



BUILDING THE
LANDSCAPE

OF A

Healthy
KANSAS

RECOGNITION GRANTS 2013



Kansas Health Foundation



2013 *Grants*

RECOGNITION

Sometimes the most beautiful field of flowers or most majestic landscape can start with a single plant or seed. Similarly, sometimes the greatest impact for the people of Kansas can begin with one project or initiative. Once that project takes root, lives can be changed. Communities can be rejuvenated. The health and wellness landscape for an entire state can be built.

It's this vision that drives the Kansas Health Foundation's Recognition Grants program, which helps support nearly 100 nonprofit groups, organizations and agencies each year as they strive to meet the health-related needs of their communities and constituents. Through this program, the Foundation has the opportunity to support grassroots organizations throughout Kansas doing innovative and meaningful work in our state.

This report is our annual tribute to the previous year's Recognition Grant recipients. Since 2008, this publication has been used to shine a light on the outstanding work of these organizations. To highlight a sampling of the grantees who received funding in 2013, this report is designed to show how eight grant recipients are using their grant funds to plant hope for a healthier future.

These organizations, like the many other grantees from all of the Foundation's grantmaking, play a critical role in building the landscape of what we hope will make Kansas the healthiest, most productive, most livable state in the nation.

GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION

If you know a nonprofit organization looking for funding for a health-related project, partnership or initiative, the Kansas Health Foundation invites them to learn more about our Recognition Grants program.

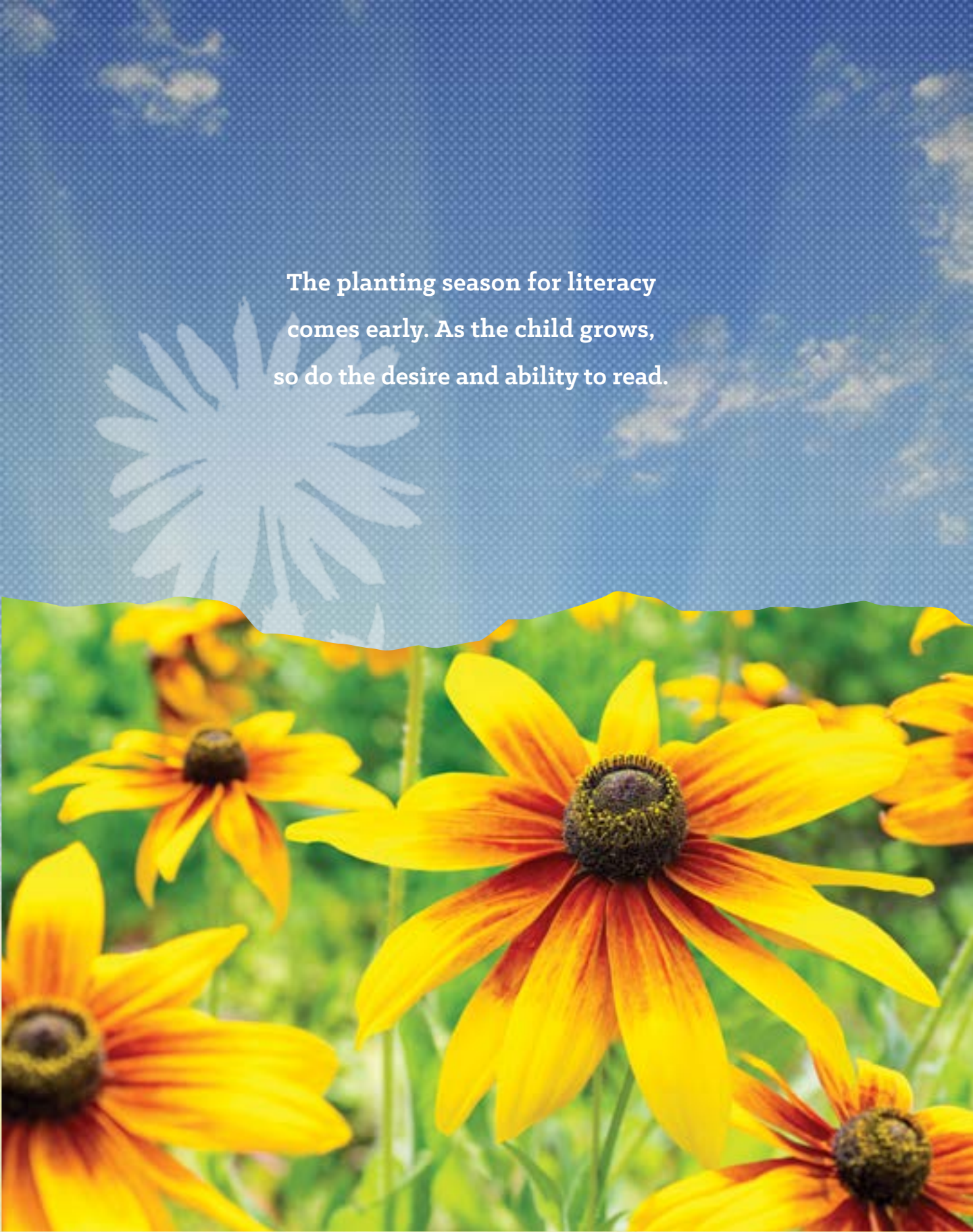
Please visit www.kansashealth.org/grantmaking/recognitiongrants to find out complete program guidelines, criteria and deadlines. Interested organizations can also read more about past grant recipients and find the program's online application.

The planting season for literacy comes early. As the child grows, so do the desire and ability to read.

