

ALL OUR KIDS MISSION:

To increase the availability of responsible mentoring relationships for at-risk youth in the Greater Omaha metropolitan area and to provide more scholarship opportunities so that these young people can become employable, productive citizens.

WINNERS CIRCLE MISSION:

To improve access to educational opportunities through a program of early intervention that targets disadvantaged elementary students by providing goal setting, positive role models and incentives to recognize and celebrate academic achievement and good citizenship.

**one kid
at a time**

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Sharing time, expanding worlds

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR OUR KIDS

All Our Kids, Inc & Winners Circle

Connecting One Kid at a Time

2008, Issue 1

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERISM BENEFITS MORE THAN STUDENTS

For many large corporations, giving back has come to mean more than writing a check. These days companies are making a bigger impact on their communities with a more hands-on approach to corporate philanthropy.



Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) and UPS are two companies whose employees volunteer their time with The Partnership For Our Kids.

"UPS encourages their employees to participate in the community for its betterment," says Carl Rigatuso, a staff supervisor at UPS. The UPS corporation has taken a stance to improve social conditions that exist within the communities it serves. One way they have chosen to do this is by joining in the efforts of The Partnership for Our Kids.

Currently, UPS has a group of employees serving as a mentoring team for All Our Kids. Their team works specifically with a group of 30 seventh grade students at McMillan Middle School.

OPPD has made it a mission to help Omaha's youth be the best they can be. Forty-one of its employees serve as Goal Buddies for the Winners Circle program and 8 employees serve as a mentoring team for the All Our Kids program.

Rubin Carter, OPPD division manager of Corporate Diversity and Advocacy, believes that the students view Goal Buddies and mentors as examples of what they can be in the future if they stay on the right track. "It gives them hope and allows them to

recognize they can be productive members of society," says Carter.

But the students aren't the only ones benefiting from the program, "The joy and brightness from the kids when we are there is priceless," says Carter. He says that being involved with The Partnership For Our Kids gives their employees a more enlightened perspective.

Rigatuso agrees, "It helps them recognize the needs in our community and gives them an opportunity to make a difference," he says.

In addition to being able to make a difference, Carter says the program benefits OPPD as a whole by providing an opportunity for the company to educate the schools, students and parents on what services their company has available.

Rigatuso says that it also helps open students' eyes to new job opportunities and helps UPS in their recruitment efforts for the future.

As an incentive for their employees to become involved in community organizations like The Partnership for Our Kids, OPPD offers time off of work so that employees may fulfill their volunteer obligations. "Employees are grateful to give their time, talent and services and we recognize their efforts on an ongoing basis," says Carter.

Several other local corporations have also joined in volunteering with The Partnership For Our Kids, including AAA Auto Call Center, Carlson Hospitality, Creighton University, Cox Communication, CSG Systems, Federal Reserve Bank, First National Bank, Hyatt Hotels, Kutak Rock, Lozier Corporation, Metro Community College, Omaha Steaks, Omaha World Herald, Wells Fargo, Weitz Funds, Union Pacific Federal Reserve, and She*La Fashion Boutique

For more information on how your company can become mentors or Goal Buddies with The Partnership for Our Kids, please call Sarah at 930-3000 or Beth at 557-6380.

Who is VinNebraska?

Over the past 19 years, VinNebraska has been helping raise money for charities in the community through an annual affair, touted as Omaha's *original* wine tasting and auction event. Over \$1 million in funds has been raised for metro organizations including American Cancer Society, Omaha Public Library Foundation, Girls, Inc., KVNO, Easter Seals Nebraska and of course, All Our Kids, Inc.

In 1989, the VinNebraska Foundation was established by a core group of local wine enthusiasts who wanted to share their passion for wine with others as well as make a positive impact on the community. From this desire, the VinNebraska Wine Event was born and has grown larger and more successful each year.

The VinNebraska committee credits much of the event's success to the support of the many wineries and winemakers that travel from across the globe to be a part of the event, donating their time, expertise and their high quality wines.

