



# The Crossroads Chronicle

## Crossroads Awarded Smart Start Grant

### News You Can Use!

- Our Head Start/Early Head Start centers have now officially started the 2015-2016 school year. For more information about enrollment or our current waiting list, please call **Denise McClure** at (405) 292-6440 ext. 341.
- Crossroads is now hiring! For more information about current openings in the counties we serve, please visit our Employment page on our web site: [www.crossroadsyfs.org](http://www.crossroadsyfs.org)



On June 30, Crossroads was awarded a four-year grant for the oversight of the Smart Start Oklahoma contract for Pottawatomie County, thereby allowing the Crossroads Smart Start grant to continue. In addition to the award, a funding grant for the Seats For Safety program was also awarded to continue the car seat program through the end of 2016. This will be the fourth consecutive year that the United Way of Pottawatomie County has funded Crossroads for this program.

During the new grant cycle for Crossroads Smart Start, the focus of the contract is changing. The new four year grant cycle will focus heavily on facilitating systems change. Our goal is to identify barriers to School Readiness in Pottawatomie County and then move forward to eliminate those barriers. This includes identifying obstacles in the homes, schools and communities of children birth to age six. Smart Start Oklahoma has partnered with Michigan State University to provide training and technical support to local Smart Start Community Coordinators to implement the ABL (Above and Below the Line) change system.

In work conducted by Crossroads Smart Start over the past year, many barriers have already been identified. Meetings with community members, service providers and surveys conducted within Head Start Parent Meetings have provided insight into what is happening with our children and families. Many of these obstacles can be tied back to toxic stress. In speaking with Head Start parents, many have identified adverse childhood experiences in their children's lives. As identified in research, these experiences can produce attention deficit, hyperactivity, oppositional defiant issues and also cause children to suffer lifelong chronic illnesses.

We are excited to move forward with this systems change process. The goal is to make lasting change in our communities and in the lives of our children and families.

—Donald Pyeatt, Smart Start Coordinator

### In this issue:

2015 Annual All-Staff Summit	2
All-Staff Award Recipients	3
Volunteer Spotlight: Mary Howkins	4
Tai Chi at the Shelter	4
Community Events	5

## New Child Safety Seat Regulations

As of **November 1st, 2015**, the child safety seat guidelines are changing. Here is a preview of Oklahoma's newest policies:

- All children age 2 years and under must be rear facing unless the child exceeds the seat's rear facing weight and height limit(s).
- All children under the age of 4 years must be in a car seat with an internal harness system.
- All children from four years of age to seven years of age (if under 4'9" tall) must be properly restrained in a child passenger restraint seat or booster seat.

Let's continue to do our part to keep children safe!

## 2015 Annual All-Staff Summit: Fifty Years of Opportunity

On August 3, 300 Crossroads staff members convened at Journey Church in Norman for the Annual All-Staff Summit. The theme for this grand occasion was 50 Years of Opportunity, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Head Start program. The event was indeed a birthday party to remember.

**Byron Jackson** of Possibilities Inc. (pictured center) facilitated a dynamic, energetic morning presentation entitled *Possibilities: A Coat Of Many Colors*. Mr. Jackson reminded participants of the perpetual value of diversity in education as well as the importance of encouraging one another on difficult, stressful days.

**Marla Parish** (Director of Administrative Services), took staff members on a journey through time with her presentation entitled *The History of Head Start: Revisiting Its Roots*. The presentation also featured the world premiere of the new Crossroads Youth & Family Services Head Start promotional video, featuring our talented staff and adorable students.

Executive Director **Lisa Winters** spoke of how far Head Start has come and her excitement for the possibilities of the program in the next fifty years.

As the day came to an end, the overwhelming consensus from staff members was that they felt inspired. The All-Staff Summit reminded them of the importance of what they do on a daily basis. They are, as Director of Residential Services, **Terran Manning** stated: "the faces these children will remember as they grow older and become successful. What you [Head Start/Early Head Start staff] do really makes a difference."

This year, Crossroads Youth & Family Services looks forward to providing every opportunity we can in Cleveland, Comanche, Pottawatomie and Seminole Counties. Please enjoy pictures from our day of learning, inspiration and celebration!



## ***2015 Annual All-Staff Summit Award Winners***

### **Above & Beyond Award Recipients**

Dana Heinrichs • Tonoah James • Madonna Fox • Gregg Fryday • Ursula Walker  
Christabel Suthers • Donald Pyeatt • Kayla Woodberry • Annette Lyles • Cherish Daughtry  
Jacquelyn Fantoni • LaKeshia Williams • Robin Harris • Danny Reese • Destiny Walker  
Michelle Watson • Denise McClure • Karen Webb • Debbie Cornelius

### **Longevity Award Recipients**

#### **Five Years of Service**

Sherri Autry, Moore EHS Teacher • Sondra Brush, Midway Head Start Teacher  
Antoinette Finley, Children's Chateau EHS Teacher • Michael Hoskins, Midway Head Start Teacher  
Angela Nobles, Education Engine Assistant Teacher • Judy Shaw, Seminole EHS Teacher  
Katrina Smedley, Moore EHS Teacher • Fern Tomlinson, Education Engine Assistant Teacher

#### **10 Years of Service With Crossroads**

Vanessa Kelley, Main Street EHS Teacher • Juanita Kemp, Union Street HS Cook

#### **10 Years of Service With Head Start/Early Head Start**

Chalonda Wallace, First Start EHS Teacher • Derease Wright, Children's Chateau EHS Teacher

