

the challenge

Magazine of The Center for Gifted Studies

Kentucky Honors Its Outstanding 7th Graders: Alumna and Friend of The Center, Sarah Jo Mahurin, Keynotes

For 28 years, Duke's Talent Identification Program's Talent Search has provided opportunities for 7th graders who are gifted and talented. For 26 years, The Center for Gifted Studies has sponsored the Kentucky ceremony honoring these 7th graders who performed well on an off-level test (i.e., the ACT or SAT).

Off-level testing provides valuable information about capability. Instead of an assessment with a 7th grade ceiling, the ACT and SAT offer the opportunity to see what children really do know and are capable of accomplishing. The results can be used by the schools to provide a better match between student and curriculum. High scores not only bring recognition on the state and/or national level, but they also make possible opportunities such as summer camps, internet classes, and other enrichment. VAMPY is one such opportunity for any qualifying Talent Search student from anywhere in the country.

This May, 1,276 Kentucky middle schoolers qualified for state recognition. To qualify, 7th graders had to score at least a 21 on one or more of the subsections of the ACT or a minimum of 520 on the Math or 510 on the Verbal section of the SAT. Kentucky had 135



students qualify for grand recognition. Qualifying scores on the ACT were a minimum of 26 while SAT scores were 650 plus. Almost two thousand students and their families attended the state recognition ceremony held at Diddle Arena on the campus of WKU.

The keynote speaker for the event is a very dear friend of The Center: Sarah Jo Mahurin. Sarah Jo has been a part of The Center since her early middle school days. She attended both SCATS and VAMPY for all the years she was eligible. She also returned as a teaching assistant and a counselor. Now a doctoral student at Yale, this Harvard alumna

shared, "It was such fun for me to return to the event that kicked off my association with the Center fifteen years ago! I was honored to speak to the students and to meet so many of their families after the ceremony."

This year, The Center welcomed new partners: Kentucky's Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) and Kentucky Education Savings Plan Trust (KESPT). They graciously sponsored the reception that followed the ceremony. David Lawhorn, KHEAA program advisor, remarked, "KHEAA and KESPT have looked forward to the partnership and participation in the Duke Talent Identification Program's Kentucky's Recognition Program. This was a great opportunity to recognize some of the most distinguished students from all across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. These are some of the brightest young minds in the entire country, and they are the future of Kentucky."

Julia Roberts, Director of The Center, believes, "Partners combine to create opportunities. The Center has enjoyed a long-term partnership with the Duke Talent Identification Program, and we are pleased to have a new partnership with KHEAA and KESPT."

Letter from Julia

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE CENTER
FOR GIFTED STUDIES,

Important questions for our personal lives as well as for our state's and country's economic future relate to creativity: What impact does creativity have on our lives? What can we do as parents and educators to encourage creativity?

Creativity makes our lives rich. New ideas move all disciplines forward – the visual and performing arts, science, math, the social sciences, and the language arts. Innovations make our lives easier and often more enjoyable. As public radio announces, "All music was once new." The same can be said of all ideas.

Creative "break-throughs" often fuel the economy. Moving forward economically depends on innovation. The number of patents is one indicator of innovation that propels our economy. Kentucky ranks 43 out of 50 states in number of patents issued annually. That is our 2007 ranking. Engineers constitute a role group that spurs the economy forward. Kentucky doesn't fare well in number of scientists and engineers, ranking 46th among the 50 states.

Innovation. What does innovation have to do with gifted education? The answer is that there are many connec-



tions. Individuals who are gifted and talented will not be the only innovators; however, they have exceptional potential to have great ideas that lead to innovations. On the other hand, the potential to innovate is often stifled when creativity is not modeled or encouraged.

Across the country, creativity has taken a back seat in many classrooms in the struggle to reach proficiency by 2014. The tragedy is that creativity can actually enhance the learning of core content. I wonder if creativity in children can be lost if not encouraged. In a recent conversation, Troy Coleman (SCATS 1983 and 1984) said that interest in science and math is "perishable." I agree and think that the adjective "perishable" relates to interest in being creative as well.

Exposure to great thinkers and innovators is one way to encourage bright young minds. In September, the IDEA Festival will be held in Louisville. The website (www.ideafestival.com) describes opportunities planned for the upcoming three-day event.

Odyssey of the Mind and Destination ImagiNation are competitions that focus on creativity. Parents and educators can sponsor teams for these international competitions. On April 18, The Center will host the Kentucky competition for Odyssey of the Mind at Western Kentucky University. Volunteers will be needed.

Creativity. Innovation. Creativity leads to innovation. How important is innovation in our society? Why is it important that children and young people are encouraged to be creative? What are the skills that one has if she is going to be an innovator?

The Berta Excellence in Education Series for the coming fall will focus on creativity. Dr. Bonnie Cramond, Director of the Torrance Center of Creativity and Talent Development, will be the featured presenter in this event that is free and open to the public. She will address parents and educators. Plan to come join with others who share your interest in creativity and value the fostering of creativity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Julia Link Roberts".

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

Editor/Writer
TRACY INMAN
Designer
MARCUS DUKES

Spring weather was sandwiched between two blustery days for the twenty-four people who traveled with The Center for Gifted Studies for Spring Break in London. On the day of our arrival, we started to take a walk in the park after visiting Kensington Palace, but were turned back by driving rain. It was a rain that umbrellas couldn't survive. Then the morning we left for the airport to fly home, a gorgeous snow came down, the first of the year for Londoners. Luckily, we had had beautiful weather except for the days that we arrived and departed.

Highlights of the days in and around London were difficult to select as every day was filled with historic places, gorgeous sites, and interesting opportunities. We saw the shows *Wicked* and *Les Misérables*. We had a tour of Parliament on a day that the House of Lords and the

ly as they were during WWII is astonishing to me because it proves that men really lived in those rooms during the bombings of London, that they really planned against Hitler and the Germans, and that the war really happened. It brought that aspect of history alive. Everything in those rooms was original, including one man's sugar ration. Seeing the reinforced floor that protected them from the bombs, the telephones with scramblers, and the maps with tiny pinholes is why Winston Churchill's War Rooms were my favorite place. Everything in those rooms was used to protect a nation and not as a place for parties or entertainment like the palaces and castles."