Although the VinNebraska Wine Event has grown and evolved over time, the committee's mission remains the same, exposing Omaha to fine wine and helping to better the community.

2008 VinNebraska Committee

Michael Bird
Dave Deao
Steve Drehsen
Dennis Hein
Roger Kadavy
Don Meredith
Art Meyers
Claudia Moseley
Steven Seidel
Ed Thompson

VinNebraska Wine Event, Another Success!"



Raise a glass to another successful VinNEBRASKA Wine Event! The staff of All Our Kids would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2008 festivities. "It has made a tremendous difference to All Our Kids, Inc. and to the 500 at-risk youth that we serve," says Julie Hefflinger, President of All Our Kids. "We are so grateful to VinNebraska for their partnership with our organization."

Twenty-two of the country's most revered wine makers traveled great lengths to be a part of what has been referred to as Omaha's original wine event. "It's now the biggest event of its kind in the Omaha metro area and has raised over \$1 million dollars for charities, like All Our Kids, since 1989," Hefflinger says. The 2008 wineries and vineyards represented at the event included: Esterlina Vineyards, Elk Cove Vineyards, European Wine Imports, Everett Ridge Vineyards, Flora Springs Winery, Goosecross Cellars, Gruet Winery, Honig Vineyards & Winery, Landmark Vineyards, Michael David Winery, Mill Creek Vineyards, Panther Creek Cellars, Quady Winery, Robert Sinskey Vineyards, Seghesio Family Vineyards, Silver Oak Cellars, Smith-Madrone Winery & Vineyards, Taylor Family Vineyards, The Meeker Vineyard, Trentadue Winery, Twomey Cellars and V Madrone Cellars.

This year's event had special significance, honoring one of VinNebraska's most devoted wine makers, Stuart Smith of Smith-Madrone Winery. "Nobody has done more for VinNebraska than Stu," says Dave Deao, a founding member of the VinNebraska committee. Smith has been a part of the VinNebraska Wine Event as a vintner from the event's infancy and has also served as the

auctioneer for the live auctions since the very first event. As the story goes, Smith stole his position right from the hands of a pro! "We hired a professional auctioneer who knew nothing about wine and was doing a terrible job of raising money. Stu told me he couldn't take it anymore, went up on the stage, and took over the auction," recalls Deao. "He did a great job and has been doing it ever since." As a tribute to Smith, his image, as well as that of the Smith-Madrone Winery, was featured on invitations, posters and other promotional pieces for the 2008 VinNebraska event. "Stu Smith has really helped to put the VinNebraska event on the map," says Hefflinger. "He is both charming and knowledgeable about the wine industry and his expertise makes our auction more successful every year."

The weekend celebration kicked off with a gourmet dinner and wine reception for over 225 guests at Happy Hollow Country Club. A sumptuous seven course meal was served and each course was expertly paired with three premier wine selections.

The festivities continued on Saturday with a wine tasting and grand auction at the Mutual of Omaha Dome. Over 800 guests sampled from many of the attending wineries' hand picked selections and bid on unique gift items, concert tickets and extravagant vacations. In addition to the vast selection of auction items available for bid, an exquisite 18 karat white gold diamond pendant, valued at nearly \$4,000 and donated by Borsheim's Jewelers was also raffled off.

While the exact amount made at this year's event has yet to be calculated, it is estimated that over \$150,000 was raised for All Our Kids Mentoring Program. All the funds from the event will go towards defraying the costs of student programming. A special thanks goes out to all of the event sponsors. "Sponsors really help to raise more money for the charity," says Hefflinger. "Their auction purchases increase the revenue and in turn this helps our charity to reach more disadvantaged children in the community, so that they can be more successful in school."

More New Faces

With a new partner, a new name and plans for a lot of new expansion, the All Our Kids team has added a few new faces to keep pace with program growth.

Dontae Allen



Dontae Allen has been with All Our Kids since the fall and serves as a Program Assistant for the North Omaha Bright Futures Pilot. Dontae says his favorite part of the job is getting to know all the students he works with.

