

LITTLE DIXIE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

January 2008

Vol. 3 Issue 1

NeighborWorks®
CHARTERED MEMBER



Little Dixie Digest

1968 * 40 years of Helping People, Changing Lives * 2008



Ellen Trantham

2007 Employee of the Year



Arron Cochran (Rattan Head Start) picks up her Christmas bonus at Little Dixie's annual meeting on Dec. 14. More than 250 agency employees attended the event in Hugo.



Faces in the crowd at Kiamichi Technology Center in Hugo, who were gathered for the Little Dixie annual meeting.



Amy Armbrister quacked her way to a free AFLAC duck during the annual meeting. Several insurance agents spoke to Little Dixie employees at the meeting.

Grant will allow start of YouthBuild program

Little Dixie Community Action Agency has been awarded a grant of \$643,859 to start a YouthBuild program in southeast Oklahoma.

The funds, from the U.S. Department of Labor, will allow Little Dixie to recruit 30 young adults ages 18-24 who will work toward their GED while learning job skills and serving their community by building affordable housing. The YouthBuild program will work in conjunction with Little Dixie's Self Help Housing Program to teach construction skills to the participating youth. YouthBuild is aimed toward high-risk young adults, such as high school dropouts, who need life skills training to overcome past mistakes in order to become productive citizens.

"Young people are the future of our community, and we want to provide them with every opportunity to succeed," said Randall Erwin, Executive Director of Little Dixie. "We're proud that Little Dixie was able to secure this YouthBuild grant for our community in order to help our local youth reach their goals."

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded \$47 million to 96 YouthBuild programs around the country to provide low-income youth who have dropped out of high school with vital opportunities to become productive adults.

In 226 urban and rural communities, YouthBuild has engaged 8,000 youth each year, 72 percent of them young men, and 91 percent high school dropouts. Sixty percent complete the program, and nearly 80 percent of graduates go on to college or jobs earning more than \$8.50 an hour.

YouthBuild is a youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses core issues facing low-income communities: housing, education, employment, crime prevention and leadership development. In YouthBuild programs, low-income young people ages 16-24 work toward their GED or high school diploma while learning job skills by building affordable housing. For more information, visit www.youthbuild.org.

Business Information Center opens new location



At left, Business Specialist Sequoia Turner visits with Floyd Griffin during the BIC Open House held recently at 502 W. Duke St. in Hugo. Some of the materials available are shown above.

Business Specialist Sequoia Turner wishes to thank everyone who helped make the Business Information Center Open House a success. Upper Crust Bakery donated cookies for the event, and several people stopped by to visit BIC's new location at 502 W. Duke St. Winner of the "Guess the Bows" contest was Zach Maxwell, who correctly guessed there were 26 bows showing around the center. The BIC will be open to the public, with a library and computer stations available to help local business efforts. Call 326-6441 for more information.

Finley joins Mentoring staff



Tonya Finley has joined the staff of Little Dixie's Passport to the Future mentoring program. Finley is the program's Recruiting and Marketing Specialist, and her office is at 502 W. Duke St. in Hugo.

Employee of the Month Guidelines

The Employee of the Month Committee has nomination forms available in hopes of encouraging more nominees for the monthly award to outstanding Little Dixie family members.

If you do not have forms in your office, call Zach Maxwell or Pam Covington at (580) 326-3351 and they will fax one to you.

Employees of the Month receive a T-shirt, gift certificate to local restaurant and are honored at the board meeting. They also will be eligible for Employee of the Year.

Submit nominations by the 15th of the month in order to be judged during that month. Submit nominations to Planning Director Pam Covington by mail (209 N. 4th St., Hugo, OK 74743), email (pcovington@littledixie.org) or fax (580-326-2305). Nominations are judged by the five-member committee. If the person you nominate is not selected, it is okay to nominate that person again the following month.