Karli Rutherford, a two-time traveler with The Center and a senior from Russellville, wrote about what she gained from this travel experience: "Being a

young adult traveling to other countries is very rare. Not only do the gifted trips allow the chance to gain experience through traveling, but also they allow the rare opportunity to learn about historic places hands-on. From Shakespeare's birthplace to famous Windsor Castle, this trip has allowed me to bond and learn with other gifted students my age outside of a classroom. Even though I walk away from this experience tired, it does not compare to the knowledge I've gained, the friends I have made, and the memories I now cherish. This has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience to grow as an individual."

So where will The Center travel next? Paris is the destination for Spring Break in 2009.

The Center Travels to LONDON

BY JULIA ROBERTS

House of Commons would be in session later in the day. We went to Stratford and saw Ann Hathaway's house as they were thatching the roof. We walked around the stones at Stonehenge as a British television station was doing an archeological dig. We boarded the Eye of London to get spectacular views of the city. (Note the smiling faces in the photo.)

Spring Break in London included eighth grade and high school students, parents and grandparents, and interested adults – the very groups for which The Center's travel experiences are planned. Two statements from students describe their experiences during their days in Great Britain.

Nikki Koller, a senior from Russellville and former Super Saturdays participant, summarized her experiences in London: "What I enjoyed most on the trip to London was Winston Churchill's War Rooms. The fact that the rooms are exact-





Winter Super Saturdays

A Learning Opportunity for Students and Parents

Since 1992, The Center has offered Super Saturdays, hands-on, minds-on enrichment classes for children with high ability. Because the need for enrichment and challenge is so great, we began offering two sessions seven years ago: Fall Super Saturdays and Winter Super Saturdays. This past winter 595 students from 48 Kentucky school districts and three states attended classes for four Saturdays at Western Kentucky University.

But they weren't the only ones attending classes. Designed to provide pertinent information to parents, Parent Seminars were held the first three Saturdays (on the fourth Saturday, parents visited their child's class). Several hundred parents took advantage of the opportunity. Dr. Julia Roberts addressed the incredibly important topic of Advocacy the first Saturday. She explains, "Parents are the best advocates for appropriate educational opportunities for gifted children. They advocate more effectively when they are prepared to speak out and when they join their voices with others."

The second session was presented by Kentucky Education Savings Plan Trust (KESPT) and Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). Addressing the issues of preparing for and financing college, KHEAA program advisor, David Lawhorn, remarked: "The Winter Super Saturdays Parent Seminar was a great opportunity for KHEAA and KESPT to present helpful information relating to preparing and paying for college. It was fantastic to partner with WKU and The Center for Gifted Studies in this very worthwhile and meaningful

venture." Gene Weis, KHEAA Outreach Coordinator, brought his College Info Road Show, a modified RV which serves as a mobile classroom unit and travels the Commonwealth throughout the year. He explained, "The 'Road Show' is equipped with on-board laptop computers and provides users with an opportunity to go online to investigate and evaluate collegiate possibilities and financial aid options, as well as other pertinent higher education information." Parent participants found the session extremely valuable. One parent from Simpson County even remarked, "We started a 529 this week. I knew nothing and learned so much!"

The last seminar was a panel of educators who focused on "What Works

for Gifted Children." Teachers, principals, and central office administrators from four districts shared ideas and answered many questions from the audience. A Campbellsville parent who attended all three sessions commented, "The panel helped to validate some very important things that my family has been experiencing lately. A lot of my questions were definitely answered!"

The next chance for young people and their parents to learn on Saturdays is Fall Super Saturdays November 1, 8, 15, and 22. Parent seminars will be held the first three Saturdays. We hope to see you there. And let us know if you have any ideas for Parent Seminar topics. After all, they are designed to meet your needs!

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM PAUL THOMAS

This past year, the great grandfather of a two-time Super Saturdays participant, Laurel Mayes of Glasgow, KY, passed away. Her mother, Bobbi Thomas Mayes, attended SCATS in 1988 and 1989. Since the great grandchildren, grandchildren, and children all agree that "going to Super Saturdays is great," the family generously suggested that expressions of sympathy go to The Center for Gifted Studies in lieu of flowers. The following friends have given lovingly in honor of Paul Thomas.

Judy Boston Glasgow, KY
Sheila & Carl Dillard Glasgow, KY
Sharon Froedge Glasgow, KY
Jayme Garrett Glasgow, KY
Betty Hobart Glasgow, KY
Teresa Hubbard Glasgow, KY
Marcia Lunzmann Crivitz, WI
Bobbi & Joey Mayes Glasgow, KY
Lenora Coates Metcalfe Glasgow, KY
Rosana Padgett Glasgow, KY
Brandy Pendygraft Glasgow, KY
Sheila & Thomas Perkins Glasgow, KY
Margaret Wood Vine Grove, KY
Liz & Barry Woosley Bowling Green, KY

ALUMNI UPDATE

MELINDA DYK (SCATS 1994) attended Vanderbilt University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering in 2003. Upon graduating she earned an Engineer in Training (EIT) certification. She works as a transportation analyst for Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. in Charlotte, NC.

MATT EVANS (VAMPY 1992) lives in Fargo, ND. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 2000 with double majors in Computer Science and Math. Since then he has worked for Microsoft, first in Redmond and now in Fargo. He is also working on a Master's in Computer Science at North Dakota State. He is married with a one-year old son. His family is currently renovating an old house in Fargo. In addition to computers, his hobbies are closed-course driving, music, and weightlifting.

