Positive Outcomes Arise From School Involvement

Mom’s Volunteer Work Valued by All; Earns Her Rockwood’s Rose Award

If were possible to clone parent Carolyn Tisdale, school staff and students everywhere would jump at the chance. At Rockwood’s Uthoff Valley Elementary School, where Tisdale has two daughters, the faculty admires for what teacher Julie Backer describes as “going way beyond the average expectation of parent involvement.” This past year, Tisdale volunteered regularly in her daughter Trinity’s first-grade class and, according to Backer, the kids always looked forward to her visits because of her “full-out” participation, including working with them in the classroom, eating lunch in the cafeteria and playing with them at recess. “All my students think Mrs. Tisdale is really cool,” confirms Backer.

Recognizing that Tisdale is one special mom, the Rockwood district awarded her its coveted Rose award, which this year went to 15 individuals who show excellence of character, performance, leadership and service to the Rockwood school district. In addition to Tisdale, Rose award recipients included teachers, administrators, a classroom assistant and a bus driver who were chosen from among the 250 persons nominated.

By any standards, Tisdale goes above and beyond at Uthoff Valley Elementary School in Fenton. Not only did she do her classroom volunteering two to three Wednesdays a month (staying on to join the children at lunch and on the playground), she was present at nearly every school activity involving her daughters, including the first day of school event, fall festival music performances and field trips, as well as PTO meetings. In past years, Tisdale has done a lot with 10-year-old Terrence’s classes, such as volunteering for class parties and other special events. Her active involvement is even more impressive given her circumstances. The family lives in St. Louis city and has been without a car since it was stolen nearly two years ago from outside their apartment. Tisdale rides the Metro bus to do her classroom volunteering and to get to many other functions at the school. Uthoff Valley is more than 15 miles from her home near Carondelet Park where she resides with her husband Terrence, their two daughters and 14-year-old son, Isaiah, who is autistic.

The bus drops her at the McDonald’s about a half mile from the school and she walks the rest of the way, no matter rain, shine, wind or snow, according to Julie Backer.

Tisdale says she is engaged in her children’s education because she cherishes being part of their young lives and because she knows how much it means to them. “My girls look forward to coming to school. It makes their day.” Her loving and caring manner extends to all the school children with whom she comes in contact, as reflected in a comment she repeats often, “I love all my Backer babies,” referring to the children in Julie Backer’s class.

Tisdale’s hands-on routine sends a strong message to her children; plus makes a wonderful impression on the other children, according to principal Connie Browning. “Mrs. Tisdale’s daughter see that education matters to her and that she is a motivating factor when their parents place education.” Painting to the connections and relationships Tisdale builds with the other students, Browning notes, “It has such a positive impact on them.

Being so tied into the school community has had some unintended outcomes for which Tisdale is especially appreciative. Having talked to other moms about the Girl Scout troop at Uthoff Valley, she enrolled Trinity in it and with the help of Trinity’s leader, she found a troop that is a good fit for Terrence even from their home. On meeting days for Trinity, a family hosts her after school until the scout meetings start and other scout mommies take turns driving her home.

When Trinity was invited to a classmate’s birthday party in High Ridge, an arrangement was worked out whereby Tisdale and Trinity met the host family at a half way point – South County Mall (a straight-shot bus ride for Tisdale) and mom and Terrence boarded the mall until Trinity was returned there. “I’m so pleased that my girls can spend time with their friends outside of the school day,” she notes.

Tisdale has a saying that guides the family in all they do: “We may not have a lot, but we make the most of what we do have.” She explains, adding that everyone, “I feel it by becoming immersed in everything that is happening at school.” By attending the informational sessions for parents on the first day of school (she caught a 6:30 a.m. bus), Tisdale found out about academic resources and curriculum information that she taps into often. Many times before arriving at Mrs. Backer’s class, she had already read the book that she was asked to work on that day with the students. She utilizes the school’s website to access books the girls can read for Accelerated Reader credits. Mrs. Backer’s class website, which features fun ideas and interactive activities, captures the attention of mother and daughter on a regular basis. “Trinity likes to update her class on our family’s activities,” mom says with a smile.

As a result of Tisdale’s presence at the school, she has developed relationships with faculty and administrators. “Because of the comfort level we have with one another, I am not afraid to ask questions or request assistance,” she explains, adding that everyone responds in a most helpful manner. The same holds true for other parents, she says. She is so well thought of that she has been asked to serve as an officer on the PTO next year, a responsibility for which she feels honored and pleased to accept.

Principal Browning believes the example Tisdales sets for other non-resident parents is a good thing too. “They see that it is possible to be part of their children’s education and to be seen as a valuable volunteer.”

School counselor Lisa Sandborn says, “For other parents, Tisdale’s presence at school is a ‘open that door’ to becoming active in your children’s school lives. ‘Find out where there’s for you. You’ll be happy you did, I promise you.”

Carolyn’s Advice for Parents

Build a relationship with the teacher and other school staff. Ways to do this:
• school visits
• conferences
• email and phone
There is much to be gained by getting to know the people who your child is in contact with all day.

