

# The Challenge

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR GIFTED STUDIES

## Our Mission

Although The Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University is a major center for gifted and talented education in the United States, we are committed to becoming a comprehensive, preeminent national center. The vision for The Center is twofold. One, we want to enhance our national leadership position in advocating for appropriate educational opportunities for gifted children. And two, we want that leadership position to be enhanced by providing comprehensive services which address the cognitive and social-emotional needs of children and young people who are gifted and talented. Realize that children may be gifted and talented in various ways — intellectually, academically, creatively, and/or in leadership or in the visual and/or performing arts. Through services provided by The Center, the quality of life will be dramatically improved for gifted children, youth, and adults across the Commonwealth and the nation.



Educational services for gifted children, their parents, and teachers have been offered by Western Kentucky University for sixteen years, having been designed and implemented under the direction of Dr. Julia Roberts. In June, 1989, the Board of Regents at Western Kentucky University created The Center for Gifted Studies as a unit within the university, providing an umbrella organization for the services for gifted children, parents, and teachers which have been offered annually since 1981.

In short, we are committed to encouraging excellence by providing educational opportunities and resources to three populations: gifted and talented students, teachers working with gifted students, and parents of gifted students.



# Letter



## **Dear Friends of The Center,**

Who are friends of The Center for Gifted Studies? All of the young people who have participated in programming offered by The Center, parents who have trusted us to provide quality opportunities for their children, teachers and parents who have been in workshops provided by The Center, and individuals who have provided support and encouragement for developing and expanding opportunities for young people, teachers, and parents in order to develop the maximum potential of young people.

A newsletter for The Center for Gifted Studies is a dream that comes true with this first issue. Two issues a year will establish a new tradition for The Center. The newsletter will provide the opportunity to communicate, sharing "what's happening" as well as the hopes for and needs of The Center. It also will create a vehicle for thanking you as friends of The Center for your support. Support comes in various forms: sharing positive comments about a program or service with others, contributing to the Western Kentucky University Foundation to augment programming offered by The Center, and providing scholarships for young people who could not otherwise participate.

Since 1981, approximately four thousand middle and high school students have spent two or three weeks in summer programming offered by The Center. Each summer more than six hundred educators have come to Western for professional development opportunities which are sponsored by The Center. During the past seven winters, over 4,500 children have been involved with Super Saturday Seminars. Throughout the year staff at The Center are responsive to needs of young people, parents, and educators; however, the needs and requests exceed our staff numbers or capacity to address them.

I hope you find this "first edition" to be newsworthy! Please let me know if you have ideas for the next edition or know of possibilities for obtaining the means to reach the vision.

**Sincerely,**

**Julia Roberts**  
**Director**

## **Dedication**

It is with love and respect that we dedicate the first issue of The Center Newsletter to these inspirational people:

**Nicole Manning (1988-1997)**

Super Saturday Seminars 1997

**Ryan Mundell (1976-1991)**

VAMPY 1990

**Ethan Wilson (1974-1987)**

SCATS 1986 and 1987

**Diana Wooden (1970-1993)**

SCATS 1984

British Experience 1987

**Stephanie Woodward (1970-1987)**

VAMPY 1984, 1985, and 1986



## Most tend to *think* that “gifted” people are

simply exceptionally smart in either

mathematics or verbal areas. That’s not true. The definition

actually includes much more. A gifted student is one who is identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts. With such an interpretation, the task of educating these people becomes complex indeed.

**E**ducational Programming for children and youth who are gifted and talented is essential for two reasons. Children who learn at a faster pace and at a more complex level deserve the opportunity to do so. They also need time to be with other young people who think like they do and who share their interests. For some students, a two- or three-week period in the summer is the boost they need to carry them through the year. Additional opportunities are needed. For example, numerous calls each year request summer opportunities for elementary children; however, expanding opportunities cannot occur without additional personnel.

### Super Saturday Seminars

Where can you find over 500 first through sixth graders excited about learning on five Saturday afternoons in January and February? You can find them spread all over the campus of WKU participating in Super Saturday Seminars sponsored by The Center. Super Saturday Seminars offer students forty-one classes from which to choose. Class offerings range from chemistry and physics to Spanish, sculpture, and film animation. Students in civil engineering make small boats

out of concrete and watch them float. Some students are venturing into cyberspace as they learn how to make their own Web pages. Other students communicate in American Sign Language, design and build medieval castles, and construct pinhole cameras.

Super Saturday Seminars are designed to provide opportunities for high ability students to broaden the scope of their interests and interact with other bright young people. The classes emphasize a hands-on approach to learning in an environment where creative and critical thinking are encouraged.

Super Saturday Seminars began six years ago with 340 students in twenty-one classes. It has grown to serving 543 students in forty-one classes. Some students travel long distances five Saturdays in a row for this oppor-

tunity to pursue an area of interest with other young people who share that interest. This year students from thirty different school districts plus nine private schools from Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana participated.

