

E a r l y C h i l d h o o d S u c c e s s I n T u l s a



**On the Road with  
Oklahoma's First Lady**

**A T o u r G u i d e**



**On the Road.**

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**welcome aboard**

# on the road

There are many significant landmarks along our journey to making early childhood success a reality in Tulsa. Special landmarks that are 'bricks and mortar' locales like libraries, schools and child care centers.

Points of interest along the way are plentiful. These include educators, parents, business leaders and other groups that share a keen interest in Tulsa's future.

## **THE DRIVING FORCES THAT FUEL OUR JOURNEY ARE PARTNERSHIP AND FOCUS.**

- ❖ A partnership characterized by uncommon collaboration and a working together spirit that keeps us on track to a common goal.
- ❖ A focus aimed at the destination and the hard work we must face to get us there.

**OUR DESTINATION:** to assure that all children arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

Ours has not been a easy road to travel. There have been barriers in our path. Detours that have added mileage to the trip.

But, we have also celebrated milestones of success. Bold achievements encourage us to go further...

As we accelerate down the road, we know that our destination can be reached.

And, today, with the gracious assistance of Oklahoma's First Lady Kim Henry, we visit a few of the many landmarks that comprise our ambitious road map to early childhood success. **WELCOME ABOARD.**





# McClure Elementary

L a n d m a r k # 1

## TOUR GUIDES

- \* Tulsa Mayor Bill LaFortune
- \* Tulsa City Councilor Susan Neal, Co-chair, Tulsa County Partnership for Early Childhood Success
- \* Dr. David Sawyer, Superintendent, Tulsa Public Schools
- \* Steven Dow, Director, Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- \* Susan Baston, Principal, McClure Elementary School
- \* Caren Squires, McClure Head Start Director

# milestones

**STRONG, BROAD LEADERSHIP.** Leadership is provided through the Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP), the primary Head Start agency for Tulsa County that partners with Family & Children's Services (F&CS) to offer a holistic, high quality Head Start program providing "wrap-around" services to Head Start families. Through the Tulsa County Head Start and Early Head Start program, these entities provide early childhood education, health and nutrition services, special needs services, parent involvement opportunities and family support services for 1,216 three- and four-year-olds and 104 infant / toddlers from low-income households. Sixteen of the 104 infant / toddlers slots are designated for children in the child welfare system.

Caren Squires, Head Start Director, and Mimi Tarrasch, Family Support Director from F&CS, are key program leaders for the combined effort. Susan Baston, Principal at McClure Elementary School provides leadership for assuring a strong working relationship between Head Start and the first years of school at McClure. Steven Dow, CAP Director, has provided leadership for the collaborative funding approach for facility development at McClure.

**INNOVATIVE THINKING, GUIDED BY RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES.** CAP's organizational capacity is strong and has demonstrated ability to create and sustain innovative programs. In recent years Tulsa County's Head Start program has been transformed into a model of community collaboration and blended funding. The Head Start program has been identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as one of the most innovative in the country.

**COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT & ACTION.** The Tulsa Head Start Program is based on a collaborative program model. Most recently that approach has been extended to work more closely with school districts and individual school sites. For example, Head Start staff members are working with Tulsa Public Schools' personnel to coordinate program planning and improve linking children to the first years of school.

Collaboration with Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) at McClure has resulted in many successes:

- ❖ Head Start provided translators to help parents make transition into McClure Elementary.
- ❖ Principal and Head Start staff are exploring joint trainings for all staff, joint Parent activities, visitation and utilization of children between sites - older children at McClure were delivering the food carts for breakfast in the mornings; reading to the younger children, etc.
- ❖ Parents As Teachers is working with staff from both sites.
- ❖ TPS Nutrition Services has the McClure kitchen providing the meals for the Head Start site.
- ❖ Local dentist provides free dental exams for Head Start children, with parental approval.

