

Chester Owens • YouthBuild

Chester Owens contacted the staff at YouthBuild, a program of the United Way of Wyandotte County, in the spring 2008. He needed volunteer help with Strugglers Hill Community Garden. The trainees stepped forward and were exposed to the do's and don'ts of community gardening, the benefits of a community garden and the importance of making a positive change in their community.

Owens introduced, "Who I Am Makes a Difference," a program he initiated with the trainees. Trainees are given a blue ribbon with the words "Who I Am Makes A Difference" and they are encouraged to pass this ribbon



on to someone they encounter who has affected them in a positive and caring way.

Owens is a recognized local historian. His knowledge of the past and especially of the people who helped shape that past has been shared with the trainees. They know that one can grow up in the Northeast area of KCK and succeed in life and most importantly "make a difference" in their community. In addition, Owens has helped YouthBuild identify other funding sources that will allow the trainees to participate in an intergenerational mentoring program.

YouthBuild is thankful that Owens has chosen to devote some of his valuable time to the YouthBuild trainees.

Helen Gibson • Cancer Action

Helen Gibson has been a volunteer for Cancer Action since 1990. During that time she has amassed a total of 23,676 precious hours of service to Cancer Action. Gibson has always liked to sew and crochet so it was natural that she would respond to a small advertisement recruiting persons interested in sewing.

At 92, Gibson still enjoys crocheting afghans and making bed pads for patients of Cancer Action. Gibson is a member of the Gladstone AARP 2970 service unit. They meet twice a month and this group holds the record among Cancer Action service units for making the most bed pads.



"I think it's important to help others who need help," Gibson noted. She continued to say that she knows what families go through when cancer strikes because two of her eight children have died from cancer. Her son, Donald, died in mid-February after a courageous battle with bone cancer while her

oldest daughter, Juanita, died of breast cancer in April 2008.

Gibson does find time to brag about her family, that include eight children, 24 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren and 27 great-great-grandchildren. Cancer Action is proud to honor Helen Gibson 2009 Volunteer of the Year.

Clayton Westgate • Big Brothers Big Sisters

Clayton Westgate has been a Big Brother for just under a year, a very enriching year. Only 22 years of age, Westgate is a detention deputy for the Wyandotte County sheriff's office. He is a seasoned volunteer having experiences while in school and through church. Westgate's other passion when not working and not being a "big" is to fish. He has served as youth chairman for the Leavenworth Bass Club.

Big Brother Clayton Westgate has been matched with Little Brother Ernest in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for seven months. Ernest is a 13-year-old Little Brother who has



six siblings. He lives with his mother and siblings. His mother juggles her time between work and her children. She enrolled Ernest in the program to give him the opportunity for more one-on-one time with a caring adult. Westgate and Ernest get together every week for a few hours. They love fishing, Frisbee golf and just hanging out.

In Westgate, Ernest has found that positive adult male friend he needed at this time in his life. Westgate has found an energetic young man, Ernest, to mentor and to share his love of fishing and the outdoors.

James Taylor • El Centro

Jim Taylor wears three different volunteer hats at El Centro, Inc. He started volunteering in the IT Department where he assists the director in repairing and updating computers since he has an extensive computer background. When he learned that funding for the senior program was very limited, he immediately became involved as fund-raiser, organizing a bake sale, garage sale, dance and dinner. He went to several businesses and organizations to ask for donations and support for these activities. He assisted in raising over \$4,000 in 2008 for the senior program. Lastly, Taylor is the "resident" volunteer disc jockey for senior birthday parties and for other social events. He made a guest appearance as "Elvis" at the senior sock hop!



His volunteer work has a positive effect on the agency's programming, staff and program participants. By assisting the IT director with computer repairs and updates, he saves time and money for the agency. Through his assistance in fundraising, he helped the seniors program by raising money. Through his music, he brings joy and laughter to the seniors.

James Taylor is the kind of volunteer that every organization dreams of having.

Congratulations Wyandotte County United Way Volunteer Honoree David Pierson

Dave Pierson has been a volunteer with KVC Behavioral HealthCare for 14 years and donates books, toys, games and clothing to the children served by KVC. Thank you to all KVC Wyandotte County Volunteers!



www.kvc.org • 913.322.4900



A special thanks to all Red Cross volunteers!



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