Ask about how you can get involved. Volunteer opportunities usually include helping in the classroom or in the library, field trips, class parties, so find out what is possible for you and your schedule.

Most importantly, a little time can mean so much — to your child, to the teacher and to you! Take a few minutes to visit your child’s class. Meet their classmates and see who their friends are.

“Involve yourself and have fun. Children, they teach us so much.”

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Outstanding 2012 Graduates

This issue of the Parent Link is dedicated to those transfer students who are members of the Class of 2012. We recognize and celebrate the hardworking students who have left behind an enviable record of accomplishments. For each student who is mentioned, there are scores of others also deserving of recognition. Our congratulations go not only to the students, but their parents and teachers as well. You are at the heart of this program and an important part of the success it has achieved.
awards program, and served as a student leader for a Diversity in Action panel and was a student speaker on the male perspective for a “Women Only” workshop. Parkway North High School

Headed to Southeast Missouri State University this fall, Adrian Flenoid was active at his high school, assisting in the planning, organization and actual participation in the No Place for Hate Assembly. He also worked with the Freshman Project Group and volunteered for special projects directed by his principal. Adrian was a volunteer for the Teen Advocate for Sexual Health youth group and the St. Augustine Center.

Parkway South High School

With plans to join the United State Navy and later attend Southeast Florida University, Gabrielle Evans is considered one of Parkway South’s brightest stars. She is captain of South’s track and field team, and a member of the Superintendent’s Social Justice Advisory Committee. Over the last four years, she challenged herself academically by taking AP and honors courses. Among her honors are the coveted South Star Award, the Student of the Month (Math) Award and the Spirit of Excellence Award.

Parkway West High School

The recipient of an athletic scholarship to Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Mo., Deyshia Bashkin plans to major in nursing with a minor in Spanish. A member of the Student of the Month (Math) Award and the Spirit of Excellence Council and received the Spirit of Excellence award, among numerous achievements.

PATTONVILLE

Pattonville High School

With plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University to pursue a degree in athletic training, Jerrica Macon has been involved in Pattonville cheer, Peer Assistance and Leadership (PALS) and Renaissance for the last four years. After college, she would love to rejoin the Pattonville family in a professional capacity.

ROCKWOOD

Jearra High School

Antonia Carter has been accepted to Missouri Baptist University where she plans to major in education and criminal justice as well as play for the women’s lacrosse team. Her goal is to become a social worker focusing on youth and families. In addition to her academic career, Antonia has participated in Eureka’s Renaissance Committee,

TREND and was the captain of dance for Wildn’Out Cats. She was a Glory of Missouri recipient as an awardee for the virtue of equality.

Lafayette High School

Jazmin Hoppwedig will attend Saint Louis University and plans to study either pharmacy or psychology. During high school she focused her studies on highlevel math and science courses through the BSG pharmacy summer program in both 2010 and 2011. Jazielynn proved her academic excellence through the Renaissance Silver Award and was a twotime recipient of the Lafayette Student Choice Awards.

Marquette High School

Anthony Dudley has been a student leader at Marquette, maintaining a high grade-point average while contributing as a student athlete. His academic focus has been on business management courses and advanced strength training. He plans to attend Southern Illinois University at Carbondale where he will pursue a degree in international business and play football for the Salukis.

Rockwood Summit High School

Recognized as the outstanding senior at Rockwood Summit High School, Jerome Golden Jr., is considering opportunities from various local colleges to study and compete in track and field. He plans to prepare for a career as a collegiate track and field coach. A member of Summit’s track and field team that was in contention for a state title, Jerome was a Focus St. Louis Ambassador, a member of the Stive and Survive Club and served as a peer mentor for productive conflict resolution.

ST. LOUIS

Metro Academic and Classical High School

Only the 51st person in the St. Louis region to earn a perfect 36 composite score on the ACT college exam since 2000, Thomas Fliss is the first St. Louis Public School District student to post a perfect score in that time span. He plans to major in computer science in college and is currently considering Stanford, Cal Tech, Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Carnegie Mellon University. Prior to his senior year, he attended an eightweek summer college program at Stanford, earning nine college credits, studying java programming, piano and oceanography. Among his many honors, Thomas was named a National Merit finalist. At Metro, he was involved in concert band, the math club and the NERD club. He was a member of the school’s debate club for three years.

VALLEY PARK

Valley Park High School

Sh’sheria Webster’s postgraduation goal is to pursue a career in the United State Air Force. Her positive attitude and dedication to hard work have been inspirational to her fellow students. A cheerleader for many years, Sh’sheria served as captain this past year. She was a leader in Show Choir, where she served as choreography captain and regularly sang the national anthem at basketball games, and was a standout in school talent shows.

WEBSTER GROVES

Webster Groves High School

Courtney Jones, who enrolled in the Webster Groves School District as a kindergartner, is this year’s outstanding senior. At the high school, she participated in Summer Challenge, the school’s new program to help eliminate the achievement gap, and the orchestra where she plays viola. A strings student for ten years, Courtney plans to seek employment as a pharmacy technician.

