

the challenge

Magazine for The Center for Gifted Studies

A one-day workshop on gifted education signaled the beginning for what has developed into The Center for Gifted Studies. The headliners for that first workshop were John and Hazel Feldhusen who came to Bowling Green from Purdue for that special day. Tom Foster, a graphic designer at WKU, created the star that was used to market that workshop (seen on the left of the graphic). Thirty-five years ago, his son was a very young child who colored in one of the stars. Thus began the star as the logo and also the relationship between The Center for Gifted Studies and Tom.

Tom has remained a friend of The Center for Gifted Studies since it began, and he continues to create graphics for us. The star is the logo for The Center as well as the logo for VAMPY which includes the star but much more as the tips of the star turn into birds flying away. Symbolically, the birds represent what happens with young people as they grow into their potential. He periodically updates the graphics for each camp.

In between the first and the current stars have been various iterations of the star as The Center's logo. This graphic highlights the production or the construction that has taken place to get the star to the current version. It is an ongoing project.

Thank you, Tom, for being a long-term friend for The Center for Gifted Studies.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS FOR THE STAR



Letter from Julia



Dear Friends of The Center
for Gifted Studies,

Spring is the time to complete planning for summer programming. Summers are filled with friendships, engaging learning, and lots of fun. That has been true for 32 summers for VAMPY and 33 summers for SCATS, and we soon will add one more summer to each of those numbers. You may have been a camper, or you may have had a child who has been at VAMPY or SCATS. I hope your memories match my descriptions of those experiences.

In the fall and the winter, children come to WKU for Super Saturdays classes. Numbers per session total 500 or more, and these children are engaged in classes of 15 or 16 students. Parents come from approximately 100 miles in all directions from WKU and a few drive farther than that.

Summer camps for elementary children are weeklong, and the learning can best be characterized as hands-on and minds-on. Time with others who are equally interested in learning is a hallmark of The Center for Gifted Studies' programs.

Since The Center for Gifted Studies first offered programming, financial assistance has been available for young people who meet the criteria for participating and may not otherwise be able to participate. Gifts from Friends of The Center for Gifted Studies continue to make it possible for children and young people to learn with other advanced and gifted learners. Thank you.

As we celebrate the 35th year of The Center for Gifted Studies, I hope that you will consider ways to engage with activities and programming The Center offers. This edition of *The Challenge* highlights the history of the program as well as a quote about each opportunity.

As part of our celebration of 35 years, The Center is soliciting applications for alumni of our programs to be named The Center for Gifted Studies Stars. Please note the information about this opportunity on the Friends page. We will be scheduling an event next summer to bring numerous alumni and friends to celebrate this 35-year milestone.

I also ask that you advocate for appropriate services and national, state, and school district policies that allow students who are gifted to learn at a pace and level that are challenging. These young people need your advocacy.

You are invited to make suggestions for The Center for Gifted Studies and to share memories of your experiences that are tied to The Center. I also appreciate updated email and mailing addresses as well as other contact information. I would love to hear from you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Julia Link Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Link Roberts
Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies

EDITOR

Tracy Inman

DESIGNER

Marcus Dukes

WRITERS

Gail Hiles

Tracy Inman

Sam Oldenburg

Josh Raymer

Julia Roberts

Stars of The Center.

Go to page 17 to read about an exciting way The Center is celebrating 35 years.

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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

An internationally preeminent center, The Center for Gifted Studies envisions 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.

A giraffe, Benjamin Franklin, a shark, superheroes, and a king converged upon Western Kentucky University April 2. Or, at least, those were some of the characters portrayed by the 78 teams competing in Kentucky's Odyssey of the Mind state tournament hosted by The Center for Gifted Studies.

The celebration of creativity and critical thinking came after months of preparation for the third through twelfth graders involved in the program. Each September, new problems are released in five categories, ranging from vehicle building to structural engineering and dramatic performance. The problems include basic criteria that teams must include in their performances, but students then incorporate their own creative problem solving. "The judges have no idea what the kids are going to come up with," explained Dalynn Jensen, the state association director. "They just have the basic scoring elements that they have to have in their skit." With 10 to 15 judges scoring each problem, some will concentrate on technical elements while others will watch for creativity.