ERIC HAGAMAN (VAMPY 1989; Counselor) graduated *cum laude* from Vanderbilt University in 1995, with double majors in Music (Trumpet Performance) and Computer Science. In 1997 he earned a Master's in Music Performance at the University of Louisville. He currently works at Aspect Software in Brentwood, TN, where he manages a team of Senior Support and Project technicians, handling customer upgrades and technical issues for high profile American and international companies. Outside of work he stays busy with music, friends, and travel. He also enjoys computer gaming and Japanese pop culture.

EDSEL "TEX" HAMILTON (VAMPY 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001) is the graduate assistant on the coaching staff with Baylor University's Lady Bear basketball program. He is working on a graduate degree in Sports Management there. Before Baylor, he spent three years with the University of Southern California Women of Troy basketball team as a manager/statistician and member of

the men's practice team. In 2007 he graduated from USC, where he was a Trustee Scholar, with a degree in Economics. Eddie was also a National Merit Scholar.

EMILY HAMILTON (VAMPY 2002, 2003, and 2004) is beginning as a third-year Architecture student at The University of Texas at Austin. Emily is a member of Phi Eta Sigma and Alpha Lambda Delta honor societies, as well as the student branch of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). She has done various student design projects, including a bird blind at a wildlife habitat, an art gallery, a welcome center for the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and a yoga and meditation center in downtown Austin. She is currently doing a student design for a library and mixed-use development in east Austin. She also is a youth leader in her church.

ALEX KINNIER (SCATS 1988) earned a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering at Lehigh University with honors in 1998 and an MBA at Harvard in 2004. He has worked for Proctor and Gamble and Google and is currently employed with Khosla Ventures in Palo Alto, CA, working to start a Cleantech business that improves energy efficiency while reducing consumption and pollution. He and his wife, Adria, live in Palo Alto. They have one child, Claire, who was born in October 2007.

BRIAN JEFFIERS (VAMPY 1990) is the County Extension Agent for Agriculture & Natural Resources in Johnson County, KY. He has been in that position since 1996, when he graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor's in Agricultural Economics. He completed a Master's in Community & Leadership Development, also from UK in 2008. His wife, Leigh Ann, is a primary teacher, and they have two daughters – Brianna and Leslie. Apart from work and family, he has also been a volunteer firefighter

for 16 years, currently serving as assistant chief of W. R. Castle Fire & Rescue.

MARK JONES (SCATS 1989) earned a BS in physics from the University of Kentucky in 1999. From there, he went to graduate school at Cal Tech where he received a PhD in high-energy physics in 2004. His thesis was titled "A Precision Measurement of the Weak Mixing Angle in Moller Scattering at Low Q²." He now works at MIT Lincoln Laboratory on projects relating to national defense.

LISA JORDAN (VAMPY 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999) graduated from Georgia Tech in 2005 with a degree in computer science. She is now a Microsoft Consultant working for Avanade. Lisa recently bought a house near Atlanta, so she spends most of her time exploring the "wonderful world of home improvement." She enjoys reading, gaming, kayaking, dancing, piano playing, and spoiling her dog egregiously.

ANNE LOUISE MARSHALL (SCATS 1996 and 1997) is currently an economist specializing in Occupational Employment Statistics at the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington, DC. She is a part-time student at Georgetown University Law Center. Her extracurriculars include the American Criminal Law Review and the Georgetown Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

GAIL HAGAMAN MOHR (SCATS 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989; Counselor) graduated *cum laude* from Vanderbilt in 1998, with double majors in Music (Clarinet Performance) and English. She and Stuart Mohr, also a Vanderbilt graduate, married in 1998 and live in Menlo Park, CA, just minutes away from cousin Alex Kinnier (SCATS 1988). She worked for several years with the San Francisco Symphony as Director of Corporate Gifts and is currently Vice President of Community Relations for Bank of America where she



implements the bank's community relations efforts in Silicon Valley and Monterey Bay, including foundation grant-making, sponsorship, and government and media relations. Gail and Stuart's first child, Ella, was born in August.

AMBER NORRIS (SCATS 1995 and 1996; VAMPY 1996, 1997, and 1998; Counselor) currently lives in Memphis, TN, where she is working full time on the nonprofit magazine *Bayou Community Magazine* which she co-created with a friend in Mississippi. Before Memphis, she worked with Teach For America in Mississippi. She graduated from Emory in 2004.

SCOTT SEXTON (SCATS Instructor and Endorsed Teacher) was named the International Champion in the Adult Future Problem Solving competition at the Future Problem Solving Program International Conference held at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, CO. This was Scott's third straight appearance as a coach in the international competition. His Junior CmPS team from Turner Intermediate School in Monticello, KY, was named the 2006 International Grand Champions. In 2007, his team from Northern Middle School brought home two international titles.

VICTORIA STATLER (VAMPY 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997) graduated from Davidson College in North Carolina. She earned a medical degree at the University of Louisville. Victoria has completed her first year of residency in pediatrics at the University of Louisville and Kosair Children's Hospital.

Happy Birthday VAMPY and Advanced Placement Institute

This was a summer of celebration. Both VAMPY and the AP Institute marked their 25th years!

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ACADEMY FIRST-YEAR MILESTONES

BY COREY ALDERDICE

► Students, staff members of the Gatton Academy and WKU, education administrators, and officials from throughout the state gathered on August 23, 2008, to celebrate the official start of the program. Kentucky Speaker of the House Jody Richards noted to the inaugural class of students "You are truly special people. You have been selected to come here and be a part of history — to be a part of the first class in this great Academy."

► In the months prior to the program's dedication, a substantial leadership gift was pledged by C. M. "Bill" Gatton, a businessman from Bristol, TN to create an endowment that would offer substantial programmatic opportunities for the new Academy. The program's name officially became the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky in honor of Mr. Gatton's \$4 million gift.

Students applied the lessons of the classroom through hands-on research alongside WKU faculty members. In all, 54 seniors and 16 juniors conducted research during the 2007-08 academic year.

