



The Telegraph/RUSS SMITH

Scott Shelton, left, a radio broadcasting student at Lewis and Clark Community College, helps out three young men from the Alton Boys and Girls Club pick out Christmas gifts

Tuesday at the Target store on the Homer Adams Parkway. They are, left to right, Jack Baldwin, 12, D'Marlo Reed, 13, and Michael Lumpkins, 12.

LCCC students help Boys and Girls buy toys

By LINDAN WELLES

Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — Fifty bright-eyed, beaming youngsters from the Alton Boys and Girls Club were the happiest shoppers in town Tuesday morning, eager to buy gifts for their loved ones.

The children themselves were recipients of \$1,500 in donations from WLCA radio station at Lewis and Clark Community College, each getting \$30 to spend at the Target store, 300 E. Homer Adams Parkway.

Most of them, in turn, were using the money to bring holiday cheer to their parents and siblings.

"The greatest thing for them was to receive, then give back" to others, said Al Womack, program director at the Boys and Girls Club, 1400 State St.

Womack said he selected the youngsters, age 6 through 14 years, based on attendance and participation in club activities as well as need.

Helpers from Lewis and Clark's broadcast classes guided the youngsters as they made their shopping selections.

"It was great. They bought everything from poinsettias for their parents and things for their brothers and sisters," Womack said.

Womack, in turn, said he enjoyed watching the youngsters tackle their Christmas

shopping chore. "You could just see the excitement in their faces as they pushed shopping carts, buying things for their brothers and trying on clothes," he said.

Womack said one young man spent his entire \$30 on clothes for his three nieces, buying nothing for himself.

WLCA has sponsored the shopping event the past three years, growing year by year. In 1996, 25 children from the club got \$20 apiece to spend at the event. Also, as a treat, Tar-

get pitches in with juice and donuts to make the outing even merrier.

The annual shopping trip is made possible by the efforts of Lewis and Clark broadcast students. Heading the effort were Adam Pruitt and Andy Harder, who were hosts of an on-air marathon for 89.9 hours, the radio station's location on the dial.

The exhausting fund raiser began Dec. 18 and ended Monday, netting \$3,000.

The remaining \$1,500 that

the broadcast students raised went to the Women's Support Center, said Mike Lemons, WLCA station manager.

"We expected a lot of the kids to head straight to the toys, although some did. A lot of them bought gifts for their parents, which was nice. All of them were real appreciative. Some of the other shoppers seemed to enjoy watching them. We love doing this for the Boys and Girls Club. It's a wonderful organization," Lemons said.

Boys and Girls Club plans week full of fun and games

By MARY ANN MAZENKO

Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — A week chock-full of activities will mark Boys and Girls Club of Alton Week now through April 5.

All current members are welcome to participate, and new members are encouraged to join the fun, said Al Womack Jr., program director. The club, part of a national organization, meets at the Catholic Children's Home at 115 Jefferson Ave. in Alton.

Activities on tap for this week include a basketball skills competition Monday; game room tournaments Tuesday; swimming and jump rope competition Wednesday; arts workshop, pie-eating contest and poster contest Thursday; awards presentation and talent show Friday; and carnival and cookout Saturday.

"We work with youths from all backgrounds, with special concern for those from disadvantaged backgrounds," Womack said. "Our goal is to help them develop qualities that will help them become leaders and good citizens."

The Alton club serves more than 500 youngsters from the Alton-Godfrey area. The only requirement for membership is to be between 6 and 18.

"They renew their membership every September and pay a \$5 fee if they can. If they can't, we make arrangements," Womack said.

Club activities are continuous, and the club is open year-round.

"We swim every Wednesday at the Alton YWCA, have arts and crafts Tuesday and Thursday, hold game room tournaments and have fifth- and sixth-grade basketball teams," Womack said. "We have a pompon and drill team and a computer course taught by volunteers."

Starting April 7, the club will sponsor "Talking with T.J.," a conflict-resolution program.

The club also has a Power Hour.

"They can bring their homework to do and earn club points," Womack said. "If they earn so many points, we'll

take special field day trips."

The club's Smart Moves prevention program helps youngsters deal with societal pressures, "from peer pressure to drugs and alcohol to everything in between," Womack said. "We do a lot of role-playing in that program."

One of the group's major purposes is to provide a safe place for youngsters. Five part-time staff members run the club with help from community volunteers.

"And some high school students earn community credits by volunteering with us," Womack said.

"I think we can make a difference," he said.

For more information, call Womack at 462-6249.

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Keeping involved adds up

Youth club
earns interest
of accountant



By MAUREEN HEGARTY
Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — Dave Bartosiak is in the thick of things again. Since his school days, Bartosiak has been finding ways to get involved.

"He always liked getting into a little bit of everything," said Nick Williams, a friend since high school and Alton Boys and Girls Club unit director.

Bartosiak's drive has delivered him to the door of the Boys and Girls Club where he is now president of the Alton club's 11-member advisory board.

"I tried to stay active in high school and I think that led me to be active in things now," Bartosiak, 30, said.



The Telegraph
Dave Bartosiak, president of the advisory board of the Alton Boys and Girls Club.

At Civic Memorial High School, Bartosiak played on the golf, tennis and basketball teams and was active in student government before graduating in 1982.

Bartosiak, a tax supervisor with the C.J. Schlosser & Co. accounting firm, is also an active Rotarian.

"I enjoy doing things outside the office, and if there is something out there where I can use my time to benefit other people, I want to do it," Bartosiak said.

His biggest hobby, golf, was

what got him in the swing of things with the Boys and Girls Club.

Bartosiak had organized an informal golf tournament since 1984 and in 1988 decided to make it a fund-raiser.

"I knew Nick Williams and I was looking for an organization to sponsor," Bartosiak said. "I had no idea in the beginning it would lead to me getting so involved. I was just looking for an organization to help and knew the Boys and Girls Club was a good organi-

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Youth

■ Continued from Page A-1
zation."

Williams said Bartosiak continued to try to find ways to help.

"He was always asking what else he could do and said he had some time to help the club," Williams added.

Williams said Bartosiak's willing hands were called upon last year when the Bethalto Boys Club board members began to worry about the progress of the Alton club, which it governs.

"They wanted me to look and see where the Alton club

was and why it had not grown," Bartosiak said.

Besides finding ways to help improve the club, Bartosiak had to help find a home for the club three times in the last year.

The club lost its first home at Clara Barton School in March and then made temporary stops at the YWCA and the Alton Salvation Army before settling in at the Catholic Children's Home.