In Kentucky, teams are split into three divisions for elementary, middle, and high school students. During Kentucky's 2016 tournament, 32 teams qualified for the world finals, which were held in Iowa at the end of May.

When her daughter was in fifth grade, Dalynn became involved in Odyssey of the Mind as a volunteer coach, which allowed her to see firsthand how problem solving skills could develop through the program. "As I let go and just sat there and asked them questions, I could see their thinking processes because I would see something going a certain way knowing that it might not work, but I couldn't tell them that. I had to keep asking the question, 'What will you do if it doesn't work?'" she recalled. "Employers are looking for

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND: STUDENTS DEVELOP VALUABLE SKILLS THROUGH PROBLEM SOLVING



someone to solve problems, to be creative, and that's what this helps with."

Post-performance celebrations are sweetened by the fact that students are responsible for every aspect of the per-

formance, Dalynn said. "It provides the opportunity for them to have a say in what they're doing, because it's all up to them," she said. "It's not an adult telling them how to do something, when to do it, and what to use."

Those learning opportunities wouldn't be available without the involvement of volunteers, said Dalynn, who volunteers her time as the state director. In addition to coaches, more than 120 people filled positions as judges and other volunteer roles during the state tournament. Training workshops are held each year for new coaches and judges. The Center for Gifted Studies provided numerous volunteers for the event.

Students, parents, and teachers interested in starting a team or learning more about Odyssey of the Mind can visit the Kentucky Odyssey of the Mind website at www.kyoothm.com or the national website at www.odysseyofthemind.com.

HISTORY

WKU first hosted the Odyssey of the Mind state tournament in 2009.

"Odyssey of the Mind is one of my favorite opportunities for young people. The biggest asset of Odyssey of the Mind is that it encourages creative thinking among multiple content areas." – JULIA ROBERTS, Executive Director, The Center for Gifted Studies



PHOTOS BY SAM OLDENBURG

DREW CURTIS (VAMPY 1987-88; Alumni Association Founder) ran for Governor of Kentucky as an Independent in 2015 spending zero dollars and landing about 4% of the vote. He gave a TED talk in 2012 on how he fought a patent troll and won. Since then, he has been to the White House and testified before Congress on reforming the US Patent System. In 2011, Drew earned two MBAs through the Berkeley-Columbia MBA program. In 2006, he wrote *It's Not News It's Fark.com*, a book on general media patterns in the news cycle and where they come from. He founded and owns Fark.com, a news media website read by millions of people every month. Among other things, Fark has been an entire category on Jeopardy—twice. Fark will be one of the first five websites going into the US Library of Congress' newly-created Digital Archives. Drew graduated from Luther College in 1995 with a degree in Computer Science (which he took as a course at VAMPY). He and his wife Heather live in Versailles with their three children, the oldest of whom is just a year away from applying to go to VAMPY himself.

I had intended to be a history major in college, but I took a Computer Science class and for the first time in my life I discovered I liked doing the homework. I changed majors, and for the most part nearly everything positive in my life going forward has stemmed from this decision. It is very likely VAMPY's influence on my life that was responsible for this.

ANDI DAHMER (SCATS 2009; VAMPY 2010-13; Counselor), an honors student at Western Kentucky University, was selected to serve as one of five Derby Princesses for the 2016 Kentucky Derby Festival from an applicant pool of over 130 distinguished young women. She acted as an ambassador for the Commonwealth, attending

more than 70 Derby Festival events, nearly 30 philanthropy events, and multiple meetings with state and local officials. Her ultimate goal as a Kentucky Derby Festival Princess was to increase global accessibility of the festival and increase the global outlook of Kentuckians since she believed the Derby is regarded as a worldwide phenomenon, while Kentucky is often reduced to stereotypes. The foundation of international outreach so deeply instilled by both The Center for Gifted Studies and WKU certainly helped her expand the global outreach of the Festival during her time as a princess.

