

# **Riverbend Head Start & Family Services Raised \$50,000 at 2010 Circle of Care Event Honoring Mike and Cindy Lefferson**

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Riverbend Head Start & Family (RHSFS) services welcomed 225 guests to the agency's 2010 Circle of Care dinner honoring Mike and Cindy Lefferson. RHSFS hosts the dinner each year to honor members of the community that have shown their compassion towards the people and progress of Southwestern Illinois. The event is also held to help raise funds for Riverbend Head Start & Family Services and its many programs that benefit children and families in Madison County. This year's event raised \$50,000, which exceeds the agency's goal of \$41,500 for 2010.

Parr says that corporate giving was up this year thanks to increased giving from TheBANK of Edwardsville. The gift prompted Argosy Alton and other corporations to increase their investment in local children through the mission of RHSFS. Event sponsors included, Alton Memorial Hospital, Argosy Alton, ConocoPhillips Wood River Refinery, Helmkamp Construction Company, Holmes Murphy & Associates, Landmark Properties, Lefferson & Associates, Inc., Morrissey Construction Co., Paul R. Lauschke & Associates, Piasa Motor Fuels, Phone Masters Ltd., Regions Morgan Keegan Trust, Riverbender.com, Southern Bus & Mobility, TheBANK of Edwardsville, The Telegraph, and WBGZ Radio/AltonDailyNews.com.

Also up was the silent auction. St. Louis metro area residents and businesses donated \$5,500 worth of merchandise, services and event tickets. The Junior League of Greater Alton managed the auction and raised \$4,000 for the agency.

A highlight of the evening, which was set to a nautical theme to represent the Lefferson's love of boating, was a video production by Garrett Lefferson, son of Mike and Cindy. He interviewed RHSFS board members Gay Bryant, Judy Hoffman, and

Brenda Walker McCain; close friends Kathy Bunting, David Lauschke, The Honorable Duane Bailey, and Jim Goodwin; fellow members of Main Street United Methodist Church Dorothy Ridder and Donna Massey; and longtime co-workers of Cindy Lefferson's at William M. BeDell Achievement and Resource Center, Gary Osborne and Cheryl Blaha. They answered questions about the Lefferson's acts of caring and leadership, and their long-term impact on the community.

Ten students of Encounter performed and earned a standing ovation. Their performance was in recognition of the Lefferson's years of sponsorship that strengthened the ecumenical choral group for teens and ensured a sustainable future.

In accepting the 2010 Circle of Care award, Mike Lefferson issued a call to action to the guests to reach out to youth and mentor future leaders as much as possible. Lefferson referenced a watch on his wrist. It belonged to Jack Foster, his mentor. Lefferson said he wears it every day as a reminder of his responsibility to pay it forward. He said, "It's the best way to sustain our community and preserve the quality of life in the region."

Mike Lefferson is president of Lefferson & Associates, Inc., and Cindy Lefferson is a well-respected teacher of children with very special needs at the local William M. BeDell Achievement and Resource Center.

According to Chuck Parr, president of RHSFS, "The Leffersons are wonderful stewards of our community and truly demonstrate a sense of compassion and empathy for the progress of our region through their work, lives and commitment to their faith. We thank them for allowing us to celebrate their contributions to the community, while also raising funds that ultimately work to enhance the lives of families throughout the county. We are so grateful for their generosity and service to our community."

Past recipients of the Circle of Care award are Dr. Paul Pierce, Rod & Jane St. Clair, Essic Robinson, Dale & Carol Neudecker, Judge Nicolas Byron, Josephine Beckwith, Jim Goodwin, Buddy Davis, Paul & Sandy Lauschke, Jack & Betty Jacoby, Don Miller, Anna Beach, Andy Simpson