

the challenge

Magazine for The Center for Gifted Studies



AYLA TOWNSEND

Thirty Years!

The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY) turned 30 this summer. Over the course of those summers, close to 4,800 seventh through tenth graders gained lifelong friends, explored contents of great interest, and discovered themselves. Steeped in tradition, VAMPY has provided a nurturing environment for young people, one that challenges them to be the best thinkers they can be and the best people they can be.

In 2000, fourth-year VAMPY camper Jon Whitney (now with a PhD in mechanical engineering) composed *VAMPY Pie*. At the talent show this year, campers Andi Dahmer and Milan Doan joined counselors Nicole Heimerdinger and Katy Harvey as they sang their latest rendition *VAMPY 3.0*. They talk of a pivotal moment for many campers – the banquet when the fourth years (i.e., tenth graders who have aged out) give their heartfelt speeches:

*I can't remember if I sighed
When I waved my parents last goodbye,
But something changed me deep inside
The day the fourth-years cried.*

VAMPY indeed changes the lives of these fourth-years – and first-years, second-years, and third-years. Many even count down the other 49 weeks until VAMPY begins again. And many of the fourth-years count down the years until they can be counselors. They want to continue the great traditions of VAMPY. Happy 30th, VAMPY!

Letter from Julia



Dear Friends of The Center for Gifted Studies,

The Center for Gifted Studies is all about relationships. It has been my privilege to be director of The Center for Gifted Studies for more than 30 years, and one of the best things about “sticking around” for a long time is the relationships that develop for a lifetime – yours, mine, and ours.

Seldom do I go any place but my path crosses with a former camper or the parent of a camper. My first question is this: Do you hear from The Center for Gifted Studies? If the person does not receive *The Challenge*, I get contact information and remedy that problem. If he or she does receive information, I am happy. One way you can help keep relationships alive is to let former participants in The Center’s programs know we would like to have their mailing and email addresses if we are not currently in touch.

Relationships set the tone for summer programming. Campers often complete their two- or three-week time at SCATS and VAMPY with lives that are richer because of the friends they have made, many of them with new friends for a lifetime.

As we value experiences for our children or for ourselves, one result is the desire to support The Center for Gifted Studies with a gift. Gifts make it possible for The Center to support children coming to one of The Center’s programs, young people who could not do so without financial support, or to offer a new initiative to encourage and support creativity and innovation.

Late this summer, we had opportunities to develop relationships with educators and parents around the globe who came to Louisville to participate in the 20th Biennial World Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. You can read about this once-in-a-lifetime experience in this edition of *The Challenge*.

Let’s continue to build relationships, so please stay in touch with The Center for Gifted Studies.

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts

Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies

THE MISSION FOR THE CENTER

We are committed to encouraging excellence by providing educational opportunities and resources to three populations: gifted and talented students, educators working with gifted students, and parents of gifted students.

THE VISION FOR THE CENTER

Becoming an internationally preeminent center is the vision of The Center for Gifted Studies. This vision includes expanding services in five areas: (1) offering educational programs for gifted children and youth, (2) providing professional development opportunities for educators, (3) enhancing communication and advocacy for gifted children, (4) conducting research and developing curriculum to remove the learning ceiling, and (5) building a testing and counseling component for gifted children and their families.

the
challenge

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LEARNING FROM EVERY ANGLE: VAMPY'S NEW CLASSES

Imagine that on the first day of class, you and your classmates had to go on a scavenger hunt just to find your classroom and your instructors. Imagine how your views on world culture would change as you dressed yourself in an *abaya* or a *djellaba*. Imagine learning about history through the eyes of those who wrote it.

Those were some of the experiences students had in Problems You Have Never Solved Before, Arabic, and World

Biographies, three new classes offered at the Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY) in 2013.

Catherine Poteet and Amar Patel, who co-taught Problems You Have Never Solved Before, enjoyed watching their students do something they weren't used to doing: fail. Through challenges like bridge building,

making concrete canoes, designing rockets, creating an egg drop, and constructing a package that would protect a single Pringle chip throughout the mail delivery process, students learned that failure is just one of many steps a scientist takes during an experiment. In fact, psychologist Carol Dweck and author of

Mindset (2007) feels failure is critical to success: "Success is about being your best self, not about being better than others; failure is an opportunity, not a condemnation; effort is the key to success" (p 44).