Alumni ★ UPDATE

RAYMOND KIM (VAMPY 1991-92; Counselor; Alumni Association Founder), after working at a start-up that tanked, studying philosophy at the graduate level and teaching at a community college, now does economics research for a private company in New York. Attending VAMPY as a camper and serving as a counselor was such a privilege for him. He cherishes the friends made there and encourages people to keep in touch!

SARAH JO MAHURIN (SCATS 1990-94; VAMPY 1993-96; Counselor; Teaching Assistant; Alumni Association Founder) graduated from Bowling Green High School in 1998, from Harvard (AB English) in

2002, and from Yale (PhD English) in 2011. After teaching for three years at Wesleyan University, she returned to Yale in 2014 to serve as Dean of Timothy Dwight College. Sarah is married to Matthew Mutter, a professor of literature at Bard College, whom she met in graduate school. Last year they welcomed a daughter, June Caroline, into their busy and happy home.

ALLISON GARDNER MARTIN (SCATS 1986-87; Counselor) is the director of communications and community relations for the Jefferson County Public School System (JCPS). She previously served for eight years as chief of staff and communications director for Kentucky Attorney General Jack Conway. Allison was also deputy communications director for Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson. Prior to joining Mayor Abramson's office, she worked for 10 years as a broadcast journalist for WLKY-TV in Louisville and WBKO-TV in Bowling Green. A native of Glasgow, Allison graduated from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. She lives in Louisville with her husband, Tony, and their two children.

EMILY PEELER (Super Saturdays 2000-01; SCATS 2003; VAMPY 2004-05; Counselor) has been named a Staff Attorney at the Center on Children and the Law, a nonprofit grant-funded program of the American Bar Association, located in Washington, D.C. As a staff attorney, Emily will undertake substantive legal work for grant-funded projects, including research, writing, contract management, and speaking. Staff promotes access to justice for children and families through technical assistance, training, research, and policy development. The Center uses law and policy to help child-serving systems work more effectively to improve outcomes for children and their families.

THE CENTER TRAVELS TO FRANCE

Springtime in Paris! Song lyrics tell of the beauty of being in Paris anytime, especially in the spring. Seventeen individuals traveled to France during spring break, and they will echo the sentiments that Paris is wonderful any season, including the springtime.

Our travels began with a trip to Normandy. The first stop was Giverny for a visit to Claude Monet's home and a walk in his garden. What beautiful colors are seen in his lovely spring garden! We walked around his lily pond, saw the



rowboat, and viewed the Japanese bridge he painted so often. In Paris, we visited the Orangerie to marvel at the paintings of the water lilies that surrounded us in that beautiful museum.

An important day was spent along the beaches of Normandy. We visited the American Cemetery located at Omaha Beach. We learned about the success and failure of the artificial harbors at Arromanches – a story that was key to getting tanks, trucks, men, and supplies to France. Time spent remembering the important events of 1944 left important impressions on all of the travelers.

Each day was filled with visits to lovely churches and cathedrals, outstanding museums, and important sights. Notre Dame, Chartres, and Sainte Chapelle have stained glass windows that stand out with brilliant colors. The Louvre and the Orsay Museum are world-class and on the itinerary of all who love art. Of course, the Eiffel Tower, the Arch of Triumph, and the Palace at Versailles are sights every visitor to Paris must experience.