CAP also has developed a collaborative funding approach using public and private sources to finance construction of new facilities, including McClure, for

improved and expanded Head Start programming. Tulsa Public Schools, local foundations, City of Tulsa Community Block Grants funds, and financial lending institutions are all participating in this approach.

**GROWING ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT FROM MANY SECTORS.** CAP is continually engaging new sources of support to build on its overall collaborative Head Start model. Currently CAP and F&CS are working on a three-year experimental study implementing the early childhood version of Families and Schools Together (FAST), a school and family-based substance abuse prevention program. CAP was one of only 15 agencies selected nationwide to pilot the Free to Grow program. Working actively with the East Tulsa Prevention Coalition, the Free to Grow program offers family-strengthening and community-strengthening programs with the aim of protecting children from substance abuse. Both of these programs affect Head Start families in positive and transformative ways by decreasing their sense of social isolation, improving protective factors for parents and children, building stronger families and then encouraging these families to build stronger communities, connecting parents to their children's educational system in cooperative (rather than confrontational) ways, and facilitating a smooth transition between Head Start and an elementary school environment.

“The Head Start program has been identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as one of the most innovative in the country.”

**FOCUS ON QUALITY & RESULTS.** To measure their effectiveness, all of CAP's programs are carefully monitored and evaluated to determine if clients' needs are being met in a manner consistent with long-term self-sufficiency. To this end, CAP complies with a comprehensive outcome-based performance measurement system called ROMA (Results-Oriented Management and Accountability). The system is designed to provide a picture of the impact CAP is making on clients and the community by measuring our results against pre-established benchmarks. ROMA reporting is undertaken in addition to Head Start compliance efforts.

Galileo, a computerized learning system, tracks children's progress on an individual basis and helps teachers plan, set goals and objectives for their children and classrooms.

All Head Start centers are either accredited by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) or working on meeting NAEYC standards through a self-study process. This is the nationally accredited program that meets the highest quality of child development and parent involvement.



# Mark Twain Elementary

L a n d m a r k # 2

## TOUR GUIDES

- \* Dr. Diane Hensley, Principal, Mark Twain
- \* Andy McKenzie, Director of Elementary School Improvement, Tulsa Public Schools
- \* Jane France, Director, Tulsa Alliance for Families
- \* Mindy Tiner, Executive Director, Neighbors Along the Line
- \* Debbie Guilfoyle, Executive Director, Crosstown Learning Center

# milestones

**STRONG, BROAD LEADERSHIP.** Multiple community partners, along with on-site leadership from Principal Dr. Diane Hensley, have been the catalysts in the development of Mark Twain's early childhood programs. In 1996, Tulsa's Metropolitan Human Services Commission created the Tulsa Alliance for Families (TAF) with the intent of building the foundation for a stronger community by engaging young families and supporting them in their own neighborhoods to raise healthy children. In partnership with Mark Twain, one of the Alliance's primary goals is to engage family members, through family support services, in providing early learning opportunities for their young children, and continuing this support, especially through the first few years of school.

The Tulsa Public School District has further supported early childhood education through its bond commitment and the subsequent building of a new elementary school. State-of-the-art facilities have provided Mark Twain the unique opportunity to re-emerge as the hub of the neighborhood and have been an impetus in the further development of collaborative ventures, with neighborhood leadership, in early childhood education and care.

**INNOVATIVE THINKING, GUIDED BY RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES.** Sharing the vision of philosopher John Dewey that each public school be a complete community, Mark Twain has established early childhood programs (voluntary four year old program, full day kindergarten, family support services) that promote a culture of community-building that adheres to the "Tribes" approach concentrating on the healthy development of every child so that each student has the knowledge, skills, and resiliency to be successful in a rapidly changing world. "Tribes" draws upon over 25 years of research to incorporate studies on cooperative learning, group process, brain-compatible learning, multiple intelligences, thematic instruction, conflict resolution, and interactive teaching methods.