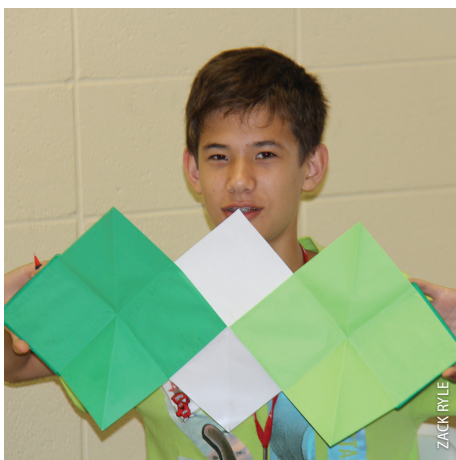
"We've noticed over the last two years of teaching VAMPY that the problem-solving

ability was there. We saw this class as a great opportunity to stretch that thought and let them see what a true scientist does," Catherine said. Amar





JOSH RAYMER



ZACK RYLE



JEN SHEFFIELD



LOUIE GUERWANE

added that students with different skill sets could succeed with problem solving: “While students might not have straight A’s, their ability to do things is what will make them better scientists.”

For Tristan Burton from Mt. Sterling, KY, seeing Catherine and Amar’s names next to the class title originally piqued his interest. “At first I saw the teachers on the list. I had them before, and I loved them,” he explained. “It seemed to be a lot of hands-on stuff so I figured it wouldn’t get boring, and it hasn’t!”

Classmate Lauren Pederson of Barbourville, KY said the class had a lasting impact on her that will be felt even after she’s finished with school. “In everything you do there are always going to be problems,” she said. “There are either people who learn to solve the problems or people who just avoid them. After this class you learn different strategies and steps for how to solve these problems.”

The classroom environment at VAMPY was a big change for Scottsville’s Caleb Bell, who’s homeschooled. While he was initially nervous, meeting classmates like Tristan and Lauren helped him enjoy class. “It’s a little hard to get to know people at first, but once you’ve had class for the first few days, you get to know everybody, and they are your family for the next three weeks,” he said.

Problem solving wasn’t the only in-demand skill that VAMPY students could learn. Arabic instructor Lhousseine (Louie) Guerwane immersed students not only in the Arabic language, but in the culture as well. “We all have things in common,” he said. “Unfortunately, people tend to look at the differences. Studying the language, we see what we have in common and learn to appreciate the differences.”

That same comprehensive approach to learning was used in World Biographies, taught by Jonathan Vaughn. “Inherently history is about mistakes,” Jonathan said. “Learning about the peo-



ple who made the mistakes and how they made those decisions, the context of those decisions, these are things that can inspire us. It can help us do better for others and for the world around us."

Students in World Biographies learned about such historical figures as Abraham Lincoln, Steve Jobs, Gandhi, and Margaret Thatcher. Those studies culminated in a bracket tournament to determine the most important historical figure of all, with the twist that students were tasked with researching different historical figures and arguing for their life stories. It was an assignment that helped Owensboro's Dayna Mathew overcome one of her fears. "I've always had a fear of public speaking, but this class helped me a lot," she said.

One thing all three classes had in common was outstanding field trips. During their study of the 16th President, students in World Biographies visited the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, IL.



Students in Arabic explored a mosque and an Arabic market in Nashville, while Problems You Have Never Solved Before students learned about space travel at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL.

Louie said one of his fondest memories happened on that field trip to Nashville: "I loved at the Arabic market when I saw Matthew (Pinerola) talking to an Arab customer, and he introduced

himself in Arabic. They understood each other. After that, Matthew told me 'I want to keep learning Arabic. I don't want to lose this.'"

That field trip also had a lasting impact on Gillian Bradley from Ft. Mitchell, KY, who said the visit to the mosque was eye opening for her. "I want to continue with Arabic," she explained on the last day of class. "I called my parents and told them I'm not just going to let this go. I want to take classes so I can learn more about the language and the culture, and maybe go visit an Arab country one day."

It's that kind of learning that makes students eager to return to VAMPY. Lauren said she had a daily ritual as VAMPY 2013 drew nearer: "I would text all my friends and go 99 days till VAMPY!" she said.