"It's been a difficult year," Bartosiak said.

And now it's tax season.

"My wife (Teresa) and I don't see a lot of each other at

this time of year," Bartosiak said. "I just try to make the most of the time I have, meeting at lunch time and after work."

Bartosiak graduated from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

"I think I switched my major four times my freshman year before ending up in the Business School," Bartosiak said.

His final decision ended up the right one. "I really enjoy what I do. It's a pleasure coming to work every day," Bartosiak said.



David Bartosiak, president of the Boys and Girls Club of Alton.

The Telegraph/JOHN BADMAN

Seeing youth served

Boys and Girls Club is committed to River Bend young people

By BETHANY BEHRHORST

Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — Providing a safe and positive place for area children is the premise for those currently being considered for the Man and Youth of the Year Award.

The Boys and Girls Club of Alton is looking for men and women, as well as children, who have invested quality time with River Bend youth through socially interactive and educational programs for the honors.

"We don't necessarily look at someone who's with Alton Boys and Girls Club," David Bartosiak, club president, said.

"These are people who've been affiliated with youth organizations. They've gone above and beyond what a normal person would do to make a better life for kids."

This year's award will be presented at a ceremony held at 7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 31, at Lockhaven Country Club in Godfrey.

The recipient is chosen by the board of directors.

Many of the programs offered throughout the community, and through the Boys and Girls Club

are arranged to give children from single-parent homes and other walks of life the chance to explore and grow with other children.

Programs such as Camp Blackhawk, which is held during summer months, allow children to investigate the great outdoors through hiking, fishing, playing and swimming.

"The primary participants are those in disadvantaged circumstances and at-risk circumstances," Bartosiak said. "What we're really trying to do is provide the kids with a positive option."

Many of the children come from single-parent homes where the family income is not sufficient to supply them with all the things they need, much less want.

"They don't have a lot of time to drive their kids out," Bartosiak said.

Many children in the programs are not able to find rides to and from activities all the time, or cannot afford to participate in other community programs, such as the ones made available through the club. The club sponsors make sure children can be a part of their programs.

The Alton Boys and Girls Club

started out as a branch of the Bethalto club. In 1992, Bartosiak took over as president of the organization and expanded many of the existing programs to offer children more of a variety of events to participate in and easier access to them.

"It's a lot of fun working with the kids," he said. "Before we took it over, it had never really grown beyond a gymnasium program."

Bartosiak grew up in Bethalto and decided to look into the Alton extension program in 1992. He became president and started two branch facilities at Eunice Smith School at 2400 Henry St., and Lovejoy School at 1043 Tremont St. Both branches have increased club membership.

"They've been very successful," he said.

A third expansion is anticipated for sometime in the near future. The club is working on the project with area schools.

"We're happy with the direction the club is going," he said.

Area youth take weekly field trips during the summer to St. Louis attractions such as Busch Stadium, the St. Louis Science Center and the St. Louis Zoo.

The Exchange Club of Alton, which provides information about child abuse and ways to prevent and stop it, offers members of the Boys and Girls Club the chance to attend a weekend outing at a 400-plus acre farm in Kampsville. The children attend fishing workshops and learn how to golf.

The organization is supported by funding provided by the United Way Partnership of Alton and a Community Development Block Grant presented by the city of Alton.

Some of the group's fall programs include the Torch Club, which allows youths ages 11 to 13 to participate in community service projects. The activities are led by Tom Dooley, a member of the club's advisory committee. A pom pon team and drill team also are available for area youth. Members of the teams perform in the Alton Halloween Parade and participate in many area sporting events.

Power Hour is another program offered to area youth. This activity allows students the opportunity to receive assistance with homework and the chance to brush up on their computer skills.

Boys and Girls Club plans to move to new location

■ A hearing on a special use permit to use the school for the club is scheduled

By JIM KULP
For The Telegraph

ALTON — The prospect of using Irving School as the new headquarters for the Boys and Girls Club of Alton was called a "godsend" Sunday, at a public information meeting to ease neighborhood concerns about the move.

Theresa Willis, a board member of the club, said it needs a facility of its own because that would make it eligible for grants totaling \$60,000 for a technology center. The center, she said, would include 17 computers and related hardware and networking, provided by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. She added that computers are a key part of children's education. She answered a question of whether the club had considered the alternative of using existing schools after hours for its activities.

"Unless we have a facility of our own, we can't participate in the technology center program of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Irving School is a good location for our kids to get there and we won't bring additional population of people into the neighborhood." Also, she said, a permanent facility would provide