Congratulations to all of the recent high school graduates with a special word of commendation to the outstanding graduates highlighted in this issue of Parent Link. These students represent themselves as well as their many classmates.

The mom featured in this newsletter is an outstanding example of the significant difference that parental involvement can make in a child’s success. The research is clear that when parents are involved, students are much more likely to be successful and have:

• Higher grades, test scores, and grades;
• Better school attendance;
• Increased motivation and better self-esteem;
• Lower rates of suspension;
• Decreased use of drugs and alcohol; and
• Fewer instances of violent behavior.

The research also shows that family participation in education is twice as predictive of students’ academic success as family socio-economic status. In addition, the more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial the achievement effects. For example, parents participating in school-

ing in a multiple number of ways such as volunteering, fund raising, serving on the PTO, etc., led to more beneficial results for student achievement.

I am sure this research would come as no surprise to Carolyn Tisdale whose two daughters attend Uthoff Valley Elementary School. In fact, I am convinced that her story is much more compelling than anything I could mention in my column to convince you of the difference your participation and involvement will make. After all, she faces challenges similar to many parents and yet she has made the commitment and figured out the best way to actively support her children’s education.

As a parent, I recognize that “more is caught than is taught.” By that I mean our children believe what we do more than what we say and there is no better way to communicate the importance of education than by our personal involvement. So this summer I encourage you to talk with your children about how you can participate in their education and take the time now to get those school visits and events scheduled on your calendar. Here’s wishing you a great, involved 2012.

David S. Glaser
CEO
dglaser@choicecorp.org
314.721.8422, ext. 3014
Contact Persons for Voluntary Student Transfer Program Families

Each of the districts accepting voluntary transfer students has a designated contact person. Contact persons coordinate the district’s administrative responsibilities for the transfer program, and serve as the liaison between the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) and the district.

The contact persons’ responsibilities may include enrolling transfer students, conducting orientation sessions for new students and parents, processing applications and submitting transportation requests.

Contact persons are often the first person from the district that a new transfer family meets, and they are a valuable resource for transfer families. They can answer specific questions about district policy and procedures and can refer parents to the proper school administrator if necessary.

**Affton**
Dr. Travis Baehrecke 314.721.8889

**Bayless**
Mrs. Dawn Thieman 314.544.1300, ext. 199

**Brentwood**
Mr. Jeff Mohr 314.256.8612

**Clayton**
Dr. Greg Barnhorst 314.721.8657

**Hancock Place**
Ms. Lisa Charles 314.544.1300, ext. 199

**Kirkwood**
Dr. Sheryl Washington 314.251.8105

**Lindbergh**
Mr. Chuck Triggell 314.721.8890, ext. 1815

**Mehlville**
Dr. Brian Lane 314.721.8843

**Parkway**
Ms. Rakshia “Rocky” Talavera 314.251.8055

**Pattonville**
Dr. Doreen Green 314.251.8093

**Rockwood**
Mr. John M. Thomas (Interim) 314.918.4578

**Special School District**
Mrs. Mary B. Buehrlen 314.990.8125

**VICC**
LH: Reverend Mitchom 314.721.8422

**VICC Office**
I-M: Jennifer Christy 314.721.8422

**Transportation Information**

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation so long as your child goes to a school in that district. The phone number for the transportation office is 314.721.8657.

Transportation cards with the bus stop location and time are mailed to the family of each transfer student at the first letter of the student’s last name. They can be reached by calling 314.721.8422, and dialing the extension number below, or via email.

**A-D** Dickie Williams 314.251.8055

**E-H** Laverne Mitchom 314.721.8422

**I-M** Jennifer Christy 314.721.8422

**N-R**1 Meldred Scott 314.251.8055

**S-Z** Mary Schaffer Mehan 314.251.8055

**STARTING DATES for County Schools**

Classes will begin soon in your county school. Make plans now to be at school every day, beginning on the very first day. Watch your mailbox for your bus card about one week prior to the beginning of classes.

The first day of school for each county district is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Affton</td>
<td>August 15, 2012</td>
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<td>Bayless</td>
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<td>Brentwood</td>
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<tr>
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<td>August 16, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirkwood</td>
<td>August 21, 2012</td>
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<td>Lindbergh</td>
<td>August 16, 2012</td>
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<td>Special/Tech</td>
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<td>Valley Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webster Groves</td>
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**Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a law that affords parents and students 18 years of age and older certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records.

A copy of VICC’s FERPA statement is included in VICC student records.

To bolster the safety of students riding buses to school, the VICC Board adopted the following Trespass Policy:

**Trespass Policy**

Any person who is not on the bus or who is not the designated person authorized by VICC to be on the bus may be considered a trespasser.

If the contractor is unable to resolve a concern, or if you have one that you feel the contractor has not resolved, you may request a handbook. You may also request a copy of the handbook from the following website: www.choicecorp.org.

![Image of a bus with students]