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## Supporting over 51 Years of Excellence in Community Services

*Summer Issue*

### Pilot Club

Incredible Years Preschool has new supplies for the classroom and playground, thanks to a gift from the local Pilot Club. The \$500 donation paid for 14 magnetic boards, along with the letters that adhere to those boards, and a few trikes and ride-in vehicles.

The magnetic items can be used in our writing center or in small groups. They help children learn letter names, sounds, printing, word formation and spelling.



Incredible Years Preschool children, and members of the Pilot Club and Early Education Center staff display new resources.

Generous donations enhance our quality programs and help us keep tuition rates low. We are grateful to the Pilot Club and others who understand the importance of early education.

Rhonda Knudson, Pilot Club member, said the organization chose Incredible Years because "one of our goals is brain education awareness. Sunflower's funding has been cut and it needs more resources to achieve the mission of teaching. It is such a good fit."

### Push Day

Sunflower representatives made it clear to Kansas legislators at Push Day that a wage increase for staff members is imperative. Eleven Sunflower individuals and two staff members attended the InterHab-sponsored event.

Sunflower individuals deserve staff members that are adequately compensated because it would help keep turnover to a minimum. To provide wage increases, there must be adequate state funding. There hasn't been an increase in Medicaid rate payments in 10 years, making it extremely difficult to do so.

Sunflower individuals and their families also are concerned about special education. Legislators need to understand that the choices they make have real-life effects on the people we serve, as well as on staff members who help them achieve as much independence as possible.

More than 700 people registered for Push Day, which is an all-time high. It is gratifying to know we stand hand-in-hand with other entities that serve people with developmental disabilities and delays.



Sunflower representatives gather in Topeka for Push Day at the Capitol Building.

## Fundraisers

The community will have special opportunities to support people with developmental disabilities and delays during August and September.

The first-ever Sunflower Ride for Independence Poker Run is set for Saturday, Aug. 26, starting at Sunshine Garage in Larned and ending at Jack Kilby Square in Great Bend – with three

stops in between. Raffles and door prizes are on the agenda, and Jaron Bell, a Kansan who will appear on “The Voice”, will perform.

While we are thrilled to offer this new activity, other long-time events that raise funds and awareness have been set for Thursday, Sept. 21. The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Coffee is at 9:30 a.m. that day, and our annual pancake feed follows from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Prince of Peace Parish Center. Tickets are \$5 each.

As a new part of this event, raffle tickets will go on sale Aug. 1 for a drawing at the pancake dinner.

The coffee and dinner are the official kick-off for our annual Sunrise Campaign. We encourage you to support Sunflower at one or all of these fun gatherings. All proceeds stay in local communities to help your neighbors who need a hand up.

### GBCF “Wish List” Gifting

In her role as our director of development, Connie Oetken decided to take advantage of the Wish List at the Golden Belt Community Foundation (GBCF). She is beyond happy that she did.

Our list was posted for just a few hours. And the next thing we knew, Jim and Kathi Armatys granted our wishes.

It was like one of those Ed McMahon moments



when he would come to the front door with a prize,” Connie said. “I was caught totally off guard and was speechless. I’d like to bottle that moment and drink it in every day. We are so grateful to the GBCF.”



Kathi and Jim Armatys, right, make a donation from their Golden Belt Community Foundation (GBCF) Donor Advised Fund to Connie Oetken, center, Sunflower’s director of development. Executive Director Christy Tustin, left, and Program Officer Sue Cooper represent the GBCF.

The Armatys’ Donor Advised Fund donation paid for a desktop computer, laptop computer, heavy-duty weed eater, lawn mower and an Explore Air 2 Machine, a piece of adaptive equipment that Sunflower individuals can use for craft projects.

Sue Cooper, GBCF program officer, noted the Foundation has been connecting people who care with causes that matter since 1996. It is now taking that mission to the next level.

### Human Resources Director

As our new Human Resources director, Charlene Sawyer wants job applicants to know Sunflower is “not just any employer.”

“You become a member of a team here,” Charlene said. “We look for people committed to the individuals we serve. This is a life-changing career path.”

Sunflower’s slogan is “The Choice for Growth,” which is a fitting way to explain our philosophy. “It refers to growth for the people we serve and our staff,” Charlene commented. “I have never seen such teamwork and passion within an organization.”

New employees appreciate the incredible amount of hands-on training we provide. The training staff allows our employees to feel comfortable before going into the field.

Originally from Ness City, Sawyer earned a bachelor's degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix. Most recently, she worked in Human Resources at an area hospital.

Charlene's knowledge and eagerness to learn combine to serve Sunflower individuals and our workforce. We are fortunate to have found her.



Charlene Sawyer is our new Human Resources director.