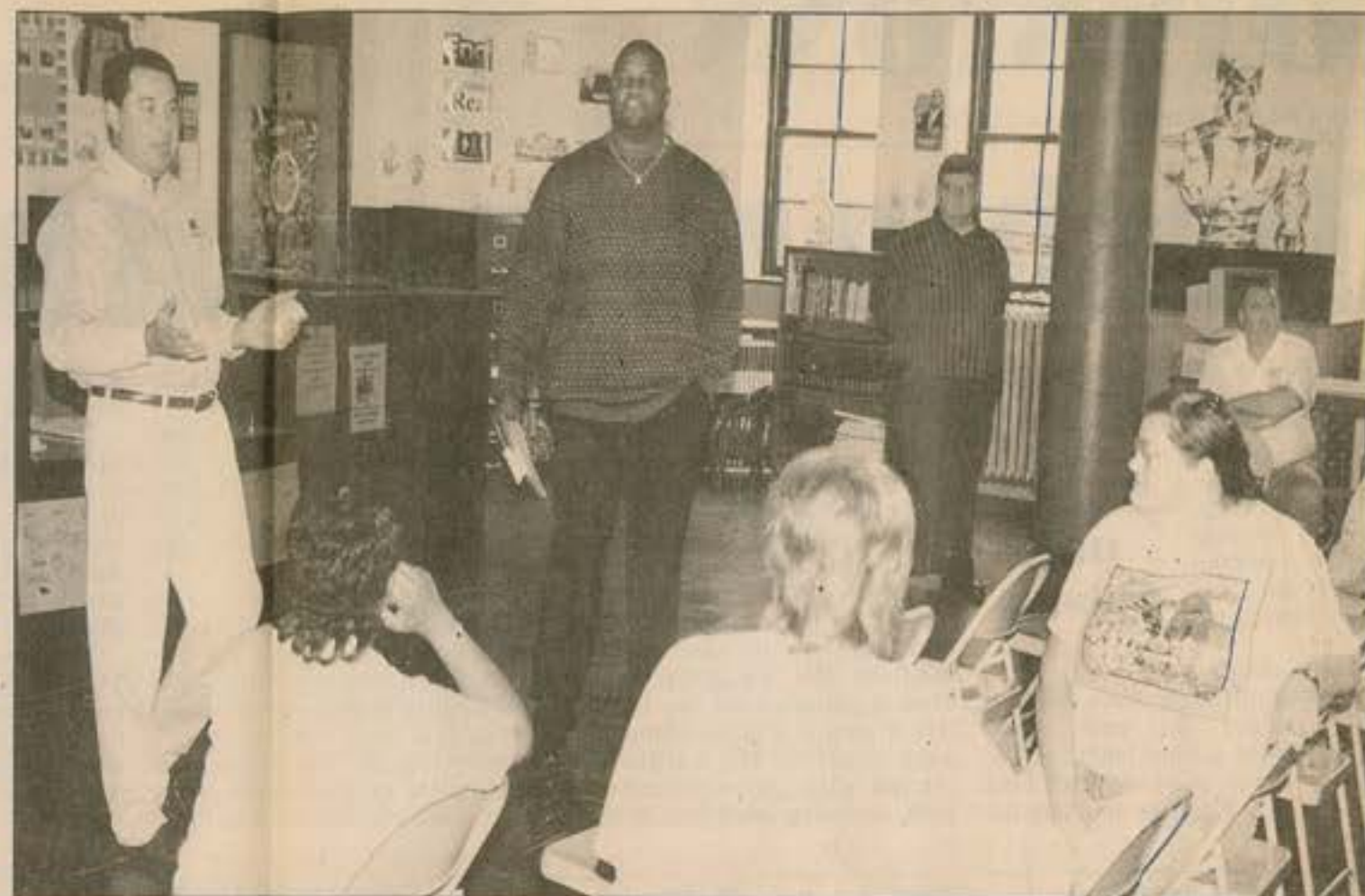
consistency for the club's members, some of whom have no consistency in their lives. She said Irving School is in good repair compared with other locations. "Irving School is a good location for our kids to get there and we won't bring additional population of people into the neighborhood."

It was announced that a hearing on a special use permit to use the school for the club is scheduled at 1:15 p.m. Oct. 31 in the Alton City Hall.

Al Womack Jr., executive director of the club, assured the Irving School neighborhood people present that the club staff would not park on the streets, would let the children use only the playground for recreational activities and there would be no noise. He said he wanted to address the concerns about the club's hours of operation, the increase in traffic and upkeep of the building.

"Outdoor activities will be on the playground," he said. "There won't be a whole lot of time spent outdoors and we stress respect." He said traffic will not be a problem, because staff members will park on the school lot and parents dropping children off will pause for that purpose for only a few minutes. As for the building's upkeep, Womack said "we want to see a clean club. We have a daily maintenance agreement with the school district because Irving is still the responsibility of the district."

The club's budget is \$300,000 a year and it serves more than 800 children with a variety of



Dave Bartosiak and Al Womack, board members of the Boys and Girls Club of Alton, field questions at a meeting about the club's intended use of the building at the Catholic Childrens Home in Alton.

For the Telegraph/ERICH KASSLER

activities, including help with homework. The club's goal is to get children off the streets and into a positive environment. The budget money comes from the United Way, state grants, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and local fund-raisers. The board members are volunteers. Dues are \$10 if the child can afford it.

"Kids need a place to go, somebody to talk to," Womack said. "We're the mom in these kids' lives, the big brother and big sister. We're trying to push kids into being caring, productive, positive people. They are our leaders tomorrow. Just being in the building keeps them safe and off the streets. If

they don't have a goal, they're headed for trouble."

Womack assured the people present that the club would do everything possible to be a good neighbor, and invited those present to come and see what the club does for its members. "I truly believe in what we're doing, which is everything we can possibly do to have an impact on kids. We have a caring board and staff and the kids want to be here. We're asking for your support."

To a question of why the club doesn't stay where it is, Womack said the Catholic Children's Home wants the space they occupy to expand a girls program.

One man, who said he grew up on Bluff Street, said the club is a "total positive" experience for children, and neighbors should not be concerned because it would be a "first class operation" when it occupies Irving School. "If you saw the smiling faces on those kids," he said, "you wouldn't be against it in your neighborhood."

Two young members of the club read papers on the topic "What the Boys and Girls Club means to me." They were Toninetta Bradley and Adrea Lucas. Toninetta, 12, said if she ever has a problem, the club can solve it. "I get along with a lot of people. It's a joyful place

and there are many things you can do. On weekdays the staff helps young people with their homework. Also, the things they say encourage you to keep you trying."

Andrea said: "The reason I think the Boys and Girls Club should be moved to Irving School is because it is a good place for kids to come play and have fun. We go on field trips, do art, do all kinds of activities. The Boys and Girls Club is like a shelter to us. They provide us with lots of stuff. They teach us how to be respectful, responsible, safe and educated. They also help you with your homework. The Boys and Girls Club is a marvelous place."

Community center would be home for Boys and Girls Club

City Council has agreed to a lease

BY TRISHA L. HOWARD
Of the Post-Dispatch

ALTON — Godfrey Township's trustees may attempt to take possession of a community center in north Alton that could serve as a new home for the Boys and Girls Club of Alton.

For nearly two decades, the community center in northern Alton has been run by the Godfrey Human Resource Development Corp.

At a meeting Tuesday night, the township's trustees are set to decide whether to pursue legal action to take over the building. The township would sell the building to Alton for the price of its legal fees, said Township Supervisor Doug Mueller.

The Alton City Council has agreed to lease the building to the Boys and Girls Club for \$1 a year, for the next 20 years. The club has outgrown its existing building, a one-room chapel at the Catholic Children's Home.

Because of the legal issues and the building's state of disrepair, club officials cannot say when they might be able to move into the building.

The community center was built in the early 1980s, funded by a federal community development grant. At the time, the center was still within Godfrey Township. Alton later annexed the property, which is located on Lovejoy Street just south of Oakwood Cemetery.

Deed restrictions for the center dictated that the property would revert to the township if the development corporation ceased to exist, Mueller said.

The Illinois Secretary of State's office had notified Mueller almost two years ago that the corporation had not filed the proper documents to maintain its non-profit status.

Even then, the township didn't seek to regain control of the building.

Calls to the president of the Godfrey Human Resource Development Corp. seeking comment were not returned.

When the Boys and Girls Club went public with its search for a new building, Mueller said he approached Alton Township Supervisor Don Huber about helping the club move into the defunct community center.

