Area woman to speak at prayer breakfast

The Wyandotte County mayors, in cooperation with the Christian Businessmen’s Committee, are hosting the 33rd Annual Wyandotte County Mayors’ Prayer Breakfast Friday, Nov. 9 at 7 a.m. at the Reardon Civic Center, 500 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, Kan. Tickets are $15 per person. All ticket reservations must be paid in advance. To purchase tickets, reserve a table of eight, or to inquire about a company sponsorship, please call 913-371-3165.

“We encourage everyone in our community to attend this annual event as we all reflect upon God’s blessings during the Thanksgiving season,” says Tom Johnson, Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast Committee chairperson. “This is a great opportunity to hear how the living God transformed the life of one of our local residents and to share in her personal spiritual journey.”

The featured speaker at the event is Theresa Reyes-Cummings, a native of Kansas City, Kan., program development specialist for the Jackson County Community Mental Health Fund in Kansas City, Mo.

Reyes-Cummings began her spiritual journey at a young age. Her lifelong journey to discover her faith and know Christ most recently led her on a life-changing mission trip to Southeast India. Reyes-Cummings will share her journey and experiences in Southeast India with attendees, along with her plans to continue to use her faith as a catalyst for change and motivating others.

Reyes-Cummings is a graduate of J.C. Harmon High School. She received her bachelor of arts degree from Pittsburg State University and her master’s in public administration from Kansas University. She is a graduate of Leadership 2000.
KU Poison Center marks 25 years of service

The University of Kansas Poison Control Center is celebrating 25 years of service to Kansas. Last year the center took more than 32,000 calls, including 20,000 in direct response to poisonings, potentially saving hundreds of lives and many millions of dollars in health-care costs to Kansas.

"Our mission is to serve the people of Kansas," said Bob Page, president and chief executive officer of the University of Kansas Hospital. "Our poison center is special because it immediately connects us with Kansans in crisis, where our highly trained staff can provide accurate information quickly. Most of the time, we are able to resolve the problems over the phone, but about 25 percent of the time, we direct them to the skilled help of their local physician or hospital for life-saving treatment."

The majority of the calls coming into the KU Poison Control Center concern children, said Rick Couldry, director of pharmacy, who oversees the poison control center.

The poison hotline number is 1-800-222-1222, accessible from anywhere in the state of Kansas, and is open to anyone regarding any kind of poison exposure or for poison information. The center also can provide educational materials.
GLASS IN THE HOUSE — The Lied Center at the University of Kansas in Lawrence has announced that its coming season includes M.O.T. Philip Glass in a solo piano concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8. Once touted as a minimalist composer, Glass’ compositions are said to have grown increasingly subtle and complex, creating music that lingers in the mind long after the end of the performance.
Guest speakers will be welcomed on the third Friday of the month beginning Oct. 19 with Tamara Falicov of KU speaking on the subject of Jews in films. Falicov is an associate professor and head of graduate studies in the Department of Theater and Film at KU where she has received many awards for her research in Latin American cinema. Her presentation will be interactive with film clips and discussion.
KU Hillel's largest event of the year, Rock Chalk Shabbat, will be held at 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 19, at the Kansas Union. All parents, alumni and community members are invited and encouraged to join the KU Jewish community for this special event. Last year's Rock Chalk Shabbat attracted more than 500 people, including Jeff Daniels (middle), KU senior, and his parents Cindy and Rob Daniels. Call KU Hillel, (785) 749-5397, or e-mail admin@kuhillel.org to RSVP.
Event to showcase college choices

ARLEY HOSKIN  
staff writer

It’s never too early for students to think about their college careers.
Olathe South High School Counselor Patty Bondurant encourages students as young as seventh-graders to attend the district’s College Night, which will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday at Olathe South, 1640 E. 151st St.

“It’s good to start hearing about it early,” Bondurant said. “That gives them more time to understand it and research it and plan ahead.”
Representatives from about 135 colleges will be available at College Night.

Bondurant said the event helps junior high school students to see the variety of colleges and universities that exist and allows high school students to narrow down their choices.

“Sophomores and juniors need to be thinking about, ‘Where would I fit in?’” Bondurant said. “Seniors should be getting very specific.”

Olathe high schools have a college night each year. The event rotates between the four high schools.
Schools that will be represented this year range from the University of Kansas to Vanderbilt University.

“We try to get word out to all the colleges that we possibly can,” Bondurant said.
The school district’s annual Financial Aid Forum will
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Counselors will help navigate financial aid

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be at 6:15 p.m. Monday at Olathe South in conjunction with College Night. College financial aid counselors will be available to answer questions throughout the evening.

Rhonda Cole, MidAmerica Nazarene University’s director of student financial services, said senior students should apply now for a federal student aid personal identification number at www.pin.ed.gov.

The electronic PIN enables students to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online.

"(The PIN) allows them to electronically sign the electronic FAFSA," Cole said. "That shortens the processing time."

Cole encourages seniors to fill out the 2008 FAFSA as soon as possible.

