New Year, New Budget

by Brian H. Akers – President, FRYSCKy, Inc.

Betsy Layne (KY) • Watching the Governor address the joint meeting of the House of Representatives and the Senate, we saw Governor Bevin make hard cuts to many programs throughout the state. We were included in the cuts, however we are going to work hard as a Coalition to help bring awareness of FRYSC’s work and value to the new Governor, the new Secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and other new state leaders.

We are entering such a busy time for our FRYSCKy Coalition. Over the next eight weeks, we have a meeting scheduled with Governor Bevin, the Legislative Reception, six days of Legislative Page Days, and a FRYSC Rally at the Capitol. We impact students and families in so many ways, however we make our greatest impact when we work together to network with others to let them know what we do, so they will continue to support our work. When I started my job in February 1997 (19 years ago!!) I knew that I had found my life’s work. I always wanted to work with kids, coach, and get off work at 3:00 p.m. (just kidding). Little did I know that my life’s work would become my calling and the job I thought I signed up for made me work late at times, worry most of the time, but gave me a sense of pride and accomplishment.

This New Year brings uncertainty about our budgets and the potential of continuing to do more with less. We have always faced this due to the increased number of students we serve qualifying for free lunch. From the time we had $210 dollars per child until now we have always managed to meet the needs of our students and we will continue to do so. We have the right people in place to do this job. We are still here to be able to coordinate the services for those who need it most. Continue doing the good work for our student and families.

We need to celebrate our 25th anniversary the entire year and let everyone know we are “Open for Business”!

As always, if you need to contact me, I can be reached at brian.akers@floyd.kyschools.us or at 606-478-5550 and I’m always glad to hear from you.
Joan Howard Receives Above and Beyond Award

by Michael A. Jones, Business Manager, Family Resource & Youth Services Coalition of Kentucky

Frankfort (KY) • The Family Resource and Youth Services Coalition of Kentucky (FRYSCKy) awarded its highest honor, the Above and Beyond Award, to Joan Howard at the 2015 Fall Institute. Joan worked for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) for 29 years. During this time, she was the KDE liaison to the FRYSCKy Board of Directors for more than a decade. She provided the Board with steady guidance, wisdom, and insights, all of which were valued and appreciated.

Prior to her KDE career, she taught primary grades for six years and was a substitute teacher for five years. Joan grew-up in Lexington, graduated Henry Clay High School, played cello in the Central Kentucky Youth Symphony Orchestra, and received her Bachelor of Science & Master's of Arts from Western Kentucky University.

For more than twenty years, she and her late-husband, Cliff, were well-known across Kentucky for their historical portrayals of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln and of Jefferson and Varina Davis. Joan continues to portray Mary Todd and Varina.

When asked about her proudest accomplishment, Joan, in her humble nature, says she simply hopes that in some small way she has helped the children of Kentucky. She is most happy and eager to talk about her three children and six grandchildren and the many fond memories of Cliff.

Joan receiving her Above and Beyond Award from FRYSCKy President, Brian Akers.

Bridges Over Barriers Award Winners - 2015

by Leslie Hall, President-Elect, Family Resource & Youth Services Coalition of Kentucky

Lexington (KY) — The Kentucky Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYS) have chosen their Bridges Over Barriers Award Winners for 2015. Bridges Over Barriers is a recognition of outstanding community partners by the FRYS through the Family Resource and Youth Services Coalition of Ky (FRYSCKy). The FRYSCKy Coalition is a professional advocacy organization made up of over 700 members across the state that support families and children. There are three categories for the Bridges Over Barriers Award, the best partner for a non-profit organization, the best partner for a for-profit business, and the individual best partner.
The Non-Profit Best Partner Award:

Debbie Cox of Creekside Elementary School Family Resource Center located in Sonora, Kentucky made the nomination for this year’s non-profit winner, the US Army Human Resource Command, Operations Division located on Fort Knox. Ms. Cox stated, “They have developed a very strong Partnership in Education with the active Military and Civilians in this division and that their commitment, hard work and dedication to the families and students continue to grow year after year.”

