

## VETERANS THE FOCUS



# Events honor, benefit heroes

Music performances, silent auction, art donations planned over weekend

### FOR THE KENOSHA NEWS

To celebrate local veterans and fallen heroes, Blend and Brew will hold a weekend-long series of events starting June 2, including a silent auction, musical performances and donated art.

The free, family-friendly event will be held at Blend & Brew, 5700 Sixth Ave.

Celebrations start Friday (June 2) with Art Donation Day. Artists from around the Kenosha area are invited to donate art as tribute to veterans and fallen soldiers. The pieces will be displayed in the shop all weekend.

Tribute concerts will be held Saturday (June 3). Musicians from the Kenosha area will play in hour-long segments in tribute to veterans and fallen soldiers from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Veteran Share & Tell, and the silent auction and raffle will be Sunday (June 4). Veterans are invited to come and share their stories with the community. The community is encouraged to come and listen.

Raffle tickets will be \$1 each or 10 for \$8. Tickets are cash or check only. Silent auction and raffle items are listed on the event page online, updated regularly. Links to the page can be found on the Blend and Brew Facebook page.

Winners will be contacted Tuesday morning and announced on social media the same day. Items may be picked up anytime after notification of winning and payment, if applicable, is due upon pickup.

Proceeds from the silent auction and raffle will be donated to families of fallen soldiers.

Each veteran who comes in will be given a piece of tribute art being displayed that was donated for the event.

Art donations can be made by contacting blendandbrewkenosha@gmail.com, or by dropping of donations any time until 5 p.m. Thursday June 1. Elementary age children up to seniors are welcome to donate tribute art to be displayed and donated to veterans and fallen heroes

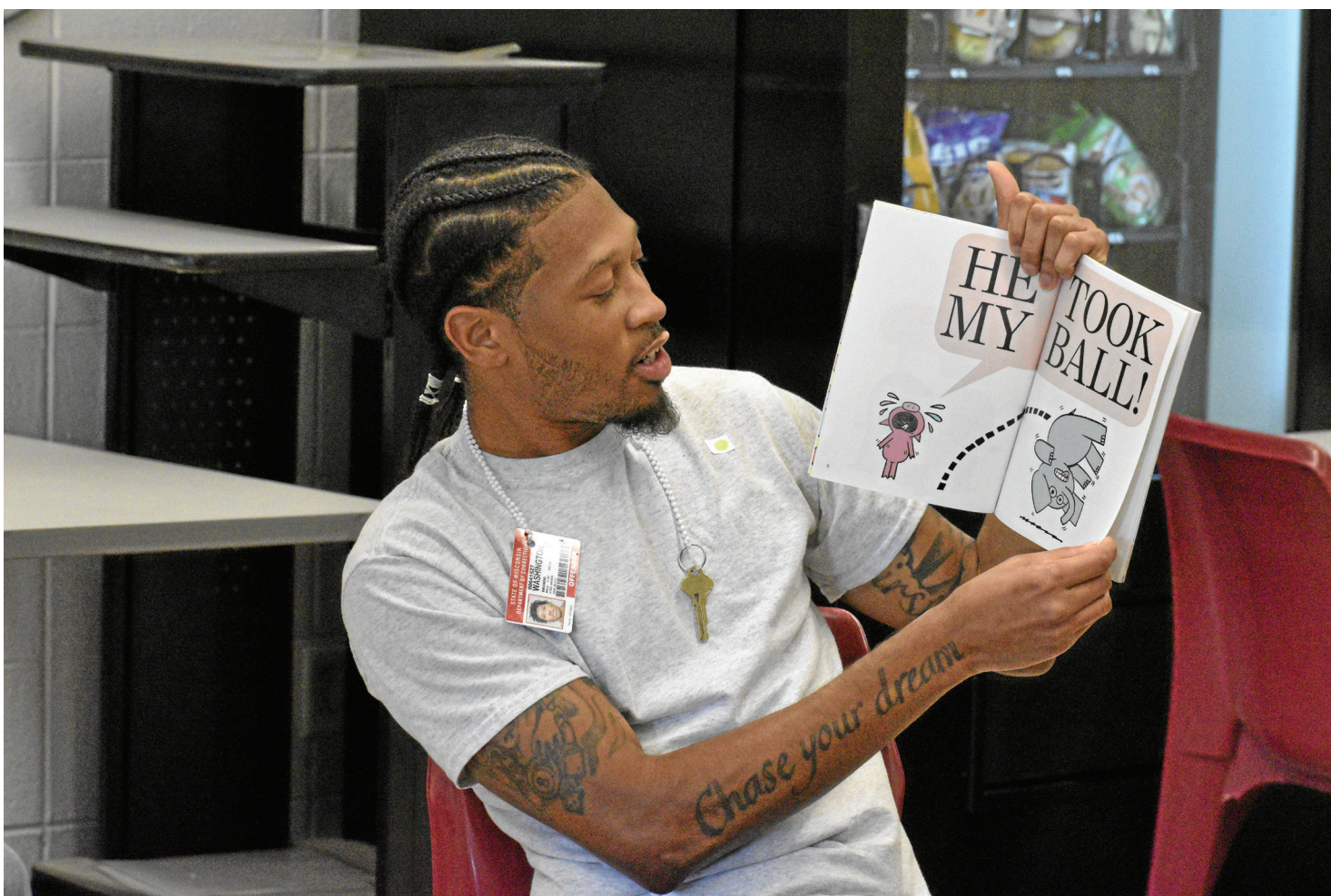
Blend and Brew is taking reserved slots for local musicians on a first-come, first-accepted basis. Performances are hour-long slots, with performance running from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Email blendandbrewkenosha@gmail.com for requests.