Efforts to find a new home for the club intensified last fall. In November, the Alton City Council denied the Boys and Girls Club a special-use permit for the Irving School, after Christian Hill residents protested the idea of the club moving into their neighborhood. But several city officials, including Alderman Tom Hoechst, pledged to find another building for the club to use.

Unlike the Irving School, the commu-

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Club

Godfrey Township has plans for club

Continued from page 1

nity center does not have classrooms, and it is roughly the same size as the building that the club currently occupies. Nor is the community center in as good condition as the elementary school, which served students in the Alton School District until last summer.

No one knows how much it will cost to repair the community center, which needs a new roof and may have problems with its plumbing and heating systems.

But representatives of the Boys and Girls Club say the community center has some advantages over the Irving School, including its central location and the potential for expansion.

The center already has a stage,

some offices and a gymnasium. The club could build on to provide classrooms for its after-school and summer programs, said Steve Stobbs, a member of the club's board.

"We will be very aggressive in trying to procure any funding necessary," Stobbs said. "There are lots of funds available for these types of projects. We'll accept help from any organization that wants to help us, and we're not going to be afraid to ask for it."

In the meantime, the club will continue to ask for the community's support in raising money for the building's renovation, Stobbs said.

"I think the public probably became more aware of us because of the Irving School situation," he said. "The more people who know about what you're doing, the more people you touch, the more support you get."

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Club still looking for new home

By SHAWN CLUBB
Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — The Boys and Girls Club of Alton wants to be in a new home by this time next year, even though a court ruling has blocked it from its most recent prospect.

The club had hoped to move into the Godfrey Human Development Resource Center building at 100 Lovejoy St., off Oakwood Ave. The Godfrey Township Board would have given the property to the city of Alton, and the city would have leased it for \$1 per year to the Boys and Girls Club of Alton.

However, Norval Cox, executive director of the center, refused to give the property over to the township without the center being compensated. Township Supervisor Doug Mueller said a clause in

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Club

■ Continued from Page C1

the deed of the property stated that if the center ceased to exist, ownership of the property would revert to the township.

The township filed a lawsuit seeking ownership of the property, but a judge ruled against the township on Nov. 19. Mueller said the ruling states the center had a grace period in which to file its papers and continue to exist, but the Township Board members feel the court failed to address the legal issue the township presented. The township could appeal the decision.

"We are contemplating whether to pursue it," Mueller said.

In the meantime, the Boys and Girls Club of Alton will continue to use the facilities of the Catholic Children's Home to provide its services.

"We're going to continue to exist. We're going to continue to provide quality programs for the kids in this community," said Al Womack Jr., executive director of the club. "It would have been a blessing, having a facility of our own, but we're not going to be discouraged."

Steve Stobbs, chairman of the Facilities Committee for the club, said the club has grown to the point where it needs a home of its own to serve the approximately 800 children it helps.

"We'll have a new location within the year," Stobbs said. "We'll have to wait to see what the township and the city of Alton does in terms of the appeal. If they do not appeal, we'll get very aggressive in terms of locating another facility."

The building on Lovejoy Street, however, would fit the club nicely, Stobbs said.

Cox now says the center is using the building for its work with the United Congregations of the Metro East and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.

"We're trying to develop collaborations among churches and organizations. The Girls and Boys Club would be welcome to use the facility and be part of this collaboration," Cox said. "We're definitely interested in any collaborative effort in the community."

"It's a matter of dedication on the part of the board of directors. They're dedicated to the well-being of the entire community. There are other obligations we have. We couldn't just give it over."

"We feel that it is an underused taxpayer-financed facility," Stobbs said. "We would think a better purpose would be for the Boys and Girls Club to make use of the taxpayer-financed building."

If the club should opt for another location, it would have to be well-received by the neighborhood, Womack said. Neighbors of Irving School blocked a move last year that would have allowed the club to locate in that vacant Alton school.

"Who's willing to say, 'We'll welcome kids in our neighborhood. We'll welcome the Boys and Girls Club in our neighborhood,'" Womack said. "The neighbors are the question."

and Girls Club of Alton receives budget from the community

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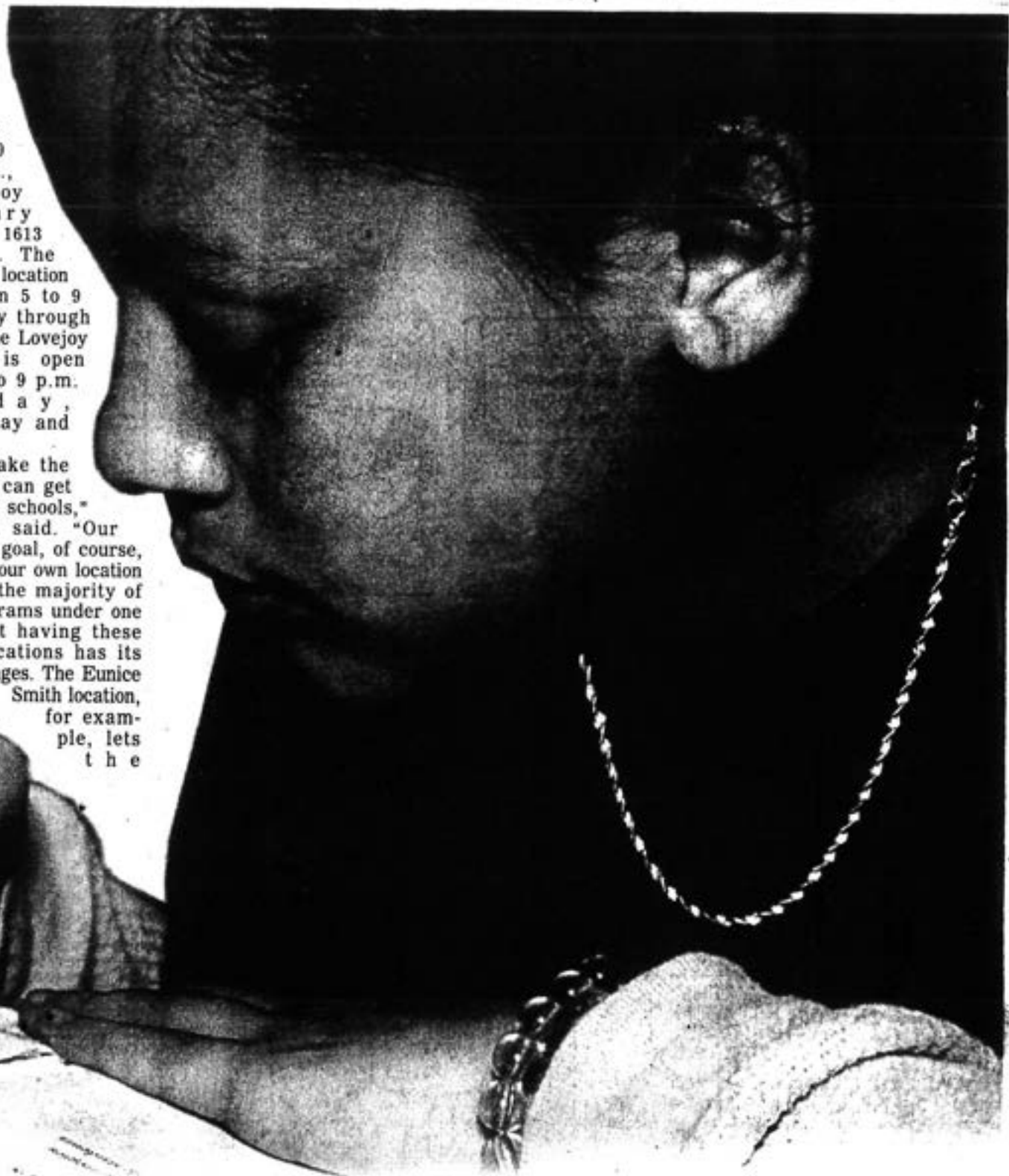
The letters being sent out include four levels of giving: Friend (\$25-\$50), Member (\$75-\$100), Associate (\$150-\$450) and Partner (\$500 or more).