Let the countdown to VAMPY 2014 begin!

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SCATS

Offers a New Twist on Learning

The Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students (SCATS) wrapped up its 31st year this summer at Western Kentucky University. The two-week camp was held June 9-21 and welcomed students from sixth through eighth grade to campus to participate in four of the 27 available classes. This year SCATS brought in 160 students from 11 different states.

During SCATS, students took four classes of their choosing. Literature was the focus for students in *The Hunger Games* and *The Hobbit*, while Russian gave students a chance to brush up on their foreign language skills. Science was present in five SCATS classes, two of which took students under the sea (Mysteries of the Marine) and into the human brain (Your Brain and Sound Waves). Other classes covered a vast array of topics ranging from math to art to history.

Truman Smith of Louisville, KY, said his SCATS classes challenged him to do things he'd never done before: "Instead of taking a math class that doesn't challenge me, I got to learn about all these mathematicians most people don't know about. I got to do ceramics and learn about my personality. I even learned how to make a speaker out of just a cup, a magnet, and some wire!"

SCATS classes weren't just a chance for students to try something new. The instructors got to teach content they might not normally teach in school. Contemporary literature is one example: "I chose to do the *Hunger Games* because I really enjoyed reading the series myself," said Katie Decker,

who taught *The Hunger Games* class. "With the movie that has come out and the one that is set to release later this fall, this series is pretty popular among the students."

SCATS offered a residential and nonresidential option for students. Residential students stayed in either Florence Schneider Hall or McLean Hall. Natalie Blocker of Helena,

AL, enjoyed living on campus. "The dorms are pretty sweet," she said. "Going and doing things after class is just so much fun."

When they weren't in class, students participated in optional activities like capture the flag, sidewalk chalk, and friendship bracelet making. There were also annual traditions like the talent show, dance, and cookout to keep students busy outside of class.

Head counselor Olivia Reed said the out-of-class activities are designed to help students ease into the camp experience: "A wide range of optionals is offered so that campers will be encouraged to interact socially, learn to do new things, and show off skills they already have."

More than anything else, SCATS is about personal growth for the

students. Olivia said she sees them grow in many different ways: "I get to see kids come out of their shells and participate in things they may never do otherwise. They leave camp more confident about who they are and with a lot of friends and experiences they will never forget."

The dates for the 32nd year of SCATS are June 8-20, 2014. The application will be available mid-January. To learn more about SCATS, visit: wku.edu/gifted/scats.php.





5 for 5 Five Take on the Five-Week Challenge

camper opted to be nonresidential during SCATS. During that time, the residential campers did more than just learn in the classroom. In the evenings, the counselors created activities for the students so that they would enjoy their camp experiences and even venture outside their comfort zones. Most nights, campers had the opportunity to take part in Optionals, which are counselor-designed activities that ranged from Dodgeball and Origami to a Murder Mystery Party. Other activities included Paper Theater, a talent show, V-CON (a VAMPY rendition of Comic-Con), the SCATS and VAMPY Olympics, dances, and community time.