Drew Napper, a fourth grader from Owensboro, described his Super Saturday experience in this way:

“It was early one Saturday morning when I awoke for my first day at college. I wasn’t a real college student. I’m still only in the fourth grade, but I was enrolled in a Super Saturday Seminar called ‘Math + Science = Fun, Fun, Fun’ at Western Kentucky University.

# The Gifted Student

We did many interesting activities over the course of the five-week program. We experimented with bubble gum, jello, and Coke, measuring the sugar content of the various items. We made kaleidoscopes and studied angles. We learned about tessellations and shapes. Each student used a tessellation to design a T-shirt.

I’m glad I had the opportunity to go to the classes. I made new friends and learned new things. College life sure is great when you are only nine years old!”

Drew’s experience speaks for many of the elementary students participating in the Seminars.

### Making a Difference

The Center is pleased to announce that Jason Crowe, a Super Saturday student, has been selected as one of the six winners for the 1997 Kid’s Hall of Fame which is





co-sponsored by Pizza Hut and *National Geographic World*. Jason was nominated by The Center for the neighborhood newspaper he started when his beloved grandmother passed away with cancer. His "neighborhood" newspaper, *The Informer*, now has subscribers in twenty-four states, Washington D.C., and four foreign countries! Jason donates the proceeds to the American Cancer Society to aid in the search for a cure. Jason, along with the other winners, won a \$10,000 college scholarship and trip to Washington D.C. The six students were featured in the October issue of *National Geographic World*.

Last January Laura Freese from The Center sent Jason an article about Vedran Smailovic, the cellist of Sarajavo. The article told how one cellist had made a difference in the world just as Jason was doing with his newspaper. After reading the article, Jason decided he should share the cellist's story so that others might be inspired to make a difference.

He wrote about Mr. Smailovic in *The Informer* and even arranged for a concert at the University of Evansville in honor of him. Last May he organized a day of remembrance for victims in Bosnia called "Harmony in the Park" which brought together musicians, vocalists, artists, writers, and humanitarians. He is presently researching and working on a book for children, but his "big" project is having a statue of Mr. Smailovic sent to the Bosnian people just as "The French sent us

the Statue of Liberty," Jason comments. So far, the project seems to be moving right along! Jason sent a letter to President Clinton, visited with artist Russ Faxon who has agreed to create the bronze statue, and visited with former Congressman Frank McCloskey who has agreed

to be on board for the project. Canadian artist Deryk Houston has even given Jason the rights to one of his paintings to help raise funds. The most exciting moment for Jason came when he talked personally to Mr. Smailovic who gave permission for the project!

Jason certainly has made a difference. But his road was not an easy one. Frustrated with school bureaucracy and unchallenging programs, Jason's parents Cindy and Dennis Crowe now homeschool him. Mrs. Crowe argues, "The Center has been our life line in times of crisis and a place to celebrate in times of joy. The Center is not a cold, clinical bureaucracy. Rather it is a warm, caring haven

for gifted kids and their parents in a world which neither values nor understands them."

And what does Jason himself think? "Dr. Julia (Roberts) and Laura (Freese) are like my second family. I wouldn't be where I am today without their love and help. They are my friends, and I love them!"

## SCATS: The Beginning

Sixteen years ago The Center began its mission with The Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students. This two-week summer camp provides a diverse curriculum and a wide range of enrichment experiences for 170 residential students and 50 nonresidential students. Students choose four classes ranging from computer science and mathematics to photography and foreign languages.

SCATS originated as a practicum for teachers working toward an endorsement in gifted education (an additional teacher certificate.) Now 1998 marks its sixteenth year of providing challenge, stimulation, and opportunity to interact with other gifted and talented people. In fact, Duncan Hinkle a







student from Shelbyville says that through SCATS he finally realized that he was “not alone in Kentucky.” He comments that it “made him feel good to be smart,” and it also “made him glad that he didn’t try to conform.” Many agree with his feelings. For many SCATS serves as a prelude for The Center’s next opportunity: The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth.

The camp has made quite an impression on its campers. Anne Raff, of Frankfort, comments: “What impressed me the most about the program was that, although there was a strong academic focus, there was also an opportunity for students to learn valuable life and social skills. Due to the expertise of the faculty and the counselors, I left the program with a greater understanding of both the subject and myself.” And perhaps she sums the experience best with “my only regret is that there is not an academic year program offered.” Others echo her feelings. Cadiz student Graham Oliver argues, “Anybody who thinks this camp is just about learning school stuff couldn’t be more wrong. The camp teaches you what it is like to be by yourself with just your peers and counselors who might as well be your peers since they treat you like equals, how different college is from school, and of course academics.” Graham dreamily states that “there are only a few places on Earth I would rather be.”

Whether it be students, teachers, or counselors, the outcome is a similar one. And Duncan Hinkle words it well: SCATS is an “experience I intend to remember for a very long time.”