Financial aid counselors will be available at Olathe North Feb. 10 for College Goals Sunday to help seniors fill out financial aid applications.

“They can even complete it right there,” Cole said.

For more information about Monday’s College Night event, call 780-7160.

— Contact Arley Hoskin at 764-2211, ext. 133, or ahoskin@theolathenews.com.
Reading project earns $3.4 million Department of Education grant

Wyandotte County Early Reading First, a language and literacy initiative supported by the University of Kansas, has secured a competitive $3.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. More than 500 grant proposals were submitted, and only 32 were funded.

The Wyandotte ERF is a collaboration between the Juniper Gardens Children’s Project, one of the 12 centers of KU’s Life Span Institute; Project EAGLE at the KU Medical Center; the Kansas City, Kansas, Economic Opportunity Foundation Head Start; and El Centro Academy for Children.

The Wyandotte ERF will accelerate learning for 180 children from local Head Start and El Centro preschools in Kansas City, Kansas, by enhancing their language, literacy and pre-reading development.

“This new ERF project will build capacity by training additional Kansas City, Kansas, preschool teachers,” Mary Abbott, assistant research professor with KU’s Juniper Gardens Children’s Project, said. “As a result, more teachers will have greater proficiency in delivering language. Additionally, the project will develop a handbook that details how to provide differentiated language and literacy instruction to preschool children. We hope to widely disseminate this handbook beyond Kansas City.”

Founded in 1989, Project EAGLE Community Programs offers family support and child development services to residents of Wyandotte County.

Including the new grant, Juniper Gardens and Project EAGLE have collected $6.5 million over the past six years to advance the education of preschoolers in Wyandotte County. The programs’ previous ERF initiative in Kansas City, Kansas, cut in half the number of children who were below average in their oral language development.
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Ex-Kansan takes on cancer at tiny level

More than half of the major insurers, including Medicare, now cover the test in women for whom it's appropriate, he said, and more than 33,000 women have made use of it as part of their diagnosis.

His company hopes to have a similar test for colon cancer on the market by the end of 2009 and is working on tests for prostate, lung, melanoma and renal cancers.

How did he get from here to there?

By way of those childhood scientific explorations followed by Emporia State University, where he earned a chemistry degree, and the University of Kansas, where he got his doctorate in biochemistry. Summer jobs at Love Box Co. introduced him to the business side of life.

He worked for and helped found other biotechnology businesses after leaving KU. A close friend's diagnosis of late-state colon cancer in 1999 inspired him to focus on cancer. He hopes his company's work will lead to more understanding of why "every cancer is a little bit different" and of how best to treat individual cases.

One of his professors at KU was Joffre Baker, who later became vice president for research discovery at Genentech, one of the pioneers in genetic engineering. In 2000, Baker joined Scott as a co-founder of Genomic Health.

Scott said Kansas has a strong -- and growing -- biotechnology presence, in agriculture as well as medicine.

Childhood chemistry sets, Estes rockets and microscopes that he used to look at Kansas lake water started Randy Scott down the scientific road.

A close friend's colon cancer turned him in the direction he is pursuing now: trying to tackle cancer at the molecular level, to individualize treatment and make it more effective.

Scott, 49, is co-founder and chief executive of Genomic Health, a biotechnology company in Redwood City, Calif., about halfway between San Francisco and San Jose.

And that puts him exactly where he wanted to be as a fifth-grader in Augusta, when he wrote in a school essay, "I want to grow up and be a chemist and live in California."

Scott's two sisters and his parents still live in the Wichita area, and he returns to his home state regularly, this week also speaking to area oncologists.

In part, he talked about Oncotype DX, a genetic test that his company developed. It's used on tissue removed during a lumpectomy, mastectomy or biopsy, to find the women in whom certain cases of breast cancer are likely to recur.

That may sound like news a woman would rather not get, but Scott said the test also shows which women should have chemotherapy in addition to other treatment to keep that cancer at bay and which can skip it -- and its cost and side effects.
Philotanopist Hortense Oldfather dies

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Hortense Oldfather, a philanthropist whose $4 million gift in 2000 established the Douglas County Community Foundation, has died. She was 88.

Oldfather died late Tuesday at a Kansas City hospice, said Chip Blaser, executive director of the foundation, which has recently provided grants and funding to more than three dozen nonprofit organizations across the community. The cause of death was not given.

“She was an extremely dynamic woman who believed in doing good,” said Barbara Carswell, who served on the foundation’s board with Oldfather.

Oldfather moved to Lawrence from Milwaukee in 1950, when her husband, Charles Oldfather Jr., joined the University of Kansas law faculty. He died in 1996.

In the 1970s, Oldfather received an inheritance that came largely from her father’s early involvement in the Pioneer Hi-Bred Corn Co. in Des Moines, said Marilyn Hull, program officer for the foundation.

The Oldfathers donated millions of dollars to community organizations and to the University of Kansas, where their gift established Oldfather Studios, which house the university’s film department. She also gave $1 million to help Kansas Public Radio move into a new studio in 2002.