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What a wonderful week this was! On Monday, ~1,200 students walked into the first new high school in Knox County since 1968. Superintendent McIntyre and I were on hand there to watch their faces as they walked into the new facility. Later that day, the Superintendent and I greeted more than 8,000 people -- students, parents and grandparents -- who joined us at the County's 7th First Day Festival. The event at the Expo Center was a fantastic way to welcome in the school year. This is an exciting time in education in Knox County and we'll have more exciting news for the education community very soon. I hope you'll take a moment to read some of the news we have for you in this newsletter.

Mike Ragsdale

~8,000 kick off school year at First Day Festival

Mayor, Superintendent greet children, parents

Free backpacks, bicycle helmets and school supplies were among the take-aways for Knox County students who attended this year's First Day Festival. Comcast, who was the presenting sponsor, gave kids the opportunity to see themselves "doing the weather" in front of a green screen. Mayor Mike Ragsdale was on hand for the 7th First Day Festival, a program he instituted. "First Day Fest is one of the most enjoyable and exciting events we do," Ragsdale noted. The event is



designed to celebrate education and to encourage parental involvement with their children's learning.

Superintendent Jim McIntyre was on hand with the mayor to meet and mingle with parents and the school children who came under his watch for the first time on Monday. He was very pleased with "high level of participation and interest" in the event. He was on hand to



help introduce Capitol Records recording artists Varsity Fan Club.

Attendance was up from just over 7,000 last year, an unexpected occurrence due to this being the first ever First Day Festival held at the end of a full day of school.

Volunteer Star deadline extended to August 20th

[Nominations needed](#) for County's outstanding volunteers. Nominate an adult or a young person who is making valuable volunteer contributions in your community.

Burlington Park Property Public Meeting

What: 2nd public planning meeting for Burlington Park

When: Monday, 8/25 at 5:30 p.m.

Where: Burlington Branch Library, 4614 Asheville Highway

Who: Interested neighbors and citizens

Voting open: You Pick the Flick

It's time to choose the lineup for *Movies on the Town* this fall.

Choose your favorite family-friendly movies at [YOU Pick the Flick](#).

Bill & Wanda Williams ask you to *Read With Me*

Classrooms across the County need your help

Every year since 2002, the [Read With Me](#) program has put volunteers in 1st and 2nd grade classrooms across Knox County. This year is no different. WBIR's Bill Williams and his wife Wanda have both participated in the program, and are heading up our recruitment effort this year to ensure the program can put a volunteer everywhere one is requested. The Williams agree on the program's value, "There is nothing more rewarding than a class-full of smiling kids welcoming you back to bring them a new story. If a child learns to read and develops a love for reading, the possibilities are limitless as to what he or she can do."

Former Clerk of the Circuit and General Sessions Court, Lillian G. Bean, is also a long-time program volunteer, "It has been a good way for me to give back to the community. Mayor Ragsdale should be commended for starting such an educational program."



Volunteers in the program spend one hour each week reading to students in a classroom, and it's the same classroom each week. WBIR anchor John Becker became a volunteer with the program shortly after arriving in Knoxville, "I haven't found a better way to form such a close connection to kids, teachers and schools in Knox County. You walk into the classroom the first day nervous and worried about making a difference. The last day, you walk out with little doubt that you did."

Now is the time to [fill out your volunteer application](#) and get set up to read in a school of your choosing, near your home, or your place of business. Once the assignment to a school is made, a coordinator at the school will work with you and the assigned teacher to set a schedule. Mayor Ragsdale has also been reading in the program since its inception. "It amazes me how much progress children can make in one short year. A couple of the children have been quick to tell me I have made good progress, too! I encourage everyone to join this volunteer effort, for the children, and for yourself."

For more information, or to volunteer, check out the Read With Me section of the Knox County website.