## What's a VAMPY?

“My VAMPY experience was one of the most influential and formative experiences of my life. It was at VAMPY that I learned the most about living as a gifted student. I learned humility, acceptance, and open-mindedness. Most importantly, though, I learned that I was not alone as a gifted child. VAMPY gave me an open and accepting environment to grow into an understanding of myself by placing me with other kids just like me and allowing me, for once, to feel comfortable among

***“VAMPY is a collection of bubbly, talented, active young people who are a joy to be around. These kids experience life and reflect on it with intensity and depth not usually found in the classroom, including college classrooms. When they come together in the summer, they create a unique community, full of life and vitality. I see them as the future leaders of our country.”***

*Dr. John Hagaman, teacher of Expository Writing*

my peers, accepted, and almost ‘normal’ (in a relative sense.) VAMPY indeed changed my life, not only by meeting other students like myself, but by allowing me to really be myself, not reserved or altered to assimilate to someone else’s standards or conventions.”

So writes former VAMPY student Matthew Hubbs in a cover letter to Dr. Julia Roberts seeking a position as camp counselor. That’s a VAMPY.

The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth operates in conjunction with the Duke Talent Identification Program. It began at the request of TIP and the Kentucky State Department. It remained TIP’s only cooperative program for six years. The Center offers this three-week residential program to students entering grades eight through eleven





***"VAMPY camp ... had a profound effect upon my life.... I learned a great deal of tolerance of every kind, not just ethical tolerance or religious tolerance, but open-mindedness about personal opinions and practices. I learned that pink hair and black lipstick do NOT make a person a 'freak' and that nose rings are not as evil as I'd been taught. VAMPY camp gave me the chance to meet many diverse people, and I learned to accept and understand from that experience."***

Ami Karlage, Edgewood, KY

who scored exceptionally as seventh graders on college entrance exams (SAT/ACT). The Duke Talent Identification Program Awards Ceremony honors those seventh graders with such scores here at WKU every spring. Many schools provide academic credit or advanced placement to students completing courses through the VAMPY program. Students travel from all over to participate; last year participants came from twelve states and two countries. USIA grants have made possible exchanges for gifted high school students in the VAMPY program and Rostov-on-Don, Russia for three summers. And it can truly be a life-changing experience.

VAMPY celebrates its fifteenth year this summer by offering eleven classes to 175 campers. Class topics vary greatly from The Holocaust to Physics hopefully sparking an interest in every camper.

Teachers in the program look forward to this time just as much as the students do. John Hagaman, for example, will be teaching Expository Writing for his eighth summer this year. He says, "I guess I've grown attached to the students I've met over the years, to

their spirit, enthusiasm and insights. It's a privilege to enter their worlds, to see how they think and feel, for even a short time. There is such an emptiness and void in Cherry Hall the weekend the students leave. I think I keep teaching each year to fill that void, to try to blot out the sadness I always feel when the last footsteps have echoed down the hall." Many students also look forward to the challenge and stimulation offered in the classes. Lucy Jackson of Paducah, KY, remarks, "Often, in school, I almost always was held back and confined to a rate of learning that was too slow for me. At VAMPY, for the first time, I was allowed to advance in my learning. My academic needs were fulfilled, and I got the chance to explore my creativity and to progress as much as I could. I was allowed to work to my potential and encouraged in doing so." Yes, the academics are strenuous and challenging. But for many, academia is only one aspect of the program.

"VAMPY is not just an opportunity to further our education during the summer; it is an opportunity to experience something moving, wonderful, and totally unique. The people that come to VAMPY are from many varied backgrounds and hold astonishingly different beliefs, and we all bring something special of our own into it," reflects Carrie Blaydes of Lexington, KY. "I have learned, here at VAMPY, not only a wealth of knowledge that will help me on my path for a good education, but also to tolerate and to love many people with whom I may not agree or see eye to eye," she continues. "From time to time we are all heard complaining about the food, the heat, the hills, or the rules, but at the talent show when we sing 'Friends,' there is not one person who does not feel the loss of our friends, our haven, our home." This holds true for many at the camp. For many VAMPY is a place of understanding, acceptance and belonging – as Lucy Jackson elaborates: "I have found being a gifted student does not always



## We will soon be on the web!

By the end of June The Center will have a web page. The web site is <http://www.wku.edu/gifted/>. Welcome to cyberspace!

bring with it praise and glory. In fact, it was more of a burden.... When I came here, I found individuality and being smart were both widely accepted.... I felt as if I finally fit in somewhere."

So what's a VAMPY? It's difficult to explain because it's a rare mixture of love, laughter, challenge, acceptance, inquisitiveness, and belonging – so potentially life changing for such a short period of time. It's a place of refuge and family, as Lucy concludes: "After all VAMPY was a definite escape from the world I feel so often misunderstands me." And perhaps Carrie sums it up best: "I will never forget the many lessons of different kinds that I have learned here at VAMPY and I envy the future generations of students who take my place in class, in the cafeteria, and in the hearts of their new friends."

