

‘Tell us a story’



AT OBERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL on Thursday, Jamie Soderlund read to Bree Chambers on the lawn north of the school. The fourth and second graders teamed up throughout the year as reading partners.
— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Neighbors learn about treatment house

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
Neighbors talked with the owners and program director of an “interdependent” home for boys with alcohol and drug addiction problems on Elk Avenue in an informal meeting last Monday.
Seven people showed up for the session with Heath Bechler, president and chief operating officer for the King’s Alcohol/Drug Treatment Center, and Cathy Rieken, assistant director of treatment services for the firm.
All but one of the neighbors at the meeting seemed supportive of the home, but wanted to get more information about the project.
Mr. Bechler said Ms. Rieken will be the program director for the house. She and her daughter will be moving to Oberlin. They will also be advertising for nine jobs, including six house parents.
A house parent, said Ms. Rieken, is not a babysitter. The person has to work with the boys. They will show them how to clean, do laundry, cook and other skills. Many of the teens don’t know how to do these things. The house parents will help plan weekly menus and with grocery shopping.
Some of the boys will have to learn hygiene, she said. The longer they are in the house, she said, the more they will know. After a while, the kids will start making decisions in the house.
Ms. Rieken said being in the program is a chance for boys to strive

for their future. A lot of them have fallen back in their education, she said. Through the program, they will either go to high school and graduate or get a General Equivalency Degree.
The home will get boys after they have been through drug and alcohol treatment, she said, so they have already been through the intense part. They will have to go through a stringent interview process.
She said they don’t get any boys who have committed crimes against a person or any physical kind of crimes. Most of the boys have had charges like minor in consumption or shoplifting.
Anyone with a violent history, even if they haven’t had charges because of violence, will be rejected.
If the boys damage the house, or threaten a staff person, said Ms. Rieken, then they don’t get to stay. The boys won’t drive their own cars or the staff cars.
How many teen and alcohol users are there in Kansas? asked Dr. Elizabeth Sliter, who lives nearby.. Mr. Bechler said a recent study showed there are 21,000 kids in the state who need help.
With this program, she added, the hope is to break the cycle in these teenagers’ lives. A lot of their parents use alcohol or drugs also, she said.
Part of the program, said Mr. Bechler, is helping the kids get a vision for their future. They should

take pride in their home and in what they can do with their lives.
How does it work with other homes in other towns, asked Dr. Sliter, since you didn’t have your ducks in a row when the company bought the Shelton house? The Ministerial Association here didn’t even know about the program coming, she said.
Dick Kelsey, co-owner of King’s Alcohol/Drug and Treatment Center and the new operator of the Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, said he had told the ministers that if he took over the ranch, that there would be a second house, an interdependent living home in town.
“That is not true,” said Butch Rittman, another neighbor, “because I found out about it when the sold sign went up on the house.”
Mr. Kelsey said again that he told the Ministerial Alliance members at a breakfast he attended at The LandMark Inn when he was looking into taking over the ranch.
Mr. Bechler said they talked a while ago about the fact that there isn’t anything like this house in northwest Kansas.
Since one more home isn’t going to address the needs of 21,000 kids, said Dr. Sliter, is the company working on homes in other communities? Yes, said Mr. Bechler.
The boys who get into a home like this, said Ms. Rieken, are normally on their last step before they go home. She said the program also deals with the parents through coun-

seling.
Mr. Rittman hasn’t been supportive of the home, which is in his neighborhood. He said although he can appreciate what they are trying to do he doesn’t think this is the right environment for it. No matter what, said Mr. Rittman, he wants to be invovled. If there is a problem, it will be a community problem, not just a neighborhood one.
“I want to be part of the process either way,” said Mr. Rittman, “whether it is successful for you or for me.”
He apologized for the fact that none of the city leaders were there, saying that he had invited them.