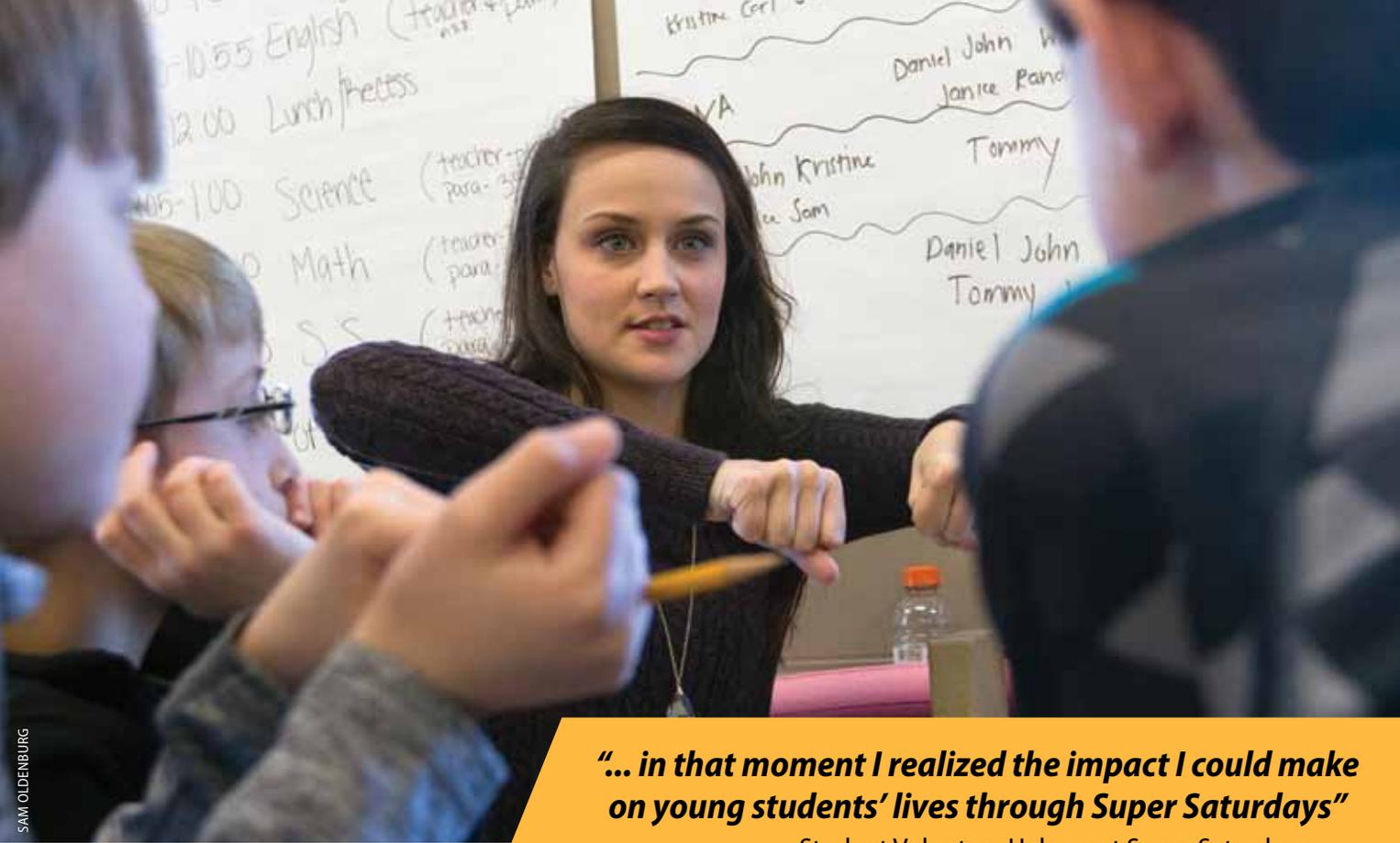
Only a few highlights are detailed here. Over all, the days in France were ones to treasure and to whet our appetites for travel in days to come. Bon voyage!

HISTORY

The Center for Gifted

Studies' first trip abroad was to England, Scotland, and Wales in 1988. The first few trips were to the British Isles before beginning a cycle of England, France, and Italy. The early trips were two weeks in length and were taken in mid-summer after summer programming concluded. After schools began to start early in August, the travel opportunities moved to spring break. In 2010, a fall break trip was added. Fall trips have been to Scotland, southern Germany, Spain, and Belgium and the Netherlands. The fall 2016 travel opportunity will be to Ireland and the spring 2017 traveling will be to Italy.