COMING SOON

Free at your local Little Dixie Office

WHAT: *FREE-INCOME TAX PREPARATION*

FREE-ELECTRONIC FILING

FREE-DIRECT DEPOSIT

WHEN: BEGINNING JANUARY 14, 2008

WHO: EMPLOYEES, FAMILY & FRIENDS

WHERE: CALL FOR APPOINTMENT

Choctaw County

500 East Rosewood Street-Hugo

326-5434

Pushmataha County

603 SW "B" Street-Antlers

298-2921

McCurtain County

1250 Lynn Lane-Idabel

286-9348

You will need to bring all W2 and 1099 forms, picture ID and Social Security cards for all family members, bank account information for direct deposit and child care receipts.

Kiamichi Development Corporation
New staff introduced
at Little Dixie Home Health



Phyllis Murray, RN
Administrator



Doris Jones
Personal Care Director



Sherri Weathers, LPN



Deann Ply, LPN



Vickie Savage, LPN



Jennifer James, RN
Case Manager



Cindy Williams, RN
Branch Manager



Geraldine Garrison, ARPN

Fair Housing seminar held in Hugo



Lorrie Davis, from the Fannie Mae Foundation, spoke to several people at a recent Fair Housing seminar held at the Little Dixie HomeOwnership Center in Hugo. Davis and Tricia Auberle of OKACAA spoke to lenders and Little Dixie Housing staff on fair housing issues, fair renting, subprime loans and other issues.

At right is one of the many information packets made available at a Nov. 29, 2007, Fair Housing seminar held in Hugo. Little Dixie and Oklahoma Homebuyer Education Association hosted the seminar.



Little Dixie's annual agency-wide training held Dec. 14



LDCAA Executive Director Randall Erwin speaks to more than 250 agency employees at the meeting.



Dale Bresee discusses employee benefits with SHARE's Charles Rust.



Gary and Rhonda Teague say cheese at the annual meeting.



More smiling faces from Little Dixie's annual meeting.



Participants discuss strategy during a most bizarre game show hosted by Clark LeForce.



Linda Byrd (left) and Bonnie Sims (above) received their service awards from Randall Erwin. Byrd celebrated five years at LDCAA and Sims marked 20 years.

Little Dixie Head Start's Thanksgiving In-Service

Training session tastes like turkey



Imogene Clark (center) was presented a plaque and flowers for her years of service.



These braided ladies lit up the fashion show.



Fashion show winner won the prize basket.



These two acts were neck and neck, but in the end, the turkey girls won runner-up.





Self-Help Housing delivers the biggest gift under the tree

VALLIANT – Ronald Anderson received a very large gift in a tiny package this past Christmas season. On Dec. 17, he was presented the keys to his new home by officials from Little Dixie Self-Help Housing.

The three-bedroom, two bath brick home – which includes a garage, wrap-around porch and stunning midnight blue countertops – was built on land which has been in Anderson’s family for generations. The location four miles south of Valliant was home to Anderson’s grandparents, the Bains.

Little Dixie CAA Executive Director Randall Erwin, USDA Rural Development Area Specialist Zack Williams and State Rep. Jerry Ellis presented the keys to Anderson a week before Christmas. Erwin said he was happy to see Anderson, a Valliant school bus driver, take occupancy of the new home.

Ellis said “I’m proud for anyone who gets a new home.”

“It adds so much to their life,” Ellis said. “They nail down roots in the community.”

Valliant Church of God Pastor Rick Patterson was credited with providing much of the painting services on the home. Anderson and his family did a significant portion of the labor, which is part of the Self-Help program that builds instant sweat equity into the home purchase.

Little Dixie Self-Help Housing has built nearly 2,000 homes over three decades in McCurtain and surrounding counties.



State Rep. Jerry Ellis, USDA Rural Development Specialist Zack Williams and Little Dixie Executive Director Randall Erwin present the keys to a new Self-Help home to Ronald Anderson (second from right). Below, some views of the new home.



Clayton transit office moves to new location

By EDDIE A. OWENS

Clayton Today

CLAYTON — The Little Dixie Transit office in Clayton has moved from their offices on Lawson Boulevard to their new location in the Clayton Place Apartment Complex.

As of this writing, the telephones have not been moved, but should be operable within a few days. The telephone number is (918) 569-7325.