► During their course of study students sampled classes in both science and humanities. The WKU math department piloted a revision of the university trigonometry course with Gatton Academy students in hopes of seeing the changes replicated in other undergraduate sections of the course. The mathematics and computer science departments also collaborated on a joint venture of a new course focusing on computational problem-solving.

► Ten students participated in the WKU Undergraduate Research Conference. Chad Phillips, a senior from Henderson, was one of ten WKU students honored as Outstanding at the conference for his work with Dr. Chad Snyder in chemistry. Alyssa Mavi, a senior from Ashland, was one of fourteen students given an Honorable Mention at the conference.





► Outside of the classroom, students established chapters of the Future Business Leaders of America, National Beta Club, and Co-Ed YMCA. Additionally, students participated in Odyssey of the Mind, mock trial, and a Gatton Academy Student Government Association. Teams were honored on the state level as the best delegation at the Kentucky Youth Assembly, second place in team awards at the Kentucky United Nations Assembly, state finalists at the state mock trial tournament, and third place in the Eccentrics Division at the Odyssey of the Mind state tournament.

Students gave back to communities in Bowling Green and throughout the state through various service projects. In all, students logged 2871 hours of community service for the year — an average of a full day of community service for each student.



Corey Alderdice



► Students participated in the WKU Big Red Marching Band, children's theater, the Bowling Green-Western Symphony Orchestra, men's and women's chorus, Campus Activities Board, and numerous other organizations while making contributions to student life at WKU.

► During the winter term, twenty-six students began the tradition of a travel study program abroad. Students and staff members spent thirteen days in January touring Italy while visiting sites in Venice, Assisi, Orvieto, Sorrento, Pompeii, Rome, Pisa, and Florence.

► Matthew Kirk, a junior from Centertown, was elected vice president of the WKU chapter of Health Occupations Students of America. Matthew placed third in Medical Math at the Kentucky HOSA Conference in Louisville and qualified to participate in the National HOSA Conference in Dallas in June.

► The 2008 session of the Kentucky General Assembly provided another milestone for the program by establishing the Gatton Academy in statute. Key components of SB-2 included diploma-granting abilities to the Gatton Academy and the authorization for Gatton Academy students to earn KEES money.





Mollie Hanrahan

The RBG Foundation, a foundation created by employees of the Glasgow Electric Plant Board to provide educational opportunities for young people, made a \$50,000 commitment to the Gatton Academy.

- ▶ As part of this funding commitment, the RBG Foundation named the major assembly area in the Academy building after the late Jama M. Young.
- ▶ In addition to legislative support, much of the program's initial success can be attributed to the broad support of members of business and industry throughout the state. Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Kentucky began their support two years prior by giving a \$100,000 gift spread over four years to promote the Gatton Academy and the importance of rigor in math and science education throughout the state
- ▶ AT&T of Kentucky partnered with the Gatton Academy to establish the AT&T Dynamic Leadership Series. The program will provide opportunities for students at the Gatton Academy to hone leadership skills and to enhance

their understanding of leadership concepts. This grant of \$35,000 will make possible consultants, materials, and other resources to nurture leaders, especially in STEM subjects.

- ▶ Ashland Inc. provided \$10,000 in funds to establish the Academy to Community Program. The purpose of the project is to encourage interest and achievement in STEM subjects at the elementary, middle, and high school levels across the state. Students plan and implement projects in their local communities. Several students piloted the program during the spring and summer months.
- ▶ Even as current students were blazing a trail for the future, Gatton Academy staff members began the process of selecting the Class of 2010. In all, 33 community information sessions and 3 preview weekends were held to introduce students to life at the Gatton Academy.
- ▶ One hundred and thirty students applied for the Class of 2010. The 63 new Academy students representing the Class of 2010 span 44 counties from across the Commonwealth. Through 3 admissions cycles, the Gatton Academy has admitted students to the program from 81 of Kentucky's 120 counties.



Corey Alderdice

► The year of exploration and adventure concluded on May 10, 2008, as the inaugural class graduates were honored during Commencement. Over 300 guests were present to celebrate the class's accomplishments while looking forward to their journey ahead. Jim Wiseman, Vice President of Public Affairs for Toyota Motor Manufacturing of North America, delivered the commencement address and encouraged the graduates to respect others, challenge themselves, broaden themselves, and enjoy life.

► Four-year scholarships totaling \$6.8 million were offered to the graduating class while \$2.6 million in four-year scholarships were accepted. Twenty-five members of the senior class were recognized as Kentucky Governor's Scholars. Six members of the class were selected as National Merit finalists: Ari Bendon, Ellen Boswell, Angela Dao, Joseph Groom, Linda Flynn, and Elizabeth Tankersley. Ari, Ellen, Joseph, and Elizabeth were also named scholarship winners.

► In the fall of 2008, members of the graduating class will attend 14 schools across the United States: WKU, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Centre College, Northern Kentucky University, The College of William and Mary, Davidson College, Florida Institute of Technology, Kenyon College, University of Miami, The Mississippi University for Women, New York University, Vanderbilt University, and Virginia Tech University.

► The inaugural year of the Carol Martin Gattton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky has brought with it myriad challenges and rewards. Students in the Classes of 2008 and 2009 have played a vital role in establishing traditions for future classes while demonstrating that the young people who benefit from this program will make a lasting impact on the economy and culture of the Commonwealth both now and in the future.



Corey Alderdice

Educating the Educators: The Center Provides Professional Development

The Center's mission focuses on three main audiences for whom we provide opportunities: young people who are gifted and talented, their parents, and their educators. Both Fall and Winter Super Saturdays, SCATS, and VAMPY all provide a challenging yet nurturing environment for

young people. The Parent Seminars during Super Saturdays are only one venue wherein we assist parents. We have an outstanding library filled with valuable resources plus we field numerous phone calls and emails requesting information and assistance. Professional development opportunities assist educators – whether that's scheduled institutes and workshops such as Leadership Institute or AP Summer Institute, or requested workshops from school districts. Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman customize professional development to meet the needs of the educators.

