

**OUR 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.**

**one kid  
at a time**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

**PAGE 2**

All Our Kids and Winners  
Circle Form Partnership  
Preparing for Life  
after High School

**PAGE 3**

Speaker Inspires  
North Omaha Students  
Wine Event Will  
Benefit All Our Kids

**BACK**

Our Mission  
All Our Kids Staff

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Sharing time, expanding worlds

# ALL OUR KIDS, INC.

**connecting one kid at a time**

A publication for supporters, partners, mentors, and all our kids

2007, Issue 3

## MENTORING PROGRAM EXPANDS TO SOUTH OMAHA

All Our Kids has teamed up with Omaha Public Schools to launch a three year pilot program designed to serve students who live in South Omaha. Through the program, All Our



Kids will now provide group mentoring and academic support services for sixth grade students attending Jackson and Field Club elementary schools.

“Based on previous experience, we believe there are a lot of students in South Omaha who need academic support and scholarship opportunities,” said Myriam Molina, bilingual coordinator for All Our Kids. “Over the next three years, a total of 150 at risk students from the two schools will participate in group mentoring activities designed to help them prepare for middle school and high school.”

“Community donors are funding the expanded program, which enrolled its first fifty students in September.” Molina said approximately 80 percent of the students are Hispanic and speak both Spanish and English.

“It’s sometimes difficult for Spanish speaking parents to communicate effectively with their children’s teachers, so we’ll be helping with that. We are able to explain the

details of our program as well as our expectations and goals to the parents that do not speak English fluently,” said Molina. “In addition, we have translated program support materials into Spanish to assist the Hispanic families that will be served by this project. Good communication is really important to the success of our program. We want to make sure the parents are involved in all of the activities and committed to the development of their students.”

The students attend monthly meetings which focus on academic issues and social skills. They also participate in regular recreational activities. Forty-six students traveled to the Bellevue Pumpkin Patch in October and many are now looking forward to holiday skating parties in December.

“All of the kids have been really excited about the program. They’re only in sixth grade, but they’re already talking about college and how we can help them accomplish their goals,” Molina said. “We have also received tremendous support from principals, teachers, liaisons and parents.”

Molina said that she hopes to bring Latino leaders from the community into the classroom to serve as role models for the students. She added that bilingual mentors are still needed for the South Omaha project. For more information about the project, call the All Our Kids office, (402) 930-3000, or visit [www.allourkids.org](http://www.allourkids.org).

## one kid at a time



As the old man walked the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead

of him. The boy was picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally catching up with the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The youth answered that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun.

“But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish,” countered the man. “How can your effort make any difference?”

The young man looked at the starfish in his hand before throwing it to safety in the waves.

“It makes a difference to this one,” he said.

Author unknown

## All Our Kids and Winners Circle Form New Partnership

All Our Kids and the Winners Circle Educational Foundation have joined forces in an effort to better serve at-risk youth in the Omaha community. Winners Circle merged into All Our Kids, Inc. this September. Together both organizations will assist more than 4,000 students from kindergarten through high school this year.

“This new partnership makes a lasting promise to kids that says – *If you aim high and aspire to college or trade school, we’ll help you get there with mentoring, academic support, tutoring and financial aid.*” said Julie Hefflinger, president of All Our Kids.

“We know that our combined programs will help these children reach their fullest potential,” added Jerry Hoberman, one of the founders of the Winners Circle.

First introduced in 1996, the Winners Circle program works to improve academic achievement and citizenship through goal setting, parental involvement, school pride and rewards. It currently serves more than 3,500 students from kindergarten through grade 6 at eleven Omaha Public elementary schools.

All Our Kids has been serving at risk students since 1989. The program offers mentoring and scholarship programs to students from the Omaha Public Schools. Today, All Our Kids provides mentoring opportunities for approximately 500 youth in grades 6-12 with academic potential and offers post-secondary scholarships for graduates of the program.

Together, All Our Kids and Winners Circle will serve 12 elementary schools including Belvedere, Saratoga, Conestoga Magnet, Mount View, King, Howard Kennedy, Miller Park, Kellom, Fontenelle, Field Club, Jackson and Franklin. It will also serve students at Monroe, Lewis and Clark and McMillan Middle Schools and Central High School.

Look for more information about the All Our Kids, Inc./Winners Circle merger in the next issue.