Alexa Thompson, from Bowling Green, KY, is one of the students who



Alexa Thompson



Isis Shackelford



Sam Carini



Anna Youngblood



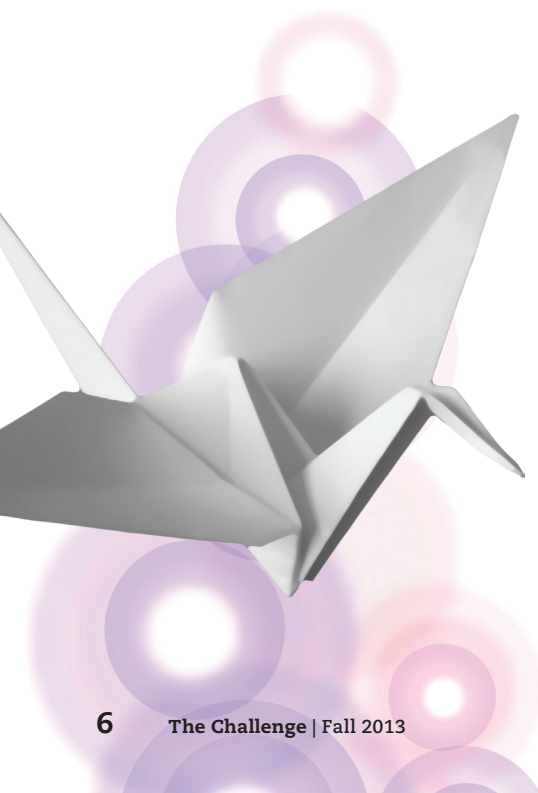
Julie Perdue

One hundred sixty students attended The Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students (SCATS) this past summer on WKU's campus. Even more, 226 to be exact, chose the Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY). Out of those 386 campers, a select few took on the challenge of attending SCATS and VAMPY for five consecutive weeks. This summer, five students participated in the "Five-Week Challenge."

Four of the five campers who completed the challenge lived on campus for the entire five weeks while one

completed the challenge. Alexa said the camps really gave her an opportunity to learn about languages that she can't study in middle school. "In SCATS I took Russian and got a really good intro into that language. During VAMPY, I took Arabic. I just have always been drawn to other languages, and I really enjoyed learning about several different topics during SCATS and VAMPY."

Being a five-weeker does come with its struggles. Among the topics brought up by the campers who completed the five-week challenge, a longing for home ranked on the list. Bowling Green native Sam Carini thought of another difficul-



ty: "One challenge I faced was switching in one day from being the oldest person in camp to one of the youngest people in camp. That challenge is small in comparison to the amount of knowledge I gained from the classroom and the new friends I have made!" SCATS campers are in grades 6 through 8, while VAMPY campers are in grades 7 through 10, so Sam fit right in at both camps.

Each camper who completed the challenge took something different out of his or her experience. Julie Perdue of Hopkinsville, KY, explained how she had the opportunity to be herself: "This challenge really helped me get out of my comfort zone. At home, I don't always have the opportunities I have here to learn. Here I can be myself and be as nerdy as I want to be and people won't judge me for it!"

A special bond forms between those students who are together for five consecutive weeks, as Anna Youngblood of Paducah, KY, explains: "One of the really cool things about the five-week challenge is growing close to the other five-weekers. Being one of the youngest campers in VAMPY, it really helped having friends that I knew from SCATS. They just helped me be able to make more new friends during VAMPY."

Louisville camper Isis Shackelford found a new home after attending for five straight weeks. "WKU is my home now. Even on my day off between SCATS and VAMPY, my mindset was I am going to visit my parents and then go back home."

The Center for Gifted Studies welcomes any student who wants to step up to the plate and complete the five-week challenge. Next year, SCATS will be held on June 8 to June 20. VAMPY will be held June 22 to July 12. For more information on completing the five-week challenge, mark those dates on the calendar, check our website for the applications and class lists, and get ready for an amazing summer of learning and fun!

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Talent, OR

DONATION OF ART

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The Summer Camp Gets Creative

It's a bright Tuesday morning in late July on the campus of Western Kentucky University, and the second floor classrooms in Ransdell Hall are buzzing with activity. While one class turns soapy water into bubbles using coat hangers and pipe cleaners, a group down the hall changes three things about their appearance in the hopes that their classmates won't notice. Around the corner some students learn about Greek mythology while others paint in the style of Vincent Van Gogh. Later that afternoon, scarves and balls will fly through the air as students learn to juggle.



These were all scenes from the second year of The Summer Camp, which was held July 15-19 for first through fourth graders. The theme for this year's camp was creativity. Each of the five classes students took – acting, art, clowning, language arts, and science – was packed with activities sure to get the creative juices flowing.

Acting was a natural choice for The Summer Camp since, as instructor Julie Boggess explained, the class focuses on creative dramatics. Campers had seemingly easy tasks, like pronouncing alliterative words ten times in a row, and tasks that stretched their acting skills, such as pantomiming a profession for their partner or interacting with imaginary objects. A break on Tuesday allowed for some math instruction, as Tyler Clark showed campers the wonders of a Menger sponge. As a fractal, the Menger sponge has no volume but infinite surface area, meaning it can't hold water. So if students wanted to color it, they'd never have enough crayons to color it all.

In art, instructor Angie Alexieff challenged campers to paint a still life in the style of Van Gogh while making their own decisions about color and shape. Angie explained that art is an essential avenue for creativity: "Art is the only class where the rules are not there," she said. "With art, it's not black and white, and you can go in so many different directions. Other than teaching





shape, form, and line, students can do whatever they want.”