Parents AS TEACHERS

ABILENE, KANSAS: \$3,500 GRANT





The planting season for literacy
comes early. As the child grows,
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Parents AS TEACHERS

ABILENE, KANSAS: \$3,500 GRANT

There's plenty of comfortable furniture in the room, but Lori Portelli and Kelly Zizelman are down on the floor, right on toddler Hannah's level, with a children's book and a stuffed animal.

"OOO, Snuggle Puppy of mine," the adults read in unrehearsed unison. "Everything about you is especially fine. I love what you are. I love what you do. Fuzzy little Snuggle Puppy, I love you."



Portelli, a coordinator and educator in Abilene USD 435's Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, and Zizelman, Hannah's mother, elicit a hearty giggle from the pretty-in-pink girl with their flawless duet of author Sandra Boynton's rhythmic writing style. Portelli adds to 17-month-old Hannah's happy mood by tickling her with the toy puppy, and the pictures in the book her mom holds also pique her interest.

“What we are really doing is empowering families.”



“Snuggle Puppy!: A Little Love Song” is one of six books PAT educators are distributing during monthly home visits in 2014 to approximately 55 Abilene families enrolled in PAT's “20 Minutes a Day Reading Challenge!” A Kansas Health Foundation recognition grant provided \$3,500 for the project, a majority of which covers the cost of the books.

Open to all families in the district, the program emphasizes the importance of reading to children at a young age. Families with babies and children up to three years old participate. The purpose is to encourage families to set a minimum daily reading goal of 20 minutes and to promote six basic literacy skills identified by the Kansas State Library as essential for the development of competent readers.



“We just use different things to make reading fun,” said Portelli, who is in her first year with the Abilene district but has 22 years of PAT experience. “I try to be engaging and meet each child where they are. I try to follow their lead.”

“We just use different things to make reading fun.”

Portelli and another educator, Beth Norman, introduce families to the program by meeting with them to set goals and administer a pretest to determine reading frequency and literacy skill. The next step is a series of home visits – usually monthly – in which new books are distributed with related materials that highlight techniques for engaging children and developing their capabilities.

“What we are really doing is empowering families,” said Meta West, PAT program supervisor.

In addition to the home visits, parents and children can attend Friday morning play groups at Abilene's First Presbyterian Church. That was part of the allure for Zizelman, whose husband, Bobby, was deployed to Afghanistan with his military unit for seven months shortly after they moved to Abilene in 2013.

“It's been especially nice because I don't have family here,” Zizelman said. “It's been super nice to have Lori come every month and offer the encouragement to know that I'm doing the right thing. We obviously love to read. But as a mom, you can get tired of reading the same book all the time. The book a month is so nice to add to the collection, and Hannah can learn more if she's seeing more.”

Once a food desert,
a neighborhood now flourishes.

