

Grow Your Own Grant

by Diana Friend, Public Relations Manager, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library

The Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (TSCPL) is one of five libraries nationwide to receive a new Public Library Association (PLA) grant called **Grow Your Own @ Your Library®** program. The primary goal of the program is to increase the number of public librarians by offering funding for continuing education in the fields of Information Management, specifically the Masters of Library Science degree. The PLA awarded an \$8,000 tuition reimbursement grant to each of the five winning libraries.



Five TSCPL employees currently seeking the MLS degree -- Robin Brooks, Stephanie Hall, Jill Pfuetze, Shari Schawo, and Jeffrey Tate -- worked on the grant proposal and will receive grant funding. TSCPL will also create a mentoring program made up of current library employees who will work with the grant recipients as they progress through their schooling. New training classes will be created to address the specific needs of individuals, develop leadership skills, and

further their careers in librarianship. TSCPL will also send all the grant participants to the national PLA conference in 2008. This grant will provide the participants with monies for graduate school and provide TSCPL with better-trained staff who will be situated to help the library and community grow.