Positive thinking was a major focus for Nick Wilkins (also known as Broadway the Clown, a Ringling Brothers-trained clown) in his clowning class: “I teach students to be positive in their creative approach to learning. When you say you can’t do something, you’re taking a step backwards. The person that says ‘I can’ is taking a step forward.” Campers needed a positive mindset as they learned to juggle, made balloon sculptures, and, most importantly, designed and applied their own clown face.

“Clowning is an outlet,” Nick explained. “Some of these students are introverts, but this brings them out of their shell.”

Creativity took on a literary slant in Language Arts as campers learned about myths ranging from the creation of fire to how the spider came to be in the world. As a final project, campers contributed their own cre-

ation myth to a class book that included illustrations. Tina Perry taught the class and said creativity has a huge impact on individual learning: “I think it’s important for students to know there are other ways to solve problems and create things than what somebody tells them,” she said.

Problem solving was a major focus for Andrea Heming in her science class. Campers were challenged to build rockets, design a marble run, and blow bubbles using their own thought processes, which made for some interesting (and messy) experiments. “Without a chance to be creative, everyone’s been put in a box and made to do the same thing,” Andrea explained. “This camp is a great outlet for them to show their creativity and know that it’s okay to be the only one who thinks a certain way.”

The next Summer Camp will be held July 14-18, 2014. Please check the website in the spring for more information.



Bowling Green High School: An Exemplar for Doing Advanced Placement Right!

Each year, my students enthusiastically return from college to offer advice and provide testimonials about how the Advanced Placement English classes and credit have transformed their own lives—they are among the very best writers and thinkers and leaders of their own undergraduate communities, from Brown to Yale to the Honors College at Western Kentucky University; they are beginning graduate school early, double-majoring, traveling abroad—and they openly and proudly talk about the work ethic, rigor, confidence, and skills they acquired in the AP English program being absolutely integral to their success.

ADA SKILLERN

AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION TEACHER
BOWLING GREEN HIGH SCHOOL, KY

Work ethic. Rigor. Confidence. These are all benefits former Advanced Placement (AP®) students reference when discussing their experiences at Bowling Green High School in Kentucky. Of course, college credit is definitely a bonus, but AP – when done correctly – proves so much more than this.

What exactly does “done correctly” mean? It means that AP is an option for all college-bound students, not just a hand-selected few. It means students don’t just take the AP class, but they also take the College Board exam in the spring. It also means that students who excel in class pass those exams – and earn college credit. Perhaps most importantly, it means that educators receive

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL AP PROGRAM

- Offer AP classes when students are ready – that may mean middle school for some!
- Develop strong feeder or pre-AP classes so that students will be ready for the rigor of AP.
- Include all college-bound students who are willing to work hard.
- Encourage or even require students to take the exams in the spring.
- Provide high quality professional development for all AP and pre-AP teachers.



the professional development (PD) so critical to high quality instruction and ultimately student success. Bowling Green High School (BGHS) has been “doing AP right” for over a decade.

Principal Gary Fields describes the journey: “When I arrived at BGHS in the fall of 2002, our AP program was considered very successful for the time period with a 74% pass rate from the previous spring. As I got my feet wet during my first year as principal, a few teacher leaders in the building approached me about making our AP program much more inclusive and available to students. The current state of the program focused on the highest of high achievers who had parents pushing them to take

AP courses and the students themselves were motivated to do so.” AP, according to the College Board, is designed for all college-bound students. Gary continues, “Our investigation showed that we had many students who were labeled as gifted who, in essence, were checking out of our rigorous course offerings and cruising through high school with little challenge. We began by expanding AP U.S. History to include more students during their sophomore year. We also focused on expansion of our Pre-AP English program – originally incoming 9th graders applied for the class and completed various tasks. Pat Scott (the 9th grade English teacher) approached me about dropping those obstacles and offering the course to any 9th grader who wanted to take it. This led to an increase from 25-30 Pre-AP English I students to the classes now encompassing close to half of all incoming freshmen. Over time, we expanded our AP offerings in social studies and other content

areas which led to a dramatic increase in our course offerings, students taking the classes, and test takers. At the same time, we expanded our pre-AP offerings to include not only English but also math and science.”