They assist with the following events:
- Hygiene product Drive—to support the new Health Habit Program
- Winter Coat Drive
- Red Ribbon Week
- Veteran’s Day Program
- Holiday Assistance Program
- Career Day
- Testing Support
- And Field Day Obstacle Course

Ms. Cox continued to say, “They are a year round resource for Creekside Elementary as well as phenomenal role-models and mentors to the students there.” Ms. Cox has made it clear that they are not only an integral part of Creekside Elementary but that they have become FAMILY. Brigadier General Lynn Owens was at the ceremony to receive the award.

For-Profit Best Partner Award:

Julia Goodman of Beechgrove Elementary Family Resource Center located in Independence, Kentucky made the nomination for this year’s For-Profit winner, Cummins Filtration of Walton, Kentucky. Ms. Goodman stated, “They not only help, but they go over and beyond to make sure everything is special. The involvement of this wonderful business and the support that they provide is greatly appreciated. They have a genuine concern for the students and the school community. They want to see our students achieve their goals. Rena Gibbs has been an excellent point of contact.”

They assist in the following ways:
- Advisory Council Representation
- Adopt a Family Program
- Born Learning Academy Sponsorship
- KPREP Celebration Assistance
- The Bee Store where students at Beechgrove receive Bee Tickets for positive behavior choices and are rewarded with a monthly shopping trip to the Bee Store. Cummins filtration allows 6-8 employees to come and work at the Bee Store. Students learn a valuable lesson in counting, saving and spending their Bee Bucks. Cummins employees recognize that about 1,800 treasures are purchased each month by the students and they also help provide these little treasures.

Ms. Goodman praised the company adding, “We are grateful for all the volunteered time from this company and its employees.”

Individual Best Partner Award:

Brenda Chaneey of the Barren County Youth Services Center located in Glasgow, Kentucky made the nomination on behalf of all the FRYSCs in Barren County, Caverna Independent and Glasgow Independent school systems. This year’s Individual winner is Dr. Bharat Mody of Walton, KY. Ms. Chaneey stated, “Dr. Mody is an individual that goes above and beyond to provide ‘Bridges Over Barriers’ for students and families. Anyone who has the pleasure of his acquaintance is continually inspired and motivated by his kindness, concern and compassion for others. Dr. Mody gives of his time and
resources to ensure that children who are faced with barriers that would negatively affect their education is addressed so they have the opportunity to succeed academically and become productive adults.

He assists in the following ways:
- Coordinates Children’s Day Celebration as a means to raise much needed funds to assist children with everything from shoes to band instruments. The promotion of this event reaches over 7,000 students and their families. Over the last 3 years over $150,000 has been raised from the Children’s Day event.
- Assists with the Backpack Program
- Scholarships to WKU and Bowling Green Tech
- Supports the Rotary Club, Boys and Girls Clubs, Community Soup Kitchen, Habitat for Humanity and Relay for Life
- Dr. Mody initiated the “To the Brim” project to collect non-perishable items for the local food pantries.

Ms. Chaney stated, “We are all blessed to have such a kind, caring and giving individual as part of our community. Dr. Mody is truly a champion for children.”

Ashland Family Resource Center Wins Harry J. Cowherd Award

The Ashland Family Resource Center (Ashland Independent) has been named the winner of the Harry J. Cowherd Award for Center Excellence by the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers.

The award, presented the 2015 Fall Institute in Lexington, recognizes a center that demonstrates excellence beyond regular center operations. It is named for the late Dr. Harry J. Cowherd, former secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources and an advocate of the Family Resource and Youth Services Centers initiative.