In the past few years, Julia and Tracy have presented workshops for over 60 different school districts in Kentucky alone. Outside the state, last year Julia worked with educators in Alabama, California, Colorado, Indiana, Tennessee, and Washington. This does not include the numerous presentations made at local, state, national, and international conferences.

An especially exciting opportunity occurred last fall in Indiana. Indiana's Department of Education contracted for The Center to work with administrators across the state in order to help

them better meet the needs of the gifted. Julia and Tracy worked with administrators during a three-day tour of the state. Indiana officials are currently negotiating with The Center to conduct differentiation workshops for teachers at three locations throughout Indiana. Bridget Hand, Division of Exceptional Learners, commented: "The evaluations were good, and the comments we received from participants were very positive. Thank you for conducting these sessions for us." The Center looks forward to returning to Indiana.

Most professional development focuses on differentiation. Julia and Tracy use the book they wrote and recently updated: *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best*

Practices for the Classroom, 2nd ed. (Pruftrock, 2009). A follow-up book devoted to their DAP Tool (Developing and Assessing Products Tool) is in press now. It's called *Assessing Differentiated Student Products: A Protocol for Development and Evaluation* (2009).

Meeting needs is what The Center is about, and the needs of educators must be addressed in order for children to make continuous progress in their learning.



Clinton Lewis

Save the Date for Creativity!

Dr. Bonnie Cramond, Director of the Torrance Center for Creativity and Talent Development at the University of Georgia (www.coe.uga.edu/torrance), will be featured in the Berta Education for Excellence Series. Parents, educators, and other interested people are invited to attend the evening session *Creativity: Glorious Gift or Awful Affliction?* on Thursday, October 23, from 7:00 to 9:00

pm (CDT). She will present another session designed for counselors, teachers, and other school leaders on Friday, October 24, from 8:30 to 3:30. This is entitled *Infusing Creativity and Critical Thinking into the Content*. Both sessions will be held at the Carroll Knicely Center in Bowling Green.

Creativity and innovation are keys to success in the 21st century. Since cre-

ativity is one category of giftedness in the state of Kentucky, services must be provided to children who are identified as gifted in creativity. Join us as we explore what it means to be creative and ways to develop that creativity.

Thanks to the generosity of Vince and Kathleen Berta, the event is free and open to the public. Please contact The Center or visit the web for information on how to register.



Learning about Leadership: Leadership Institute XII

Educators from eight Kentucky school districts gathered for two days this past November to learn how to teach leadership skills to students. Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman presented practical, real-world strategies, tools, and resources to help participants develop leadership skills in young people. Activities focused on problem-solving, decision-making, and communication.

Anna Clardy, an elementary counselor from Warren County, has attended the Institute several years. She explains: "I always look forward to attending the Leadership Institute at Western Kentucky University as the training is packed with wonderful information and activities that I can take back to my location and

begin using immediately with my leadership students. The presenters are readily equipped with a variety of educational resources and are willing to assist with any questions or concerns that arise during the training sessions. I enjoy the time collaborating with others from surrounding counties as well. The time spent at the Institute is certainly valuable for our school as I continue to learn new and exciting activities that assist me in leading our leaders of tomorrow."

Leadership XIII will be held December 4 and 5. The speaker will be Mariam MacGregor, a leadership consultant and author of several books on youth leadership. For a preview, go to www.youthleadership.com.

LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

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Multiple Ways to Define Academic Success: *What Resonates With You?*

BY JULIA ROBERTS

Parents and educators want young people to achieve academic success. Their definitions of academic success, however, vary considerably from making good grades no matter how easy the content is to earning high grades when the content provides challenge to learning for the love of learning. These are the rungs on the ladder of academic success. What the adults, both parents and educators, see as academic success usually shapes the child's view. So what parents and educators think about academic success really matters!

Let's look at the levels on the ladder of academic success. The first rung is getting high grades with little effort. This occurs when the student already knows most of the material and previously has acquired the skills or the content is so easy that it is quickly learned. When proficiency is held as the prominent goal in a classroom or school, it is actually no goal at all for children who are already at the proficient level or beyond. Yet this

stage of academic success may please the parent who doesn't see past the good grade to what the student is not learning (see What a Child Doesn't Learn in *The Challenge*, no.18). High grades alone will not prepare a student to do well when he eventually meets an academic challenge, so the first rung of the ladder of academic success is a precarious place to stay.

Spreading the Word

The Center for Gifted Studies has partnered with Kentucky's State Advisory Council for Gifted Education to produce a video and a public service announcement advocating for young people who are gifted and talented.

Gifted Education: Let's Do It features Kentucky decision-makers, superintendents, educators, and concerned citizens discussing the importance of gifted education to children and to the Commonwealth. Each Kentucky school district should have at least two copies since gifted coordinators and superintendents each received one. An ideal program for civic clubs, professional development for educa-



tors, and discussion prompt for parents, this nine-minute DVD is available from The Center. Think about venues to show the video! Help us spread the word.

The PSA on gifted education also spreads the word. If you have contacts at television stations, please let us know. The message is critical!

Go to www.wku.edu/gifted to see both the PSA and the DVD.

Levels of Academic Success

3

Learns with satisfaction and joy (student is on the way to becoming a lifelong learner)

2

Earns high grades on assignments that challenge (completes assignments that require effort)

1

Gets good grades with ease (completes assignments with little effort)

How do you facilitate your child moving to the next level of academic success?

Don't rescue the child from a challenge. Instead support him/her.

Help find and support interests outside of school as well as in school that motivate and develop a work ethic.

Advocate for continuous progress and excellence at various levels of decision-making.

The second rung on the ladder of academic success features high grades that are earned when the student meets an academic challenge. Reasonable academic challenge is the key – not too difficult to achieve the goal but certainly not so easy that no effort is required. The student takes the most rigorous classes available, acquiring study skills and developing a work ethic. Parents and educators play a significant role in reaching level 2 when they encourage, even insist, that a child take the courses that will stretch his intellect and expand his experiences. This second level on the academic success ladder really can prepare a child for future academic success.

