



**OPPORTUNITY
SCHOOL**
**SPRING UPDATE
2017**

BECAUSE OF YOU

“I am blessed.”

This is Samantha Ross’s simple reply to the greeting of “how are you today?” Blessed beyond measure is her attitude each day.

BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

Some people in her circumstances may not feel that way. Samantha is a loving grandmother who has been sidelined for several years by health challenges and a disability. But she didn’t hesitate when the state asked to place her four young grandchildren (ages 7, 5, 3, and 2) in her care on a permanent basis.

“They said that the children would be sent to the four different parts of the state. I believe that you have to ‘man up’ and take care of your family. That’s what I did,” she reflects with tears in her eyes.

Samantha’s youngest grandchildren, ages 2 and 3, attend Opportunity School’s Grand Street Campus each day. Just getting them to school hasn’t been easy. When her car broke down and then couldn’t pass inspection, fellow parents and families rallied around her and helped with cab fare. Others stepped in to help with funds for new tires, mechanical repairs and to fix a broken window. Soon she will be able to get the car inspected.

“I feel all the love here, and it’s awesome! I pray that these babies can stay here because they are excited to come. I am grateful they will get a good start that will help them be successful later,” she said.

Because of the school family created at Opportunity School, we have families helping families and looking out for each other. When she comes each day to drop off the girls, Samantha spends a few minutes picking up trash that blows into the parking lot and sweeps the dust away from the front door—doing what she can to give back.

When asked what she would like others to know about Opportunity School, she wishes people would make it a goal to come to Opportunity School and see the blessing it is for children and families.

“I’m learning how to be a better person, be more patient, to be a better teacher for my grandchildren. With God’s help, I can see them raised and with a better life than I could ever dream for them.”

Samantha with her two granddaughters who attend the Grand Street Campus



THANK YOU TO **VOLUNTEERS**

Special people in our community also pour into children who need our love and support. We especially thank **Jim Jordan** who retired from our guest reader program this year, after faithfully reading to our little learners for 10+ years! If you would like to become a guest reader, please call either of our campuses for more information. We would love to have you!



CENTRAL CAMPUS

Guest Readers – John Pristash, Mary Mullin, Richard Phillips, Betty Burgy, Jerre Wells, Rhonda Holden, Jim Jordan

Office and Classroom Volunteers – Michael & Brittany Garza, Pathpoint Fellowship Church, Mirelda Garcia and Casey Wyatt, Mission Amarillo for shoes, Amarillo College for murals at Gratitude House, Children’s Exchange and Colorful Closets for clothing

GRAND STREET CAMPUS

Guest Readers – Kyle Wade, Amarillo NE Library Staff, John Early, Ann Hicks

Office and Classroom Volunteers – Stan Morris, the Garden Staff from the High Plains Food Bank, Keaton Vest and Kyle Vest, volunteers from Patsy’s Place, Mission Amarillo for shoes, Children’s Exchange and Colorful Closets for clothing

SPECIAL TRIBUTE

George Cason Passed January 31, 2017

Longtime Board member and faithful volunteer, George Cason, passed away early this year. Board members, staff and families alike were stunned by his sudden passing, as George was a frequent visitor to our campuses. He would often check in with staff, visit with family members and was always the first one to volunteer. According to fellow board member Sam Lovelady, “As an accountant, I always appreciated George’s ability as Treasurer to make financial statement presentations less dry. His clever comments and wry sense of humor were always in evidence when he spoke about them. I’m mourning the passing of a true servant leader whom I’ve known for many years but regret not knowing better and longer.” The Board of Trustees honored George during the January board meeting by sharing fond memories about the true friend he was, to each of them. All our love to George’s wife, Renee, and their family.

NC Martin Passed March 5, 2017

NC Martin was a man of vision and great compassion for children. He was a consistent advocate for Opportunity School and was deeply involved when the school expanded on Grand Street, in 2000. Jill Goodrich, noted, “Whenever I would visit NC at his home, he would always ask about the children and how things were at the school. He would share memories of his visits to the school when he and his wife, Dale, would play catch with our young students. NC knew the value of Opportunity School. He held a Master’s Degree in Social Work. He retired from the State of Texas as a social worker and then later retired as the Director of the VA Nursing Home. We offer our deepest sympathies to the Martin Family.

WHOM WE SERVE

Primarily low income families; serving children and their families. This year we served 419 people, unduplicated.

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our Board exemplifies love in action, in the way they pitch in with everything from cleaning to cookie packing, donating their time or packages of child-sized underwear. They help trim trees, clear out clutter, plant shrubs, and even send over their very own washer and dryer, so that our staff can make sure our littlest learners have clean bibs and clothing! Our Board says “YES” to children and families in so many ways! **THANK YOU!**

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OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL - SEEKING FORMER STUDENTS

In partnership with the Education Department at WTAMU, we are looking for former students from Opportunity School to share their memories of the earliest days of their education, and their academic, career and community successes. If you are a former student, or can help us contact former students or their parents, please email Jill Goodrich, Executive Director, at jillgoodrich@opportunityschool.com or call the school at 806-373-4245. You can also message Opportunity School on Facebook. Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE

LIPS 2017 THURSDAY
OCTOBER 5
25th Anniversary



NEW LOCATION: Amarillo's New Downtown Embassy Suites

VISION:

A community where today's young children become lifelong learners and tomorrow's responsible and contributing members of their families and society.

MISSION:

Through high quality early childhood education (0-5) and caring family support, Opportunity School equips low income children and their families to succeed in school and in life.

UPDATE BY THE NUMBERS

Thanks to you, Opportunity School has continued to forge new partnerships in order to help some of our community's most vulnerable children. YOU are part of our school family. Because of you, we can celebrate by these numbers ...



1 & 7

ONE new classroom at Gratitude House in collaboration with Early Head Start and the Downtown Women's Center serving **SEVEN** infants and toddlers living there.



23

The number of Opportunity School staff who are currently advancing their education including Child Development credentials (CDA), associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees.



90

Percent of the brain that is wired by the age of 5. Thanks to you, an early start at Opportunity School has a life-long impact.

RACHEL OLOGUIN SCOTT (OS CLASS OF 1994)

Rachel is inspiring because of the joy that shines through her and her passion for helping others in the field of healthcare. This former Opportunity School student will soon graduate with her RN degree and is already giving back as a key member of Heal the City Free Clinic that is helping hundreds of people in Amarillo. Rachel remembers baking cupcakes on her birthday and how much fun it was to learn at Opportunity School. Rachel says, "Education is the key to breaking the chains of poverty. I'm so glad for Heal the City and for Opportunity School for the work we all do to love our fellow neighbor." Rachel and her husband, Daniel are the proud parents of a three-year-old, Kaydence.



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