The need addressed by Ashland FRC was homelessness. Ashland had 282 students in 2014-15 who were identified as homeless. Through a grant written by Ashland FRC Coordinator, Geri Willis, three home/school liaisons were hired to help families acquire immunizations, physicals, dental and vision services and make referrals to other community agencies for services. A major component of the grant provides tutoring for 43 students living at the homeless shelter. Of those 43 students, 34 showed an improvement in their academic achievement.
During her 24-year tenure as an FRC coordinator, Willis has secured more than $10 million in grants. The current value of grants secured by Willis is $589,343, and they are used for programming such as:

- Grandparents as Guardians
- Monthly “Lunch and Learn” Parent Program
- Kinder Camp
- Weekend Snack Program
- Ashland Alliance Back Pack Program
- Back to School Fest
- Summer Camp
- Shop with a Cop (back to school and Christmas)
- First Book (free books)
- Mental Health Services

Two other centers were recognized for their achievements:

- First runner-up, Briarwood FRC (Warren County), Janice Lockwood, coordinator.
- Second runner-up, Dorothy Kingston FRC (Christian County), Barbara Meriwether, coordinator.

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**FRYSC News from across Kentucky**

*Region 2 (Russellville Independent)* • Carol Kees, Coordinator at Stevenson Elementary School Family Resource Center, is leading her school in its second year of the BornLearning® Academies. While families new to the program participate in the Academy curriculum and many of the first year families continue to have perfect attendance for alternate programming, the combined groups of children are always excited to see what interactive activities are awaiting their participation. While the children seem to really enjoy the crafts, the stories, and the playtime, what they seem to enjoy most is the time at the end of the evening, the time when re-united with their parents, the time when they do an activity together. The first session, the families used construction paper, popsicle sticks, glue sticks, markers, and file folders to create hand puppets and a theater. Parents were provided with ideas for using this type of interactive play to make everyday moments become learning activities.

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*Region 2 (Webster County) ~ “Camp Read-A-Lot” Family Literacy Night*

*by Melissa Wolfe, Coordinator, Connections FRYSC*

*Dixon (KY) •* Connections Family Resource Center in collaboration with our Dixon PTO sponsored a “Camp Read-A-Lot” family literacy night for our students and families. This event was held in October in the evening on the school grounds. This was a great way to promote Literacy by encouraging families to read together and participate in activities incorporating reading; it was fun filled night for the whole family. At the beginning of the event our Principal, Mr. Wheatley had the students gather around the camp ground to listen to him read “A Camping Spree with Mr. Magee”. Next the students and parents traveled around the camp site participating in many fun activities such as Fishing for Rhymes, Reading Under the Stars, making Puppet Pals, Word Building, making Story Cubes and of course, making S’mores. We had approximately 148 people attend this event. As an extra bonus to the night, students who participate received a homework pass and a free book to take home for their enjoyment, donated by Connections Family Resource Center.
Region 2 (Owensboro Public Schools) ~ Storybook Christmas

by Jennifer Thurman, Coordinator, Sutton FRC

Sutton Family Resource Center held its annual Storybook Christmas program on December 3, 2015. This is a family literacy program that includes a snack, craft and Christmas story. This year our families listened to the story “A Wish to Be a Christmas Tree” and then each child was able to create a painting of a Christmas tree on canvas. Mrs. Bratcher, one of our Kindergarten teachers, shared information with parents about Footsteps2Brilliance, a literacy app available to our families. This gave families the opportunity to spend time learning and growing together.

Region 2 (Daviess County) ~ Cinderella’s Closet of Western Kentucky

by Sue Krampe, Coordinator, Apollo High School YSC

Owensboro (KY) • The day of March 14, 2015 will forever be a day no one from Cinderella’s Closet of Western Kentucky will ever forget. It is all a blur, the faces, the names, the craziness, but not the smiles or the feelings of happiness. You know the kind that goes straight to your heart and warms it like a blanket or cup of hot cocoa. It seeps from your heart to the rest of your body and all you can do is smile, no matter how long the day has been or how bad your feet hurt.

70 girls participated in our first ever Cinderella’s Closet. They were treated like princesses from the moment they walked in. Each girl was able to find the perfect dress along with shoes and jewelry. Ideas about makeup and hair were also part of the day. As Carrie Kimbrel, YSC Coordinator at Daviess County High School said, “It’s our goal that they feel cherished and valued.”