### VAMPY Celebrates Fifteen Years!

1998 is definitely the year for huge celebrations. The pawnshop celebrates its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Valentine cards turn 275. Communism turns 150; Karl Marx published his Manifesto in 1848. Marie Curie discovered the elements polonium and radium one hundred years ago, and twenty-five years later the Milky Way, Butterfinger, and Sanka hit the shelves. Both Israel and McDonalds made their debut fifty years ago. And Nixon confessed, "I am not a crook" just twenty-five years ago. But the crowning event for anniversary celebrations turns an adolescent fifteen: a decade and a half ago scores and scores of verbally and mathematically precocious youth hit the Hill!

Get ready for a celebration. Plans are underway for a VAMPY reunion on July 25 here on campus. We know there will be a dinner and T-shirts, but we're open for additional ideas. Please let The Center know suggestions and ideas. A registration form should be to you by the first part of June. If you don't hear from us, please contact us. We look forward to you celebrating with us!

### 1998 Calendar of Events

April 10 - 19	Spring Break in London
May 29	Duke Talent Identification Program Awards Ceremony
June 21 - 26	The Advanced Placement Summer Institute - WKU
June 28 - July 10	The Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students (SCATS) - WKU
June 29 - July 1	The Building Success in Social Studies Institute - WKU
July 12 - August 1	The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth - WKU
July 13 - 17	The English Vertical Team Institute - WKU
July 13 - 17	The Mathematics Vertical Team Institute - WKU
September 29 - 30	Symposium on Kentucky's Children Who are Gifted and Talented - Shakertown
December 3 - 4	Leadership Institute III - Institute for Economic Development, WKU South Campus

### Time for a New Tradition?

For almost as long as there has been The Center, there has been a trip to Opryland as part of the student programs. But that changes in 1998. Opryland Amusement Park has closed its doors as it remodels the majority of the park into a mega-mall. No more flying through the air on The Hangman. No more almost-losing-your-lunch episodes from the Wabash Cannonball. But don't despair. We're sure to find something else to thrill you. If you have any ideas, feel free to contact us. It's time for a new tradition.







## Experience the World Through Educational Tours

"My experiences of overseas travel have really opened my eyes to the real world. Instead of learning what to think, I have learned how to think and why to think. Without programs such as these from the Center of Gifted Studies, I would not be quite the person ... I have become." Katie Bauer, student and world traveler

This comment from Katie Bauer of Madisonville, Kentucky, reads as if it came from the cover of a travel brochure. It is actually just an honest response about the program of Educational Tours offered by The Center. The Center hosts these tours for eighth grade and high school honors students as well as interested adults. Over the past thirteen years, Dr. Julia and Dr. Dick Roberts have directed tours to France, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, The People's Republic of China, and Russia. Dr. Julia Roberts comments, "I consider international experiences to be key to enabling students and educators to obtain a global perspective." Because of this philosophy, she has directed approximately two study tours a year.

Through these study tours, students gain an invaluable appreciation of their world through experiencing another culture. Just ask Katie. Between her mother, her brother David and herself, they have logged in travel miles to ten different countries! She explains: "Through participating in their travel/study trips abroad to places such as Italy and France, I have gained an abundance of knowledge, witnessed the rich culture and language of another nation, learned skills for independent living, met some wonderful people, and, in whole, experienced history to the fullest." She also experienced French and Italian cuisine to the fullest: "I'll have to say my favorite part of Italy was the ice cream 'gelati.' I averaged three cones a day!" She reminisces about France: "My favorite memory is Montmartre, where the Sacred Heart Church is located. In this quaint little part of Paris we saw authentic sidewalk painters and ate the most delectable bowl of French onion soup. It was so good I can still taste it...." One of the pleasures of travel is the new experience whether it be food, language, or culture.



Yet, according to Katie, these experiences prove difficult to translate to others: "It is truly impossible to try to express in words what an impact each of these trips has had on my life. Besides making wonderful memories, building lasting friendships, and gaining a wealth of knowledge, each person acquired so much more." In fact, she admits, "Out of each trip I have learned so much more than I ever thought possible." International traveling offers so much.

The last opportunity to travel with The Center was Spring Break, April 10-19. Travelers learned about the history, culture, pagentry, and people of England as sites in and outside of London were visited and discussed. This international experience was the only one The Center offered this year. We hope you'll make plans to join us in 1999.

## What's Next?

There is no doubt that gifted and talented young people desperately need opportunities for growth and challenge. And yes, some of those needs are being met by The Center through such programs as SCATS, Super Saturdays, and VAMPY. But more is needed. The wish list is long – but feasible. Some of the programs we'd love to implement include the following:

**Super Summer Program** — Many requests have come in for a summer program for gifted elementary children.

**Leadership Academy** — In a one-week residential experience, middle and high school students who demonstrate the potential for leadership would have the opportunity to study leadership, develop leadership skills, and build a plan to be carried out with the student in the leadership role.

**Weekend Academic Seminars** — Middle and high school gifted students would have weekend opportunities to study one content area.

The interest is there; the need is there; and with funding, the programs will be there as well.