"We don't have very many in the upper level," Womack said with a smile. "But even if people want to send in \$10 or so, we'll certainly take it. If we get enough people participating, it can add up pretty quickly."

The club has more than 800 members from age 6 up to high school seniors. In addition to the main facilities, satellite locations are E u n i c e S m i t h

Elementary School, 2400 N. Henry St., and Lovejoy Elementary School, 1613 Tremont St. The Eunice Smith location is open from 5 to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The Lovejoy location is open from 4 to 9 p.m. M o n d a y , Wednesday and Friday.

"We take the time we can get from the schools," Womack said. "Our ultimate goal, of course, is to get our own location and get the majority of our programs under one roof. But having these other locations has its advantages. The Eunice Smith location, for example, lets t h e



Alton

Some oppose moving Boys and Girls Club

Continued from page 1

a public hearing earlier this month. Since then, the club's organizers have tried to contact all the people who signed the petition against the permit. They also held an informational meeting last week to talk about the club's programs and goals. Only a handful of the people who signed the petition attended.

"It's disheartening to me," said Theresa Willis, a member of the club's board of directors. "Most of our strongest opponents didn't show up to hear what we had to say. This is a big opportunity for this community to do the right thing, and to not even have a meaningful dialogue is bad."

The club has outgrown its current headquarters, a one-room chapel about half a mile away from the Irving School. Every year, the club serves about 800 children between the ages of 6 and 18, providing programs that emphasize character and leadership development.

Womack hopes that the club could expand its services at Irving because several programs could run simultaneously in the building's many classrooms.

But Womack's dream is Michael B. McNamee Jr.'s fear. McNamee, 33, doesn't want the traffic in his neighborhood.

"When I bought this house, I understood the hours of the school," said McNamee, who lives directly across the street from Irving. "I knew when I came home, everything would be quiet."



SAM LEONE/POST-DISPATCH

Shawn Shroeder, a staff member at the Alton Boys and Girls Club, helps Jared Smith (right), 9, with his science homework while Brandon Spearman, 9, works on his math homework.

But with the club operating until 9 p.m. several nights a week, McNamee said, he sees it as an inconvenience.

Something else may be driving the opposition: residents' frustration with the Alton School District. The Irving School is one of four elementary schools that closed last spring as part of the district's reconfiguration plan.

Tim Spaulding, 46, grew up in his house, four doors down from the Irving School, where he was once a student. He said he has

watched the other schools that the district closed over the years deteriorate as their original tenants struggled to maintain the buildings, or left altogether.

Spaulding would prefer that the district find a buyer who can turn it into a private school or a charter school.

"There's always been a grade school on the corner down here," he said.

To contact reporter Trisha L. Howard:
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'98 Trans Am Convert. w/523,995	\$22,995

Honor student pursuing scholarship

By LINDA N. WELLER
Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — After marking achievements in sports, academics and extracurricular activities for four years at Alton High School, the Boys and Girls Club of Alton's 2002 Youth of the Year is trying for big scholarship money at the state level.

Charmaine Helms, 18, will compete against other Boys and Girls Club standouts March 15 at the Illinois Boys and Girls Clubs' youth camp in Chicago. In her quest to win an \$8,000 scholarship, she will give a three- to five-minute presentation about what the club means to her, then answer questions from a panel during an interview.

"I am really excited about it. I hope I can do well and win state," Helms said. "I really can use all the money I can get for college."

By winning the local title, she is getting \$1,000 from the Alton organization and \$1,000 from the national Boys and Girls Club.

In the meantime, Helms is looking forward to having breakfast Friday with state Rep. Steve Davis, D-Bethalto, and possibly also state Sen. Evelyn Bowles, D-Edwardsville, at the Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs in Springfield.

Helms, who plans to major in accounting at either the University of Illinois-Chicago or Tennessee State University at Nashville, said if a business career doesn't work out, she may go into politics. Both colleges have accepted Helms. She eliminated three others.

She is the daughter of James and Donnetta Talbert of Godfrey.

Al Womack Jr., executive director of the club, said Helms was the obvious choice for Youth of the Year among members of the Alton organization who submitted essays.

"She stood out above everyone else. I couldn't envision myself having such a resume as a high school student," Womack said. "She is bright and mannerly and definitely has a good future."



The Telegraph/MARGIE M. BARNES
Charmaine Helms, 18, right, Youth of the Year, helps Brandon Elliot, 11, of Alton, with his math homework Wednesday at the Boys and Girls Club of Alton.

"I am really excited about it. I hope I can do well and win state. I really can use all the money I can get for college."

Charmaine Helms

Alton High School student to compete for \$8,000 scholarship

Carrying a 3.68 grade-point average, Helms was on the high honor roll for the first semester this school year and ranks 58th out of her class of 404. She said math is her best subject.

Helms lettered all four years on the Lady Redbirds basketball team and was Most Valuable Player of 1998 on the junior varsity team.