"Our children have travelled with The Center numerous times and returned home with a new-found confidence and enthusiasm for exploring, and they loved the very "hands-on" approach to learning about historical places and events. We've taken several trips with Dr. Roberts, and I can't imagine a better way to experience the great historical cities of Europe. Dr. Roberts and The Center for Gifted Studies help build the confidence in students to travel and explore on their own in the future. Each adventure was so very well planned and executed yet flexible enough to be able to take in spontaneous events when the opportunity arose. It's such fun to travel with the students as they explore, learn, make new friends, and experience so many once-in-a-lifetime memories." – SUSAN SUMMERS, Traveler



"... in that moment I realized the impact I could make on young students' lives through Super Saturdays"

– Student Volunteer Helpers at Super Saturdays

THE INDISPENSABLE STUDENT VOLUNTEER

If you are a teacher, student, or parent with Super Saturdays, you have seen them: smiling faces that greet you at the door; help your child feel at ease; make sure the experiments happen, the colors are mixed, and that everything is set up in the beginning and cleaned up at the end. They are the Super Saturdays WKU student helpers, and *super* is a word that accurately describes them.

Just like the teachers of Super Saturdays, the student helpers bring a passion and creativity that translates to the classroom experience. As WKU students, they come to be helpers via a wide variety of paths: HonorsToppers, Office of Scholar Development, Omega Phi Alpha (OPA) Service Sorority, Gatton Academy of Math



and Science, SkyTeach, Elementary Education class, and a past experience at the The Center for Gifted Studies. The common

thread is that members of these communities become a member of the Super Saturdays community through their desire to make Super Saturdays the best it can be for each child.

What makes these WKU students give up their Saturday mornings and afternoons for eight Saturdays a year without getting paid?

Lillie Shaw is a freshman from Elizabethtown majoring in mechanical engineering. She was a VAMPY camper from 2011-14, and in her words, "I can easily say it changed my life. I made some of my best friends at VAMPY and wanted to continue to help The Center because of what a positive impact it has had on my life." Lillie is also a new member of OPA. Members of the OPA service sorority became involved with Super Saturdays when they made a commitment in Fall 2013 to work with women in sciences and chose Super Saturdays science classes as their main service project. OPA members have continued to be an integral part of Super Saturdays volunteers.

HISTORY

Since the first Super Saturdays classes were offered in 1992, more than 26,300 gifted and talented students have learned, discovered, created, strategized, designed, dissected, drawn, been challenged, and amazed. Families have traveled from all over Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana.

Super Saturdays began as a five-Saturday, two-hours-a-day enrichment opportunity for students in grades 1-6. Over 25 years, it has evolved into twice a year, four-Saturdays for 2 ½ hour classes for grades 1-8. The Center has hosted classes outside of Bowling Green – in Owensboro for a few years and currently in Louisville through a partnership with the Kentucky Science Center. We have treasured our partnerships: the Corvette Museum; the Confucius Institute; Little Learners, Big Ideas; Kentucky Down Under; teachers from school districts in Kentucky and Tennessee; numerous WKU professors from various departments; WKU art education students; SKyTeach students preparing to teach math and science at the secondary level; elementary education students plus the student volunteer partnerships mentioned in the article.

"I have heard Julia (Roberts) give me credit for starting Super Saturdays, but the original idea was hers. I think parents talked with her about the need for challenging opportunities for their elementary students and encouraged her to provide something before the middle school years. One of the special moments I remember from the very first Super Saturdays was that we were small enough to gather all the students and parents in the auditorium at Tate Page for an Opening Session. I remember the excitement in the air and the look of eager anticipation on the faces of the children and the parents as they waited to take their first class on a college campus! I have always been so impressed with the parents who drive their children many, many miles so they can attend Super Saturday Classes and sit patiently waiting for them for two hours to complete their classes. I loved following children and parents down the hall at the end of classes. The children couldn't talk fast enough as they were brimming over with enthusiasm about what they had done and learned. One of my favorite jobs as a principal at Cumberland Trace Elementary was when students would ask me to sign their Super Saturdays applications verifying that they would be a good candidate for a class. I would always ask them why they chose a particular class and their responses varied from "this class just sounds like fun," to "I've had a deep interest in architecture (for example) for several years and am really wanting to learn more." – MARY EVANS, Founder of Super Saturdays

