



# The ADVOCATE

A newsletter from School Based Service Specialists

## Legislators visit Clinton Middle School

The Tulsa County Child Protection Coalition hosted a legislative visit Jan. 14 at Clinton Middle School. The purpose of the visit was to inform Tulsa-area legislators about work being done by School Based Social Workers/Service Specialists through the Check and Connect Program. The program is a cooperative effort between the Tulsa County Juvenile Bureau, Oklahoma Department of Human Services and Tulsa Public Schools.

A number of legislators attended, including Representatives Wade Rousselot, Pam Peterson, Jeannie McDaniel, Sue Tibbs and David Brumbaugh. There was a great turnout. Also attending was April Merrill from the Schusterman Family Foundation; Lael Engstrom, Director, Check and Connect; John Selph, CEO, Volunteers of America; Claudette Selph, Tulsa County Child Protection Coalition; Margaret French, Check and Connect Program evaluator. Michele Kelly, Anthony Taylor and Jeff Isenberg, all Check and Connect Social Workers at various schools, attended as well. Hosts were Charity Clark, Check and Connect School Based worker at Clinton Middle School, and Shelly Holman, Clinton Middle School principal.

Engstrom began the morning's visit with an overview of the program. Clark then shared stories of some of her students at Clinton and invited one of her eighth grade students to speak. After the student told her story, she sang a very emotional song called Broken, for which she received a standing ovation. This was the first of two scheduled legislative visits for Clinton Middle School. The second was held in late January.



*Clinton Check and Connect students Brianna Carson, Jaden Weir and Malia Factor. Brianna and Jaden served as hostesses for the legislative visit, and Malia gave a speech and sang.*



*Charity Clark (third from the left) with legislators and community partners.*



*Over winter break, Charity Clark, school based worker at Clinton Middle School, and Michele Kelly, school based worker at Eugene Fields, took 28 kids ice skating at Winterfest.*



# Social Worker Helps Establish East Central GSA

As East Central's school based social worker, Schelonda Jones has the opportunity to help develop many new organizations for the school. One of those is the Gay-Straight Alliance.

The Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a youth leadership organization connecting school-based GSAs to each other and to their community resources through peer support, leadership development and training.

The GSA's goals are to:

1. Create safe environments in schools for students to support each other and learn about

homophobia and other oppressions.

2. Educate the school community about homophobia, gender identity and sexual orientation issues.
3. Fight discrimination, harassment and violence in schools.

East Central's GSA students are in the process of creating posters for the school to promote awareness. They also had a very successful fund raiser to support this cause.



## Greetings from Booker T. Washington High School

Time does fly. Seems like a short while ago we were welcoming back our returning students and greeting our new freshmen. Reflecting back, it has been a busy time.

With the help of Youth Services, OKDHS employees and Booker T. Washington Parent-Teacher-Student Association members, many resources have been available to our students in need this year, including donated school supplies, hygiene items, food packets, housing needs and clothing.

During the Christmas season we coordinated with the BTW-PTSA to identify students for the Adopt-a-Hornet program. Participating students were provided not only a Christmas gift, but also received gifts to help meet their school needs, including items such as an upcoming school yearbook, class dues payments and participation fees for student events. Generous PTSA members were also able to secure four computers for students as well as a new bike for a student's transportation.

We also addressed our students' emotional needs by providing a listening ear and aligning their needs with available community services. As BTW's Safe Team coordinator, I have provided forums through the services of DVIS and Palmer for the students

participation with topics like What Makes a Healthy Relationship? and Managing Stress. Upcoming topics include Time Management and Anger Management, all subjects chosen by the students and addressed by community services representatives.

These forums are held during the school's activity period in the Safe Team room and are open to any BTW student who wants to attend. We also participated in the Tulsa Mental Health Association Youth Outreach Listen-Up Conference in February at the Greenwood Cultural Center. This conference allows students to tell the movers and shakers of the Tulsa community what they see as important issues needing to be addressed. Columbia Teen Screen returned to the school in January for depression screening for any students whose parents decide to allow them to participate, concentrating on the freshmen class.

Things are happening around BTW and I am proud to be a part of aiding in the students' success, and to be a part of the Hornet family. *Until next time*

*Curin Bradley*

OKDHS/TPS Social Services Specialist  
Booker T. Washington High School

## Will Rogers High School Update

By Carrie Fleharty, Librarian/  
Media Specialist



Will Rogers High School can't live without their social worker! She stays busy behind the scenes keeping the students fed, clothed and in homes or shelters. She is a helpful ear in times of a crisis, and is a liaison between the community and the students in need. Will Rogers High School social worker, Mary Tippet, is almost everything to everyone. More importantly, she is appreciated by the students, the faculty and the administration.

During the holidays, Mary is a liaison between members of the Tulsa community who want to provide for families in need. She also helps distribute coats and clothing to students who are in need. Mary is a great source of information about the different agencies and their programs and services. She connects the students with the agency that can best help them. Sometimes there are students who, through no fault of their own, become homeless, and she will guide them and help them find shelter until they graduate.

Today's students come from many types of homes, from those with a single parent to homes where they are raised by grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers or sisters. According to Mary, the students of Will Rogers High are her first priority. Their safety and well-being are first. She will help and guide them to the best of her ability. One thing is certain: she would rather empower students more than just help them.

Teachers and administrators also suffer from similar burdens. Mary has started and implemented a support group for teachers. She will listen to and help all people in education learn that the stress of educating urban schools can be managed. Will Rogers High School appreciates the help their social worker provides in her many endeavors to help the school become a better place.

*Mary Tippet*, school based social worker at Rogers High School, is what I call a diamond in the rough. She has positively impacted many of our students and staff throughout the years. Her title may be a social worker, but she assumes many roles. She is a teacher, student and staff advocate, as well as a leader. She transitions between the roles with ease and makes everyone feel comfortable. Her daily responsibilities may include, but are not limited to: interviewing students to determine nature and problem at hand; assisting family members understand the client's needs; and assisting them in working out realistic functional goals. She also helps students and families through individual or group conferences to understand, accept and follow the given recommendations. Many times her personal impact may not be noticed immediately due to different aspects involved with each individual case, but when a student or family's needs are met, the happiness and excitement illuminates to others around the school. Mary definitely helps illuminate hope to those who may otherwise feel hopeless.

--Shawnee Allen, R.N.



## Edison Prep Hosts Anti-Bullying Presentation

Samantha Checota serves as a co-chair on the Edison Preparatory School Safety Committee. This committee is made up of student, parent and staff participants. They work together to create a safer and healthier environment for students and staff. On Jan. 28 they hosted Stand for the Silent, a presentation about bullying. This presentation was created by Kirk Smalley and the Upward Bound organization. After losing his son to bullying and suicide, he has made it his mission to spread the message of his son's life and others who have been affected by bullying. Bullying and cyber-bullying have become a major problem in the schools, and with the collaboration of the students and the staff, this problem can be eliminated.



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