The multi-talented student has played on the girls track and tennis teams and was involved in the Presidential Education Award Program of 1998, the Midwest Engineering and Science Association pre-college program at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and the University of Illinois-Chicago

math and science summer program for six weeks in 2000.

Helms participated on the Piasa Creek Watershed Environmentalist Team, is a member of "Who's Who Among American High School Students," was a prom court candidate last year, former secretary and current parliamentarian of the Alton High Student Council Activities Board and vice president of the Upward Bound Program in 2000-01.

She also participated in the YWCA of Alton Leadership Development Institute, Minority Excellence Program, Alton Junior Marketplace and rings bells for the Salvation Army's Tree of Lights campaign. She

received the Excellence in Education Principal Scholar award in 1998, has been in the honors program at Alton High from 1999 to 2002 and was KMOX Radio Student of the Month in January 2001.

Outside of basketball season, the senior works and volunteers at the club, 115 Jefferson Ave., for 12 to 15 hours weekly. She said she especially likes interacting with the younger children at the club.

Helms says her many involvements are time-consuming "but worth it" and better than "hanging out on the streets."

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AREA

THE TELEGRAPH

Brock to emcee guns-hoses game

By LINDA N. WELLER
The Telegraph

ALTON — Round 3 in the annual face-off between Alton police and firefighters on the softball field is set for Saturday, with Hall-of-Fame St. Louis Cardinals outfielder Lou Brock the “designated” master of ceremonies.

Barring heavy rain, the “guns and hoses” competition will start with a home-run contest at 2 p.m. at Ball Diamond 3 at Gordon Moore Park.

The top three hitters from each team will get 10 pitches apiece, and whichever side has the fewest number of hits must pop up with a donation to the Boys and

Girls Club of Alton.

After that friendly competition, the two teams will step up to the plate for the actual softball game. Brock will throw out the first pitch.

All proceeds from the game will benefit the club at 115 Jefferson Ave.

Lt. David Hayes of the Alton Police Department, president of the club’s board of directors, said he hopes the event can raise \$2,500 to \$3,000. The annual games also are fun for youth members of the club who come to watch the action, he said.

“The kids are looking forward to it,” he said.

Hayes said the competition is friendly but that, since

“I’m excited that the Police Department and Fire Department have decided to continue the tradition of playing this charity game and have the proceeds come back to the kids. We have two great supporters in our service men. It’s definitely a competitive game.”

AL WOMACK JR.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB
OF ALTON

firefighters won the previous two match-ups and a benefit trivia night, police are ready for their first triumph.

“We’re looking for our first

victory,” Hayes said. “It’s all in good humor, it’s all in good fun, and it’s all for charity.”

Firefighter Jeff Manns of the Alton Fire Department

arranged Brock’s appearance. He said the former baseball star would talk with the youngsters, and he hopes Brock will draw an even bigger crowd to the event.

“It’s always fun, and it’s good to get together with them when you’re not on a scene,” Manns said about the police officers.

Al Womack Jr., executive director of the club, said he appreciates the police officers and firefighters holding the games the past three years to benefit the Boys and Girls Club.

“I’m excited that the Police Department and Fire Department have decided to continue the tradition of playing this charity game and

have the proceeds come back to the kids,” Womack said. “We have two great supporters in our service men. It’s definitely a competitive game. I appreciate what they’ve done and what they continue to do for the kids.”

Womack, son of a retired Alton police officer, said he would like to see the “under-dog” police do well, considering they lost the past two games.

Hayes said the diamond would be protected until game time, so a morning rain would not postpone the event. If there is a rainout, a make-up game will be scheduled, he said.

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Director points to progress in preventing infant death

By DAVE WHALEY
Telegraph staff writer

Although the state's infant mortality rate has remained virtually unchanged the last four years, health officials choose to look at the bigger

picture.

During the 1990s, the rate dropped 22 percent, according to statistics released last week by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

"The 1990s was a decade in which we can point with some

Mortality rate dropped 22 percent in the '90s

pride to the progress we've made in the fight to save infants from dying," said Dr. John Lumpkin, the state's public health director. "Advances in public health and clinical

medicine have helped us to reach the lowest infant mortality rates ever recorded in Illinois."

In 1999, one fewer infant died than in 1998 (1,505 to

1,504), although the rate actually increased to 8.3 deaths per 1,000 births from 8.2, because there were 476 fewer births statewide in 1999 than the previous year. The 8.2 rates logged in 1997 and 1998 were the lowest rates ever recorded

in Illinois.

The infant mortality death rate is figured by taking the number of children who die before they reach 12 months of age and dividing that by the

■ See INFANT, Page A7

City to residents: No parking in yards

By LINDA N. WELLER
Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — The city is posting a blanket "no parking" sign that will cover vehicles parked on unpaved areas of front, side and back yards in residential areas.

Beginning Monday, it no longer will be legal for Altonians to park their cars and trucks in their yards in Alton. Parking at residences only will be allowed "upon a driveway providing access to a garage, carport or parking

■ See PARKING, Page A7



The Telegraph/JOHN BADMAN
Al Womack Jr., executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Alton, works with Zachary Brown, 11.

Club has hopes for new home

■ Committee will discuss resolutions at meeting today

By LINDA N. WELLER
Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — The city of Alton and Godfrey Township plan to cooperatively initiate steps soon that may lead to a new home for the Boys and Girls Club of Alton.

The first step is expected to come tonight, when the aldermanic Committee of the Whole will discuss and make recommendations on two resolutions.

■ See CLUB, Page A7

Good Morning

Area/Illinois	A3, 5, 6, B4
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Blower, Bonafede, Hine, King, Mead, Ringhausen, Tepen, Whitworth, Wilson	
Region	B1
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Camp helps local youths

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is another in a series of articles The Telegraph is running to profile local United Way agencies during the 2004 fund-raising campaign.*

United Way



Three weeks of summer camp gave 10-year-old Adam much more than swimming and craft lessons. The youth — who was diagnosed with a behavior disorder — gained self-confidence, skills for a successful school year and friendships that will last a lifetime.

Adam was one of more than 100 youths who participated in Camp Blackhawk, a popular summer program the Boys and Girls Club of Alton hosts each summer at the former Alton Police Youth Camp.

Camp counselors knew Adam — and several others enrolled in camp — had difficulty staying focused, keeping his hands to himself and working with others. To help campers, who range from ages 6 through 14, overcome such social and academic setbacks, group activities are encouraged. Adam and his fellow campers gained firsthand experience in cooperation, planning and patience through activities ranging from relay races to balloon tosses to portrait painting.