One of the longest standing and dependable group of helpers comes from WKU HonorsToppers, a group of student ambassadors for the Honors College. McKenzie Perdew, a psychology major from Shepherdsville, has been the Coor-

dinator of Events for HonorsToppers this past year, and one of her duties as Coordinator was helping match HonorsToppers with Super Saturdays classes of interest. McKenzie first found out about Super Saturdays at her interview to become an

HonorsTopper and remembers thinking it sounded so interesting. "I love working with children in new and inventive ways, so Super Saturdays couldn't have fit me better!" McKenzie has been a volunteer with Super Saturdays since her sophomore year and plans to continue volunteering through her graduate studies at WKU.

Another student volunteer from HonorsToppers is Elijah Essa, a finance major from Louisville. While he had heard of the Super Saturdays program his freshman year, it was not until his sophomore year and in HonorsToppers that he fully understood what Super Saturdays were. He explained, "I knew I wanted to be a part of it. I have always been passionate about education, especially when it is on 'fun subjects.' I love the idea of helping gifted students learn about a variety of topics that they are excited about. As a finance major, it is not often that I get to study subjects like iPads and ocean animals. Helping students understand these things is not only beneficial for them but is a refreshing experience for myself as well."

Mary Spraggs, a physics major from Danville, first volunteered when she was a student at the Gatton Academy, but when she continued her studies at WKU, she also continued helping with Super Saturdays. "After helping out with a class, you can see how much the teacher appreciates having an extra person to keep an eye on the students and to ensure that they are learning while having a good time," she said. "It gives you a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. The teachers and children definitely appreciate having people around to help them with their work." Mary's passion about her time with Super Saturdays is evident: "I feel very strongly that in this day and age, education is critically important to every young person, and Super Saturdays is a great way to keep students motivated outside of school and to show them that there are other students just like them that love to learn for the sake of

learning. Being in a positive learning environment helps so much. This is something I know personally because of the Gatton Academy.”

Haley Adams, an elementary education major from Tompkinsville, is a student in Super Saturdays teacher Patty Bertke’s ELED 355 class at the WKU Owensboro campus. She was one of several from Patty’s class who signed up to help with Super Saturdays. As a future teacher, Haley jumped at the chance to help in the classroom: “Super Saturdays is an amazing experience for everyone involved. The students get an opportunity to engage in exciting tasks that allow them to learn and have fun. The teachers and volunteers get the opportunity to interact and teach such amazing young minds. The students that I had the privilege to work with amazed me. We worked with bridges in my group, and some of the things they would come up with blew my mind.

As a future educator, I was so impressed. I have worked with students in observing classes before, but I have not had the opportunity to work with high ability and high interest children. This experience taught me that we, as teachers, truly need to pay attention to differentiation in a classroom. Not only differentiation for those who are below average, but those who are above average.”

What special memories do these amazing student volunteer helpers have? For Lillie, it was when she was absent one Saturday. “I didn’t realize what an impact I had made on my class until the next week when several of them ran up and hugged

me yelling ‘Ms. Lillie!’ when I returned. Talking with the kids’ parents at the final session was pretty grand, too. Some were so shocked at all of the gadgets and robots we had whizzing around, but others knew exactly what they were because they had them at home. It was really encouraging to see the parents involved and willing to let their kids create things unbounded. And I loved working with Jennifer Sheffield – she was my teacher at VAMPY, and it was great fun to work with her again. She is fantastic with the kids and so creative with our projects.”