Transit Clerk Shirley Richardson invites everyone to come by and see the new offices and get acquainted with her and the staff.

Drivers Joe Paul Castleman and Francis Fuller are encouraging potential drivers to apply for driving positions to help them meet the high demand for Little Dixie’s services.



Head Start Happenings



Idabel Head Start recently visited with Captain John Martin about "Stranger Danger" and were finger printed. The children also got an opportunity to investigate his police vehicle. They are pictured with their teacher Conchita McCarrell.

Ft. Towson V.F.D. and Smokey the Bear recently visited Ft. Towson Head Start. Visitors included Chief Athelta Hopkins, Firefighter Jed Drake and Oklahoma Forestry Service’s Johnny Baze to help Smokey Bear teach fire safety.



RSVP honors volunteers from McCurtain County



December Birthdays

- 13 - Joanie Hurlburt
- 15 - Judy Jones
- 19 - Larry Wyrick, Randy Pruitt
- 22 - Jerri Mitchell, Julie Palmer
- 23 - Brenda Everett, Jeannie McMillin
- 24 - Dawn Standridge, Marilyn Van
- 25 - Holly Stover
- 27 - Timothy Hoavis, Kristy Jordan
- 28 - Joan Edge
- 30 - Rhonda McClure
- 31 - James Dancer

January Birthdays

- 1 - Shannette Bailey, Lashinda Hubbard
- 2 - Ruby Gann
- 3 - Debbra Streun
- 4 - Tina Price, Jennifer Goodman
- 5 - Tina Wright
- 6 - Billy Byrd, Jr.
- 7 - James Turner, Kristina Porter
- 8 - Sharon Pennell
- 14 - Arron Cochran
- 15 - Windell Cayton
- 16 - John Pennell, Jr.
- 17 - Rebecca Ingram
- 19 - Ruthie Tate
- 21 - Hannah Blackowl, Johnny Moffitt
- 22 - Lindsey Thomas
- 24 - Tina Foster
- 25 - Leola Abbott
- 28 - Anita Bruce, Brenda Nelson, Mandy Scharnhorst
- 31 - Debra Beshirs



Ethel Shores, 99, was honored for her 29 years of service in the RSVP program.



McCurtain Memorial Hospital's "Pink Ladies."

Colonial Lodge Retirement Home and RSVP Singers.



Broken Bow Nutrition Center.



Little Dixie's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) held its third volunteer recognition event on Nov. 30, 2007 in Idabel. Special recognition awards went to Glenda Brumit (800 volunteer hours) and Ethel Shores (29 years in RSVP and 99 years young!).

Dozens of prizes were given out to those in attendance, and Jewel Turnage of Idabel won the grand prize of a free stay at a Little Dixie state park cabin of her choice.



Glenda Brumit, right, is shown with Barbara Moffitt and Virginia Gilley as she accepts a special volunteer award for completing 800 hours with RSVP.



McCurtain Memorial Hospital's "Pink Ladies."



Doris Jones and Phyllis Murray from Little Dixie



State Rep. Jerry Ellis greets RSVP members.



Virginia Gilley with CASA Volunteer Coordinator Dawn Standridge and volunteers Al & Sue Ward, Frances Cooper and Juanita Pollard.

Little Dixie welcomes the following new family members hired since Oct. 16.

- Victoria Ledford
- Amy Cooper
- Nancy Hembree
- Jennifer Morphis
- Tonya Finley
- Christy Long
- Randy Smith
- Pamela Briley
- Karen Tinney
- Cassandra Jacobs
- April Joiner
- Anna Dunlap

THE 2ND ANNUAL WHO MENTORED YOU? ESSAY CONTEST

Deadline : January 25, 2008

Growing up, were there people in your life who encouraged you, showed you the ropes, and helped you become the person you are today? Think about family members, a teacher or coach, a neighbor, a boss, or family friend; those people were mentors to you.

Tell us about them and how they affected your life. It could win you \$50. Just write us an essay telling your story and submit it by January 25th. We will then review the essays and choose a winner.

Send completed essays to Doris Long or John Morton via e-mail, postal service or in person.