The day and event could not have happened without the support of other FRYSC’s in the Western Kentucky area and other community agencies. They helped with dress drives and referrals of girls that participated. Their support and encouragement provided over 600 dresses and accessories. As a result, we were able to “Turn Dresses into Dreams” for junior and senior girls who could not have otherwise been able to attend their prom.

Our next Cinderella’s Closet is March 19, 2016. We are currently accepting gently used or new prom dresses. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Kimbrell (270-852-7311) or Sue Krampe (270-852-7111).
and a lovable red Kangaroo named Boomerang. The event had over 200 in attendance. Dads, grandpas, stepdads, and other adult male role models brought their students out for pizza and the show. This event sponsored by the Family Resource Youth Service Center encourages dads to get involved by volunteering at school and staying actively engaged with their children. This fun and educational event also helps remind dads that children benefit from their fathers’ involvement in their schools. Research by the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that this is true even when a child’s mother is already involved in the school. A father’s involvement “exerts a distinct and independent influence” on a child’s success in school. Students were able to pet some of the animals and learn a lot about these fascinating creatures.

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**Region 7 (Fleming County) ~ Etiquette Classes for 8th Graders**

*by Mendy High, Coordinator, Fleming County YSC*

Flemingsburg (KY) • The Youth Service Center at Simon’s Middle School in Fleming County works with 8th grade students each school year to offer Etiquette Classes. Coordinator, Mendy High recruits the assistance of the local Fleming County Cooperative Extension Office and Homemakers Club to assist her with this annual event.

Students participate in a two-day lesson to become engaged in how to conduct themselves in a proper manner when dining in a formal setting. They also learn which silverware and tableware are appropriate for each course of food, and how to set a formal table. These are important skills as they enter into high school and join clubs and activities which will take them to statewide and national conferences. In addition, all students learn how to tie a necktie. Boys are required to wear a necktie to the formal meal held the second day. The Youth Service Center keeps numerous neckties on hand for the demonstration and provides one to those students who need one for the day of the formal meal. As the program has been in place for a number of years, a greater number of students have started to dress more formally for the special celebration.

The YSC staff work collaboratively with the local lunchroom on this activity. While kids eat the same cafeteria food, the meal is served in a formal like setting in the school library. Coordinator, Mendy High states, “It is amazing to see how mature our students react to having tables adorned with tablecloths, cloth napkins, salad and dinner plates, tea goblets, silverware and water glasses with just a little training. This skill allows our youth to feel comfortable if faced with a formal setting (wedding, banquet, job interview, convention, etc.) later down the road.”
Region 2 (Russellville Independent) • Carol Kees, Coordinator at Stevenson Elementary School Family Resource Center hosts a very popular annual celebration of National Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Family Day, with just under 500 meals being served again this year. The sixth annual event celebrated the 4th Monday of each September and sponsored by the SES FRC is made possible through help from local organizations and a huge number of volunteers. Studies show that the more frequently families eat meals together the less likely those children are to participate in high risk behaviors. Families are provided with take home placemats that encourage this simple practice as a risk-reducing activity.

Region 7 (Robertson County) • Diana Wells, Coordinator of the Robertson County FRYSC shared information about her school’s Gifted and Talented Program. Middle school students in the program attended the Middle School Leadership Symposium. The event was held at Thomas Moore College on December 8th. Front row: Abby Earlywine, Vivian Cummins, Natalie Massey, Eli Dotson and Madison Tucker. Back row: Sam Buckler, Alex Schalch and Wyatt Cooper.

Region 7 (Warren County) • Cole so happy to get his Holiday Stocking during Christmas! Thanks to everyone that donated stockings for this event!! Holiday Goody Stocking!! Picture shared by Janice Lockwood, Coordinator, Briarwood Elementary FRC
Region 7 (Morgan County) ~ Daddy and Daughter Dance

by Angela Ferguson, Coordinator, WEVE FRC

West Liberty (KY) • We would like to thank all the dads and father figures that came out to support their daughters during our first Daddy & Daughter Dance on December 4. The daughters enjoyed watching the dads in our unique dance competition. A special thanks to Mrs. Megan, Mrs. Dee Dee, Scarlett Smith, and Callie Lewis for serving dinner to our special guests. We would like to also thank Debra and Jason Vanhoose for providing music to get those dads up on the dance floor. Brandon, Gaye, and Sabrina worked diligently on decorations and lighting to make the night magical. Evan O’Neal with the Fatherhood Program provided games and activities that helped each dad leave knowing a little more about their child. Those special memories will be treasured a lifetime!