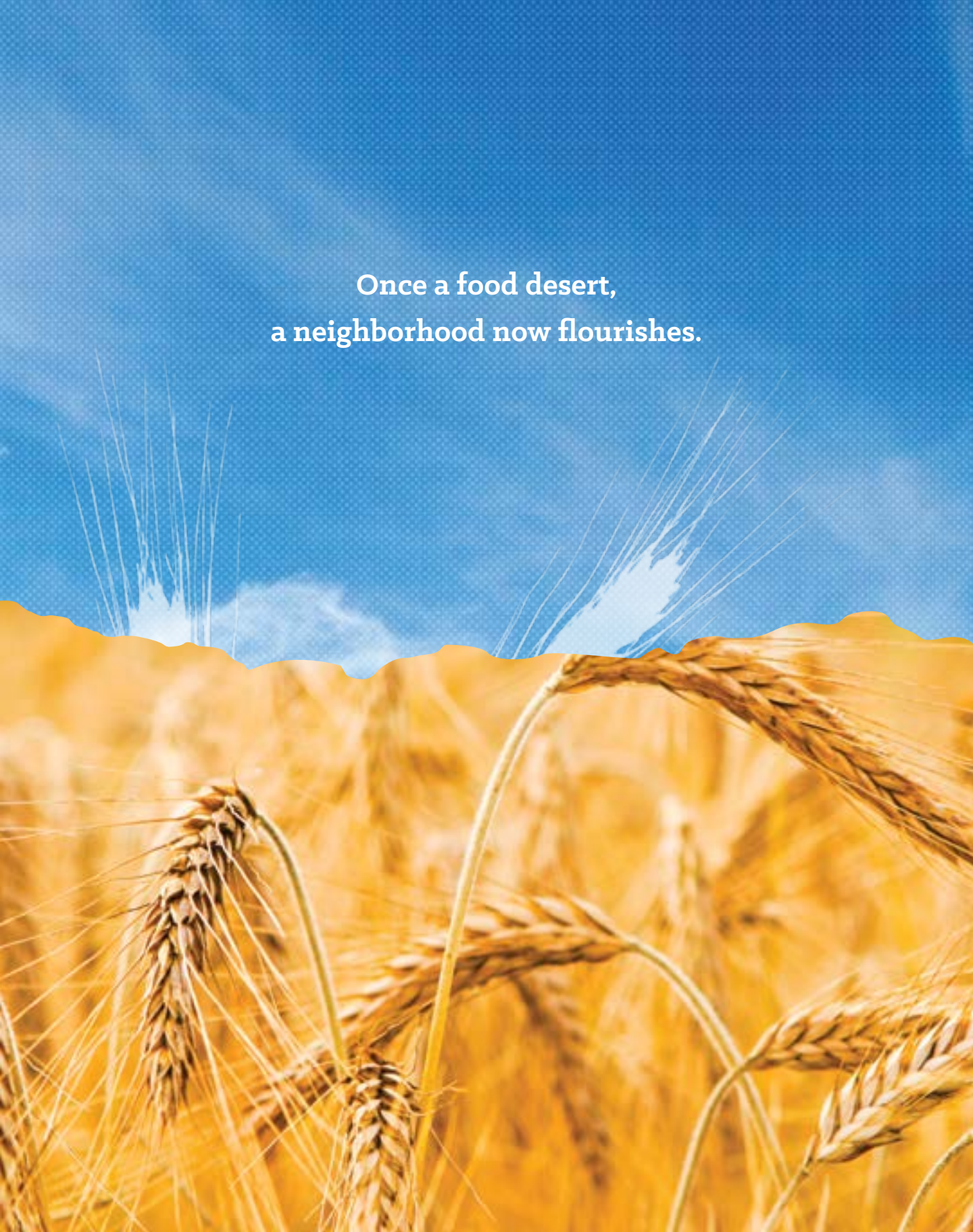
Argentine

NEIGHBORHOOD
DEVELOPMENT

ASSOCIATION

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS: \$25,000 GRANT





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Argentine

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KANSAS CITY, KANSAS: \$25,000 GRANT

A few steps inside the Save-A-Lot grocery store entrance, Gloria, a Hispanic woman, peruses an assortment of jalapeño, poblano and serrano peppers.

Pasillas and tomatillos are also part of the bounty located near a display of cantaloupes and seedless watermelons prominently displayed in the produce section.

Apologetic for her limited English, Gloria still clearly states what she thinks of the selection in front of her.

“This is great.”

For almost a decade, Gloria, a resident of Kansas City's Argentine neighborhood in Wyandotte County, didn't have a grocery store near her home. But in December 2013, Save-A-Lot, a national discount grocer, opened its facility at U.S. 69 and Metropolitan Avenue.

The store's arrival ended Argentine's designation as a food desert – a location in which it is difficult to buy affordable and quality fresh food. But it was a five-year project for which more than \$1.5 million in charitable funds were needed from a mix of contributors to set the wheels in motion.

Ann Brandau-Murguia, executive director of the Argentine Neighborhood Development Association (ANDA), spearheaded the effort to bring Save-A-Lot to her community. It became a primary mission when she was elected to the Wyandotte County Board of Commissioners in 2007.

"Argentine is a great example of the working poor," Brandau-Murguia said. "They work, but they don't make a lot of money, so they have to watch how they spend their money. This kind of place helps them do that."

“ Everybody has to eat, so it's really nice to have a place that's local. ”

While the addition of a grocery store itself was meaningful to the community, ANDA facilitated an even stronger bond with Save-A-Lot. The Association established the Argentine Community Healthy Food Council to serve as a bridge between residents and the store, maintaining the community's input on store operation and providing feedback on food quality, selection and overall services.

"Save-A-Lot has been fantastic in the establishment of this," Brandau-Murguia said. "They've been fabulous to work with as far as getting the kind of products that are valued by the residents who are shopping here."

A \$25,000 Kansas Health Foundation recognition grant funded a portion of the Council's budget. The Council was formed in collaboration with the University of Kansas Medical Center's Community Health Outreach Program.

Save-A-Lot, for its part, has monitored customer preferences in the early months of the Argentine store's opening.

"We are stocking things geared toward the Hispanic community and, to some degree, toward the African American community," Save-A-Lot employee Mark Sturdivant said. "Some of it we still gauge by just putting it out there, and if it sells well, we keep ordering it."

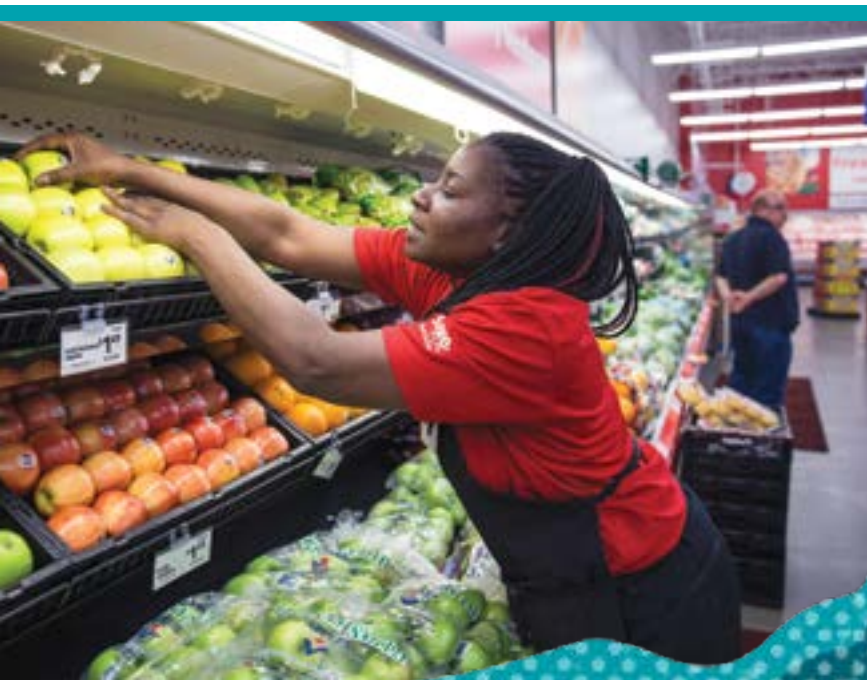
One of the Council's goals is to provide nutritional education to the store's customers. The initiative will promote healthy eating and connect it to the products Save-A-Lot offers to customers. On a larger scale, Brandau-Murguia said the store's early retail success verifies its potential as a social center for the Argentine community of 10,000.



"Save-A-Lot has been fabulous getting the kinds of products that residents are shopping for."