Rung 3 on the ladder of academic success describes the lifelong learner: the child who enjoys reading when a book has not been assigned, conducting an experiment when there is no science fair in the near future, or investigating a question just because she is interested. This top level of the academic success ladder is reached when the focus is on learning and not solely on grades. The parent asks the child “What did you learn in school today?” and then takes the time to listen when he talks about what he found interesting in class that day.

What can parents and educators do to facilitate children moving up the ladder of academic success?

- The very important first step is to support the child if she finds that a rigorous class takes hard work and time. Do not rescue a child from the challenge but support her in successfully reaching high academic standards.
- Help a child find interests in and outside of school and then encourage those interests. Deep interests and passions motivate young learners and promote lifelong learning.
- Advocate for continuous progress and excellence at various levels of decision-making at school and district levels. No one reaches excellence without hard work and persistence.

So why should a parent or educator care or be concerned as long as a child makes good grades even if challenge is absent from the picture? Underachievement sets in early when children are allowed to acquire high grades with little effort. To complicate the situation, underachievement is difficult to reverse. The first level of academic success is equated with “easy.” In fact, one danger is that the child with a history of good grades for easy work will doubt his ability when schoolwork is not easy and effort is required. An individual's definition of academic success will shape what she does in school and the academic goals that she sets – likely, transferring to many other aspects of her life. If a particular definition for academic success is “good enough now,” will it be tomorrow?

Inman, T. F. (2007, Winter). What a child doesn't learn. *The Challenge*, 18, 17-19.

FACT OR FICTION

1. Gifted children thrive with more work.
2. Allowing a gifted child to tutor another child is usually a very effective service option. You really learn something when you teach it.
3. Just because a child is gifted in one area does not mean he is gifted in all areas.
4. Do not expect gifted students to be model students.
5. Gifted students are not at risk. If they are actually gifted, they can get by on their own.
6. Giftedness can easily be measured by intelligence tests and tests of achievement.
7. A good teacher can teach any student, because good teaching is all that is needed.
8. Even if the curriculum is accelerated for all students, services are still needed for gifted learners.
9. All children are gifted.
10. Most children suffer emotionally and socially when grade accelerated.
11. The brightest students tend to make the lowest achievement gains in school.
12. Gifted students are needed in all classes so that students do not lack positive role models for academic and social leadership.

What do the experts say? Continue to page 16 to find out.

A special institute will be conducted in the fall of 2008 to provide leadership training and support to parents to help them become advocates for improved science and math education in their schools and communities.

A \$125,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation, the corporate philanthropy organization of AT&T Inc., to the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence in partnership with the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science and The Center for Gifted Studies will fund development of a special Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

CIPL has received national recognition for its training program since it began in 1997. Since then, about 1,500 parents have participated in six days of intense instruction to gain the knowledge and skills they need to become leaders in school improvement.

"The parent leadership program is a wonderful example of effectively training parents to help improve the education of our kids in Kentucky," said Joan Coleman, president of AT&T Kentucky. "Education is a priority for AT&T, and we are especially pleased to support this focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Public-private partnerships such as

this are essential to moving our state forward."

CIPL's curriculum focuses on leadership skills, planning and strategic development as well as elements of Kentucky's education and accountability systems. After completing the institute, parents work with educators and other parents on projects targeting specific areas of student achievement. Projects in this institute will focus on opportunities to increase student achievement in science and mathematics in the participants' schools and districts.

The Center Partners with the Prichard Committee, the Academy and AT&T to Fund Parent Leadership Institute



Clinton Lewis

"This AT&T grant allows us to offer an exciting, innovative statewide program for parents," said Bev Raimondo, director of the institute. "It enables a specific focus on math and science so parents can understand their importance to high level learning and determine ways to address those areas at their schools."

"This grant from AT&T will increase interest in challenging learning opportunities in math and science across the Commonwealth," noted Dr. Julia Roberts, Executive Director of The Center for Gifted Studies and the Gatton Academy. "These content areas are critical for creating a bright future for our state and nation."

See these websites for more information: www.wku.edu/gifted or www.prichardcommittee.org.

FACT OR FICTION:

What Do the Experts Say?

BY TRACY INMAN

1. Gifted children thrive with more work.

FALSE: Gifted children do not need more work; they need different work. No one wants to do all the odd numbers of an assignment quickly just to be burdened with the even ones on top of it. No one wants to write a paper in addition to the project when everyone else just does the project. Soon no one will want to be gifted!



2. Allowing a gifted child to tutor another child is usually a very effective service option. You really learn something when you teach it.

FALSE: The belief that it never hurts students to review what they have learned “has led to the practices of using gifted students as tutors for slower students in the classroom and having them do more work at the same level. Such activities have been used to fill the time of the student who finishes assigned work quickly, relieving the teacher of additional planning for such a student and simultaneously providing help to students who require extra support. This situation has been especially noticeable since Cooperative Learning groups have become an integral part of classroom organization. Too often, in an effort to maintain the standards they require of themselves, gifted students who are placed in a heterogeneous Cooperative Learning group will take on the major part of the research, writing, and presentation tasks, while also trying to tutor other members of the group, so that the group result will not be unacceptably low to these gifted students. Although sharing with classmates is an important social experience for gifted students, the overuse of group projects

and the use of such students as tutors will prevent them from engaging in their own educational challenges. The increasing number of gifted students writing articles on their frustration with experiences in inappropriately constituted Cooperative Learning groups adequately validates the idea that there is a limit to the educational value of repeatedly reviewing materials and concepts that have already been mastered” (Clark, 2008, p. 23).

3. Just because a child is gifted in one area does not mean he is gifted in all areas.

TRUE: Students may be exceptional in one or more areas. Just because a child is three grade levels ahead in math does not mean he is three grade levels ahead in reading. He may be right at grade level or even reading below grade level.