### Accomplishments—Judah & Charlie

Sunflower's Early Education Center began working with Charlie and Judah Smith shortly after their release from neo-natal intensive care. The twins were 12 weeks premature, with low birth weights; they were automatically eligible for EEC services.



McKinley Phillips holds Judah, left, and Charlie during a home visit.

Today, Charlie and Judah are thriving, said their parents, Stacy Nowlin and Zack Smith.

"The staff started by helping us learn to encourage the children to roll over," Stacy said. "After Charlie and her brother were able to roll over, we moved on to crawling and walking."

Judah also had feeding concerns "and now we know when to introduce new foods," Stacy added.

If Sunflower wasn't available "we would have to travel to doctors' and therapists' offices all the time," Zack said. "Since services are free, we can make sure the children get services without a financial burden."

McKinley Phillips, early childhood special education teacher, has collaborated with the family since the twins were 5 months old; they were born Nov. 27, 2015. Our multi-disciplinary team is thankful for Stacy and Zack, who have been great partners.

### Accomplishments—Ronnie

After his long-time employer had to close up shop, Ronnie Lewis started searching for just the right job. It appears he may have found it. With the help of Cody Harris, Sunflower's job coach, Ronnie is now employed by Walmart and is extremely excited about this new venture.

He especially enjoys the variety of tasks he is asked to perform, and is always eager to take on something new. His hard work is paying off. Ronnie has attained his goal of 90 days of successful employment.

He continues to work part-time at Sunflower's manufacturing plant to supplement his income so he can maintain his independent lifestyle.



Ronnie Lewis enjoys performing a variety of tasks in his new position at Walmart.

Our Community Employment support team also deserves a lot of credit. This team works with people we serve, as well as others referred to us by Vocational Rehabilitation.

We couldn't be more pleased with this teamwork and Ronnie's success.

## Contributions—April 2017 through July 2017

The following individuals and businesses have contributed to the support of Sunflower's programs and special projects.

Dollars received by the Foundation are gifted on a quarterly basis to supplement local, state and federal funding.

Our supporters and partners are very important to us, and we appreciate the involvement of each and every one.

If you know of anyone we have missed, or if we need to update our information, please let us know.

### Contributions

Assurance Partners  
Chris & Vicki Batchman  
Barry Bennington  
Brown, Isern & Carpenter Law Firm  
Carr Auction & Real Estate  
Tom & Marcia Coleman  
Creative Touch  
Tom & Jan Crissman  
Phyllis Deckert  
Joan Dreher  
Charles Elliot  
Farmers Bank & Trust  
Agnes Finger  
Golden Belt Fire & Safety  
Jim & Pam Jordan  
Dortha Keenan  
Mark Kennedy  
Knights of Columbus #2100  
Karen Kramp  
Harvey & Rosemary Linn  
Fred & Pat Lohrey  
LPL Financial  
Marjorie Miller  
Twila Obrien  
Office Products, Inc.  
Libby Olsen  
Dennis & Kathy Pechanec  
Dr. Jean Pringle  
Sanko Auto Service  
Darwin Siefkes

### (cont.)

Kenny & Cindy Vink  
Monty & Kate Weber  
Roy Weber  
Marc & Diana Webster  
Steve & Joanne Wondra  
Morgan Wright

### GBCF Wish List

Jim & Kathi Armatys

### Invest In Kids

Brown, Isern & Carpenter Law Firm  
Christian Womens Fellowship  
Randy Cobb  
D.S. & W. Well Servicing Inc.  
Neil Frieb  
Christina Genova  
Mary Johnson  
Nex-Tech, Inc.  
Our Saviour Lutheran Church LC-MS  
Ann Parker  
Paul's Oilfield Service, Inc.  
Lois Replogle  
Lavina Scheuerman  
Dale & Andra Seeman  
Karen Shaner  
Eugene & Kristi Stos  
Ron & Kathy Straub  
Superior Essex

### Robin Armstrong Memorial

Ladeska Makings

### Cleo Petz Memorial

Kathleen Collicott  
Doug & Karla Crissman  
Tom & Jan Crissman  
Linda Holloway  
Margaret Holloway  
Jim & Judy Johnson  
Duane & Sharon Lanterman  
Richard & Anne Linenberger  
Ladeska Makings  
Paul Maneth  
Walter & Sandy Nelson  
Mike & Tammy Nicholson  
Bernice Petz  
Alan & Janet Schremmer  
Larry & Kay Thompson

### Jayne Wapelhorst Memorial

Mary Johnson

### Raffle Sponsorship

Brown, Isern & Carpenter Law Office  
Brad & Sarah Shirer

### Poker Run Sponsorship

Carr Auction & Real Estate  
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## **Jon Prescott new Sunflower Diversified Services executive director**

A Great Bend native wanted to continue his career of serving people and was waiting for the just the right opportunity. And then it came along.