#### **15 Years of Service With Crossroads**

Shirley Martin, Human Resources Assistant

#### **15 Years of Service With Head Start/Early Head Start**

Amy Gregg, Learning Tree Center Director • Jancy Johnson, Seminole EHS Teacher  
LaDonna Pham, Tecumseh Head Start Teacher • Shelli Pratt, Seminole Classroom Support  
Towanda Ross, CSBI EHS Teacher

#### **20 Years of Service With Head Start/Early Head Start**

Donna Benson, Assistant HS/EHS Program Director  
Stacie Permetter, Neighborhood HS Teacher/Center Director

#### **Head Start/Early Head Start Employee of the Year**

Floretta Campbell, Learning Tree EHS Teacher

#### **Youth Services Employee of the Year**

Melissa May-Dunn, Youth Services Specialist

#### **Spirit of Crossroads**

Ruby Myers

## Volunteer Spotlight: Mary Howkins



For three months, there has been a new, friendly face on the second floor of the Main Street office in Norman. Whether organizing files for the Fiscal Department or making hundreds of copies for staff meetings, **Mary Howkins**, our Administrative Volunteer, is an integral part of the daily activities in the Administrative offices of Crossroads Youth & Family Services. From her perspective, Mary refers to herself as our staff extension. “What I do helps to free up time for staff members to focus on more important work,” Mary said of her weekly assistance.

For Mary, a recent retiree, volunteering with Crossroads Youth & Family Services has been mutually beneficial: “Getting out of the house is great, but I also know what I do is very valuable to the Head Start program here. For me, it’s about the intrinsic value.”

Having previously worked with the Head Start program in Mississippi, Mary has taken note of the program’s progress and is genuinely excited about what Head Start will look like in the next fifty years. “I started first grade in 1957—well before there was a Head Start program. I did not attend preschool nor did any of my peers because there were simply no programs available. Working in Head Start later in my life showed me how important this program is to children in America. I hope Head Start will continue its push to reach every child, everywhere.”

When Mary isn’t helping out at Crossroads, she enjoys reading and spending time with her pets. We are appreciative of all Mary has done here and we hope she will continue to be our “staff extension” for a long time!

If you are interested in volunteering with Crossroads, please contact [Kayla Woodberry](#).

## Slow and Steady: Tai Chi at the Emergency Youth Shelter



Volunteers at the Emergency Youth Shelter are a key factor in the success of the program. From college students to grandparents, individuals sign up to spend time with the shelter residents, serving as mentors and positive role models at a tumultuous time in their lives. They participate in many shelter activities and occasionally present a new and exciting activity to the children.

Recently, Mike Wahl dropped by the facility and inquired about teaching the children Tai Chi. This ancient form of martial arts focuses on slow, meditative body movements that are used to promote a sense of inner peace and calm. The benefits of a tai chi program are numerous: in addition to improved flexibility and muscle strength, it also an effective part of treatment for depression, toxic stress, high blood pressure and digestive issues.

Mike’s motivation for bringing tai chi to the shelter is simply to teach the children skills that will be beneficial to them throughout their lives. As a Professor Emeritus of the College of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma and frequent world traveler, Mike knows all too well how stress can affect individuals in even the most ideal situations. He is looking forward to showing the children how tai chi can be used to relieve their stress or anxiety at any time or any place.

We are so grateful to have Mike at the shelter and we are looking forward to great results from this program!

—Source: [MedicineNet](#)



# Community Events

The Lawton Community will be presenting the second “Open Streets Lawton-Fort Sill” on Friday, October 2nd, 2015 from 4pm-10pm. The location will be on “C” Avenue from 2nd to 5th Streets in the downtown area of Lawton. This event is presented by a multitude of community organizations to include the Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma Coalition. Open Streets is a newer concept that turns city streets into a temporary public park with activities for the whole family to get people moving. Open Streets is a national movement with more than 90 documented initiatives in North America. Open Streets events are increasingly common in cities seeking innovative ways to achieve environmental, social, economic, and public health goals by temporarily closing streets to automobile traffic, so that people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing, playing, and socializing.

Some of the tentative events scheduled to take place at Open Street include: Sidewalk Sales, Bicycle Obstacle Course, Fitness Classes, Imagination Playground, Food Trucks, Giant Board Games, Stress Relief activities, Live Music, Market Vendors, Kids Crafts and more.

For more information, visit the [Open Streets Lawton-Ft. Sill Facebook page](#).

**OPEN STREETS**  
Come PLAY in the Street!

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2ND, 2015**  
**4PM-10PM**  
**C AVENUE FROM 2ND-5TH STREET**

<b>ACTIVE ZONE</b>	<b>CHILL ZONE</b>	<b>PLAY ZONE</b>
• BIKE LANE	• YOGA	• IMAGINATION PLAYGROUND
• FITNESS CLASSES	• FARMERS MARKET	• LAZER TAG
• 5K RUN	• LIVE BANDS	• GIANT BOARD GAMES
• SMOOTHIE BIKE	• FOOD TRUCKS	<b>&amp; MORE</b>

**Open Streets Lawton- Fort Sill**

**Boo On The Bell** is a family-friendly event sponsored by Safe Events For Families in Shawnee. The date for this event will be October 22-24 at varying times and locations. Activities include:



- Live music
- Ghost tours
- Zombie parade
- Boo bingo
- An old-fashioned carnival, complete with rides and games
- Hot dog eating contest
- Pie eating contest
- Hay rides
- Pet costume contest & parade
- Trick or treating (note: this activity will take place on Saturday, October 24 from 3:30pm—5:00 pm)

For more information, visit the [SEFF Shawnee Facebook page](#) or the [SEFF website](#).

