

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DOUGLAS COUNTY, KANSAS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2011

4:00 p.m.

-Convene

CONSENT AGENDA

- (1) (a) Consider approval of Commission Orders;
- (b) Acknowledge fee reports for May and June 2011 (Clerk's Office)

REGULAR AGENDA

- (2) Consider request from Van Go for \$20,000 in job training support under Economic Development funding (Lynne Green)
- (3) Other Business
 - (a) Consider approval of Accounts Payable (if necessary)
 - (b) Appointments:
Board of Zoning Appeals 10/2011 (2 positions-current not eligible for reappointment)
 - (c) Miscellaneous
 - (d) Public Comment
- (4) Adjourn

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2011

Consider approval of the minutes for April 27, June 1, June 8 and June 15, 2011.

- Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) Applications to KDOT

-Reappointment of Coroner position (Sarah Plinsky)

-Noise Ordinance discussion (Jim Flory)

MONDAY, JULY 11, 2011

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Commissioner Budget Work Session-Hear individual budget issues from agencies and county departments.

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2011

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Commissioner Budget Work Session-Hear individual budget issues from agencies and county departments.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2011

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Commission Budget Work Session - Hear individual budget issues that could not be scheduled the previous week and discussion by the County Commission.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2011

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Commission Budget Work Session including directions to staff on changes to budget

6:35 p.m. – Rothwell Annexation

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2011

MONDAY, JULY 25, 2011

8:00 a.m. -Additional Budget Work Sessions, if necessary

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2011

8:00 am -Additional Budget Work Sessions, if necessary

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2011

6:35 p.m. -2012 Budget Public Hearing

Note: *The Douglas County Commission meets regularly on Wednesdays at 4:00 P.M. for administrative items and 6:35 P.M. for public items at the Douglas County Courthouse. Specific regular meeting dates that are not listed above have not been cancelled unless specifically noted on this schedule.*



Impacting
young lives
for good.

May 17, 2011

Craig Weinaug
Douglas County Administrator
11th & Mass
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

"....across the country, the American Dream seems increasingly out of reach. But nowhere is it greater danger than among today's unemployed young people, who threaten to become the lost generation." (Dan Froomkin)

Dear Mr. Weinaug:

Van Go Inc. is an award-winning, arts-based youth employment and job-training agency for at-risk teens and young adults (ages 14-21) that recruits and hires high-needs Douglas County youth. Since 1999, Van Go Inc. has trained and employed hundreds of teens, with the goal of changing their lives for the better by providing economic opportunities where before there were none. **85% of Van Go grads go on to find employment or enroll in post-secondary education.**

The largest employer of teens in the County and the **only** employer who recruits and trains "under" and "unemployable" youth, Van Go's intensive job-training program provides the skills necessary for disconnected youth to become productive taxpayers. 86% of our current employees are 16 and older—and this summer, 25 of them will be employed by Van Go, Inc.: 17 at our worksite and 8 in supervised, off-site placements.(w/business partners where they will receive additional workforce training.) ALL of Van Go's employees receive "real world" job experiences: they fill out a job applications, are interviewed , complete training sessions, and are evaluated during their employment. Van Go also provides life skills training and social work services to give this population the boost they need for successful employment.

Van Go WORKS.

Van Go would like to request \$20,000 in financial support from Douglas County for its job training/employment efforts. This request coincides with a stated objective of Douglas County's economic development policy: "Encourage training and development of employees located in Douglas county."

A K.U. School of Social Work research project found that graduates of Van Go programs are *twice as likely to graduate from high school* than their peers (2008). And as data shows, earning a high school diploma increases employability and is a key determinant of future job prospects. Our own research shows how effective our efforts have been. According to our 2008 Alumni Survey:

- 77% reported better job-preparedness
- 74% reported that they learned to be more responsible
- 64% reported better job performance

Additionally, employment opportunities for youth produce significant returns to the youth and to the community. The Youth Development and Research Fund found that *every dollar invested in youth results in more than two dollars returned to the economy in wages and reduced welfare benefits.*

The steep drop in the summer teen employment rate has massively reduced the number of teens who obtain ANY exposure to the workforce and has been especially devastating to low-income youth. Those who MOST need preparation for positive work experiences are the least likely to get it. Van Go ONLY serves this population and no one else in Douglas County takes unemployable young adults and gives them skills for successful employment.

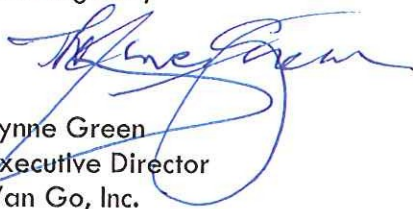
Your investment in our efforts would not only help low-income families make it through very difficult times, but would also meet your goal of preparing Douglas County residents for new job opportunities in the workforce.