The stats speak for themselves. The chart below delineates the growth of the AP program at Bowling Green High. In 2002, only 10% of the population took AP exams. Within 10 years, that percentage jumped to 30% with 71% of those students passing the exams!

AdvanceKentucky, an initiative of the Kentucky Science and Technology

Corporation in partnership with other entities such as the National Math and Science Initiative and the Kentucky Department of Education, works “with local, state and national partners to dramatically expand access to and participation and success in rigorous college-level work in high school, particularly among student populations traditionally underrepresented in these courses” (www.advancekentucky.com). AdvanceKentucky strongly supports and funds high quality, content-rich professional development opportunities for schools in their cohorts. Bowl-

Year	Number of Students Tested	Percentage of Student Body	Total Exams Taken	Exams earning 3, 4, or 5	Percentage of Students Earning 3, 4, or 5
2002	95	10%	128	95	74%
2006	188	19%	258	190	74%
2010	289	27%	466	304	65%
2013	343	30%	601	424	71%



ing Green High School became part of AdvanceKentucky Cohort 2 in 2009 and, as a result, has added AP Statistics, AP Calculus BC, and AP Computer Science to their offerings in addition to training their teachers at The Center for Gifted Studies' AP Summer Institute.

AdvanceKentucky supports the critical role that professional development plays in the success of an AP classroom. Results from a recent report examining PD "indicated that students who attended schools with high levels of AP PD tended to outperform those who attended schools with low or no known AP PD activity" (Laitusis, 2012, p. 1). Gary concurs: "PD has been a vital part of our work at BGHS. All of our AP teachers have attended multiple AP Summer Institute workshops at WKU over the past 10 years. Many attended those first 'newbie' week-long sessions as they began teaching an AP course and followed up in subsequent years by attending the experienced teacher workshops. Additionally, we have sent many of our pre-AP teachers to Laying the Foundation trainings for multiple years, and we also have sent pre-AP teachers to the summer AP workshops so they can have a better understanding of where their kids are going." He credits The Center with being an integral part of preparing his teachers for AP success.

Likewise, BGHS AP Calculus BC teacher Amy Cash values the PD she has received: "I attribute my success to the training I received through Laying the Foundation and AP Summer Institute at WKU. My APSI trainer, Monique Morton, truly gave me the tools and confidence I needed to teach the material effectively." She continues, "I have attended APSI at WKU three times. These were invaluable in preparing me to teach this rigorous course successfully."

Ada Skillern, BGHS AP Language and Composition teacher, agrees: "I have always given the AP Language course everything I have to give; but professional development opportunities made available to me in the 14

years that I have taught AP have made monumental differences in the quality and efficacy of my teaching—the three Workshops for Experienced Teachers I took through The Center for Gifted Studies in 1999, 2009, and 2010 helped me understand how better to align the research and non-fiction components in particular with the goals and curriculum of college-level English courses; it also introduced me to a network of Language colleagues throughout the state that I remain in informal collaboration



with today." Ada adds, "The Center also provided for at least two January, one-day College Board conferences that I know many of us found extremely helpful – some of these materials remain a part of my instruction (awesome presentations by veterans such as Danny Lawrence)."

The Advanced Placement Summer Institute was one of the first professional development opportunities The Center for Gifted Studies undertook thirty years ago as one of the early institutes offered in the country. We know that high quality, rigorous professional development leads to high quality, rigorous instruction in AP and pre-AP classrooms. Gary Fields and his dedicated staff at BGHS along with AdvanceKentucky know that as well. That is why the Advanced Placement Summer Institute at WKU exists – to help educators and administrators "do AP right"!

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Thirty Years of Developing Advanced Placement Teachers

The summer of 2013 was indeed a time for special anniversaries – both VAMPY and the Advanced Placement Summer Institute turned 30. For three decades, The Center has offered exemplary AP preparation, both for teachers brand new to AP and those who are experienced at it. Close to 7,600 educators have participated since that first workshop. This year more than 450 educators from 19 states and four countries attended one of the nineteen beginning or seven experienced workshops.

