

Kiwanians talk leadership in Washington

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The Iola Register

A day filled with like-minded individuals intent on finding ways to serve others kept a trio of local Kiwanians busy during a recent trip to Washington, D.C.

Iola Kiwanis President Chris Stevens and Kiwanians Mike and Nancy Ford were in Washington April 28-30 as part of Wednesday's declaration of Kiwanis International Day at the White House.

The Iolans were the only Kansans invited to the event, tabbed as a "leadership summit."

Iola's Kiwanis club was chosen to participate largely because of its integral role in developing the Mothers of Miracles (MOMs) playground area at Riverside Park. The playground is designed for children with disabilities but has become one of the most



Iola Kiwanians Nancy and Mike Ford, from left, and Chris Stevens were in Washington, D.C., last week to attend a leadership conference. COURTESY PHOTO

popular features in the park for all children.

The summit's keynote speaker, Alfonso Lenhardt, is deputy administrator for the Agency for International De-

velopment and a former ambassador to Tanzania.

His ambassadorship ties in nicely to Kiwanis Interna-

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al's "Eliminate" effort, a global campaign to eradicate the world of maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Kiwanis has identified 37 countries with such cases, Mike Ford said.

"We've been able to eradicate in 14 of the 37," Ford said. "We still have 23 to go."

The numbers remain sobering. A child dies of tetanus every 11 minutes.

Kiwanis has teamed with UNICEF to provide tetanus vaccinations at a deeply discounted cost, \$1.80 for a series of three shots.

Still, the campaign is ambitious. Kiwanis

International organizers estimate the cost to eradicate the disease at \$110 million.

While in Washington, the Fords and Stevens visited with Rep. Lynn Jenkins and Sen. Jerry Moran to update them on another local project, an effort to build handicap-accessible restrooms at the park, near the MOMs playground.

Iola Kiwanis is in the initial fundraising stages and is looking for potential grants, Ford said.

The Kiwanians also were given tours of the U.S. Capitol among other activities.

"It was definitely a whirlwind," Ford said.