## *Educators have needs for*

effective professional development if they are

to remove the learning ceiling for children who are gifted

and talented. Effective professional development is ongoing within a school and district, and it is planned to provide options for educators, just as classroom teachers must differentiate learning opportunities for a wide range of learners in their classrooms. The one-size-fits-all approach to professional development works no better than the one-size-fits-all approach to teaching in the classroom.

course in a high school which had never offered it before. His source of help proved to be the WKU AP Summer Institute. He comments, "The consultant provided me with ideas, concepts and strategies which enabled me to be successful in my first year as an AP teacher." Mr. Treadwell was one of the nearly 3000 teachers who have been strengthened through the Institute. But his story differs somewhat. He is the only participant who has ever returned as a consultant.

Dr. Julia Roberts approached him. "While I was flattered by the offer and saw it as a positive result of the years of work I had put into becoming 'recognized,' I saw a deeper and more meaningful opportunity. This was my opportunity to give something back to the program that has come to mean so much to me as a professional," he explains. "I have

**T**he Center has been the largest provider of professional development in gifted education in Kentucky since 1985. Professional development opportunities have been offered by The Center in response to expressed needs of educators and changes in education in Kentucky. For example, the Commonwealth Diploma built around College Board Advanced Placement courses was the reason for starting the Advanced Placement Summer Institute fifteen years ago; and the Leadership Institute began last year when educators expressed the need for assistance in building student leadership skills. Addressing the needs of the teachers of gifted students so that their teaching is on target is just as crucial as addressing the needs of the students themselves.

### **College Board Partnership: The Advanced Placement Institute**

The fifteen-year partnership with the College Board demonstrates the reputation of Center-sponsored professional development. This relationship began with the College Board Advanced Placement Institute for Teachers. These high school teachers spend one week developing effective strategies for

teaching College Board Advanced Placement courses. Approximately 250 teachers come from across the United States and world; last year nineteen states and three foreign countries were represented. Teachers may choose from beginning or advanced workshops depending on need. And workshops include such areas as Calculus, French, U.S. History, Statistics, Studio Art, and Psychology to name a few.

The job of teaching the gifted and talented student at times proves ominous indeed. Teachers actively search out resources that help in understanding, technique, and method. Larry Treadwell, AP European History teacher at Ely High School, Pompano Beach, Florida, serves as an example. In the early eighties he began preparing to teach the

done many workshops and institutes for the College Board, but Western Kentucky is special in my heart. When I do the WKU Institute, I see myself sitting in those seats back in the '80s and I strive to give the participants everything I wanted when I was in their shoes." With such a philosophy, there is little doubt as to the success of the Institute. He even comments that "while it sounds trite, I would gladly do this institute for free."

The Institute does make a difference for those professionals seeking guidance in beginning these courses and in strengthening them. "For those participants who have the desire to excel the WKU Institute will change the way they think about teaching, education and will instill a pursuit of excellence that will carry them through their careers," Mr.

# The Gifted Students' Teacher



Treadwell explains. "For those of us who teach the workshop this is a battery recharge, a chance to share the exuberance of youth, to exchange ideas and then be fully recharged to face the upcoming year." And as former participant and current consultant, he should know.

### **College Board Partnership: English Vertical Teams Institute**

In 1996 in cooperation with the College Board, The Center piloted the only summer institute in the Southeastern region to assist English teachers in the vertical articulation of the curriculum to help more students reach world-class standards. Now in its third year, the English Vertical Team Institute provides an opportunity for middle school and high school English teachers to explore ways to bridge the gap between the two curricula. Teachers attend a one-week institute focusing on three major goals. According to Dr. Sharon Chaney, consultant for the program and nationally-recognized teacher, these goals include "(1) to improve classroom instructional practices of the individual teacher through heightened awareness of what is taught at various grade levels; (2) to promote team building among grade levels, and team collaboration expertise among team members; (3) to train individual teachers to become facilitators of other teams." As these goals are sought, Dr. Chaney believes that desirable student goals are more attainable: "e.g., higher order thinking skills, improved standardized test performance, and increased responsibility for learning."

The usefulness of the approach, according to Dr. Chaney, is that "it assures consistent communication among teachers. As the communication takes place, teachers are able to plan appropriate sequencing of lesson designs in order to support previous learning and eliminate needless repetition of past instruction." With such dialogue the teachers "can tailor an entire program to meet the needs of the current student population."

In fact, this is the major strength of the institute. As Dr. Chaney points out, "English Vertical Teams work best when teachers meet together, talk together, and plan together." The Institute provides the opportunity, the training, and the reinforcement necessary to achieve such measures.

### **College Board Partnership: Mathematics Vertical Team Institute**

Similar in nature and goals to the English Vertical Team Institute, the Mathematics Vertical Team Institute will be piloted by the College Board Southern Region here this summer. This one-week institute is designed to provide an opportunity for teachers of mathematics to explore ways to bridge the gap between middle and high school mathematics curricula to enable more students to reach high stan-



dards. This institute will be offered separately from the English Vertical Team Institute but at the same time in July.