Thirty summers of Advanced Placement institutes have provided opportunities for many teachers to prepare to teach AP classes and for many others to advance their knowledge and acquire strategies to take their students to higher levels of learning. I so appreciate the consultants who spend a week at WKU making the institute so outstanding and the teachers who come so willing to learn.

— Julia Roberts

Paris is the dream destination for many people. Traveling to France as the school year concluded made a great start to the summer of 2013. Twenty-seven travelers flew to Paris and spent 10 days visiting Normandy as well as sights of interest in and around Paris.

Going to Normandy is such a powerful experience. The American Cemetery is so beautiful and such a memorable place to visit. The museum at Arromanches provides the background for the floating harbors – one that was successful and one that was not. The bunker at Pont du Hoc is as it was during the Battle of Normandy, and our visit was on a rainy day which is similar to the way it was on D-Day. It would seem that no one

PARIS

in the Spring

on the trip will read about or study World War II in the same way after they have walked in these places that were so important in June, 1944.

Paris is such a special place to visit. Favorite experiences were different from one traveler to another. Some favorites include viewing Paris from the Eiffel Tow-

er, enjoying the Monet paintings at the Orangerie, viewing well known paintings at the Louvre, or walking along the gorgeous avenues.

Other highlights include strolling in Monet's garden at Giverny, walking the quaint street up Mont St. Michel, and visiting a French chateau, Chenonceau. The possibilities are endless when visiting France, and The Center for Gifted Studies travelers enjoyed many wonderful sights.

During the 2013-2014 school year, The Center will travel to Germany in the fall and to Italy in the spring. Check out information about these travel opportunities at The Center for Gifted Studies website – www.wku.edu/gifted.



As one heads out for a world conference, usually he goes to the airport to start the journey. For many individuals from Kentucky or nearby states, the journey began with a car ride to Louisville. For staff at The Center for Gifted Studies, their cars were filled with the printed programs for the World Conference, audio-visual equipment, banners to hang at the conference, and many other supplies that were required to host the conference. In addition to staff, volunteers came to welcome participants and help them find their way at the Galt House Hotel, the site of the 20th Biennial World Conference.

Educators and parents from 41 countries gathered in Kentucky for the 20th Biennial World Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. The theme for the conference was “Celebrating Giftedness and Creativity.” The participants numbered 550, and they spent the days from August 10-14 listening to 10 keynote speeches and multiple presentations, networking with colleagues from around the globe, and making new friends with whom to share ideas. They returned to their homes invigorated by their experiences at the World Conference.

20TH BIENNIAL WORLD CONFERENCE HELD IN LOUISVILLE



Denise Ann Zigler, gifted and talented educator from Metro Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN, described her experience at the World Conference: “The 20th Biennial World Conference was a rare and phenomenal opportunity to gather together with other gifted and talented educators, scholars, and esteemed leaders in the field of gifted and talented education from around the world. It provided a unique occasion to learn, collaborate, and share insights and best practices with others from around the globe.”

The Opening Ceremony was Saturday, August 10. Greg Fischer, Mayor of Louisville, and Gary A. Ransdell, President of Western Kentucky University (WKU), welcomed conference participants. Wayne Pope, Assistant Professor of Music at WKU, narrated a program of American music, presented by five undergraduate students – Sarah Fox, Will Linder, Rachel Weaver, Taylor Dant, and Lauren French. Dr. Joseph Renzulli, Professor at the University of Connecticut, gave the opening keynote address. The WKU College of Education and Behavioral Sciences sponsored a reception for all conference participants.

The Gala Dinner was Tuesday, August 13. The Mt. Victor Revue provided the music for this special event. One of the members of the Mt. Victor Revue

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Bowling Green, KY

bluegrass band is Bruce Kessler, head of the Mathematics Department at WKU and VAMPY teacher. Prior to the dinner, the National Association of Gifted Children and the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children cosponsored a reception. The theme for the reception was "Celebrating Milestones."

In between the Opening Ceremony and the Closing Ceremony, days were filled with numerous presentations, visits to the exhibits, and time to get together at the coffee breaks which were mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

The 21st World Conference will be held August 10-14, 2015, in Odense, Den-

mark. The International Headquarters of the World Council for Gifted Children, along with the Executive Committee of the organization will plan with the organizers in Denmark to make that conference memorable as was the conference in Louisville.