"I just think people appreciate a neat, clean, affordable place to shop," she said. "Everybody has to eat, so it's really nice to have a place that's local. They don't have to catch a bus. They can walk. It's very convenient."

And right inside the door, the path toward a healthier community begins.




To most, it's just a ride.
To the elderly,
it's a connection to life outside.

Topeka **LULAC**

**MULTIPURPOSE
SENIOR CENTER**

TOPEKA, KANSAS: \$18,125 GRANT





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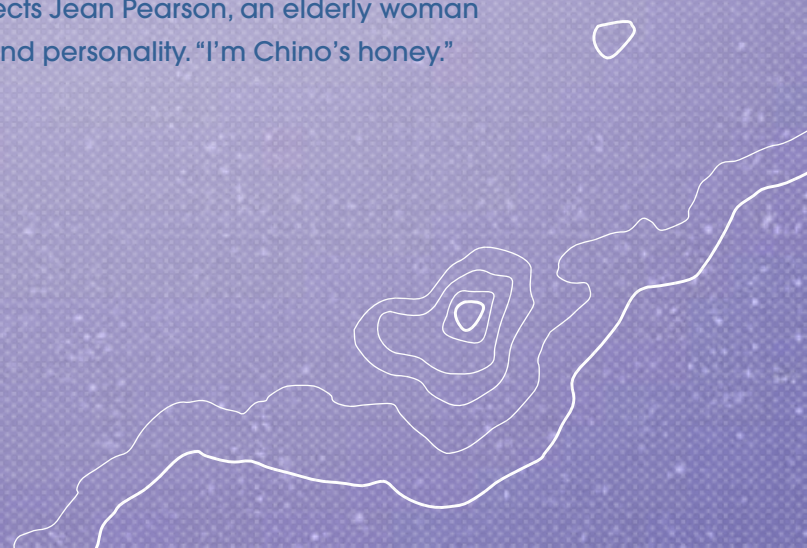
Topeka **LULAC**

**MULTIPURPOSE
SENIOR CENTER**

TOPEKA, KANSAS: \$18,125 GRANT

*T*his is my honey," the man they call "Chino" says as he assists 88-year-old Lois Wright and her walker onto a motorized lift that will load her into the large white van outside the Topeka LULAC Multipurpose Senior Center.

"I'm his honey," interjects Jean Pearson, an elderly woman with loads of spunk and personality. "I'm Chino's honey."



It might look like a lovers' quarrel is unfolding at this converted church across from Topeka Fire Station No. 6 in the Oakland community. But in reality, everybody here loves Armando "Chino" Solis, the longtime driver who transports many elderly and physically disabled Shawnee County residents from their homes to the senior center and on a variety of daily chores.

And Solis loves them.



"There isn't any substitute for people who step in and do the extra," said Orion Jordan, one of the center's board members. "He sure does."

LULAC – the League of United Latin American Citizens – has served Topekans since 1973. In addition to offering transportation services, the center is a Meals on Wheels site and provides recreational opportunities, outreach and education for seniors.

With a recognition grant of \$18,125 from the Kansas Health Foundation and other sources, the senior center offsets some of its

personnel and transportation expenses associated with delivering county residents to medical appointments and its Groceries on Wheels program.

The center operates on a limited budget. During the spring, Solis was the only full-time driver. A part-time employee also transported local elderly residents.

In 2013, the weekday service assisted approximately 225 individuals. A majority of the pick-ups were to bring people to the center for lunch and daily activities.

LULAC drivers also transport seniors to occasional planned activities like dinners, movies and trips to the library.

"It's wonderful," said Wright, a widow who has lived in her current home for more than 50 years. "I don't know what I'd do if I had to give it up. They pick me up around 9 a.m. and we stay at the center until around 1:30 p.m. We have lunch. I can get the same lunch delivered to my house, but it tastes different here. We're all sitting and talking and eating. I enjoy the meal here much more than I do at home by myself."

"Just like you and me, they don't want to sit around at home and be bored."

Solis, who has worked for the center for 23 years, understands the level of independence he provides. In some cases, his vehicle enables the

"There isn't any substitute for people who step in and do the extra."

elderly to continue living in their homes. In all cases, it keeps them connected to their community.

"A lot of people don't think about what it's going to be like when they get older," Solis said. "For some, their families are busy and don't have the time to take them where they want to go. Just like you and me, they don't want to sit around at home and be bored."

Solis has worked with numerous drivers and transported hundreds of Topeka's elderly.

"If I had a picture of everybody I've driven, I'd have a bunch of albums," he said.

But to senior citizens like Pearson, Solis is one of a kind.

"If we didn't have him and this van, I'd have to stay home," Pearson said. "I don't like staying home. I go every day I can."

And Chino is happy to take his honey where she wants to go.



A piece was missing from their lives.
Active recreation completed the picture.



CLASS LTD

COLUMBUS, KANSAS: \$14,461 GRANT

SOUTHEAST KANSAS





A piece was missing from their lives.
Active recreation completed the picture.

CLASS LTD

COLUMBUS, KANSAS: \$14,461 GRANT

S O U T H E A S T K A N S A S

It's Jerry's turn to run under the rainbow-colored recreational parachute on a mild, overcast morning in southeast Kansas.

Fourteen friends – some in wheelchairs – form a circle and hold the parachute by its handles. They raise their arms, giving Jerry the cue to do his thing.

He doesn't disappoint.



The popular figure at CLASS LTD's Cherokee County Service Center in the city of Columbus runs under the middle of the chute, stops, and flexes both arms in his best bodybuilder pose. Staff members and others in the day service program cheer his originality as he continues across the circle.

