

# Habitat...from Page 1A

helping to make a profound difference in our local community and contribute to neighborhood revitalization.

"Habitat is an exceptional organization extremely efficient in directing contributions into the ministry," Sparks said. "Blairsville and Hiawassee are better and stronger communities because of Habitat.

"Partnering with Habitat, we're able to make home ownership a reality for families who could not otherwise afford a home," Sparks said.

Borowski noted that Habitat built its first house here in 1999.

"This year we will build

our 15th house," Borowski said. "Building hope is part of the Habitat mission. Strong families have hope for the future and children in strong homes stay longer and do better in school.

"At our rededication in January this year, a mother with a small child on her lap broke down in tears realizing that their new house would be the beginning of a new life," she said. "Hope for future!"

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris was on hand for the celebration.

Commissioner Paris said it was a privilege to be

part of the cooperative effort of Towns and Union counties supporting Habitat.

"Habitat for Humanity has made an impact in our communities and has given people something to live for," he said.

Cindy Williams, president of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce was on hand.

Williams thanked both Cadence Bank and Habitat for being active members of the Chamber.

"Both are outstanding organizations," she said.

She said that the "active" members of the Chamber of Commerce are the

"heart of the community."

In addition to Sparks, Commissioner Paris, and Williams, several of Habitat's Board of Directors were on hand for the presentation.

Afterward, everyone was invited to tour the newly opened Habitat ReStore, which opened the first of the year.

The ReStore, located behind the Habitat Headquarters in Young Harris, has a variety of house wares and furniture in good condition, and a good selection of books.

The ReStore is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

It's located at 7685 Highway 76 in Young Harris.

# Pre-K Grant...from Page 1A

Those options include the following information:

**Option 1**, call the Union County Registrar at (706) 835-4321 and provide parent/guardian name, the child's name, the child's date of birth, and a phone number for making contact.

**Option 2**, go to //www.surveymonkey.com/s/union-preksurvey to fill out the online interest survey.

**Option 3**, return the form to the Union County Board of Education with the name of the parent/guardian, a contact phone number, the child's name and date of birth.

"For this application to be successful, we need to gauge parents' interest for this program to become a part of our school system," Steppe said. "A vital part of the ap-

plication process is securing interest of parents/guardians willing to send their child to the Union County Primary School to attend a newly-formed Pre-K program."

Steppe reiterated that children taking part in Pre-K programs are better equipped to make the transition to Kindergarten.

An on-campus program would familiarize young chil-

dren with the primary school, teachers, and administrators.

Steppe said additional benefits include a state approved curriculum, bus transportation, school cafeteria meals, regular school hours, a school calendar, certified teachers, improving school readiness, and positively impacting foundational skills in language, literacy and math.

# Explorers...from Page 1A

isha Shook Dorton is taking up donations at United Community Bank in memory of my cousin Sonja Jo Freeman.

"They gave us a check today and have more coming," George said. "Tell everyone thank you for everything they have done."

George, and Access Explorers' teacher, Shannon Hogsed along with Parent Mentor Becky Tracy are raising funds to take the Access Explorers to Chicago, Ill.

As a teacher, Hogsed feels blessed by her students. She's looking to help them feel blessed as well.

Access Explorers is a

group of Union County High School students with a variety of learning disabilities.

As their teacher, Hogsed explains that most of these students have never traveled outside of Union County in their lifetimes.

That's why she wants to take them on a trip of a lifetime, Chicago, Ill.

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe has approved the field trip, giving these students an opportunity to travel before they graduate.

The trip is slated for April 10-15. Hogsed, George, and Tracy have raised more

than \$10,800 of the needed \$13,000 for the trip.

The group needs another \$2,000 to make the trip a success for these UCHS Special Needs students.

They need some help in raising the final amount necessary for the trip for the Access Explorers.

If you are financially able to make a donation or have questions, please contact Hogsed at Union County High School.

Hogsed's contact information is Shannon Hogsed, 153 Panther Circle, Blairsville, GA 30512, (706) 994-9668.

# Owltown...from Page 1A



Garrett said. "Next year, we'll complete another section, and then we'll complete another section in 2016.

"We'll keep that going until the entire roadway is repaved," he said.

Last week, road crews repaved a section of John Smith Road, Garrett said.

"The cost of repaving a mile of roadway is really expensive," Garrett said. "That's why we have to do these projects in phases."

The Owltown Road project began at its intersection with Mulky Gap Road. The project will end for 2014 at Speedling Farms, Garrett said.

Last year, the county paved roads that included Mulky Gap Road, Garrett said.

The Owltown Road project is a three-phase project, Garrett said.

"We break the projects up in phases because of the amount of money involved," Garrett said. "We have to plan ahead and decide which roads need the most work. We have a priority list that we work by to make sure the roads in the worst shape get attention first."

The county uses Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars to do road improvements.

The last couple of months, SPLOST collections have been off considerably, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said.

Last month, collections were approximately \$195,000. That's off from the usual \$265,000, Paris said.

Collections could be down for March as well, due to bad weather, Paris said.

"We had some bad weather months that impacted our SPLOST collections," Paris said. "The next month could be a down month as well. It's all because there were several days that folks couldn't get out to do their regular shopping because of the bad weather.

"We anticipate those SPLOST figures returning to normal with the arrival of spring weather conditions."