At Mark Twain, this caring process becomes an on-going culture within the school, with each of the building's hallways becoming its own "family" of 4 year olds through 5th graders. In turn, these "hallway families" become part of the larger "school family." Fifth graders, serving as mentors, interact with 4 year olds on a daily basis. Mark Twain's early childhood programs foster caring and supportive relationships; emphasize positive factors and the importance of resilience as opposed to problems and deficits; and promote the critical importance of young children experiencing opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion within their own family, their school family, and their community.

At this "full service school" site, the Tulsa Alliance for Families provides research-based programs, services, and opportunities that are crucial supports for Mark Twain's parents and children. Utilizing a "wrap-around" process of service delivery, in partnership with the Alliance's member agencies, school-based "Student Success Teams" focus on providing a broad array of supports. These include: extensive home visitation / outreach, assistance in meeting basic needs, nursing treatment, referrals for medical care and other community services, crisis

intervention, individual, group, and family counseling, intensive family support through case management services, parent education, and family literacy.

**COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT & ACTION.** The collaboration between Mark Twain Elementary School and the Tulsa Alliance for Families has been instrumental in enhancing both the quantity and quality of families' engagement with their children's school activities. Mark Twain parents have begun to emerge as leaders in both the school and the neighborhood, playing vital roles in the development of support services for young families. By providing models of parenting, including volunteering at the school and creating a network of peer support for each other, these parents are empowering other young parents to explore actions necessary to raise healthy families, and to become advocates for their own children.

**GROWING ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT FROM MANY SECTORS.** Strong relationships with community-based partners have resulted in maximizing Mark Twain's early childhood resources to promote school readiness. The Alliance's current collaborative partnership is comprised of: Tulsa Public Schools, the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Family & Children's Services, The Parent Child Center of Tulsa, the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services - Tulsa County, the Tulsa Housing Authority, the Tulsa City-County Health Department, Domestic Violence Intervention Services, the YMCA of Greater Tulsa, and TulsaWORKS / Goodwill Industries of Tulsa.

*“Mark Twain parents have begun to emerge as leaders in both the school and the neighborhood, playing vital roles in the development of support services for young families.”*

Neighbors Along the Line - a community service center serving West Tulsa and Mark Twain - and the Crosstown Learning Center Along the Line, a two STAR child care center, recently announced the opportunity for three year olds to begin full-time child care in preparation for Mark Twain's 4 year old program.

**FOCUS ON QUALITY & RESULTS.** Recognized on both state and national levels for innovation and building strong commitments between young families and the school, Mark Twain and the Tulsa Alliance for Families see the results of their collaborative endeavors in enhanced family well-being, parenting skills, and knowledge of child development; safer and more supportive family learning environments; improved family health, and increased school attendance.



# YWCA Patti Johnson Wilson Center

Landmark # 3

## TOUR GUIDES

- \* Dixie Reppe, Executive Director / Board Member, YWCA
- \* Christy Roberts, Child Care Director, YWCA
- \* Kathleen Coan, President, Tulsa Area United Way
- \* Sally Nichols-Sharpe, Accreditation Specialist, Tulsa Child Care Resource Center
- \* Dr. Cathy Burden, Superintendent, Union Public Schools

# milestones

**STRONG, BROAD LEADERSHIP.** Volunteer leaders of the YWCA and staff of all of the YWCA Child Development Centers have a high commitment to serving families and to strong professional development and leadership at all their centers. Program Directors and teachers are degreed or certified in child development. Program Directors serve in leadership positions in the community such as Chair of the State's Child Care Advisory Committee and members of the Board of Directors of Friends of Early Education and the Advisory Committee of the Child Care Resource Center. Three child development centers offer universal services for rate-paying and state-subsidized families. Child development programs are located at the YWCA Patti Johnson Wilson Center, the East Center and the North Center, serving over 250 children.