Van Go's mission, to change kids' lives for the better, is best said by a 2000 graduate of our program:

"Without Van Go I don't think I'd be where I am today. Being a part of this program made me look at my future and want to do something with my life...I just want to say thank you!" -Kachet, age 22

Thank you so much for considering our proposal.

Best regards,



Lynne Green
Executive Director
Van Go, Inc.

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FRIDAY • FEBRUARY 18 • 2011

Painting 'with iron and fire'

Young artists learn old art to help build gate for Black Jack site

By Christine Metz
cmetz@ljworld.com

ONLINE: Watch the video at LJWorld.com

The young adults at Van Go Mobile Arts are best known for their pieces of brightly painted furniture. But on Thursday, a crew of four put down their paintbrushes and picked up hammers to learn the ancient art of blacksmithing.

It's an art that requires both a forceful hand and a delicate touch.

"You are painting something, it's just with iron and fire," said 19-year-old Heng Liu.

Every other Thursday since December, the Van Go students have been



Walt Hull

making the short trip to Walt Hull's forge in Pleasant Grove. They will become part of a group of

blacksmiths from across the world that will craft a gate at the site of the Black Jack Battlefield, just outside Baldwin City.

Like most people, the Van Go artists were at first nervous around the blazing fires and were timid with the hammering, instructor and local blacksmith artist Kate Dinneen said. But then they picked up the key to blacksmithing.

"It's a really good way to get out your aggression," Dinneen said.

It's a skill that 20-year-old Tandy Myers never thought she'd acquire. But her friends think it's pretty cool since they are into heavy metal (the musical variety, not the trade).

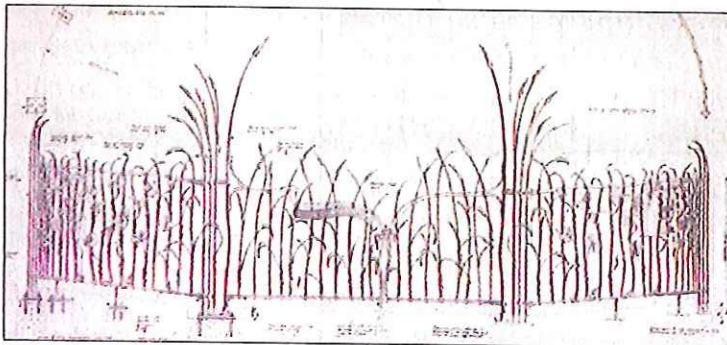
"You have to be very fast and you have to be very precise," Myers said.

Please see VAN GO, page 2A



Mike Yoder/Journal-World Photo

DANIELLE VOLLE, 20, AN ARTIST with Van Go Mobile Arts, forges a piece of iron, which will become part of the Black Jack Gate, at Walt Hull Ironworks on Thursday. Students from Van Go have visited the studio four times to learn how to work with iron and to help create the gate, a drawing of which appears **BELOW**.



\$30,000 STILL NEEDED TO MAKE BLACK JACK GATE A REALITY

This May, Kate Dinneen hopes to gather more than 50 blacksmiths to build a gate to welcome visitors to the site of the Battle of Black Jack near Baldwin City.

The gate would mark the 155th anniversary of the battle and the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

Before the gate can be built, more than

\$30,000 needs to be raised in the next few weeks.

A rough economy coupled with the state's recent cut for art programs has dampened fundraising efforts.

"We are desperately in need of money at this point," Dinneen said.

Contributions to the Black Jack Battlefield can be made online to blackjackbattlefield.org.

Van Go artists learn new trade

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

When Miquel Brown told his friends that he was learning how to blacksmith, they asked if he was making medieval knight suits.

"I never really thought about blacksmithing. I thought it was a dead art. Like machines did everything these days," Brown said.

On Thursday, it was obvious the art was alive and well as the group pounded out leaf-shaped designs for the battle-field gate.

The work is definitely more physical than other art forms, said 20-year-old Danielle Volle. But like painting, there is a flow and smoothness to blacksmithing.

"But that's really it. You are not painting with a hammer," she said.

Jordan Ryan, an Ameri-corps volunteer who works with the group through Van Go, said that because the art form was foreign to everyone, she saw the artists' creative process and personalities come out in the past few months.

Dinneen agrees.