"Good job, Jerry," CLASS employee DeAnna Goering says. "That was awesome."

Also awesome is the bounty of new recreational equipment CLASS acquired in the spring of 2013 for approximately 400 people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in Cherokee, Crawford, Labette and Montgomery counties. The objective of the acquisition was to improve the health and physical fitness of the people CLASS serves.

Once limited by a sparse supply of used equipment, CLASS used a \$14,461 Kansas Health Foundation recognition grant to purchase a variety of adaptive sports equipment ranging

from baseball, basketball, softball and volleyball to lower impact activities like the parachute, disc golf and fishing. Indoor options like table tennis and Wii video game bundles were also on the wish list as part of the organization's Healthy Activity Initiatives project.

"We're getting them excited to go outside, and they like to be outside," Goering said. "They like to do things and they don't want to be sitting around. We've been able to say, 'Have at it, guys. Have a good time.' They've been really stoked."

"Some of these folks didn't have those opportunities because the service system was so much different."

The excitement level is high for recreation time at the Cherokee County Service Center. David, a client, grabs a softball glove with thick padding in its webbing and pounds his fist into it while he

waits for others to come out of the service center. When they do, he can hardly contain his enthusiasm to throw one of the cushiony softballs, designed to minimize the chances of injury.

"This part is absolutely the best," said Tracy Glasgow, a CLASS team leader who oversees a staff of "coaches" who assist clients with the day program's activities. "This and fishing. We have two days we set every week to take them fishing. Some of them are very high strung, so this activity time makes our day much easier."

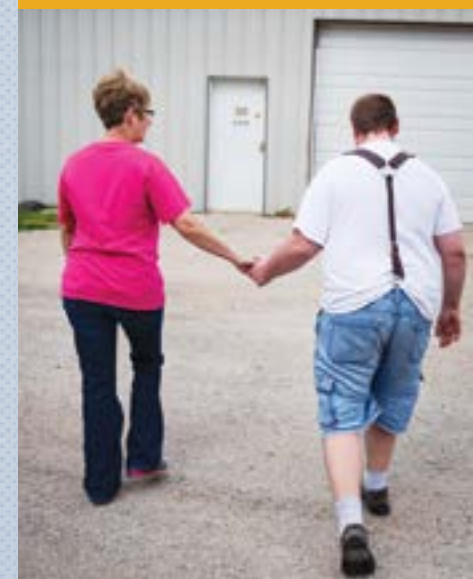
While some play catch with softballs, all gravitate toward the parachute when it is unfurled. Coaches push those in wheelchairs under the parachute and across to the other side when it's their turn to go.

"We're getting them excited to go outside, and they like to be outside."

"Most of us have played sports," Goering said. "Some of these folks, especially the older ones, didn't have those opportunities because the service system was so much different. Institutionalization was the way, so there weren't opportunities for people like there are today."

Gretchen Andrews, a CLASS employee, recalled a time when the organization had five fishing poles, "and three of them were broken." The funding for the sporting goods equipment, which was distributed equally among the four counties, was a game changer.

"This was really the first opportunity for our clients to have new things," Andrews said. "It was exciting to be able to deliver brand new stuff. It felt like Christmas."



One museum curates history
and cultivates the future.

KANSAS

African
American

WICHITA, KANSAS: \$24,900 GRANT

MUSEUM



One museum curates history
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KANSAS

African American

WICHITA, KANSAS: \$24,900 GRANT

MUSEUM

A large group of Maize High School students reaches the second floor of The Kansas African American Museum (TKAAM) in downtown Wichita, and Christyn Breathett enthusiastically greets them with a challenge.

The boys and girls are about to embark on a self-guided tour of the museum's "Journey through Kansas" exhibit. When they reconvene on the main floor of the former Calvary Baptist Church, Breathett, the museum's education director, wants them to share something they learned from their walk back in time.



By the time the visitors leave, Breathett has guided them on a role-playing exercise with groups divided by eye color. The purpose is to parallel and personalize the racial discrimination experienced by African Americans in the 1950s and earlier.

"A lot of them are able to relate to it that way," Breathett said. "With young people, if you're touring a museum and you can't relate, it can get boring pretty fast."

Since Breathett's arrival, the museum has continued to give youth a hands-on outlet for connecting with history. She joined TKAAM in September 2013, shortly after seven current and

former Coleman Middle School students completed "Making History," a program directed by Polly Basore that educated low-income and minority youth on key figures in African American history and fostered a personal connection to them through creative expression. A \$24,900 Kansas Health Foundation recognition grant partially funded the program.

"It's important that they understand different cultures and different things about them," said Jessica Ahmed, whose daughters, Rukhsana and Nadiyah, participated in the program.

"They were very proud of the projects they did, and were eager to get in and do more."

Through activities like photography, journal writing and drawing, students were encouraged to analyze their lives and share their thoughts.

Another student, Travon Brown, said the program gave him an appreciation for historical figures like the late Gordon Parks, a Fort Scott native and photographer whose work is displayed in the museum.

"Our curriculum is different than Making History, but it is designed to have the same impact and is aligned with our mission."

"We went over a lot of history," Brown said. "Most of it was about peoples' lives and them expressing their feelings. We did some of the same."

Breathett, who witnessed the Making History participants' awards ceremony, has fostered a similar spirit with the museum's educational mission. In her first year, TKAAM visited several Wichita USD 259 schools with its "Museum on Wheels" program, exposing students to cross-cultural activities and current exhibits.

In her first summer with the museum, Breathett oversaw "Legacy," a weeklong camp for middle

school students in which participants explored area museums, cultural exhibits and archives; studied people in Kansas history; and met with archivists, curators and historic figures.