He is responsible for the sixth grade classes at Howard Kennedy Elementary and Belvedere Academy.

Dontae believes that the merger of All Our Kids and Winners Circle is a step in the right direction because of the consistency it will provide for the students. "Now there will be positive people working in their lives from kindergarten through high school," he says.

Dontae is a graduate of Bellevue University and has a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education. Dontae was active in athletics through out his entire college career, playing both football and running track.

Still involved in athletics, Dontae plays indoor football and is currently a member of the Iowa Blackhawks. Dontae also enjoys playing in the park with his 2 yr-old son Jamari, working on projects around the house and is looking forward to the newest edition of the Allen family, due in May.

Rebecca Blum



Rebecca Blum joined the All Our Kids staff in July. She serves as the agency's Financial Manager and is responsible for overseeing all of the organization's financials

but was attracted to her position with All Our Kids for an entirely different reason. "The thing I love the best about my job is the cause it serves," says Rebecca. "I like that I get to work for such a dynamic purpose while utilizing my accounting degree."

Rebecca has both an Associate's degree in Business Administration from Iowa Western Community College and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from

Buena Vista University. While attending school she was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Outside of work, Rebecca enjoys playing volleyball and soccer, scrapbooking and spending time with her husband Shadon, three-year-old son Micah and their Siberian Husky, Suka. The Blum family is also looking forward the upcoming birth of their newest son. "I'm due in June, and just the anticipation and preparation is very exciting for us," says Rebecca.

Michael Caldararo



Michael Caldararo is another recent addition to the All Our Kids staff. On the job since mid-December, Michael serves as a Program Assistant for the North Omaha Bright Futures Pilot and enjoys being a part of the team. He is also excited about the program's growth. "Everyone is enthusiastic and genuine," says Michael. "I believe the new merger will allow us to provide a more complete service and reach greater numbers of youths in our community."

Michael is responsible for leading the 6th grade group at Conestoga Elementary and the 7th grade group at Monroe Middle School.

Michael received his Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Public Administration with a focus on public management at UNO. "I am excited to be involved in school because all the people are so interesting and motivated," Michael says. While in school, Michael has become an active member of the University's rock climbing club and says he really enjoys the rush that climbing provides.

Michael has many other outdoor hobbies including fishing, camping and running with his dogs, Raj and Simon. When winter rolls around Michael enjoys reading long books, watching television, working on crosswords and doing puzzles with his girlfriend, Sarah.

Katie Kendall



"It is refreshing to work for a place that makes a difference in the lives of kids," says Katie Kendall, the newest Program Assistant for the South Omaha Pilot project, about what she love best regarding her job.

Katie started her position with All Our Kids this past December and has taken on many responsibilities. Currently Katie's student groups comprise 88 students, including the 6th grade classes at Jackson and Field Club Elementary as well as all of the high school students.

Katie is really excited to be a part of the new partnership and foresees a brighter future for all the students involved. "If someone reaches out to a child early, chances of that child succeeding are increased. We will be able to collectively touch each child at every stage of their lives," she says.

Katie attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha majoring in Psychology and History. In the course of her studies she completed research involving depression amongst Native Americans living on the Omaha reservation vs. those who lived off the reservation. This research was published in the American Journal of Psychology.

Outside of work, Katie is a bit of a pool shark and plays in two local leagues in which she has received several trophies.

Renee Wingert



Renee Wingert started with All Our Kids earlier this winter and works as a Program Assistant for the North Omaha Bright Futures Pilot project. Renee has dived right into her many duties, including overseeing student transportation, planning student meetings and presenting timely student curriculum. She is responsible for two student groups, including the 6th grade students at King Elementary and the 7th graders at McMillan Magnet School.

Renee says the merger will allow staff to be with the students and their families over a longer period of time, which in turn will provide a bigger impact on their lives. "I think bringing in more resources and caring staff will only make our program better," says Renee, in regards to the recent merger of Winners Circle and All Our Kids staff.