Kentucky identifies children in five areas of giftedness: General Intellectual, Specific Academic, Leadership, Creativity, and Visual and Performing Arts. (704 KAR3:285 Programs for the gifted and talented)

4. Do not expect gifted students to be model students.

TRUE: Many gifted children have not been challenged in the classroom. For some of them, their characteristics have been misunderstood as behavioral issues. Therefore, they have learned coping skills: boredom, sleep, disruption, being off task (e.g., reading a novel in math class), daydreaming, etc. Many have become underachievers. See Rimm (2008) for specific strategies to reverse underachievement.

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 Counselor) & Wake Norris (VAMPY 1989, 1990,
 1991, & 1992; Counselor) St. Louis, MO
Matching Gift: Emerson

When you consider the fact that we have over 900 students and educators coming to WKU to learn and live for a total of 40 days and nights in the summer, you'll understand why we appreciate Carolyn Hagaman so much. Each summer, Carolyn leaves her "rest of the year" job of Counselor/Coordinator with Student Support Services at Western to come work with The Center. Since she's been doing this so long, she's gotten things down to a science: "It's taken the gradual development of experience to make all of it manageable. This summer was my 22nd, so I ought to have figured out a few things by now. What I do pretty much amounts to doing whatever needs to be done." It is that spirit of collegiality and deep belief in what we do that makes Carolyn so indispensable to The Center (not to mention she's a delightful person with a quick wit and uplifting personality)!

Her tasks are indeed many. From scheduling classes to ensuring AP consultants have the resources they need, Carolyn has a hand in all we do. She explains, "I often buy and bag supplies. . . . Recently I've worked with Tony Kirchner, the College of Education technical expert, to schedule SCATS students into their four classes. I watch for campers who need a bit of extra attention. I go to most staff meetings, so I know what's going on every day and so the counselors and I know each other well enough for me to be their primary contact when necessary. I've learned to manage the data base, but some expert student workers seem to have that fully under control this year." With all the demands on time and energy, she fully appreciates The Center's team approach: "One of the nicest things is that everyone pitches in on any job no matter how mundane. We all work hard, fast, and long. We don't mind because it all goes toward making valuable programs work."

Carolyn fully supports the mission of The Center. She describes the many positives: "Without a doubt the most important aspect of the summer programs is the experiences they provide for young people. For the young people, the chance to learn and have fun with peers who have similar interests and learning abilities is literally a life saver for many. The two or three weeks they spend at WKU are, for many, the best part of their entire year.

Spotlight on Carolyn Hagaman: *22 Years of Friendship*



"A few things I have learned over time are that I find the greatest satisfaction in small things such as individuals who believe I've made a difference, from watching young people get their feet under them and grow, and from working with students whatever their ages or stages might be."

Those words or similar ones occur over and over again on their feedback forms; I'm not making it up!"

Carolyn fully understands the necessity of challenge for gifted children since she has two of her own. Both adults now, Gail (SCATS 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989; Counselor) and Eric (VAMPY 1989; Counselor) have been part of The Center's family. She reflects: "The first summer I worked with Julia and Dick our daughter, Gail, was a 10-year-old 5th grader. Julia suggested she take 2 SCATS classes; she couldn't narrow her choices to two and ended up going all day. She loved it and returned as long as she was eligible. Our son, Eric, had other ideas about his summers and never tried SCATS. He did finally go to VAMPY but not until his last eligible year. Then he found out what he'd been missing, and looked forward to returning later as staff." Even her nephew attended: "Alex Kinnier, my nephew from Pennsylvania, came for SCATS, took Western's motto (The spirit makes the master) very seriously; he still says that has encouraged him to take full advantage of his oppor-

tunities and to give his best to everything he does." The entire Hagaman family has played a role. Carolyn explains, "My husband John has taught the VAMPY Writing class for 16 or 17 years. Every year he wonders if the next group can possibly be as wonderful as the last, and every year it is. It's been a good long-term involvement for all of us. We all believe the summer programs provide essential opportunities for high ability young people and the adults who work with them."

With a varied background in counseling, teaching, and student services, Carolyn brings a richness, energy, and insight to The Center each summer. We certainly rely on her and welcome her each summer. Carolyn feels the same: "Coming back to The Center for Gifted Studies every summer provides a dramatic change which is very good for me. I've never quite grown out of a preference for change and variety."

"Carolyn makes invaluable contributions to the programming The Center offers each summer. She is both a colleague and a friend," said Julia Roberts.

5. Gifted students are not at risk. If they are actually gifted, they can get by on their own.

FALSE: “This would be true only if intelligence was solely inherited, and, therefore, did not change. The well-documented fact is that intelligence is developed from an interaction between genetic patterns and environmental opportunities. It is dynamic rather than fixed, which puts children who are not stimulated at the level of their growth at risk. They do not progress; rather, they regress. Additionally, the growth of intelligence is less limited than was once supposed, and the level to which any child can achieve, when given appropriate stimulation, is unknown. This possibility alone makes this belief that these children can get by on their own very problematic. Gifted students, like all students, need challenges presented to them by their educational experience at the level congruent with their ability and development. The problem for the gifted learner is that schools often do not present curriculum aimed at higher levels of thought” (Clark, 2008, pp. 21-22).

All children need guidance in their learning. Yes, gifted children seem to absorb information. Yes, they make connections others don't. Yes, they can readily comprehend materials. But in order to thrive and develop their talents, they need explanation, discussion, questioning.

