

## Press Clippings 05/09/2019

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### Judson honors community volunteers at annual breakfast

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Vivian Maly receives the D. Ray Wilson Volunteer Service Award from Judson University President Gene Crume, left, and last year's recipient Keith Brill, right, during Judson's annual Community Prayer Breakfast Wednesday.



Kylee Siers, a junior at Westminster Christian School in Elgin, is recognized with the Bea Wilson Volunteer Service Award by Nick Salzman, left, Judson University assistant vice president of campus operations, and Judson Provost Gillian Stewart-Wells, right.



Lawrence Drake, a Judson trustee and global business leader and executive development mentor, shares his story of losing his adult daughter to cancer during Judson University's annual prayer breakfast Wednesday.

Judson University in Elgin honored several community volunteers for their service during its annual Community Prayer Breakfast Wednesday.

Vivian Maly of Elburn received this year's D. Ray Wilson Volunteer Service Award. She has volunteered for Boy Scouts of America, Kaneland Unit District 302 and Right to Life of Kane County.

Maly launched TLC Pregnancy Services in Elgin in 1996, serving as a volunteer executive director and raising funds to purchase the nonprofit's current building in Elgin. The organization provides free pregnancy tests, emotional and spiritual support and items such as diapers, formula and clothing to those in need.

She also helped TLC raise funds for a medical clinic offering pregnancy tests, limited obstetric ultrasounds and STD facilitation free to clients and to convert a recreational vehicle into a mobile ultrasound unit. In 2014, she championed the opening of satellite offices in Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates, Roselle, Hanover Park and Streamwood.

Kylee Siers, a junior at Westminster Christian School in Elgin, received this year's Bea Wilson Youth Volunteer Service Award, honoring young people in the Fox Valley who give back to their communities. The award includes a \$3,000 annual scholarship to attend Judson.

Siers volunteers at Illinois Park School, a public at-risk preschool in Elgin, and is involved with serving the homeless through Vineyard Church of Elgin. She is an honor student, student ambassador at Westminster and at Westminster Presbyterian Church, a Student Council representative and captain of the soccer team.

More than 150 people including community members, local dignitaries, civic leaders and school administrators attended the event held at the Love Family Christian Foundation in downtown Elgin.

Judson trustee Lawrence Drake, president and CEO of LEAD, an organization focused on developing equal learning access models, gave the keynote address.

Drake, a global business leader and former executive for Coca-Cola, spoke about how the recent loss of his adult child caused him to explore the intersection of vulnerability and courage as a man of faith. Drake lost his 41-year-old daughter a year ago to stomach cancer.

"As a culture, we don't often equate vulnerability with courage and strength," he said, noting that men especially do not have a safe space to be vulnerable.

Drake began interviewing other adults, specifically other black men, to learn how they were coping with the loss of a child. He now is writing a book to help others navigate the topic.

# Parents of U-46 special education graduates organize alumni prom

By: Eileen O. Daday



Student alumni from U-46's transition program attending an alumni prom last year. From left are Patrick Chanthalusy and Cassie Paradiso.



Student alumni from U-46's transition program attending an alumni prom last year. From left are Patrick Chanthalusy, Cassie Paradiso, Natalie Herrera, Cornelius Patton.



Student alumni from U-46's transition program attending an alumni prom last year. This year's event takes place May 18 at Villa Olivia in Bartlett.



Alfredo and Kimberly Herrera with their daughter, Natalie Herrera, at last year's U-46 special education transition alumni prom. Kimberly Herrera is organizing this year's event, which takes place May 18 at Villa Olivia in Bartlett.

For the second straight year, parents of special education graduates from Elgin Area School District U-46 are taking matters into their own hands.

While their children are trying to transition into the adult world -- including finding jobs, managing their time and looking for social outlets -- the one program from their school years that they desperately want to hold on to is their prom.

### **If you go**

What: Prom for graduates of District U-46's special education transitions program

When: 6-10 p.m. Saturday, May 18

Where: Villa Olivia, 1401 W. Lake St., Bartlett

Cost: \$45 per person

Details and registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-transition-alumni-prom-tickets-54998870101>

Yet, last year, officials with the South Elgin Special Education transition program decided to limit their annual Spring Fling to current students, similar to other events and activities at U-46 schools. That left the young adults in the transition program looking for alternatives.

Enter a group of their mothers, who were determined to make sure they had their big night.

"They just love, love, love going to prom," says Kim Herrera of South Elgin, whose 28-year-old daughter, Natalie, has Down syndrome. "They love the dancing, getting their hair done, wearing fancy dresses. Some even rented limos last year."

Herrera got the ball rolling last year, recruiting other parents to help.

"Faced with their disappointment, we put on our own prom," says Herrera, who worked with fellow parents Karen O'Connor of South Elgin and MaryBeth Temesvary of Bartlett to pull it off.

For their first-time effort, they drew more than 75 guests, including young people and their chaperones or parents. They all came from communities that feed into U-46 schools, including Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin and Streamwood.

This year's event takes place May 18 at Villa Olivia in Bartlett. Organizers have planned the prom around a "Dance Around the World" theme, complete with photos of international destinations on each table and colorful decorations throughout the room.

They even have a disc jockey ready to rock the party, whose assistant has Down syndrome. The evening will also include a photo booth, giving each couple the chance to have their portrait taken as a keepsake of the big night.

One of the elements that separates this prom from one hosted by the school district is that there are no chaperones, meaning that each attending guest -- or cluster of guests -- will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the entire duration of the event.

Parents and guardians will not have to sit with their children at the prom, however.

"We sit at tables in the back and we have just as much fun," Herrera says. "All alumni sit independently with friends. It's their day."

Herrera's daughter, Natalie, looks forward to the prom all year, her mother says. Since graduating from South Elgin High School, she has found a job at a nearby Walgreens store and attends the transition program in Batavia.

"She started talking about the prom months ago," Kim Herrera says. "I'd hate for her to miss out."

Tickets remain available for the prom until Saturday, May 11. Email Kim Herrera at [kimiam316@aol.com](mailto:kimiam316@aol.com) with special dietary requests and seating, or call (847) 809-9123