"Our curriculum is different than Making History, but it is designed to have the same impact and is aligned with our mission," Breathett said. "It's important to expose kids to things like that and make them culturally aware and accepting of people for their differences. They can learn from these historic people, whether it's from their art or their civic contributions."

"It's important that they understand different cultures and different things about them."



Grassroots financial literacy
grows family and business
budgets in southwest Kansas.

ULYSSES, KANSAS: \$21,308 GRANT

KANSAS
HEAD START
ASSOCIATION



Grassroots financial literacy
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ULYSSES, KANSAS: \$21,308 GRANT

KANSAS
HEAD START
ASSOCIATION

*T*hese are exciting, yet anxious, times for Juan Madrid. The 33-year-old Ulysses man recently started his own trucking company. He has a wife and two young children.

Madrid also has a strong desire to be the best possible provider for his family and employees.

"You face financial stuff every day," Madrid said. "I just don't know anything about finance. Sometimes, I have to trust my bank. But I would like to know more about how the system works."

Madrid and other low-income Ulysses residents are getting that opportunity through the Kansas Head Start Association's Financial Literacy project. Started as a pilot program in four Kansas communities in 2012, the project establishes strategic partnerships with local financial institutions to aid families with efforts to improve their health, well-being and financial stability.

Facilitated in Ulysses through the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL), its initial eight-week program started in June 2014.



“ We’re exposing them to learning how to save and what it’s going to entail. ”

Elida Fowler, a bilingual head teller at the Bank of Ulysses, teaches the course in two-hour weekly sessions at the Ulysses First United Methodist Church. A meal and nursery care are provided.

“We’re exposing them to learning how to save and what it’s going to entail,” Fowler said. “I think a lot of them have a tendency to work with cash. In a lot of their situations, once they get cash, it’s gone. We’re teaching them to deal with the growing part of money, and not just cashing a check and spending it.”

For Madrid, whose company hauls grain from elevators to feedlots and transports construction materials in the area, handling cash-flow issues

is a concern. He is hoping to apply the budgeting and financial management concepts the program implements from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation’s “Money Smart” curriculum.

“Sometimes, I face problems when customers don’t pay their bills really fast,” Madrid said. “I don’t want that to be an issue for paying my guys. I’d like to know some financial methods to keep those trucks running.”

Madrid learned about the Financial Literacy project through his family’s participation in Head Start, which received a \$21,308 Kansas Health Foundation recognition grant to help fund

the statewide program. In Ulysses, the program is unique because it is also open to non-Head Start families because of an additional contribution from two community benefactors.

“We have a lot of community collaboration, the type that’s just easy to find in a small town,” said Jeff Pfungsten, KCSL’s West Region development manager. “That’s enabled us to open the program up to low-income residents throughout the community.

“I think there are other programs in Ulysses like Communities in Schools and Parents as Teachers that will have families who will be able to benefit from this, as well.”

Whether the focus is saving, setting up a budget, establishing credit or any other financial concept,

“I would like them to just be comfortable with learning about a budget and finances, and understand that banks and financial institutions are there to help them.”

the project’s underlying purpose is to create effective relationships between low-income residents and their local financial institutions. Fowler started connecting with a few of her participants in a meeting one month before the first class.

“I would like them to just be comfortable with learning about a budget and finances, and understand that banks and financial institutions are there to help them,” said Pfungsten, who also attended the meeting. “There’s a place to go when they have questions.”



Sheltering the homeless.
Saving food. Sharing a chance.

STEPPING
Stone
SHELTER

LIBERAL, KANSAS: \$6,900 GRANT





Sheltering the homeless.
Saving food. Sharing a chance.

STEPPING
Stone
SHELTER

LIBERAL, KANSAS: \$6,900 GRANT

*I*t seems like every meal is my favorite meal.”

Travis says those words during lunch at Liberal’s Stepping Stone Shelter with a touch of humor that matches any self-deprecating food lover. But coming from one of the facility’s extended-stay residents, it is a sincere appreciation for a basic necessity that many take for granted.



Every day, the homeless shelter, located just a few blocks from the site of Liberal's annual International Pancake Day race with Olney, England, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner to residents and walk-ins. At mealtime, people of various ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds file through the front door to join residents for buffet-style dining.

Stepping Stone board president Susan Lukwago says, "All we ask is you wash your hands."

In 2013, Stepping Stone – the only extended-stay homeless shelter in western Kansas – served 22,234 meals, including 7,108 to walk-ins. To meet those needs, Stepping Stone relies heavily on donations from local churches, organizations and people in the community.

On an early spring afternoon, approximately 30 people fill plates from a table in Stepping Stone's kitchen that includes donated pizzas, desserts and leftovers from the previous two days. But the spread also includes fresh lettuce, tomatoes, carrots and other bright-colored fruits and vegetables.



“ You can feel the joy and the love in this place. ”

“Some might think the meals can't be that good – it's the shelter,” said Lukwago, a registered dietitian. “But we wouldn't want to serve something that we wouldn't eat ourselves.”

Stepping Stone now provides nutritional options proudly and confidently with food stored in a stainless steel Arctic Air commercial refrigerator. The refrigerator, purchased with a \$6,900 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation, replaced three donated side-by-side refrigerators that were prone to leaks.

“When stuff would be leaking, the food would go bad,” Lukwago said. “We'd have to throw away whatever little stuff we had.”

Access to quality food is essential at Stepping Stone, which serves as a satellite distributor for the Kansas Food Bank to several area agencies. The ability to safely store perishable items assists Stepping Stone in trying to provide a balanced diet to those it serves.

That impact varies from day to day, but remains constant. In 2013, the shelter housed an average of nearly 15 residents per day.