* Water restrictions approved by city starting last week

(Continued from Page 1A)
a.m. It used to go until 10 a.m., but the council agreed to stop morning watering at 9 a.m.
Councilman Ray Ward said he would like to cut off the water dock north of the city shop when the city is in a water warning.
People can buy water starting at 200 gallons and up, and the city crew uses the dock.
Several people from out of town bring in tanks and fill at the dock, he

said, and take the water out for cattle.
During a water warning, said Mr. Ward, it should be closed. How can the council tell people on city water that they can only use water outside every other day, but let people from the county come in and fill up a tank?
The council agreed to the new watering times, special watering permits for those starting new lawns or spraying down houses to paint and closing the water dock to public use.

Businesses to close for Memorial Day

Most Oberlin businesses will be closed Monday for Memorial Day, including federal, state, county and city offices and all banks and financial institutions.
The Oberlin Herald will be closed. The paper will print a day late next week, so copies may be picked up on Wednesday afternoon, with mail delivery mostly on Thursday.
Deadline for the *Country Advo-*

cate will be noon on Friday as usual.
Raye’s Grocery will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday and Monday. The Frontier Restaurant, Crossroads Express, D & M Service, Keeno’s Road House, Ampride, Pizza Hut and A&W Restaurant will be open on Memorial Day. The LandMark Inn will have a breakfast buffet from 8 to 11 a.m. on Monday.

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Summerfest car show set to go

The Decatur County Museum is getting ready for the Summerfest Car Show the first weekend in June.
This will be the fifth year for the car show that is held on Main Street. Things start at 7 p.m. Friday, June 2, at the Museum office with the Cruise-In. The staff will serve hot dogs and soda while they check cars in for the show.
Activities kick off at 7 a.m. Saturday, June 3, with a pancake feed at the Old Bohemian Hall. An hour later, registration begins. The museum has 30 cars registered so far, said Dana Marintzer, and expects more. Last year, the show drew around 80. She said a lot of the people register the day of the show or during the cruise-in.

During the day, vehicles will be parked on Main Street for the “Show and Shine,” prize judging, vendors and a raffle. Viewing the cars is free.
At the museum, activities include the Needle and Pins Quilt Show and crafters. The museum will be open, along with the gift shop. Tickets are \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for kids.
The car show will offer many new activities, including racing for all ages. Kem Bryan, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, said they will sponsor remote-control vehicle races starting at 10:30 a.m. just south of Farmers Bank and Trust on Main. The remote-control vehicles will have a course to maneuver through in a race.

Age ranges include kindergarten to third grade, fourth through sixth grades and seventh grade to adults.
Mrs. Bryan said the Chamber board thought it would be fun and a way for everyone to get involved.
Lunch will be served in front of Farmers Bank and Trust from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Other activities include:
• A poker run at 1 p.m.
• A starter throw at 2 p.m. sponsored by Oberlin Automotive.
• A tire relay at 2:30 p.m. sponsored by Terrace Gardens RV Park.
• A burn out at 3 p.m. sponsored by Fidele Electric, Woodcrafting and Building Supply.
A barbecued beef supper will be held at 7 p.m. in the Bohemian Hall.

Summer reading, math offered

Summer is just around the corner, which could mean long, hot days at the pool or a job for most kids in Decatur County, but for some it might mean summer school.
The Oberlin School District will be offering reading and math for all levels this summer, the first time the Oberlin schools have offered summer school.
The idea of summer school is to give additional help to students who need it, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt. This is an extended learning

opportunity for kids who need some extra help.
Mr. Glodt said letters have been sent home to the parents of students who teachers have selected for summer school for whatever reason, but there may still be some open slots.
If a parent didn’t receive a letter and wants their child to attend summer school for some extra help, he said, they should call the school office to see if there is room.
At the high school, summer school will be Monday through Fri-

day from Monday, June 5, to Friday, June 30.
At the grade school, it will run Monday through Thursday from Monday, June 19, through Thursday, June 29, and again from Monday, July 10, to Thursday, July 27.
Mr. Glodt said he isn’t sure which teachers will be assigned for summer school, but the board will get the assignments. Those students who are in sixth grade now, said Mr. Glodt, will attend summer classes at the high school.