### **College Board Partnership: The Building Success in Social Studies Institute**

Piloted at Western last year by the College Board Southern Region, The Building Success in Social Studies Team Institute will convene at WKU at the end of June this summer. This three-day institute is designed to provide an opportunity for middle and high school social studies teachers to explore strategies to strengthen social studies curricula to enable more students to reach high standards.

According to Marie Waller, nationally acclaimed teacher and College Board consultant, "The Building Success Program provides teachers with techniques to encourage active learning in the classroom for all students. One of the major activities is to teach and practice the skill of asking questions." She continues, "Another major part of the program is to teach the skill of organizing their ideas, solving problems and thinking clearly in order to communicate." There are many advantages to this program, but perhaps the most profound is that it "encourages students to be life-long learners – by learning how to be an active learner – to think, question, and communicate with others." With such outcomes, the Institute is aptly named.

### **Potential Leaders Wanted: Leadership Institute**

Thomas Jefferson, in his *Notes on Virginia*, commented: "We hope to avail the state of those talents which nature has sown as liberally among the poor as the rich, but which perish without use, if not sought for and cultivated." And if the state is to benefit from these talents and gifts, we, too, must nurture and cultivate young minds. In order to develop and hone leadership skills, the Center offers the Leadership Institute. 1998 marks its third year at WKU. This institute offers





**"You don't prepare a young man or woman to become a world class athlete by keeping him or her in regular gym classes and by not allowing him or her to compete against other youngsters who can provide appropriate levels of challenge.... You don't develop world leaders such as Martin Luther King, Golda Meir, and Mahatma Gandhi by having them practice basic skills over and over again or by reiterating mundane concepts that they can undoubtedly learn faster than all of their schoolmates and, in some cases, even many of their teachers. Talent development is the 'business' of our field, and we must never lose sight of this goal."**

Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis in "The Reform Movement and the Quiet Crisis in Gifted Education"

sessions for teachers, administrators, and counselors on developing leadership skills among the youth and children in schools and in communities.

Last December, leaders from the world of business and academia presented workshops to over 80 interested individuals. Talks ranged from *Leadership: From a Business Perspective, Easier Said Than Done* by Jim Wiseman of Toyota Motor Manufacturing of North America to *Leadership - Schools and Community Together* by Dan Reeder, Gifted Coordinator of Montgomery County Schools. These workshops provided insight and strategies in preparing our young people to be the leaders of tomorrow.

According to Dan Reeder, "Leadership II proved to be thought-provoking, stimulating, and beneficial for educators in attendance. The Institute presented a myriad of ideas, resources, and curriculum opportunities." For example, Jim Wiseman discussed his concept of leadership from the business perspective, including the overall strengths and weaknesses of the student in the business arena. Dr. Frances Karnes, Di-

rector for Gifted Studies, University of Southern Mississippi, presented the framework of nine essential concepts for the development of leadership programs, including such concepts as Problem Solving, Values Clarification, and Decision Making. The final session was directed toward the establishment of leadership statements. "Participants left with a personal plan for their schools and seemed excited about taking new ideas and implementing them," Mr. Reeder commented. He concluded, "Leadership II ended with a strong commitment to continued leadership development. The next level for Kentucky Educators will evolve around creating curriculum. The need for a structured curricu-

lum with a scope and sequence will be the direction for future institutes." And Leadership III planned for this December should target these areas.

## **Staff Development and Teacher Education**

The Center has provided the leadership for numerous staff development opportunities for teachers and administrators. Personnel at The Center work with Gifted Coordinators in a 44-county region, bringing them to Western for planning and staff development. Workshops for teachers and administrators are offered annually. For example, last fall over sixty people attended the Shakertown Symposium, a joint venture with KAGE. In addition to the workshops, The Center provides technical assistance to schools and school districts. Frequent requests are made to assist districts in implementing the Gifted Education Regulation and in planning with faculty to implement the primary and middle school programs in ways that lift the learning ceiling.

Involvement of both university and regional teachers in addition to university students has been a priority in all activities sponsored by The Center. Field experience for undergraduate and graduate students is provided through all programs administered by The Center. University students in teacher education have had the opportunity to gain field experiences with gifted students observing and participating in SCATS, VAMPY, and the Super Saturday Seminars. Another service offered concerns the preparation of teachers with the endorsement in gifted education. Since 1983, Teacher Education has offered graduate courses to prepare specialists in gifted education. The endorsement in gifted education requires four three-hour graduate courses. Currently, WKU is the only institution in Kentucky that offers annually the complete sequence of graduate courses to earn the endorsement in gifted education.