Veterans or a family members of a fallen hero are encouraged to come speak to the community

Auction items can be donated by anyone, with proceeds going to veterans and veteran families. Items can be dropped off at Blend & Brew anytime until 5 p.m. June 1.

Raffle items can be donated by businesses, brands or individuals who have merchandise or gift certificates. These items must be dropped off by 5 p.m. June 1 to be a part of the raffle.

## 'DYNAMIC DADS'



JILLIAN CRAIG PHOTOS, KENOSHA NEWS

Davario Washington reads "A Big Guy Took My Ball" and shows pictures from the pages to group members during the Dynamic Dads program Monday afternoon.

# Workshop teaches dads reading to kids

Incarcerated men learn how to make reading fun for kids

JILLIAN CRAIG  
jcraig@kenoshanews.com

Gathered together in a circle, with smiles and laughter lighting up the room, nearly a dozen people incarcerated at the Kenosha Correctional Center took turns reading children's books aloud.

From "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type," to "A Big Guy Took my Ball," the group practiced how to read to children in a fun and engaging way. It was part of the "Dynamic Dads" program, which teaches people in the Kenosha Correctional Center how to read aloud to children in an engaging way. The goal is to help foster a love for reading, as well as how to choose age-appropriate books.

Each workshop, which meets roughly once each month, has 10-12 participants.

The program started after Heather Thompson, head of Youth and Family Services at the Kenosha Public Library, brought the idea to Correctional Center Superintendent Michelle Hoffman after learning about the different types of public library-prison partnerships at a library conference.

"In (one) of these programs, people who are incarcerated are able to visit with their children virtually and read stories to them. This was facilitated by the library, which furnished books to the prison, as well as space at the library to make the calls," Thompson said. "I loved the idea of keeping children connected to their parents during a difficult time by reading books together. In 2019, I approached Superintendent Hoffman about creating a similar program locally."

After talking, Thompson and Hoffman realized the best approach for the Kenosha Correctional Center would be to hold in-person classes for fathers and father figures.

"One of our now-retired early literacy specialists, Linda Potter, designed a curriculum that would impart a love of reading aloud to children, as well as an understanding of how to select age-appropriate books for reading aloud," Thompson said. "At the end of each class, participants select a book to share with their child during their next visit."

During Monday's session, Kenosha Public Library Early Literacy Librarian Tessa, Fox-Pawlaczyk, opened with an expla-



Tessa Fox-Pawlaczyk, early literacy librarian at the Kenosha Public Library, gives a demonstration on reading to children in an engaging and fun way at the Kenosha Correctional Center Monday afternoon for the "Dynamic Dads" literary workshop program.

nation of different books for different ages and reading levels after the group gave introductions. Fox-Pawlaczyk explained specific details of each type of book, from chapter books without pictures to early childhood books with many pictures and few words.

After giving a rundown of all the books, Fox-Pawlaczyk gave a read-aloud demonstration to the group using the book "The Book With no Pictures," by B.J. Novak. From there, group participants were instructed to find a book to read aloud, with stories ranging from "Frozen" movie characters Elsa and Anna to nonfiction history books.

"One of my favorite parts of this program is to see the guys who were kind of like 'I don't really want to do this. I don't really want to be here. I don't want to read out loud,'" Fox-Pawlaczyk said. "And then everyone does it ... and everyone is smiling and laughing."

At the conclusion of the workshop, Fox-Pawlaczyk gave an overview of the offerings at the Kenosha Public Library aside from books. They include museum passes to snow shoes.

"It was a lot more educational than I thought it was going to be, honestly," inmate CP said. "There's a lot more stuff for kids than I thought there would be."

"I learned a lot of things about public libraries and the things they provide that I didn't know, and I'm an avid reader," inmate RC said. "(Reading) is highly imperative and necessary in our lives ... I try to teach my daughter how important it is."

Fox-Pawlaczyk said the importance of having the program



Adrian Servantez, right, reads a book aloud while showing the group photos as Tessa Fox-Pawlaczyk, left, observes during the Dynamic Dads program Monday afternoon.

available is getting participants excited about reading so they can share that excitement with their children.

"I think it's always really important to get grown-ups excited about sharing books with kids, particularly their male role models. You see a lot more girls who are into books than young boys and I think a lot of that has to do with the role model and representation of who they see as a reader, who books are for and who reading is for," Fox-Pawlaczyk said. "To get these grown men excited about reading to their kids, sharing books with their kids and seeing the value in it is great, because we need more of that everywhere."

"From the reentry aspect, it's a resource for them that they don't even know is available," Hoffman said. "The opportunity for free things for the men to take their

family or their children to do is beneficial."

Hoffman said the impact with the program she sees is exposing the people who are incarcerated to new things they might not have known about.

Fox-Pawlaczyk said the impact she sees with the program is, "seeing the lighter side of some of these guys."

"I think a lot of people who aren't involved don't see the humanity of people who are incarcerated. Programs like this, you get to learn a little bit about their families," Fox-Pawlaczyk said. "Everybody has preconceived notions about who incarcerated people are, and that's definitely not true for everyone, so getting to meet some of the different guys and know a little bit more about them and see their humanity and them as parents or as individual people, is great."