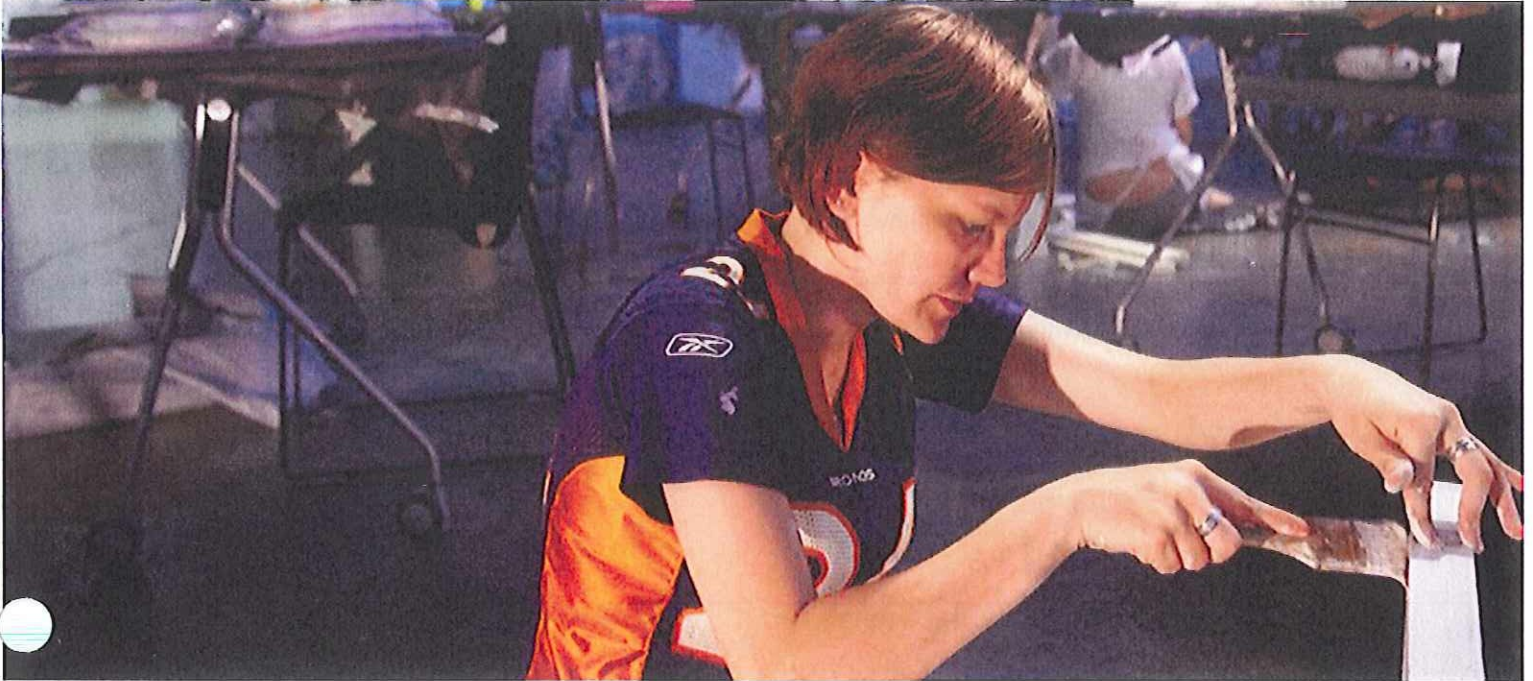
"You see a smile on their face as they really get to wailing on it and another side of them comes out," Dinneen said.



- Reporter Christine Metz can be reached
at 832-6352.

LJWorld.com

Van Go Mobile Arts offers young adults advice, training through employment program



Nick Krug

Ashley Bailey, 20, Lawrence, applies a layer of primer to a bench created by another young artist Thursday, June 8, 2010 at Van Go Inc. Bailey is a participant of the Arts Train program, which provides job training for youth out of school before entering the work force. [Enlarge photo](#)

July 9, 2010

Young adults are learning more at Van Go Mobile Arts than just how to be creative. They are also learning how to get jobs.

Through the center's transitional employment program, post-high school students have the opportunity to receive advice and training before entering the workforce.

Ed Brunt, program director, said the students are in a demographic that often falls through the cracks. He said the 18- to 21-year-olds are in an age group that doesn't get a lot of assistance in finding a job and could benefit from such a program. With that idea in mind, the Arts Train program kicked off in January.

"We try to get the kids ready for introduction into the workforce and get them ready to be productive members of the working 'ety," Brunt said.

Five students are working summer jobs through the program. Before entering the workforce, the students take classes in digital design, woodcutting and art. They also learn practical skills such as interviewing and appropriate dress for work.

Ashley Bailey, a 20-year-old from Colorado, summed up her learning experience in one word.

"Life — how to live life and some things you can look forward to doing in life," Bailey said.

Brunt said the most rewarding part of the program is seeing the young adults come out of their shells and build self-esteem.

"You begin to see who they are and they begin to see what they are really capable of doing," Brunt said.

Ala Wyrick, an Arts Train member from Lawrence, works at the front desk of the Van Go center. She said the program has helped her grow as an individual and realize her potential.

"I love working here — we all act like a family," Wyrick said.

Starting in September, eight to 10 more students will have the opportunity to benefit from the new program.

Originally published at: <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2010/jul/09/van-go-mobile-arts-offers-young-adults-advice-trai/>



**VAN GO
WORKS**