## Preparing for Life after High School



All Our Kids high school students are no longer simply dreaming about their futures – they’re taking the first steps toward making those dreams become reality.

The 12th graders recently attended sessions designed to help prepare for college and other opportunities.

“Our meetings with the seniors have focused on life after high school,” said Jayna Berens, program assistant. “Speakers visited with the kids about college scholarships, resume writing and

interview skills. We also attended the EducationQuest College Fair at UNO.”

Berens said the 10th graders are working with mentors and staff members to set personal and academic goals. They are also completing service projects in the community.

“Our students helped out at the Salvation Army earlier this year – filling backpacks with school supplies. They also helped dismantle a Halloween display at the Omaha Children’s Museum,” Berens said. “They really like contributing to the community. They had a great time and approached each task with very positive attitudes.”

More activities are scheduled for the coming months, including the annual Career Fair, college visits and the Race for the Kids.

**TO BECOME A MENTOR FOR ALL OUR KIDS, CALL 930-3000.**

## Speaker Inspires North Omaha Students



*Liz Murray with students*

She turned her street smarts into classroom triumphs and went from homeless to Harvard. She is Liz Murray – now an author and inspirational speaker who recently traveled to Omaha to share her story of success.

“The entire sixth grade class at Belvedere Academy and several students from McMillan Magnet school were able to attend Liz’s presentation. It was very powerful,” said Melissa Mayo, program manager with All Our Kids.

The child of drug-addicted parents, Murray told the students that she began supporting herself at age 10. At age 15, her mother died and she started living on the streets. Realizing the value of education, she overcame incredible odds to finish high school in just two years and earn a scholarship to Harvard. Her message is one of hard work, determination and commitment to achievement.

“The students really connected with her and her message,” Mayo said. “Her story of overcoming adversity and unfortunate circumstances was truly inspirational.”

Murray’s presentation was just one of several activities offered to students enrolled in All Our Kids’ Bright Futures Partnership. The sixth graders are participating in several activities designed to introduce them to other students and teach them about the program’s activities and expectations such as goal setting and team building. Middle school students are completing their community service projects and all of the students will be invited to celebrate the holidays with a party at Hope Skate.

This is the third year of the Bright Futures Partnership pilot program. We have student groups in Lewis and Clark, Monroe and McMillan Middle Schools as well as Belvedere Academy, Conestoga Magnet, Howard Kennedy and King Elementary Schools. “Our goal is to serve more sixth graders and continue to support our middle school students with academic services and mentoring sessions,” Mayo said. “We are working to bring new programming ideas, activities and curriculum to make their experience a memorable and rewarding one. We want every one of our students to reach their personal and academic goals.”

## Wine Event Will Benefit All Our Kids

Winemakers from across the country will gather in Omaha next spring for a very special two-day event, which will benefit All Our Kids once again.

VINNebraska 2008 will get underway Friday, March 28, with a winemakers’ reception and gourmet dinner at Happy Hollow Country Club. Those attending will enjoy a sumptuous seven course meal, expertly paired with the perfect selection of wine. Professional winemakers will be seated at each table to help guests fully enjoy the tasting experience. The evening’s activities will also include silent and oral auctions.

The festivities will continue on Saturday, March 29, at the Mutual of Omaha Dome with hors d’oeuvres and wine tasting from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. A Grand Auction featuring several exquisite items, will be held from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

“This year’s auctions will include several one-of-a-kind wine-related gifts, trips, gift certificates and much more,” said Julie Reisbig, development coordinator at All Our Kids. “We’re very grateful to again be a part of this very special event, and we’re looking forward to another wonderful weekend.”

VINNebraska has been organizing wine tasting and auction events in the Omaha area since 1990, with all proceeds going to local charities and community organizations. Last year, more than \$145,000 was raised and donated to All Our Kids, Inc.

Attending this year’s event will be representatives from many renowned wineries, including Flora Springs Winery, Silver Oak Cellars, Goosecross Cellars and many others.

Sponsorships for Friday’s event are \$3,000 for a gold table and \$5,000 for a platinum table. Table sponsorships for Saturday’s Wine Tasting and Grand Auction are \$700, \$800 and \$1,000. Individual tickets for the Saturday’s Wine event are \$70 if purchased before March 1, 2008. Please call All Our Kids at 930-3004 or visit [www.allourkids.org](http://www.allourkids.org) for more information.

**M a k e a d i f f e r e n c e , b e a m e n t o r**