Jon Prescott, a 1975 graduate of Great Bend High School, is the new executive director of Sunflower Diversified Services, a non-profit agency. Sunflower serves infants, toddlers and adults with developmental disabilities and delays in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties.

“As I was learning more and more about Sunflower during the interview process, it became apparent this would be a great opportunity to give back, to serve people,” Prescott recalled. “This was more of a consideration for me than any other ‘normal’ motivations to accept a job.

“It is pretty amazing when you think about all that Sunflower does for clients, their families and the community,” he added.

During much of Prescott’s career, he served people at CPI Qualified Plan Consultants, and he has a history of volunteering for non-profit entities. At CPI, he was director of relationship management and strategic initiatives, chief marketing officer and president over a 27-year period. Prescott then worked for Envisage Information Systems, a large independent software development company, for four years.

He lived in Great Bend most of his life; he now lives in Ellinwood. He graduated from Fort Hays State University in 1981 with a degree in marketing and finance. Prescott is a current member of the Star of Hope Board of Directors; Star of Hope helps orphaned children in 15 countries. He also has served on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters board; was president of the Hoisington Jaycees and the Jaycees state director; and was trustee of First Baptist Church.

“Throughout my career, I have been serving people, whether planning for their financial security or helping find homes and sponsors for orphaned children,” Prescott said. “I bring this experience to Sunflower.

“I hope to grow the business side of our agency, while having an open heart for the clients we serve,” he continued. “Sunflower’s philosophy of providing options for independent living remains the same. This is what our services and staff are all about.”

One of Prescott’s early messages to clients and families is “I am an open-door guy. People can talk with me anytime.

“The same goes for this great staff,” he added. “I want them to know I care about them. In my organizational structure, I am at the bottom. I will do whatever I can to lift them up and help them succeed. I will help remove roadblocks, provide training, whatever I can do.”

A big priority for the executive director is to tell Sunflower’s story directly to Kansas legislators. Cuts in funding for people with disabilities have direct results on Sunflower’s clients who depend on Medicaid and other programs.

“This means we have to rely more on donor support,” Prescott commented. “But these are tough economic times because our two biggest industries - oil and agriculture - are down.

“I am sensitive to this and understand business cycles,” he added. “But I want to touch the hearts of legislators. We need to increase funds, not reduce them.”

Prescott plans to keep the road hot between here and Topeka where “I will do all I can to help them understand what our clients are faced with. I have a passion to work on these issues.”

In upcoming weeks, Prescott will have the ear of Jim Johnson, former executive director, who retired last year after 42 years of service.

“I am extremely excited that Jim will be my coach during the transition,” Prescott said. “He left a wonderful legacy and I have big shoes to fill.

“When you think about Sunflower being here for 51 years, it says a lot about the agency’s integrity, leadership and focus on clients. A lot of agencies and businesses don’t enjoy this kind of success and longevity. Jim played a huge role in this.”

Prescott also noted that Sunflower has a strong board of directors and Foundation trustees board.

“These are amazing, giving people,” he said.

Scott Donovan, vice chairman of Sunflower’s board, said Prescott is a “great fit for Sunflower because of his ability to work with someone not against someone. He is a true people person.

“I know that when Jon gets involved in something, he puts his heart, soul and an incredible work ethic into it. Jon is the kind of leader you want to learn from. He will become the new face and voice of Sunflower.”





and



***ALL YOU CAN EAT***

*Pancakes, sausage and drink*

*Thursday, September 21 - 4:00pm to 7:00pm*

***Prince of Peace Parish Center***

***4100 Broadway***

*\$5.00 per person*

*Dine in or Carry Out*

*Tickets available at the door*



## *September 21<sup>st</sup> Raffle Drawing*

*All proceeds to benefit  
Sunflower Diversified Services*

**\$5 per ticket OR buy 5 and get 1 free**

**Winners announced at the Chris Cakes Pancake Feed  
DO NOT need to be present to win.**

### *1<sup>st</sup> Place*

**\$100 EPPI Beef Gift Certificate  
\$100 EPPI Pork Gift Certificate**

### *2<sup>nd</sup> Place*

**\$50 Applebees Gift Certificate  
\$50 Delgados Gift Certificate  
\$50 Perkins Gift Certificate  
\$50 Classic Inn Gift Certificate**

### *3<sup>rd</sup> Place*

**\$100 ZIPS Gift Certificate  
(10<sup>th</sup> and Grant Location)**

### *4<sup>th</sup> Place*

**\$100 Pro Tint Wash & Wax Certificate**

### *5<sup>th</sup> Place*

**\$50 Walmart Gift Card**

### *6<sup>th</sup> Place*

**\$50 Dillons Gift Card**