To help Adam make the most of his day-camp experience, his counselor developed an individual, four-step strategy that included informing Adam about the goals that were expected of him; assigning responsibilities that kept him active and involved in the program; commending him on positive gains while addressing negative behaviors; and closely monitoring his behavior throughout all the sessions.

The strategy was successful for improving Adam's behavior; his counselor saw a dramatic turnaround in the young man's attitude and skills by summer's end. Adam is one of the program's prime examples of how any child can achieve success if given the proper direction, time and positive encouragement that Camp Blackhawk is committed to providing.

In 2003, the Boys and Girls Club of Alton served 606 youths with a variety of year-round educational and recreational programs, including Camp Blackhawk. This agency is among the many United Way-funded organizations serving local residents. United Way's campaign is under way to raise money for such vital agencies so they may continue helping those in need. To make a donation, please call 251-0072.

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THE TELEGRAPH

Issue 107, Volume 182

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Alton's Boys & Girls Club turns 20



Nathan Woodside | For the Telegraph
Miles Lynch, center, receives the Boys and Girls Club of Alton's Champions of Youth honor during the organization's annual fundraising awards dinner Thursday night at Lewis and Clark Community College Commons. He fit the role by bringing 8-year-old Tre'Shaun Holliday, a club member assisting at the event, to the stage to help him accept the award.

Nathan Woodside
For the Telegraph

GODFREY — It's been 20 years since the Boys and Girls Club of Alton's Executive Director Al Womack Jr. began his mission with the non-profit to educate, inspire and embolden local youth, now he's looking to the future.

"I think, 'Twenty years, wow,' a lot has been accomplished, but there's still so much more to be accomplished," Womack said recently during the

Boys and Girls Club's annual fundraising awards dinner at Lewis and Clark Community College Commons in Godfrey. "We look forward to what the future holds. This community is so supportive. I think with a little revving-up, we can do so much more. I want to do the best for our kids in Alton."

Many in attendance praised Womack's work Thursday night at the event. Boys and Girls Club of Alton's board President Bret Mayberry

described him as a "jewel to the community."

"I don't think everyone realizes how lucky we are to have him," Mayberry said.

In 2016, the club served more than 20,000 meals to 1,300 youth members. The club had an average of 200 youth daily in attendance, and 85 percent of those received academic achievement in school.

During Thursday's ceremony, four young members helped to usher the event and escort honor-

ees to the stage. One of the members, Tre'Shaun Holliday, 8, spoke with poise beyond the average 8 year old.

Holliday said he was thankful for what the club has done for him.

"Otherwise, I'd just be at home playing video games," he said.

Holliday's favorite thing to do at the club is play basketball, but also he is part of a club program that teaches proper manners.

See CLUB | 6A



Can do

Group launches first beautification project at James Killion Park

By Melissa Meske
ADVANTAGE NEWS

With the appointments to Alton's recently formed James Killion Beautification and Enhancement Committee approved at the Oct. 25 City Council meeting, the committee is proud to kick off its first beautification project for the park.

Alton 4th Ward Alderwoman Tammy Smith said the project, known as the Together We "Can" Campaign, will place 20 brand-new trash cans at James Killion Park. The cans will be installed by the city's Public Works Department in March, but only after first being altered by the imaginations of Alton School District students.

"To kick off our first beautification project, we've asked some of our local art students and teachers to volunteer and decorate some new trash cans," Smith said. "This committee came out of 'the trash' and into existence, so we thought, 'Let's do something with trash cans first.'"

Smith was referring to the controversial removal of basketball rims in August 2017 at the park that, according to city officials, had resulted from issues with non-containment of trash in proper receptacles.

Alton Public Works employees also helped committee members deliver the cans to the schools on Jan. 12. Cans were dropped off for artwork at Alton Middle School, East Elementary, North Elementary, Alton High School, and the Boys and Girls Club of Alton.

"We are extremely excited to see the finished outcome and dedicated to providing more community beautification projects," Smith said.

Committee members include Smith, Steve Thomas, Sheila Goins, Abe Barham, and Joyce Elliott. Partners in the effort include Alton Public Works Director Bob Barnhart, Heather Johnson, Ann McLaughlin, Lanea DeConcini, Angel Weber, Mike Bellm, and Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Al Womack. ■

Al Womack, center, executive director at the Boys and Girls Club of Alton, pauses for a photo with Alton 4th Ward Alderwoman Tammy Smith (left) and fellow James Killion Beautification and Enhancement Committee member Sheila Goins as trash cans are dropped off at the club on Friday, Jan. 12. Students will decorate the trash cans before they're installed at the park in March.

Changing of the guard

New RiverBend Growth Association chairman takes reins at awards dinner

By Frank Prager
ADVANTAGE NEWS

GODFREY | More than 300 local business and community leaders gathered Jan. 25 at the Lewis and Clark Community College Commons banquet room for the annual RiverBend Growth Association dinner and awards meeting. The evening featured overviews of business and tourism initiatives as well

as the presentation of awards for outstanding achievement by businesses and individuals.

RBGA interim President John Keller provided opening remarks and presented Monica Bristow with flowers in recognition of her contributions as past president of the organization. Bristow resigned to accept the appointment as Illinois' 111th District state representative after the retirement of

former state Rep. Dan Beiser.

Outgoing RBGA chairman Augie Wuellner recognized board members, both returning and newly elected. He said the region is realizing success because of their hard work and enthusiasm.

See Awards, Page 8



Photo courtesy of RBGA

(From left) John Roberts, Dale Blachford, Heinz Peter Jr., Augie Wuellner, Al Wornack, Ty Bechel, and participants in the Boys and Girls Club of Alton's Passport To Manhood program gather for a photo.

AWARDS

FROM PAGE 1

Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau CEO and President Brett Stawar gave an overview of a new tourism branding initiative, Great Rivers and Routes of Southwest Illinois. Referring to the national fame of the legendary Route 66 and the regional popularity of the Great River Road, Stawar said, "This is the only place in America where the Mother Road meets the River Road."

He attributed a 50 percent growth in regional tourism during the past year to ongoing efforts of many of those in attendance.

Stawar presented the bureau's Spirit of Tourism Award to Alton Mayor Brant Walker, Madison County board member Bruce Malone and an Amtrak executive for their work related to the new train station in Alton.

"It's wonderful to see so much community support and civic pride," Walker said. "It took many resources to get this done and all of the organizations involved coordinated seamlessly."

