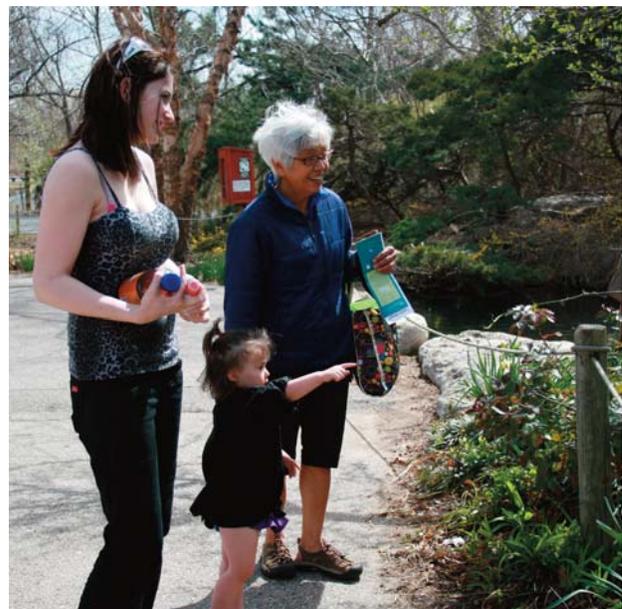
Senior Services is currently looking for caring women willing to commit to a mentoring relationship with a teenage mother.

In partnership with the Wichita Children's Home M.O.M. Program, The Treehouse and Volunteer Kansas, the new program will match mentors with teenage moms, providing them with an affirmative role model and a friend willing to help them grow.

"Studies have shown that mentoring makes a difference," says Debbi Elmore, program manager. "Teen mothers who receive regular mentoring are three to four times more likely to postpone a second pregnancy. Pregnant and parenting teenagers who have mentors have lower levels of depression. Teen parents who are mentored feel less socially isolated, and babies of teen mothers in a mentoring relationship are breastfed longer and taken to the hospital less often."

In the Young Moms Mentoring Program, mentors and mentees share experiences and enjoy activities together. The matches last for at least six months and meet at least eight hours per month, with a minimum of one hour a week.

Being a mentor has its own rewards. Aside



*"She gives me advice, and I know I'm not the only one. We go out and do things we like to do. I have gained a lot. I have a mentor who likes to surprise me and has enriched my life. She is a second mother." - Nicole*

from making a difference in the life of a young mother, mentoring contributes to a greater sense of purpose and allows mentors to feel more connected to the community. Mentoring leads to a longer, better quality of life and improves mental and physical health. We hope to see positive changes in the lives of both the mentors and their young moms.

To volunteer, call 267-0302, ext. 203, or go to [www.volunteerkansas.org](http://www.volunteerkansas.org)



## Spring Senior Employment Fair Set For March 15

As many people have discovered, much to their chagrin, it isn't so easy to land a job once you reach your 50s.

Holly Shipman, like many others, was frustrated when she would apply for a job for which she was eminently qualified, only to be turned away if she hadn't colored her hair to look younger than she is. She had a part-time job at Big Lots, but wanted something more. She was at work when she saw some flyers promoting the spring job fair hosted by the Senior Employment Program at Senior Services, Inc. She came in, signed up, sat in on a couple of Tuesday job club meetings, and then attended the March 17 job fair.

"The best thing about it was the people I went to see knew I wasn't 20 years old from the start," she says. She wound up with two job offers. She chose Dillons and now works there and also at Big Lots.

For over 30 years, the Senior Employment Program (SEP) has been helping older Kansans find employment. Throughout those three decades, they have literally placed thousands of people 55 years of age and older with jobs.

"We find that many people can't afford to retire or don't want to sit home," says Cherie Wenderott-Shields, SEP director. Each Monday she creates a list of available jobs and posts them prior to the Tuesday morning job club. She also posts them on two large job boards in the Downtown Senior Center.

In a time of a tight economy and even tighter job market, Cherie says she still identifies around 100 open positions a week. Many come from the employers, who contact her directly. Others she seeks out from the Internet or job placement centers.

Those wishing to enter the program go through a two-hour mandatory orientation. Cherie helps to counsel them on jobs that would be a good fit for their individual skills and desires.



The program receives up to 800 requests for employment a year, and the Senior Employment Program successfully places at least 500 of those. The program has received awards from the State Department of Commerce for its high placement rate, and has consistently been recognized by the Wichita Business Journal as the most successful job placement program in the city.

The Senior Employment Program had humble beginnings as an informal help wanted board. In September of 1982, it was officially launched as a joint venture between Senior Services and KETCH after a federal grant was received to create a jobs placement program. For 20 years, KETCH officially handled business placements while Senior Services handled in-home and respite care placements. Since 2003, it has been solely operated by Senior Services.

"It's a win-win situation," says Laurel Alkire, executive director of Senior Services. "Seniors are able to remain active, contributing members of society."

The program is currently funded by the Kansas Department of Commerce's Older Kansas' Employment Fund and a Sedgwick County mill levy administered by the Department on Aging.

*(continued on next page)*

## Meals On Wheels Social Worker Hailed As Heroine

The family of Jody Harris is crediting quick action and insight on the part of Liz Buggs, Meals on Wheels social worker, for saving her life.

“Thanks so much for being there for my mom when she was in crisis on June 1st, 2015,” says Debra Miller.

When Jody phoned Meals on Wheels to cancel her noon meal, concerned she was too ill to answer the door, Liz immediately noted her speech was slurred. She kept her on the phone talking while simultaneously calling for emergency assistance.

“You called the ambulance so she made it to ICU quickly and she has recovered from the stroke so she could spend more time with her family,” Debra adds gratefully.

“I’m glad Mrs. Harris is doing well,” says Liz. “She has a lot of fire in her and I’m glad the light didn’t go out.”

“I am grateful that this story is told so it may save others, and educate volunteers as they deliver meals, just how important their service is to the community,” Debra says.

## Employment Fair

*(continued from page 2)*

The Senior Employment Program incorporates two areas. Job seekers have a choice of traditional employment in business settings, or in-home. These jobs include private caregiving, handyman and lawn care services, electricians, painters, drivers, etc. Chester Green, Hila Boyer and Wenderott-Shields comprise the entire staff of SEP.

SEP offers help with preparing a resume, interview strategies, computer training, and quality job leads, in addition to the weekly job club and annual job fair.

SEP has scheduled its annual spring senior job fair for 9 to 11 a.m. on Tuesday, March 15, at



Jody Harris with her granddaughters.



the Downtown Senior Center, 200 S. Walnut. More than 27 prospective employers will be on hand. There is no cost to job fair attendees, but they are required to pre-register by visiting the office at 200 S. Walnut any time between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. up until March 10. Each job fair attendee is also required to attend an orientation prior to the fair. For more information, contact SEP at 267-1771.

*(This article by Debbi Elmore is reprinted from the September issue of The Active Age.)*



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*of Wichita*

200 South Walnut  
Wichita, KS 67213-4777

Address Correction Requested

You are cordially invited  
to a

## Rebranding Launch Party

Monday, February 22, 2016  
3 to 5 p.m.

Refreshments will be served

Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita  
200 S. Walnut • Wichita, KS 67213

RSVP to Chris at 316-267-0302