A daughter may outgrow your lap, but she will never outgrow your heart.
Region 7 (Boyd County) ~ Inmates Donate Money to Boyd County FRYSCs

by Vickie Caniff, Coordinator, Catherine Newton YSC

Ashland (KY) • Inmates at the Federal Correctional Institute in Summit wanted to make a difference in the community. They partnered with the Boyd County Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, with 115 inmates donating $1,801.50 to the Backpack Program. FCI officials presented a check to Boyd Administrators, and FRYSC Coordinators. The backpack program gives students food for the weekend. About 300 participate in the program funded exclusively through donation from church and other community groups.

The program not only aids children, but it allows inmates to be part of helping in the community. Those who donated were at the check ceremony, and many of them suggested other ways to give back. Some of the inmates indicated they might continue to give to the resource program on a regular basis.

Region 2 (Bowling Green Independent) ~ Eighth grade students at Bowling Green Junior High were chosen as a leadership group to participate in a science enrichment activity at Western Kentucky University. Students attended a WKU lab and worked under the direction of college professors to dissect rats and synthesize aspirin. The activity was sponsored by the YSC at Bowling Green Junior High (Linda Krutza, Coordinator).

Region 2 (Russellville Independent) • Carol Kees, Coordinator at Stevenson Elementary School Family Resource Center runs the K-Kids Club that is sponsored by the Russellville Logan County Kiwanis Club. K-Kids Club members meet twice each month, once for a business meeting and once for a service meeting. December’s project was making Christmas Cards for residents at the local nursing home.
Region 2 (Daviess County) ~ Family Resource and Youth Services Centers Are Here for You!

by Carrie Kimbrell, Coordinator, Daviess County HS YSC

Owensboro (KY) • You might think a student’s biggest worry is next week’s science test, but many students in our community face issues that are far more serious than you might expect.

How can we expect a student to learn when they don’t have running water or electricity? How can a student come to school ready to learn when they are up all night moving because the family has been evicted from their home for the second time this school year? Or are they sleeping on a different couch each night? Why would school even be important to a student who has to work 35 or 40 hours a week because they must contribute to their family’s income, even while they are trying to graduate from high school?

The above issues are just a few of the obstacles that many children and teens face.

Fortunately, Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) are designed to come alongside these students and their families to help them overcome these issues, which have the potential to overwhelm a student who might lose the motivation and drive to follow through with their education. It is our goal to work with the student and meet their needs. FRYSCs serve as an advocate, a link between community and school, and a resource to our students and families. Without these services, which are offered right at the school building, many students would slip through the cracks, ultimately not graduating.

Some of specific services we offer to students include, but not limited to, providing clothing, assisting with medical needs, arranging housing, assisting with utilities, linking students to college and career opportunities, assisting families during the holidays, and meeting other needs that may hinder a student from being successful in school.

As a Youth Service Center coordinator, it is my personal goal that we treat each family as a part of our school family and that we serve ALL families and let them know they are an important part of our school community.

Regardless of their income, families often encounter obstacles that affect a student’s ability to perform well in school. It is the role of the Youth Service Centers to meet those needs and do whatever it takes to help a student succeed in life, not just in school. The goal of each FRYSC is to remove the non-academic barriers to learning, in an effort to encourage academic success for students in our schools and in our community. Each center in our area offers a unique blend of programs and services determined by the needs of the population being served.

Many people agree that the creation of Family Resource and Youth Service Centers was the best thing that came out of KERA (Kentucky Education Reform Act) in 1990. FRYSC is one of the few remaining pieces from KERA. The development of this vital program changed the way schools and communities partner to help school-age children. Because this important program was installed in schools across the state beginning in 1990, millions of students are now having their basic needs met and receive the support and services that allow them to graduate from high school and become independent, working, contributing residents of our state.