Doris Long : dlong@littledixie.org

John Morton : jmorton@littledixie.org

Or mail to : Little Dixie Passport Mentoring

603 S.W. "B" Street

Antlers, OK 74523

(580)298-2921

LITTLE DIXIE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Helping People. Changing Lives.

RANDALL ERWIN
Executive Director

LEWIS COLLINS
Board Chairman

Board Members: Choctaw County

Leeoma Caldwell, Lewis Collins, Kevin Cory, Tracy Gilbert, Ray Noble, William Smith, Osker Ward, David Rawls.

Board Members: McCurtain County

Pat Baggs, Kenneth Hamilton, Betty Jacob, Keith Lowe, Herb Matlock, Jerry Shinn, Arthur Stewart, Jr., Jane Wooten.

Board Members: Pushmataha County

Brent Franks, Joe Hill, Eddie McIntosh, Mark McIntosh, Bridget Paxton, Joel Taylor, Tony Winters.

Little Dixie Digest (printed monthly)
209 N. 4th St.
Hugo, OK 74743
Contact: Zach Maxwell
Phone: 580-326-3351
Fax: 580-326-6655
E-mail: zmaxwell@littledixie.org

From the Desk of Randall Erwin...

As we close 2007, it is a good time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year. We really had a banner year at Little Dixie Community Action Agency, with a variety of individuals earning well-deserved awards, and millions of dollars worth of grants announced to improve the livelihoods of southeast Oklahomans.

I prefer to look ahead to 2008. Bearing in mind our successes in '07, this new year will undoubtedly bring many more opportunities to fulfill our mission – Helping People, Changing Lives.

As always, our associate directors, program directors and grant writing staff will seek out sources of funding and assistance from resources available in those fields. With the continued passion of our employees, we will continue to grow and serve our communities in ever expanding ways.

The new year will see the start of several new programs at Little Dixie, including YouthBuild to help at-risk young people while providing affordable housing; and the Project COMMIT Healthy Marriage Initiative. Several programs which started in 2007 will be in full swing over the next few months, and other long-standing divisions of Little Dixie continue to expand their services across our region.



One aspect of Little Dixie which has evolved in recent years is our presence outside of the traditional three county service area. Our housing programs, especially, have been busy at their tasks in Bryan and Atoka counties, as well as a special project in Muskogee. Kiamichi Development Corporation and our partners at Southeast Oklahoma Interlocal Cooperative are expanding their efforts as far away as Atoka, Poteau, and McAlester.

There is still plenty of work to be done, especially in educating the public about Little Dixie's role in the social and economic fabric of southeastern Oklahoma. Our payroll is in the millions, and our contribution to local tax bases is great. We are the largest employer in Choctaw County, and the second largest in Pushmataha and McCurtain counties. It will be up to us to provide the leadership and vision to continue our mission, all while making sure the public we serve has a better understanding of that mission.

Here's to a brighter future and a successful 2008.



Submit calendar items to:

zmaxwell@littledixie.org

Deadline for submissions to

February Little Dixie Digest:

Wednesday, Jan. 30

DATEBOOK...

Upcoming holidays for Little Dixie employees:

Monday, Jan. 21 — Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (observed; Dr. King's actual birthday is on Jan. 15.)

Monday, Feb. 18 — George Washington's Birthday (President's Day)

Calendar of Events

January 1-31 — Southeastern Oklahoma Interlocal Cooperative Band Instrument Drive — Bring unwanted musical instruments to any Little Dixie office.

10 January — 10 a.m. — Pushmataha County Turning Point Coalition meeting —

Antlers Church of Christ.

10 January — 1-4 p.m. — SOIC meeting to discuss ways to battle methamphetamines — SOIC Building, Idabel.

15 January — 10:30 a.m. — Little Dixie Board of Directors — HomeOwnership Center, Hugo.

15 January — 11 a.m. — McCurtain County Coalition — SOIC Building, Idabel.

15 January — 2 p.m. — Choctaw County Coalition — Kiamichi Technology Center, Hugo.

25 January — 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. — PREP Couple's Retreat — Hugo Lake State Park Cabin No. 22.