**INNOVATIVE THINKING, GUIDED BY RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES.** Developing a comprehensive early childhood system requires innovative thinking in meeting a variety of needs. The YWCA Child Development Centers are developing a number of best practice programs. Examples include:

- ❖ **FAMILY THERAPY** Through a grant from three state foundations, a model family therapy program that works with child care staff, families and children is underway. A family therapist is available on staff for consultation and referral at the three centers.
- ❖ **EARLY LITERACY** To engage and assist parents in their child's literacy development, the three centers have created "Literacy Bags" available for checkout. Each bag contains an age appropriate book and activities for the family to share. Consultation is available on best use of materials.

**COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT & ACTION.** The YWCA partners with many programs and agencies to provide a wide range of opportunities for families of young children. All three YWCA Child Development Centers are participants in Tulsa's Success by 6<sup>®</sup> Quality Enhancement Initiative supported by the Bank of America and the Tulsa Area United Way.

The YWCA East Child Development Center, in partnership with Tulsa Public Schools (TPS), offers a 4-year-old classroom. By using the Child Development

Center space, TPS can serve families who want pre-school programs for their four year olds who were not able to access them at a TPS site due to space limitations. Four year olds receive the same pre-school curriculum plus they are able to access before and after school care that meets the needs of working families.

To assure the opportunity for children to receive immunizations, the YWCA works with the BlueCross / BlueShield Caring Van to offer required immunizations on-site at the centers at no charge.

*“The YWCA has a strong commitment to quality and is dedicated to having their programs achieve national accreditation standards and three Star ratings.”*

**GROWING ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT FROM MANY SECTORS.** The YWCA's Board of Directors has committed to providing quality early learning programs in its organizational planning. Its success in pursuing this goal has resulted in significant increases in United Way support for its early learning programs. The YWCA also has received increased public support from grants and child care subsidy payments, and provided expanded volunteer and in-kind support. The organization continues to seek support from all sectors of the community for early learning and is active in local advocacy efforts to increase that support.

**FOCUS ON QUALITY & RESULTS.** The YWCA has a strong commitment to quality and is dedicated to having their programs achieve national accreditation standards and three Star ratings. Currently, the YWCA Patti Johnson Wilson Child Development Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The YWCA North Child Development Center has completed its application for NAEYC accreditation and awaits its validation visit, and the YWCA East Child Development Center is preparing its accreditation application.



*“Volunteer leaders of the YWCA and staff of all of the YWCA Child Development Centers have a high commitment to serving families and to strong professional development and leadership at all their centers.”*



# First Methodist Church of Tulsa

L a n d m a r k # 4

## TOUR GUIDES

- \* Terry Heritage, Chair, Early Childhood Development Committee, Rotary Club of Tulsa
- \* Kim Henry, First Lady of Oklahoma

# milestones

**STRONG, BROAD LEADERSHIP.** The Rotary Club of Tulsa has a long tradition of working to improve educational opportunities for young children. For many years its Adopt-A-School Committee has worked with different elementary schools in low-income areas to assist with specific programs. In recent years, its Early Childhood Development Committee has helped focus the Club's attention on the need for improving early learning success by addressing the preschool years.

**INNOVATIVE THINKING, GUIDED BY RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES.** The Rotary Club's Early Childhood Development Committee has partnered with the Success By 6<sup>®</sup> Quality Enhancement team at the Child Care Resource Center. The committee's investments have focused on specific improvements in early childhood programs serving the Clinton Elementary School area. Quality early learning programs that accept state subsidy are critical components to early success for a growing number of children from low-income households. The Committee and the Success by 6<sup>®</sup> Quality Enhancement team is considering innovative steps to expand the initiative.

**COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT & ACTION.** The partnership with the quality enhancement project has enabled the Rotary Club to significantly improve the program quality at a family child care home and a child care center in the Clinton area. This approach has allowed the Rotary Club to collaborate with both the United Way's increased investment in improving quality of care, and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services commitment to quality improvement through its Star Initiative.