Carrie Kimbrell has served as the Youth Services Center coordinator at Daviess County High School for nine years. serving in that role at Daviess County Middle School for eight years before that. She is the mother of two children and is a cofounder of Cinderella’s Closet of Western Kentucky. Kimbrell is an active member of Owensboro Christian Church and is dedicated to serving others in our community.
Region 2 (Ohio County) • On November 19, 2015, over 600 people gathered in Hartford at Wayland Alexander Elementary School to celebrate Science Night. The school’s Family Resource Center, Title I Program, and Parent Involvement Committee hosted the event. Families conducted science experiments in classrooms and enjoyed pizza in the cafeteria. Several community partners provided science-related displays and activities in the library. The evening culminated in an assembly, featuring Kentucky Kingdom’s live animals. Information and picture shared by Starla Cravens, Coordinator, Wayland Alexander FRC.

Region 2 (Warren County) • Daddy Daughter SnowBall Dance
A Memorable Evening for Dad and Daughter!

by Leslie Carr, Coordinator, Oakland FRC

Oakland (KY) • On December 11, 2015, Oakland Elementary Family Resource Center hosted the Snowball Dance for Kindergarten through Sixth grade students. Fifty-seven students and their escorts attended the daddy-daughter dance. Their father or a “father-like figure” escorted the girls. The “father-like figures” ranged from a friend’s dad, older brother and even grandfathers. The escorts were dressed to the nines and girls all wore pretty dresses. Some of their escorts even provided corsages as a special treat!

The school’s gymnasium was turned into a winter wonderland decorated in white and pale blue. There was a photobooth including a sleigh to capture the memories on film. The couples dined from the dessert bar and sat at candlelit tables.

The girls and their escorts danced the night away to a variety of music selections provided by the Music Department at Oakland Elementary. Of course, a dance is not complete without a conga line lead by Mrs. Carr, the Family Resource Coordinator.

The night also included a racing hula-hoop contest wherein the escorts had to hula-hoop to the middle of the gym and pass the hula-hoop to their daughter. The daughter had to then hula-hoop back to the original starting point. Let’s just say it was quite a contest and all had a great time!

The dance was intended to create a special bonding opportunity for the girls and their fathers. What we discovered in the end is that the men enjoyed it as much as the girls. It was a unique chance for the fathers and daughters to spend one on one time together and create special memories. One father told Mrs. Carr during the dance, “this is the first time I’ve ever danced with my daughter.” To see the girls dancing on their father’s feet was just priceless.

The dance was such a hit that the male students at Oakland Elementary have already requested a Spring Mother-Son Dance! Mrs. Carr is planning a Derby Dance for the mothers and sons in May.
Region 2 (Simpson County) ~ Sophomore Summit

by Amie Chaney, Coordinator

Franklin (KY) • Each year students from Franklin-Simpson High School attend the Sophomore Summit in the fall. Sophomores have the opportunity to listen to guest speakers talk about career and college opportunities available for them. The event is held at the South Central KY Community and Technical College campus in Franklin. Students also have a fashion show that shows appropriate and inappropriate dress for job interviews. Students have a chance to see the campus and attend classes as juniors and seniors. Junior Achievement sponsors the event for students.

Region 7 (Lewis County) ~ Scott Osborne, Coordinator, Lewis County YSC, shares information on two great opportunities that he helps manage at his high school.

The S.T.O.P Coalition (Support Team On Prevention) is a regional youth coalition comprised of high school students in each of the seven high schools in the Buffalo Trace region. There is a total of around 30 teens that currently serve on the coalition. Overall goals of the coalition are to increase awareness of the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse and decreased rates of substance abuse among youth. On this occasion, our Lewis County HS coalition team was presenting to students at Garrison Elementary School. Program was held during Red Ribbon Week.

