

Report

UCS Announces 2009 Human Service Award Recipients

United Community Services of Johnson County congratulates the 2009 Human Service Award recipients. UCS will honor the recipients as part of its annual meeting in December. Honorees were selected by the UCS board of directors.

UCS Excellence in Community Service *Evergreen Living Innovations, Inc.*

In 2003, Evergreen Living Innovations, Inc. took over operations of the Johnson County Nursing Center and renamed it Evergreen Community. County government ran the facility for seniors who did not have enough money or any family to care for them in their old age beginning in the 1860s.



Today, evidenced-based practices have transformed the center's institutional care model into a resident-centered one that makes life as "normal" as possible for residents. For example, residents choose the color of their room and have access to a small kitchen 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The educational arm of Evergreen Community is Grow with Evergreen Resources for Transforming Innovations (GERTI). GERTI draws from the success of Evergreen Community's operational model to deliver training that equips long-term care workers for greater success, job satisfaction and retention.

"When you take away the hierarchy, you create a family environment. Our residents and staff love it here." K.J. Langlais, CEO of Evergreen Community and GERTI

UCS Citizen of the Year *Sue Bond*

Lifelong Kansan Sue Bond is the daughter of two civic-minded parents who volunteered for a myriad of causes well into their 80s, so volunteering comes naturally to her.



"Early on I got involved because it was the best way for me to know what was going on with my kids," she said. Today, that desire to "keep up" with things happening in the community is still the driving force behind her civic involvement.

Many of Sue's long list of activities have been entwined with those of her husband, Dick Bond, a former Kansas State Senator. One example is her current role as a board member at Sunflower House, which started as a UCS-initiated task force. She and Dick will serve together as honorary co-chairs of the Sunflower House annual gala in February.

"Sue is so quiet about all the good work she does," said Cynthia Smith, president and CEO of Sunflower House. "Her wisdom, honesty and loving guidance help Sunflower House to be a better place. Together with Dick, she's done more for Johnson County than anyone I know." Along with numerous other positions, Sue has served as a board member of the Health Partnership Clinic of Johnson County.

UCS Distinguished Public Service *Senator John Vratil*

Senator John Vratil has been a friend to education, calling our schools the "best in the country" and fighting to increase funding at a time when state budgets were being slashed. "Quality education is the greatest economic tool we have," he said.



He believes that education starts before kindergarten and supports additional funding for early childhood education. In addition, Sen. Vratil is working to prevent cuts to the catastrophic aid provided to school districts serving severely disabled children.

He has helped pass legislation that preserves and adds funding for CHIPRA (Children's Health Insurance Program) and Kansas Safety Net clinics. And during the 2009 session, Sen. Vratil was instrumental in passage of legislation to extend Healthwave, Kansas' program to insure low-income children.

Even during a recession, Vratil refuses to lose sight of the big picture. "We're in a very difficult time, but we'll work our way out of it. We'll come back with strong economic growth just as we have in the past."

"Early childhood learning ensures that children start off to school on the right foot." Senator John Vratil