## **KAGE and The Center for Gifted Studies**

The Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE) values the ongoing support of The Center. KAGE is a non-profit volunteer group of parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and citizens interested in being advocates for appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented youth in Kentucky. The Center provides administrative and program assistance to KAGE to carry out the goals of the organization. These goals include the following: offering training for parents and teachers of gifted and talented students, disseminating information about opportunities for gifted and talented students as well as parents and teachers of these students, assisting parents, educators, and public officials in identifying and assessing resources necessary to meet the needs of students who are gifted and talented, and encouraging the continued improvement of educational services to all students, including those who are gifted and talented.

The Center provides space for the KAGE office. The Center's support helps make it possible for KAGE to have an excellent professional development conference for educators and parents each spring. Also The Center staff provides assistance in collating handouts, stuffing packets and preparing bulk mailings. Staff members at The Center provide consultative services to local parents' groups who are forming KAGE chapters and serve as speakers at meetings. The Center and KAGE co-sponsor a Workshop for New Teachers in Gifted Education in August. The Center houses numerous resources on gifted education (books, videos, journals) for parents and teachers. KAGE members frequently check out these resources. *KAGE Update*, the association's quarterly newsletter, is developed at The Center with Dr. Julia Roberts as editor.

### **In Deepest Appreciation**

These dear people have made it possible for The Center to thrive. Through their gifts and donations, gifted and talented young people are able to be a part of the programs who otherwise would not. To them we are extremely grateful:

Miriam Belknap of Elizabethtown, KY  
Jackie and Bill Capp formerly of Paducah, KY now in Edina, MN  
Janine and Ben Cundiff of Cadiz, KY  
Sheila Depp of Owensboro, KY  
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Olivia Landrum of Scottsville, KY  
Kathy Larsen of Owensboro, KY  
Dixie, Pete and Sarah Jo Mahurin of Bowling Green, KY  
Patricia and John McHale of Bowling Green, KY  
Shanna Paul of Bowling Green, KY  
Carol and John Talbert of Henderson, KY

Friends wishing to make gifts to The Center should designate WKU Foundation, The Center for Gifted Studies on their donations.

Each summer the KAGE Foundation provides scholarship assistance for gifted elementary and secondary students attending summer programs offered by Kentucky's universities. Each year there are more requests for assistance than the KAGE Foundation can meet. The Center offers scholarship assistance to address some of these needs.

KAGE has been a strong force in working with legislators and the Kentucky Department of Education to insure that the needs of gifted and talented students are addressed in KERA schools. The Center has provided research, resources, and support to help that happen.

KAGE opportunities include Susan Winebrenner presenting the KAGE Summer Workshop entitled "Meeting the Needs of the Gifted Child in the Regular Classroom" in Lexington on June 23, 1998. Also, the National Association for Gifted Children will hold its 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Louisville this November. Call The Center for more information.

### **Future Dreams**

The Center has accomplished much in terms of professional development; but more is needed. We have dreams of The Summer Institute in Gifted Education. This would be a one-week institute that would offer teachers a variety of workshops to help them address the cognitive and social-emotional needs of gifted children. A Counselor Institute is also needed. This institute would offer school counselors information on the social-emotional needs of children who are gifted and talented and strategies to address the needs as well as strategies to guide them in educational and vocational choices. Another goal on the horizon is the preparation of preservice teachers to teach all children, including the gifted. The Kentucky New Teacher Standards provide the basis to support appropriate learning opportunities for children who learn at a faster pace and more complex level. We have the desire to meet these needs; all we are lacking is funds.



# The Center *believes* parental support for

gifted students cannot be adequate un-

less giftedness is understood. It is our mission to provide resource

material to all interested parents. At the beginning of student programs sponsored by The Center, seminars are presented on parenting gifted students. We also conduct parent workshops and presentations at the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education and many regional, state, and national conferences. As The Center has grown, it has become the leading sounding board for parents on hundreds of issues concerning gifted students – including state funding and appropriate educational opportunities.

to have the opportunity to travel to the centers of culture with guides who give so much information; as a private tourist you miss so much.” It is families like the Johnsons that The Center services. Whether it be resources, seminars, or travel opportunities, The Center is there to meet needs.

## Resources Available

The Center for Gifted Studies houses a resource library for parents and teachers. Resources are checked out or used in the Center on an ongoing basis. A new video collection is now available for purchase as a set or individually. The series *Bringing Out the Best* include five videos: 1) *Fostering Excellence in the Classroom – Getting Rid of the Ceiling*; 2) *Incorporating Broad-Based The-*

**A**ll year long workshops are presented to parents. For example, in January and February workshops were available for interested Super Saturday parents. Subjects ranged from *Recognizing and Nurturing Advanced Ability in Children* and *The Emotional Side of Giftedness to Gifted Education in Kentucky – Matching Services to Needs* and *Strategies for Parenting Gifted Kids*. Over 300 parents attended. Workshops such as these are presented at the beginning of each student program sponsored by The Center.