Our Teen Leadership Academy is a program designed to enhance leadership skills both inside and outside of 4-H. This rare opportunity also allows 4-H teens to be a part of their community’s positive development. In early November our Leadership Academy group visited and toured news affiliate WKYT in Lexington Ky.
Region 2 (Webster County) • Donna Bumpus, Coordinator of the Webster County HS YSC sponsored "Ghost Out" on November 19, for the "Great American Smoke-Out" Day.

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Region 1 (Graves County) • Mayfield, Graves County FRYSC Directors Share Statewide How They Fund, Operate Community Christmas Connection

by Jennifer Morris, Coordinator, S.A.F.E. Family Resource Center

Symsonia (KY) • The Mayfield and Graves County Family Resource/Youth Services Centers directors recently presented a program on how they fund and operate their annual Community Christmas Connection. They presented to their peers statewide who attended the annual fall institute conference in Lexington of the Family Resource/Youth Services Coalition of Kentucky. Presenters included (from left) Lori Beyer, Tana Jones, Stacy Harris, Mike Duncan, Juliana Reyes, Kaye Horn, Jean Ann Miller, and Jennifer Morris.

Attendees were given the tools to implement a successful Christmas program of their own in their respective counties. Tools included a PowerPoint of all forms used in the program from the family application to the community donation request letter. Attendees learned of the timeline of the Christmas program and were taught that this program begins in August for the Family Resource directors and runs through January. They Mayfield and Graves County FRYSC directors stressed to attendees the impact that the community donations have on the program from the Graves County Truck and Tractor Pullers Association pull in August to the $5 donation in December. All donations matter and are appreciated. Attendees learned that the directors bargain shop throughout the year to make the most of the community donations.

The Community Christmas Connection 2015 program is underway in Graves County and is anticipating serving approximately 1,000 students again this year. Families are earning their points by attending classes, school functions, and volunteering. Directors are busy preparing the building and stocking it full of toys for the shoppers. Businesses are holding toy drives and making donations.

The program provides a way for families to give their children Christmas presents who otherwise could not afford to do so. To learn more about the location of the toy drives or to host a toy drive, contact Jennifer Morris. To make a monetary or toy donation, contact Jennifer Morris at 270-328-4994 or 270-674-4994 or contact any local family resource or youth services center director.
Region 1 (Paducah Independent) ~ Special Volunteer: A Special Resource

by Robyn West, Coordinator, KIDS Company I FRC - Clark Elementary School

Paducah (KY) • Four years ago KIDS Company I Family Resource Center began the Watch D.O.G.S. program at Clark Elementary School. Mr. Drew Vanderford attended our initial Pizza Night Kickoff with his 2 grandsons and quickly signed up and started volunteering in their classrooms. What started with volunteering once a month, quickly changed to once a week, and then to three times a week. Word quickly spread through the school of Mr. Vanderford’s success with some tough students and his patience, mentoring attitude and love of kids.

In addition to working with our tough students, he also works in 2nd grade with the high reading group. He has loved working with this eager to learn, inquisitive group of students. Last summer he also came with our staff and Center volunteers to the local low-income apartment complex to give out books and snacks to our kids who lived there.

One of the things that has never impeded Mr. Vanderford is that he uses a wheelchair to get around our school building. His minor disability has not slowed down his ability to volunteer at our school. In fact, it has opened up the door for discussion among some younger children to see a wheelchair, touch it and ask questions about it. Mr. Vanderford has told me time and again that this volunteering job is as good for him as it is for us here at Clark. But truly, we at Clark School are the lucky ones that he has chosen to volunteer at our school.

While she was networking with a community agency in Lexington during the Fall Institute, Linda Krutza, Coordinator, Bowling Green High School YSC had an unexpected photo-op with UK basketball player, Marcus Lee.
IN MEMORIUM

The FRYSC family lost two friends when long-time coordinators (both retired) passed away in early January. Ivan and Tonetta were hard working, beacons of hope to the children and families of their respective communities.

Ivan Tuggle
1953-2016
Monticello, KY

Tonetta Nichols
1958-2016
Inez, KY

Farewell good and faithful servants