“With residents, there is no pattern,” said Pat Allsbury, Stepping Stone's executive director for 11 years. “With walk-ins, we notice there are more at the end of the month, when money might become a little tight.”

Lukwago understands the challenges facing unsettled families and individuals. Before coming to the United States as a teenager, she fled from Uganda to Kenya with her family at age 10 to escape unrest in her native country.

As a dietitian, one of her goals is to ensure Stepping Stone provides healthy options, particularly to families with children.

“I saw a child eating carrots,” Lukwago said. “It was with ranch dressing, but at least we're making progress.”

“I saw a child eating carrots. It was with ranch dressing, but at least we're making progress.”

For Travis, who had started a second-shift job at a local beef processing plant during his time at Stepping Stone, the shelter's efforts to provide quality meals didn't go unnoticed.

“I appreciate that they are doing what they can to serve healthy food,” he said. “You can feel the joy and the love in this place.”

A little town with a lot of heart builds
on its spirit of community.

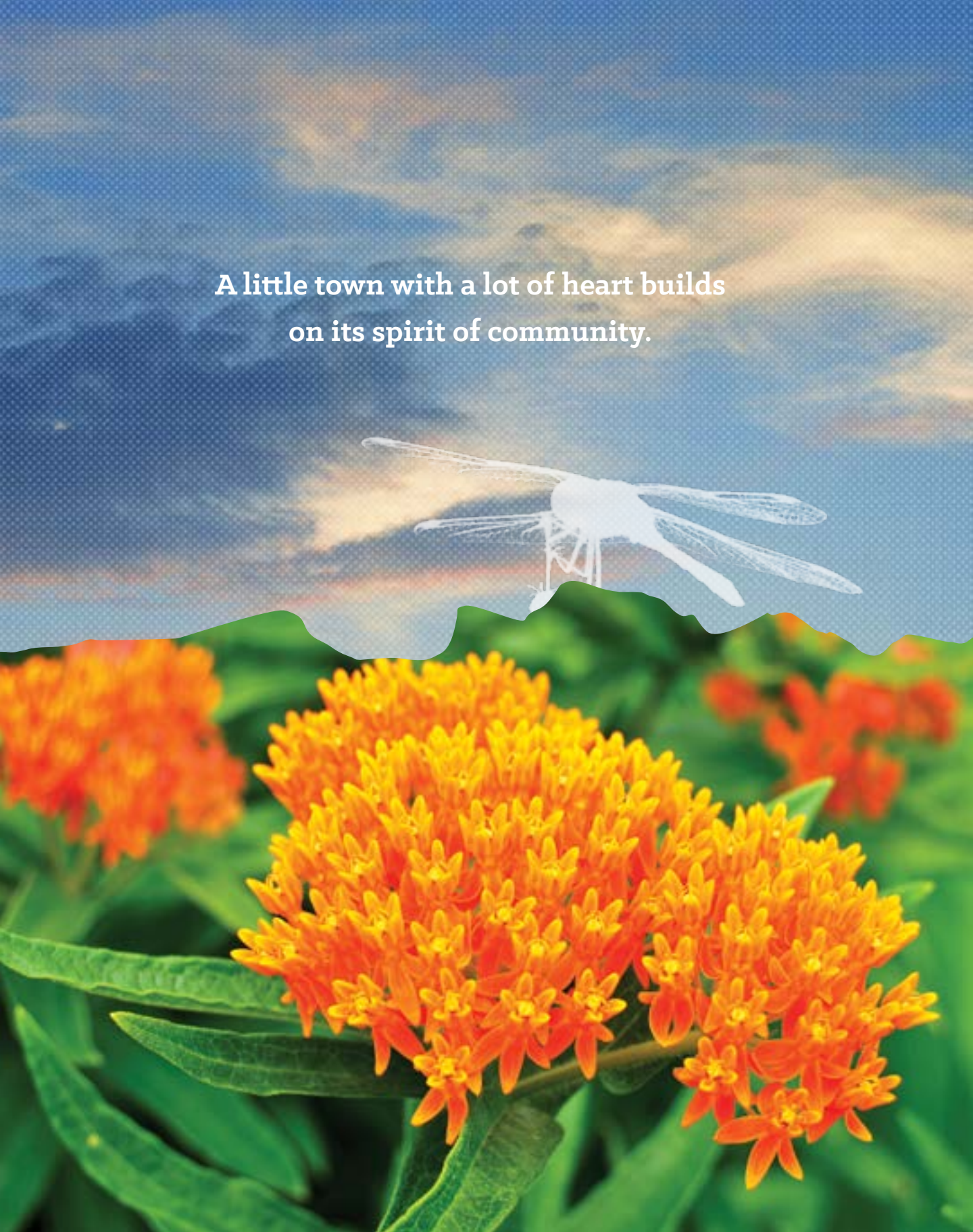


CITY OF
Lincolnville

LINCOLNVILLE, KANSAS: \$15,000 GRANT



A little town with a lot of heart builds
on its spirit of community.