Parent Judy Johnson of Bowling Green has taken advantage of several of The Center's

# The Gifted Students' Parents

## Travel Studies Opportunities - 1999

Spring Break in Paris  
April 2 - 11, 1999

The Italian Experience  
June 3 - 17, 1999

offerings. When her daughter Cayce attended Super Saturdays, she attended all of the workshops offered. She comments, “I appreciate making the seminars available. Dr. Roberts keeps us informed about so many issues including KAGE and KERA.” She also mentioned her “copious notes” on dealing with a gifted child. Mrs. Johnson's other child, Alex, attended SCATS for three years. She feels that “the program is so good because it reinforces the idea that there are other children like them – that there is no stigma about being bright, being capable.” In addition to these two programs, the Johnson family also traveled to France with The Center: “it's great

*matic Units into the Curriculum*; 3) *Incorporating Critical Thinking Skills into the Curriculum*; 4) *Incorporating Creative Thinking Skills into the Curriculum*; and 5) *Recognizing and Nurturing Advanced Ability in Young Children*. All videos are \$35.00 plus shipping and handling. Contact The Center for more information. One additional video also offered is *To Be Myself: Gifted Students* in which fifteen gifted adolescents from VAMPY respond to a series of questions. Cost here is \$25.00. From videos to written material, The Center provides a plethora of resources. The Center is a leader in services for parents as well as teachers and students in the state and beyond.



## Our Vision for the Future

The vision of The Center for Gifted Studies is to become a year-round provider of comprehensive educational opportunities for gifted and talented students, teachers working with gifted students, and parents of gifted children. Through this vision we will dramatically improve the quality of life for gifted children and youth in Kentucky and the nation. Conservative estimates project that The Center has served over 20,000 students, teachers, and parents in its sixteen-year history. Our goal is to establish the Endowment for the Future of Gifted and Talented Children to ensure the continuation of our mission and to move toward our vision.

The Center has operated its programming on a self-supporting basis through fees for various programs for children, youth, educators, and parents. This budget pays salaries for approximately 150 individuals as teachers, residential counselors, academic counselors, office staff, and consultants during the summer and for a few throughout the year. It meets expenses for programming including food and housing. Grant funding has focused entirely on specific partnerships with schools designed to achieve specific goals. Since 1990, The Center has received \$1,750,000 in such federal support for research and curriculum development.

To improve services to gifted students we must address the cost of programming. The Center continues its long established policy of admissions without regard to race, creed, gender, disabilities, national origin, or any other classification that deprives applicants of consideration as individuals. The Center offers needs-based scholarships. All students applying are endowed with the merit and qualifying scores to complete the programs. However, many students each year require financial assistance. We currently turn away one-half of all students requesting financial aid, while the other half of these funds are simply absorbed by The Center. So we have dreams of offering more scholarships. We envision an Educational Programming Coordinator and Graduate Fellowships. All of these require more resources.

As the world turns to the Information Super Highway to access any and all forms of information, the Center needs to be there. A new Internet resource center named in honor or memory of an individual or family will be a rising star in future years. A conservatively estimated 10,000 students, parents, and teachers would turn to the new electronic re-



source center via computer annually. Student services and extended study courses will be available as well as instant up-to-date information on opportunities, applications, and deadlines for gifted students. Information for parents ranging from daily advice to publications and nationwide seminars will be on the resource center's wire. Current curriculum ideas and information on opportunities for teachers and administrators will be available. We have visions of such a web site/resource center. Yet not only must we design and establish this, we must also have the equipment and help necessary for its success. Here we envision an Advocacy and Development Coordinator, a Multimedia Designer, and even a Graduate Fellowship.

Another part of our vision involves a lecture series. This series for parents and educators, conducted four times annually, would highlight needs of the gifted child both at school and at home. Consultants from across the country would be commissioned to offer their expertise to parents and educators. The cost of improving our resources using this program would total \$15,000 annually. The series and scholarships could be named in honor or memory of an individual or family. Also part of the professional development arena includes our vision of a Professional Development Coordinator, a Thinking and Problem-Solving Institute, and scholarship support for teachers to earn a Gifted Education Endorsement.

Several other areas are needed for The Center to be a comprehensive one. A Research and Grants Coordinator could generate funds. And we have a desperate need for a Testing/Counseling Coordinator. We have put much effort in creating a program that aligns with our mission for these three populations of gifted student, teacher of the gifted, and parents of the gifted. But our mission is not yet complete. If we are to envision the best for these people, we must have the resources to accomplish that vision.



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### Ideas Needed for Future Newsletters

We want the Newsletter to speak to you and for you. Please contact The Center with any ideas, articles, photographs, or suggestions. We appreciate your help and insight. You can reach us by telephone (502) 745-6323, by fax (502) 745-6279, or by e-mail <gifted.studies@wku.edu>.

Failure to help the gifted child is a societal tragedy, the extent of which is difficult to measure but which is surely great. How can we measure the sonata unwritten, the curative drug undiscovered, the absence of political insight? They are the difference between what we are and what we could be as a society.

— James J. Gallagher

## Anything New?

You're important to us! Help us be able to contact you. Please let us know of any changes. Also please send addresses for your children who participated in Center-sponsored programs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET CITY STATE ZIP

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_