**GROWING ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT FROM MANY SECTORS.** The Rotary Club's focus on early learning

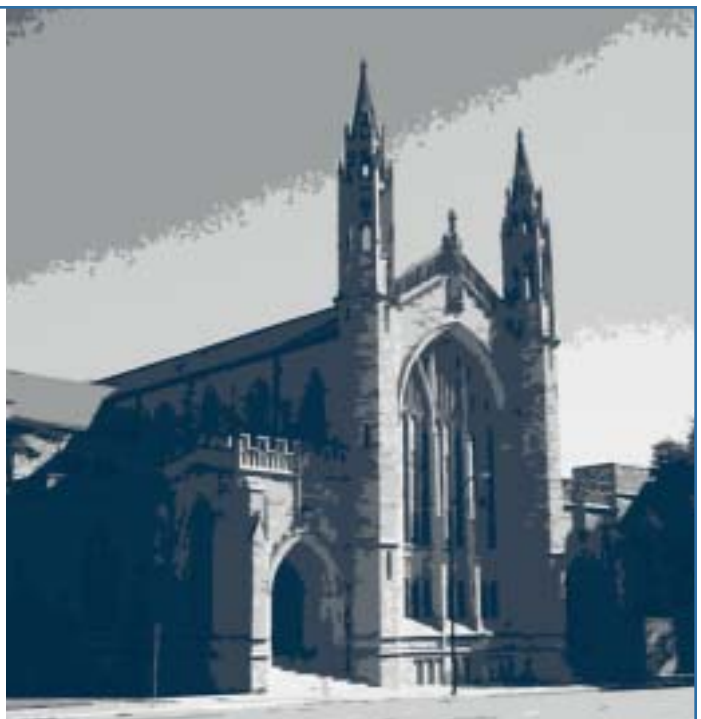
demonstrates the potential significant impact the civic sector can have on improving quality early learning, especially in an individual neighborhood. A relatively small amount of carefully invested dollars can have a very important leverage affect of large amounts of both philanthropic and public funding. The Rotary Club's example will hopefully help stimulate increased commitments from throughout the civic and business sectors.

*“The Rotary Club's focus on early learning demonstrates the potential significant impact the civic sector can have on improving quality early learning, especially in an individual neighborhood.”*

**FOCUS ON QUALITY & RESULTS.** In 2002, the family child care home receiving Rotary Club support achieved its Two Star credential by Oklahoma's "Reaching for the Stars" Quality Differential Rating System. Two employees at the program earned the national child care CDA Credential from the Council of Professional Development. Ongoing work continues through the quality enhancement project to help the program achieve its national accreditation and later its three Star level.

The Center receiving Rotary funding has achieved its One Star Plus Certification, made important safety improvements at its facility, provided advanced director's training, and its staff are progressing toward receipt of CDA Credentials.

*“The Rotary Club of Tulsa has a long tradition of working to improve educational opportunities for young children... In recent years, its Early Childhood Development Committee has helped focus the Club's attention on the need for improving early learning success by addressing the preschool years.”*



# Jump on board.

For more information about

early childhood development or to

secure a speaker for your group,

please contact Phil Dessauer, Jr. or

Ginny Morgan Utter at 918.585.5155,

or Gary Percefull at 918.583.2333.



The Tulsa County Partnership for Early Childhood Success is an collaboration of civic organizations, educational institutions, and business groups that are collectively working to make early childhood development an integral part of Tulsa's quality of life.

Members of the partnership include: Members of the Metropolitan Human Services Commission (the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Tulsa Area United Way, Tulsa City-County Health Department, Tulsa County, Tulsa Public Schools), Community Action Project of Tulsa County (Head Start), Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa Technology Center, and Union Public Schools.



JumpStart is the public engagement initiative for spreading the good news about early childhood development and its potential impact on Tulsa's future. The JumpStart campaign aspires to reach a variety of publics to raise awareness about the science behind early childhood development, the techniques to employ to best prepare our youngest children for a lifetime of success, and the economic impact that early childhood development could have on every aspect of our community.

The 'On the Road with Oklahoma's First Lady' tour of representative early childhood development sites in Tulsa is a part of the JumpStart campaign. For more information about the initiative, please visit [www.jumpstarttulsa.com](http://www.jumpstarttulsa.com).