Wuellner gave an overview of the Small Business of the Month awards process and spoke about each of the past year's recipients. He also introduced incoming RBGA Chairman John Roberts and presented tokens of appreciation to RBGA committee chairmen.

Four Chairman Awards were presented to businesses and groups for outstanding achievements.

Boys and Girls Club of Alton Executive Director Al Womack, along with young members of the club, accepted one of the awards. Womack talked about the success of the organization's Passport To Manhood program, which engages young boys in discussions and activities reinforcing character, leadership, and positive behavior. The program's success was demonstrated by a video of the boys that became a social media sensation, attracting 2.4 million online views.

Dale Blachford, president and CEO of Liberty Bank, accepted the Chairman Award on behalf of Alton's Gordon Moore Park Restoration Committee. He called out more than a dozen members of the committee for their commitment and service in the success of the project over the past year.

"The success of the project is a tribute to the Riverbend community," he said. "There is a momentum in this community I have not seen since I and my family moved here in 2005."

Ty Bechel accepted the award for Amare, a nonprofit group he founded three years ago that focuses on helping those addicted or in active drug recovery and provides them a safe place to get support and resources.

"We built this from the ground up by taking a grassroots approach to dealing with substance abuse in the community," he said. "These past three years have been very humbling."

The final Chairman Award was accepted



Photos by Frank Prager

More than 300 business and community leaders attended the RiverBend Growth Association's annual dinner and awards meeting. Below right, Dale Blachford, president and CEO of Liberty Bank, accepts a Chairman Award on behalf of Alton's Gordon Moore Park Restoration Committee. Below left, incoming RBGA chairman John Roberts (left) stands at the podium with outgoing chairman Augie Wuellner.

by Heinz Peter Jr. of Lockhaven Golf Course. He and his father, Heinz Peter, purchased and reopened the course this past year, making major investments and improvements to the local landmark.

"Over the past year, we've met so many wonderful people," Peter said. He thanked



his administrative and grounds staffs for the incredible work he says they did and for "making the impossible possible."

Wuellner concluded the event by bringing incoming RBGA Chairman Roberts back on stage and formally turning over the chairmanship.

"I look forward to working with both new and old members," Roberts said. "The heart of the association is its members. I challenge you to continue to get more involved."



Participants in the Boys and Girls Club of Alton stand onstage with executive director Al Womack to receive their Chairman Award.

Photo courtesy of RBGA

Vital van

During a recognition celebration, Freer Auto Body donated a 2017 Chevy Express 2500 12-passenger van to the Alton Boys and Girls Club. The business purchased the vehicle after learning the club was in desperate need of a new van, and also donated \$300 in gift cards, enough cleaning supplies to fill two vehicles, and more than \$2,000 in cash, raised with help from the community. Katie Wilson gave the club a \$500 gift card she won. Freer Auto Body owner Tim Freer hands the keys to the donated van to Alton Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Al Womack and children from the club during a short presentation on Feb. 9. The club serves the area as a youth development agency, offering after-school and summer programs in education and career development, health and life skills, character and leadership development, sports and the arts.



Photos by Pat Taubee

Alton Boys and Girls Club busy with summer activities

By DAN BRANNAN
The Telegraph

It has been a busy summer for the Alton Boys and Girls Club, averaging more than 150 youngsters a day in attendance.

The club has a wide range of summer activities and summer hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"We are continuing to grow our numbers each week, and our participation is growing," said Al Womack, director of the Alton Boys and Girls Club. "I also think there is a greater need in the community for programs for youth, and people are recognizing we are out there."

The area's economy has been slower, Womack said, and that

has affected everyone in the region.

"We are seeing more parents going back to school and getting additional jobs, and that is creating a greater need for kids to be in some programs, especially for the summer," Womack said. "For the most part, we are focusing on summer learning with the children and addressing education in different ways through high-yield learning activities."

The Alton Boys and Girls Club does a lot of recreational activities with swim sessions at the YWCA of Alton, weekly field trips and challenging physical tests.

"We have fitness activities regularly," Womack said. "We

also do character building, citizenship stuff, and the kids are having fun. That is part of the reason the numbers are increasing, and that says we are doing something right."

Womack said he sees making the educational and physical activities fun as a key component of the club's work.

"Some kids think they should take a break when the summer begins, but it is important for them to continue to learn and use their brain," he said.

With the various obesity problems affecting children, Womack said he thinks the physical activities and eating properly are important.

See CLUB, Page C2



The Telegraph/JOHN BADMAN
Emyra Hightower, 6, slides along on her wheeled board during a race in the gym at the Catholic Children's Home in Alton, where the Alton Boys and Girls Club is having its summer activities program.

CLUB

FROM PAGE C1

"We are trying to address some critical issues that kids are facing in regard to obesity issues," he said. "We also discuss healthy living and eating right."

The Alton Boys and Girls Club and its counterpart in Bethalto have worked together on several activities.

"We are encouraging the kids to run and keep their bodies moving," Womack said. "Ultimately, our goal is to create responsible citizens."

The Alton Boys and Girls Club is also working with area youths on drug prevention.

"We have a lot of resources for drug prevention that we didn't

have when I was a kid," Womack said. "Young adults get involved in educating the kids and providing guidance. In all actuality, we hope that every kid will do the right thing. If we reach one kid, we are at least doing our job and making sure resources are out there."

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Boys and Girls Club of Alton present 'Man' and 'Youth of the Year' awards

By LINDA N. WELLER
Telegraph staff writer

ALTON — The Boys and Girls Club of Alton said "thanks" to three groups that have lent their helping hands to the 807-member organization — Alton Foundation, the Alton Housing

Authority and the Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club.

The club also bestowed its "Man of the Year" award Saturday on



Goins

Pfc. David Goins of the Alton Police Department and "Youth of the Year" award on Ashley Longstreet, 14, of Alton, at the club's annual recognition banquet.

"Every year we try to select the top three organizations that have been very supportive of the

Boys and Girls Club last year," said Executive Director Al Womack, Jr. Womack said the club is grateful to the Alton Foundation for its donation of \$8,000 with which to operate its programs. The AHA provided funds for more than 200 youths' memberships last year and oper-

ated its summer lunch program, Womack said.

The Rotary Club paid for a new basketball court and replaced a roof on the lodge at the Boys and Girls Club's Camp Blackhawk off Lockhaven Road, he said.

"A new roof was badly need-

ed," Womack said.

The club, 115 Jefferson Ave. in Alton, serves youths age 6 through 18 through various activities and programs. The board of directors held its annual banquet Saturday at the Holiday Inn Alton, 3800 E. Homer Adams Parkway.

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