Renee is a graduate of Briar Cliff University and has her Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. After college Renee spent a year in Edinburgh, Scotland volunteering at a homeless shelter.

When Renee is not working she especially enjoys visiting new places. She says she is already preparing for a couple of summer trips. "I am planning some fun vacations to Washington DC and New York -places that I have never been to!"

The Partnership For Our Kids

Its official! The recently merged teams of All Our Kids Inc. and Winners Circle Educational Foundation will now formally be known as, The Partnership for Our Kids. The new organizational name received a unanimous vote by the group's board of directors at their first quarterly meeting in January. Plans for branding and marketing of the organization's new identity are currently being strategized and will be launched this Spring.

The agency merger brings more than a name change. On February 8th, the Winners Circle team moved its home office to the Burlington Capital Building and will now share office space with the All Our Kids team. "The Burlington Building office space is beautiful, we are privileged to have such an accommodating and inspiring place to call home," says Beth Smith, Executive Director of Winners Circle program. Smith says that the Winners Circle team is eager to grow with the All Our Kids team. "Our move allows us to plan for future growth as well as establish a plan for the big picture. Being close to All Our Kids gives us a better foundation to work towards that cause," Smith says.

The Partnership for Our Kids is planning for both expansion, as well as structural changes over the course of the next three years.

All Our Kids staff members will be working to expand the number of schools and students they serve. By 2010, All Our Kids plans to be serving 1,150 students in 7 North Omaha

schools, including Belvedere Academy, Conestoga Magnet, Howard Kennedy, King, Kellom, Miller Park and Franklin Elementary as well as two South Omaha schools, Jackson and Field Club Elementary. "I am excited at the prospect of further expansion of programming we offer to students," says Melissa Mayo, All Our Kids Program Manager.

Over the course of the next 3 years Winners Circle, who currently serves over 4,000 students will focus on expanding their staff. While Winners Circle will still add one new school to those they serve in the 2008/2009 academic year, the team's main objective will be to improve the staff to school ratio, which Smith believes will only better the service they provide. "It should allow for better communication and implementation of our program," says Smith.

Although the expansion of All Our Kids, Inc. and Winners Circle programming will take more dedication, planning and hard work, the teams of The Partnership for Our Kids feel they are well prepared to serve more students and do it even better. "Our mission with any endeavor we embark on is to do it in a quality manner," says Mayo. "It would be a disservice to our students to give them anything less than the best."

M a k e a d i f f e r e n c e , b e a v o l u n t e e r



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think."

Robert Frost

"We have promises to keep, and miles to go before we sleep."

Marian Wright Edelman

"Children must have at least one person who believes in them...It could be you."

Colin Powell

"We don't put character in the lives of children by lecturing them. Only if they see successful adults in their everyday lives can they become successful adults themselves."

INTRODUCING THE WINNERS CIRCLE STAFF

Serving almost four thousand students at nearly a dozen schools is no small feat, but for the staff and volunteers of Winners Circle, it is all in a day's work. We thought our readers might enjoy an inside look at some of the team members that drive the Winners Circle Program.

Beth Smith



"When I learned what the Winners Circle was about I knew this was where I belonged," says Beth Smith the Executive Director of Winners Circle Schools.

Beth has been with the organization since 2003. She manages all aspects of the program including marketing, budgets, HR, recruitment and employee supervision. Beth says her favorite part of the job is bringing schools, parents and corporations together to execute one vision of encouraging at-risk students to set goals and celebrate their achievements.

Beth has over 25 years of experience in the corporate business and travel industry. Before coming to work for the Winners Circle program, Beth served in many corporate roles ranging from Office Manager to Vice President. Because of her work, Beth traveled the world and gained a passion for different cultures. While she will not admit one favorite place to visit, there are a few places Beth found to be most exciting. "East Africa, Israel and riding the Orient Express train for 3 days from Singapore to Bangkok were highlights," Beth says of her travels.

