

ST-9

Oklahoma Report: March 1, 2007

Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO) is launching a grassroots campaign to increase state aid to public libraries. The goal is to raise state aid to \$2.50 per person. Donations of \$100 from the Miami Public Library Friends and \$400 from the Stillwater Public Library Friends, plus matching funds, bring the total for the campaign to \$1,000! The donations will be used to purchase advertising. The members of the Oklahoma Library Association hope all library users in Oklahoma will write personal stories to legislators about how important public libraries are to them.

For the past 31 years, Muskogee Public Library and the Hultquist Trust have sponsored the program Great Decisions. Speakers focus on a particular area of the world and the topics are selected by the Foreign Policy Association, a non profit organization in Washington, D. C. The purpose is to encourage people to learn about world issues. The series beginning in February and ending April 24 will discuss such issues as migration, war crimes, changing world climate and children around the world who face fighting in combat, human trafficking and unsafe labor practices. Areas to be focused are Central Asia, the Middle East, South Africa, and Mexico. The series is open to the public at no charge.



Street School, a non profit alternative school in Tulsa sharing partnerships with Tulsa Public Schools and Tulsa City County Library, has a library for the first time in 34 years. Students no longer need to go on a field trip to the downtown library. They have access to updated computers and reference books to provide research experiences and books for pleasure reading. Street School is supported by United Way and provides education and counseling for students who have dropped out of school. Having a library helps prepare students who wish to go on to college. According to the executive director, it also reinforces the notion that the students are important and there are people who wish to see them successful. Students,

community leaders and supporters at the ribbon cutting ceremony were excited to see the facilities and resources made possible by grants from the Sarkeys Foundation and Gelvin Foundation. There is lots of room to grow, but it is a beautiful start to encouraging life long learners.

Clifton Taulbert is the winner of the Arrell Gibson Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Oklahoma Center for the book. The award is given for a body of work that contributes to Oklahoma's literary heritage. In his first book, entitled *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*, he shared his Mississippi Delta upbringing with his adored grandmother. In his *Eight Habits of the Heart* he focuses on the importance of a nurturing attitude, dependability, responsibility, friendship, brotherhood, high expectations, courage and hope. Believing in the

importance of community, he founded Building Community Institute. He is a sought after speaker for presentations geared to writers, business leaders, and education organizations. He has the ability to engaged both children and adults with his sincerity, humor, and storytelling.