6. Giftedness can easily be measured by intelligence tests and tests of achievement.

FALSE: “Brain research has indicated that the brain has at least four major areas of function: physical/sensing, affective, cognitive (both linear, rational and spatial, gestalt), and intuitive. The function of these areas integrate to form a person's intelligence, and the brain seems to be nearly unlimited in its potential for development. Any of these areas of function or a combination of them can be involved in expressing intelligence, making the concept of intelligence quite complex. Intelligence tests generally measure only a sample of the linear, rational ability of a person, and because intelligence can be expressed in many other ways, such a small sample cannot be viewed as an adequate measure of the universe of intelligence or the potential of any person. Although current intelligence tests give valuable estimates of abilities in the area of intelligence that can be predictive of success on school-related tasks, these tests cannot identify giftedness in many areas of intelligence or suggest an individual's potential. Identification of giftedness is a complex task and requires a variety of samples of a person's ability from many areas of function” (Clark, 2008, p. 22).



7. A good teacher can teach any student, because good teaching is all that is needed.

FALSE: “Although good teaching practices must be the basis for all teaching excellence, the appropriate education of gifted students does not end with these important concepts and strategies. In addition to using exemplary educational techniques that support the learning of all students, teachers of gifted and talented students need some special skills. They must know how to change the pace of instruction, provide in-depth learning, and advance the level of content because these are common needs of gifted students. Teachers must know how to develop high degrees of complexity and interrelationships in the content, as well as develop and provide novelty and enrichment. They must accept intensity and divergence, and they must encourage creative solutions. These are but some of the added teaching skills that teachers of gifted and talented students need because these students have specific needs, require additional challenges, and

produce differently in terms of both quantity and quality” (Clark, 2008, p. 22).

8. Even if the curriculum is accelerated for all students, services are still needed for gifted learners.

TRUE: “All students must be given opportunities to have challenging learning experiences. However, those challenges will not be the same, either in content or pace of instruction,

for every student. One of the commonly accepted characteristics found as the brain becomes more efficient and expresses higher levels of intelligence is the increased speed of thought processing. Gifted students learn faster and process information more quickly. It would be unfair to ask a gifted student to slow down this process as it would be to require a slower learner to think more quickly; neither student can do what is being asked. With the ‘dumbing down’ that admittedly is occurring within the curriculum in many schools, some acceleration of content and pace might be positive; however, to speed up the learning process to the pace of the gifted learner would be inappropriate for other learners in the regular classroom and would inhibit their chances for success. In *National Excellence* (Ross, 1993), this vision of schools of excellence was offered; ‘All children progress through challenging material at their own pace. Students are grouped and regrouped based on their interests and needs. *Achieving success for all students is not equated with achieving the same results for all students* [italics added] (p. 29)’” (Clark, 2008, pp. 22-23).

Kentucky mandates multiple services for each identified gifted child. The Gifted Student Service Plan is an individual education plan outlining services, people responsible, and time frames so that the child has continuous progress in his learning.

9. All children are gifted.

FALSE: “All children are valuable, all students are important, and all children should be allowed to develop to their highest potential; however, all children are not gifted. The term gifted designates the students ‘who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities’ (Javits Act P. L. 100-297, reauthorized in 1994 through 2006). The capabilities to which the Javits Act refers include high levels of intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or academic abilities. Obviously not all children have high levels of development that create needs for modification of the curriculum, and yet, in a misguided effort to assert the value of all children, a statement such as ‘all children are gifted’ is mistakenly made. The problem is that such a statement can cause the unique educational provisions needed by gifted students to seem unnecessary, and, therefore, they will not be provided” (Clark, 2008, p. 21).

10. Most children suffer emotionally and socially when grade accelerated.

FALSE: The Templeton National Report on Acceleration, *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students* (2004), is a seminal study on acceleration. While the popular perception is that a child who skips a grade will be socially stunted, fifty years of research shows that moving bright students ahead (whether that be through grade skipping, early entrance to school, or any other of the many types of acceleration) has strongly positive results, both academically and socially.

11. The brightest students tend to make the lowest achievement gains in school.

TRUE: “In a pioneering study of the effects of teachers and schools on student learning, William Sanders and his staff at the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System put it this way: ‘Student achievement level was the second most important predictor of student learning. The higher the achievement level, the less growth a student was likely to have.’”

“Mr. Sanders found this problem in schools throughout the state, and with different levels of poverty and of minority enrollments. He speculated that the problem was due to a ‘lack of opportunity for high-scoring students to proceed at their own

pace, lack of challenging materials, lack of accelerated course offerings, and concentration of instruction on the average or below-average student. While less effective teachers produced gains for lower-achieving students, Mr. Sanders found, only the top one-fifth of teachers were effective with high-achieving students. These problems have been confirmed in other states. There is overwhelming evidence that gifted students simply do not succeed on their own” (DeLacy, 2004, p. 40).

The Fordham Institute released their report *High-achieving Students in the Era of NCLB* (2008) examining the status of high achieving students. In their foreword, Finn and Petrilli summarize the findings:

“No Child Left Behind appears to be meeting its objectives: narrowing achievement gaps from the bottom up. Some may declare this to be a wonderful accomplishment: the performance of low-achieving students is rising, while those at the top aren’t losing ground. But is that outcome good enough for a great nation? If we want to compete in a global economy, don’t we need all our young people – including our highest achievers – to make steady progress too?” (p. 8).

12. Gifted students are needed in all classes so that students do not lack positive role models for academic and social leadership.

FALSE: “Research on role modeling (Schunk, 1987) indicates that to be effective, role models cannot be drastically discrepant in ability from those who would be motivated by them. Teachers overwhelmingly report that new leadership ‘rises to the top’ in the non-cluster classes. There are many students, other than identified gifted students, who welcome opportunities to become the new leaders in groups that no longer include the top 5% of a grade level group” (Winebrenner & Devlin, 1996, p. 1).



Dustin Strupp

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Institutional Advancement
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Dustin Strupp

CALENDAR

October 23

***The Berta Parent Seminar
Creativity***

October 24

***The Berta Educator Seminar
Creativity***

November 1, 8, 15, & 22

Fall Super Saturdays

December 4 & 5

Leadership Institute XIII

February 7, 14, 21, & 28

Winter Super Saturdays

March 27 – April 5

Spring Break in Paris