KCHD receives \$250K grant through Project Diabetes

Community partnership targets diabetes prevention

Project Diabetes has provided a \$250,000 state-funded grant CARD (Comprehensive Approach to Reducing Diabetes). The grant means the Healthy Weight Program can expand its efforts to address diabetes and obesity issues in Knox County. Through CARD, the Knox County Health Department, will work in partnership with the Knoxville Utilities Board, Cariten Healthcare, Knoxville Parks and Recreation, and Mt. Olive Baptist Church to provide a workplace and community program that targets youth and adults living and working in Knox County. Pilot sites will include both business and public venues. Successful outcomes, demonstrated by reduced risk factors and improved diabetes management, will establish the program as an effective approach for addressing the disease, and improving the quality of life for those affected.

There are both diabetes prevention and management components to the program, with a goal of providing the knowledge, tools and resources people need to delay or prevent the onset of diabetes. CARD will also provide diabetes management education for individuals diagnosed with diabetes or pre-diabetes. More information is available on the [Knox County website](#).

Tots & Books...a Library photo contest

Imagination Library looking for cute kids with books

The Public Library is looking for pictures of Knox County children and families making the most of their Imagination Library books. To encourage you to participate, we will feature some of the photos you submit in this newsletter.

Knox County Calendar

August 20

Extended deadline:
Governor's Volunteer
Star nominations

August 22

Museum of East
Tennessee Ribbon
Cutting

August 23

Museum of East
Tennessee Grand
Opening

August 25

2nd Public Hearing on
Burlington Park

August 25

County Commission

August 28

Movies on the Town:
Last day to vote!

September 1

County holiday

September 5

Deadline: Library
photo contest

September 13

Second Saturday
Concert at the Cove:
Retroholics

THINK GREEN #55

Chances are you don't leave all of your lights burning while you are at work. So make that "turn it off" practice apply in the office, too. Leaving on the office lights and computers and printers overnight can double the

utility bill and really generate greenhouse emissions. Lower our carbon emissions and our energy bills. Turn off the lights when you leave!

**True Green* from National Geographic's *Clean Up the World* campaign

Quick Links

[Knox County Office of Neighborhoods Public Library Public Schools Parks & Recreation Health Department](#)



So, send the Library shots of your baby or grandbaby chewing on a board book, your toddler dressed up as her favorite character, or your preschooler "reading" a favorite title for the 8th, 12th or 50th time. Be creative!

Remember, it is a contest, so the Library will be awarding winners a \$25 Visa gift card, an Imagination Library gift pack and a framed copy of their photo. Plus, selected entries will be featured at Lawson McGhee Library in the Imagination Library Photo Exhibition, on the Library website, and in various Imagination Library publications!

Pick up an entry form at any library location or download one from the Library website. Entries must be received by September 5, 2008. For more information, call 215-8784.

Mooreland Heights School & Staff Honored

Swaney, Fife & Briggs cited as exceptional

Mooreland Heights Elementary and three of its teachers were honored this summer in Nashville as part of their participation in the Value Plus (VP) Program funded by the Tennessee Arts Commission. The school received the School of Excellence Award and a \$10,000 check for demonstrating the most growth over the course of the school year to achieve a standard of excellence. The three teachers honored were as follows:

Heidi Swaney, 1st grade, Distinguished Teacher of the Year for demonstrating exceptional growth and whole-hearted participation in teaching, planning, and collaborating on arts integration instruction.

Britney Fife, kindergarten, the Molly L. Pratt Spirit Award for going above and beyond the classroom to make arts integration successful.

Holly Briggs, art teacher, Master Teacher Award, honors a single teacher out of ALL six of the VP schools who has demonstrated extraordinary teaching skills, a propensity for thinking outside the box, a positive attitude, cooperation with fellow faculty, and whose presence and contributions to the field of arts-integrated teaching have had tremendous impact on their students and school.

Join us in our efforts to make Knox County *A Great American Community*. **Become a part of the conversation.** Tell us about our programs and services that are working for you, and the ones that aren't. **Support our teachers** and the great work they are doing to educate our children. **Get involved** with the workforce development effort. **Participate** in the great events our libraries and parks departments offer, like the summer reading challenge and the Second Saturday at the Cove concert series. County government starts with you, the citizen, so **join in!**

Sincerely,

Mike Ragsdale, County Mayor
Knox County, A Great American Community