Beth is also an active volunteer in the community and has donated her time and business savvy to many charities including Child Saving Institute, St. Vincent DePaul Society, Stephen Center, Catholic Charities Advisory Board and many church groups.

In her down time, Beth enjoys spending time with family and friends, gardening and traveling to new places.

**Editor's Note: Since production Winners Circle has hired a new Program Assistant, Siobhan Duffy and a new Program Coordinator, Tiffany Matlock. Please look for their stories in the next issue.*

Amy Anderson



"By positively effecting the youngest generation, we are positively effecting every generation," says Amy Anderson, regarding what she loves best about being on the Winners Circle staff.

Amy serves as the Executive Assistant for the Winners Circle Program. On the job for over a year now, Amy has a myriad of duties, which keep her extremely busy. While primarily responsible for assisting the Executive Director, Amy is also responsible for a variety of accounting and clerical duties as well as helping the program staff with events and celebrations.

Amy is a graduate from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and has her degree in French with a minor in English.

When she is not working, Amy is keeping fit. "I am a certified yoga instructor and mentor 20 people currently going through the yoga training program," she says. Amy has been doing yoga for 11 years and teaching it for two years. "Yoga keeps me sane and it is great for the body, mind & spirit," she says.

Josh Jessen



Josh Jessen has been with the Winners Circle team since early summer of 2007 and serves as the team's Goal Development Coordinator.

Josh keeps very busy with his many responsibilities including overseeing student goals at all

11 Winners Circle schools and ensuring they are both challenging and beneficial to each student. This means Josh must analyze nearly 4,000 goal charts each quarter to make certain each classroom is fully participating in the program.

In addition to his duties as Goal Development Coordinator, Josh also serves as a Goal Buddy for special education classrooms at Fontenelle and Mount View Elementary. As a Goal Buddy, Josh visits the classrooms twice per quarter to reinforce in the students they can and will achieve their goals. "It makes me truly happy to know that I am a positive part of their lives," Josh says of his involvement with the students in the program.

Josh received a Bachelor's degree in English from Portland State University and went on to get his Master's degree in teaching from Western Oregon University.

Outside of work Josh is just as busy. "With the birth of our son Peter, time for hobbies is a bit limited," Josh says. Peter Jessen was born on December 7, 2007 and is growing every day. Josh is enjoying being a dad and says that when Peter is not eating and sleeping, he loves listening to music.

Joanne Poppleton



Joanne Poppleton serves as a Program Supervisor and has been working with the Winners Circle team for 4 years. As Program Supervisor, Joanne's duties are many and include managing the

Program Coordinators and delegating implementation of programming elements in each of the Winners Circle Schools. Joanne also has three schools for which she is individually responsible for executing program elements including Kellom, Field Club and Fontenelle Elementary.

Joanne has a lot of experience managing multiple responsibilities at once. Before working for Winners Circle Joanne spent five years as a stay-at-home mom to her four children. "I loved every minute of it," she says. Joanne is also an active member in her church and community. She volunteers as the T-ball Commissioner for Prairie Lane Sports Association and is also a member of the AID Team for her church. The AID Team coordinates events such as fish fries, teacher's luncheons and many others.

Outside of working and volunteering, Joanne says she especially loves being with her family. "I enjoy camping and spending time with my four children."

Kris Morgan



"I really enjoy being active in the schools and providing the students with motivation to accomplish their goals," says newest edition to the Winners Circle team, Kris Morgan.

Kris serves as a Program Coordinator for the team and is responsible for program operations at four of the eleven Winners Circle schools.

Kris received a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a non-certified endorsement in Special Education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Kris is a devoted mom to 20 month-old daughter, Joss. She is also an active volunteer for a women's group in her community. "I am currently the 'working moms moderator' for a local moms group called MyOmahaMommies.com," she says. Kris adds that she takes great pride in planning events for the other moms in the group.

When she is not working or volunteering with her moms group, Kris enjoys spending time with her family, taking her dog to the park and geo-caching.