Julia Roberts is a member of the seven-person Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, and Tracy Harkins is the Executive Administrator of the organization. The international headquarters have been located at WKU since January, 2011.



Alumni UPDATE

LEANNE TALLEY BINKLEY (VAMPY 1995-98; Travel to Britain; Teaching Assistant) married her best friend and the man of her dreams in the Nashville floods at their alma mater, Vanderbilt University, on May 1, 2010. She and her husband, Clint, had a blue-eyed brown-haired little girl named Margot in July of 2012. Graduating with dual degrees (JD and MHA) from St. Louis University, she is a licensed attorney in the state of Tennessee. Leanne was recently named Chief Operating Officer at East Georgia Regional Medical Center in Statesboro, GA.

SHANON AYMOND BUFFINGTON (VAMPY 1986-88) graduated from the University of Missouri-Rolla with a BS and MS in Engineering Management. She spent six years working in the software consulting industry. In 2002, she left her career in consulting and started her adventure with yoga. Shanon co-founded the Surya Center for Yoga in Coppell, TX, in December 2003 with the hopes of providing yoga to anyone open to receiving it. She is an initiate and teacher in the tradition of the Himalayan masters and ParaYoga. She aims to bring an authentic experience of the yoga tradition to each class as well as to everyday life. Shanon lives in Coppell with her husband of 12 years, Gary, their son Jack, and four cats.

SKYLAR HORNBACK (Fall Super Saturdays 2008) set a record for the highest one-day total in *Jeopardy! Kids Week* history: \$66,600. The amount was the third highest one-day total in the history of the show. His winnings will go toward his college education.

SEUNG YEN PARK (VAMPY 2004-2007; Counselor 2013) graduated from Duke University in May 2013 with a double major in Public Policy Studies and Economics. At Duke, she was especially active in community service, residential life, and chamber music. Right after the summer camps, Sunny started a full-time position at the Boston Consulting Group's Washington, DC, office. She is excited to begin her career in management consulting and hopes to eventually pursue a Master of Business Administration degree.

I served as a counselor for SCATS and VAMPY this summer. Coming back to The Center to help continue all the summer traditions was an unforgettable experience. I am thankful for how my own summers at The Center shaped my intellectual journey and wish to stay in contact with The Center in the years to come!

CLAY ROYSE (SCATS 2001; VAMPY 2002-04) is service manager at a new bike shop in downtown Providence, RI, and makes backpacks and technical outerwear as Vapor Designs. He attended Hampshire College and the Savannah College of Art and Design and plans to pursue an MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design.

RICHARD TAING (SCATS 2002-03; Teaching Assistant; Counselor) is in his second year of medical school at the University of Kentucky. Graduating in neuroscience from Vanderbilt, Richard is open to many aspects of the medical field from surgery to research to the business-side. His interests include participating in recreational sports, reading, and playing the piano. He loves to travel and learn about different cultures. He also enjoys creating artistic manifestations of the moments and places he comes across in his travels or during his summers.

The Center is certainly a special place that allows things like VAMPY or the Gatton Academy to exist. It's a rare occurrence for intelligent students to have the privilege to come together at such experiences and have so many opportunities available to them. For many, it's a place to learn just as much about yourself as you do about interacting with other people. The people I have met and the relationships I have gained have taught me about myself and demonstrated the wonderful things that other people are capable of. I have truly appreciated the opportunities that I have been given to be a part of such an amazing institution.

BRIAN WATTENBARGER (VAMPY 1989-91) is an engineer for the Columbia Fire Department in Missouri. He also is a part-time paramedic for the Randolph County Ambulance District. In his spare time he teaches scuba diving. Brian earned a business administration degree from Columbia College.

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CALENDAR

October 4 – 13, 2013
Fall Trip to Germany

November 2, 9, 16, and 23, 2013
Fall Super Saturdays

December 5-6, 2013
Leadership Institute XVII

February 1, 8, 15, and 22, 2014
Winter Super Saturdays

February 28, 2014
IdeaFestival Bowling Green

March, 2014
Berta Excellence in Education Seminar

March 28 – April 6, 2014
Spring Trip to Italy

June 8 – 20, 2014
SCATS

June 22 – July 12, 2014
VAMPY

June 23 – 27, 2014
Advanced Placement Summer Institute

July 14 – 18, 2014
The Summer Camp