

## **Johnson County Library Department Has Received 2006 Exceptional Service Award**

by Pat Hassan, Development Projects Coordinator, Johnson County Library

The 2006 Exceptional Service Award has been awarded to the Outreach Services Department of the Johnson County Library (JCL)(KS) by the American Library Association's Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), in recognition of its pioneering service to citizens that are often underserved by public libraries. The award will be presented at the American Library Association Conference in New Orleans this summer. Staff members are Outreach Services Coordinator C.J. Sullivan, Senior Services Librarian Lynn Wild, Youth Outreach Librarian Kathy McLellan, Young Adult Librarian Tricia Suellentrop, and Secretary Bobbie Grossi, who are supported by 11 volunteers.

Staff members at the Johnson County Library have worked actively with United Community Services and other organizations for many years in pursuit of service that makes a difference to the unserved and under-served in Johnson County. Its interactive style has placed the Johnson County Library "at the table" in the community, because customized programs are developed in collaboration with constituents and their caregivers and in response to community need.

The uniqueness of JCL Outreach Services is in the personal delivery of services, its attention to constituents – such as the developmentally disabled – who are usually not served by libraries and its effective partnering with other organizations. Library staff work to find new niche audiences, ascertain their needs, develop and tailor services in response and then promote the library to those patrons and their caregivers – all in a collaborative, interactive style.

Outreach Services staff members have developed face-to-face, very specific, literature-based programs emanating from these collaborative relationships, serving:

- children in child care
- teens and adults in the justice system
- persons with disabilities
- homebound adults
- senior citizens in retirement centers and in the community

Their mission is to ensure that members of the community who cannot come to the library do receive library service.