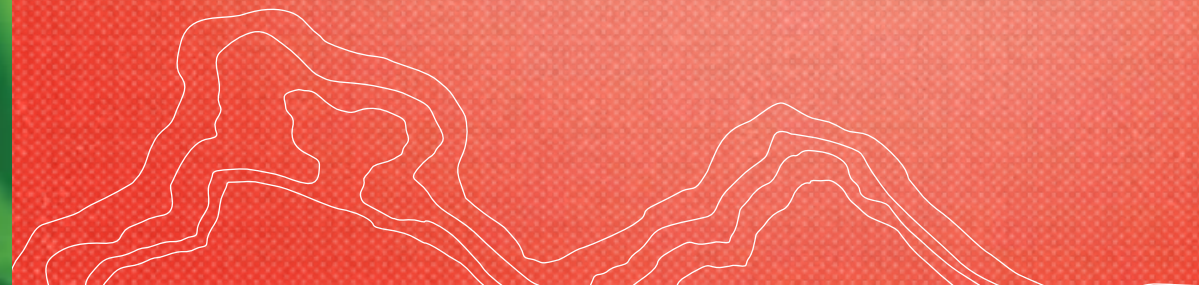


CITY OF
Lincolnville

LINCOLNVILLE, KANSAS: \$15,000 GRANT

The heartbeat of tiny Lincolnville can be found in its community park.

It is located less than two blocks from U.S. 77, the highway that ushers most travelers through the Marion County town in mere seconds. The park is a wonderful setting for public gatherings, a game of basketball or a little time on a swing set.





few other viable recreational outlets in LincolNville. The Fit-Trail system the city acquired features wooden equipment and is accompanied by instructional signage for each station showing users how to execute various stretches and strength and agility exercises.

“We have a lot of our population that will just walk the town in the evenings,” LincolNville Mayor Barb Kaiser said. “You can get a good mile in, but that gets boring after a while. That was a lot of Sherri’s thinking: Let’s give them something else to do.”



“You can get a good mile in, but that gets boring after a while. That was a lot of Sherri’s thinking: Let’s give them something else to do.”

Since late September 2013, the park has also provided an option for LincolNville’s 210 residents to get their hearts beating a little faster. LincolNville used a \$15,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to purchase and install a 20-station Fit-Trail exercise system that winds through a small grove of trees on the park’s south side.

Sherri Pankratz, a LincolNville City Council member who also serves as Parks and Recreation chair, spearheaded the idea to add a fitness trail to the park, which has been the site of other improvement projects in recent years.

“I just thought it always sounded neat,” Pankratz said. “I thought it was something kids could use before they start volleyball and football. And to some of the older people in town, it’s a way to get them moving.”

Aside from nearby Centre High School and a baseball field on the west edge of town, there are

Pankratz, a Kansas Department of Transportation employee, consulted with City Council members and mapped a quarter-mile course for the stations. The first station – a calf stretch – is next to playground equipment close to the park’s community building.

“Sherri is a go-getter,” Kaiser said. “She sat down and put pencil to paper and brought the plan to us. Once we saw what she had lined up, there was no question that it could work.”

Pankratz took a couple days off from her job to dig post holes for the various stations.

“ Once we saw what she had lined up, there was no question that it could work. ”

Construction of the trail was completed in one day, mostly through volunteer labor that included several students and their parents.

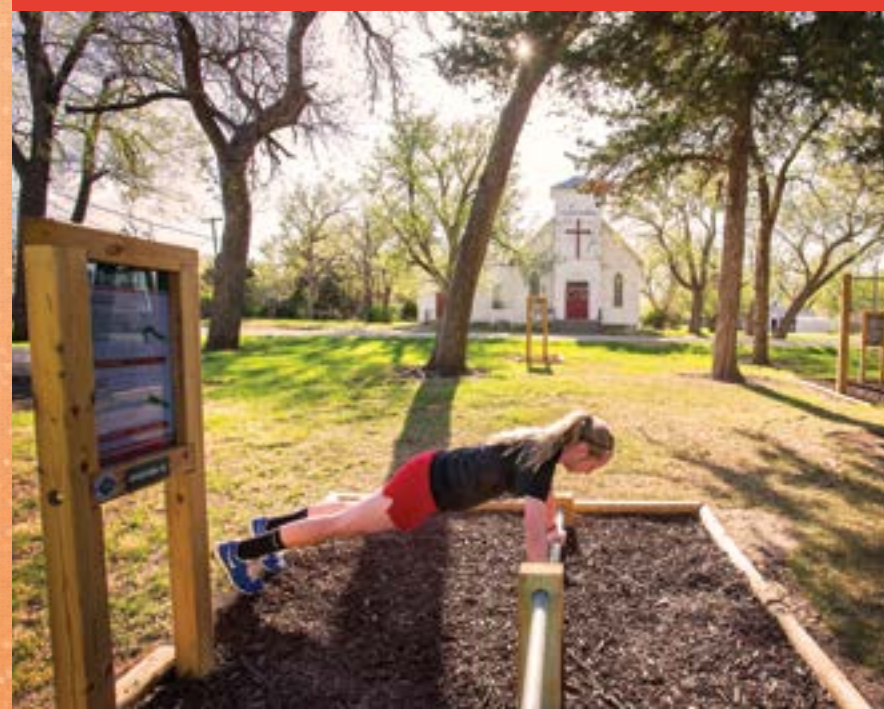
“The kids showed up. We gave them shirts to wear, and we had moms hauling water to kids so they could pour the Quikrete for the posts,” Pankratz said. “The city paid for hot dogs and buns to feed them, and we had some watermelon donated.”

Pankratz would like to add a concrete walkway adjacent to the fitness stations to make the trail more accessible for senior citizens. Another

project is widening a walking bridge, which crosses a small drainage ditch that divides some of the stations.

In its present form, however, the fitness trail adds to the park’s appeal for people of all ages.

“I like it a lot,” said Taylor Peterson, a Centre High student whose mother, Cristina, is a City Council member. “We go running all the time, and after we run, we do cool downs with lots of stretching. Now that we have this trail, it’ll make it a lot more fun to do that type of stuff.”





309 E. Douglas • Wichita, KS 67202 • 316.262.7676 • 1.800.373.7681 • kansashealth.org

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