One of McKenzie’s favorite moments was one Saturday when she realized that one of the students was from her hometown: “It was super fun to make a connection with a student like that and be able to talk about things that were familiar. I loved talking with her parents on the last day of presentations. She was a great gal and even wanted a picture with me at the end of the program. It was very small, but I just loved being able to relate to her and her family about school, life, and the drive down I-65! It made my heart very warm.”

Elijah’s “aha” moment was this: “I remember in the first Super Saturday I helped facilitate, the iPads class, there was

a student named Jake. Jake was ahead of his class by all accounts, as he learned very quickly. I spent a lot of time talking to Jake and complimenting his work in the class, and I could tell he really appreciated having an older student like myself so invested in his work. At the final class, Jake asked if we could take a picture together on his iPad; it was in that moment that I realized the impact I could make on young students’ lives through Super Saturdays.”

One Saturday Haley was working with a group of third and fourth graders discussing friction. Using Play-Doh, the

students were able to work the Play-Doh into any shape they wanted, then use one of the forces of friction on it. Haley related this story: “One student said, ‘This is the best day ever! We get to build bridges and play with Play-Doh!’ Even though his reaction was not because of what I did, I felt moved by this. This showed me that Super Saturdays are

more than just a learning experience. It is a fun one, too.”

The thread that ties WKU Super Saturdays student helpers is apparent – making sure that each Super Saturdays participant has the best experience possible. The added bonus for the helpers? The impact it had on them personally. As Elijah says, “I never thought I would have an opportunity like Super Saturdays coming in college. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience, and I am excited to continue participating in it my senior year.”

We are excited to have all of our student volunteers continue as well.

INTERACTIVE FOCUS SPARKS NEW IDEAS AT IDEAFESTIVAL BOWLING GREEN 2016

The candy-launching robot's name was Victor.

The house lights dimmed as Victor dashed onto the stage, his illuminated nameplate alternating between a purple and blue glow. A wave of excitement rippled through the 475 participants (affectionately nicknamed "iffers") gathered in the Downing Student Union auditorium. They'd come for the third annual IdeaFestival Bowling Green expecting talks on innovation and creativity, and now they were having candy, streamers, and even \$1 bills launched at them by a robot.

Victor was the brainchild of Bill Cloyd and Keith Hollifield, who represented the Lexington-based makerspace Newton's Attic during a talk entitled "Play: The Ultimate Learning Tool" they shared with Ben Hibben, of Louisville's LVL1 Hackerspace. Bill and Keith focused on how fun the engineering process behind Victor was, while Ben shared how empowering the maker movement is for those involved.

"We want everyone to understand that play can be engineering, and engineering can be play," Bill summarized. "Either way, you're learning."



After their session, Newton's Attic and LVL1 co-hosted the IFBG Makerspace on the third floor of DSU. It was almost possible to feel the amazement as you walked past the room and saw participants learning to solder their own LED light kits or controlling a robot that could shoot a basketball through a hoop on

the floor. For all the building and tinkering that went on, Ben said the highlight of the Makerspace for him was interacting with iffers and witnessing the reactions to engineering in action.

"One moment that really stuck with me was when a young man told me he'd previously given up on his dream of being an engineer because an older friend found the school courses too hard," Ben recalled. "He said he realized after my talk that he could be an engineer and wanted to pursue that dream again. I was deeply humbled."

The Makerspace was just one of many new interactive activities added to the breakout sessions that occurred between speakers. Sharing the exhibit area with Newton's Attic and LVL1 were the Kentucky Innovation Network's 3-D Printing Lab, where participants could create keepsakes with 3-D printing pens, and a Coding Bar made possible with the help of Dataseam (which loaned 12 computers) and students from Potter Gray Elementary's Student Technology Leadership Program, who taught iffers the basics of computer coding.

IDEAFESTIVAL

BOWLING GREEN

#IFBG2016 **IF** BOWLING GREEN

BRING YOUR IDEAS



SAM OLDENBURG

Sponsors AT&T and the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce hosted interactive exhibits outside the Makerspace. As part of its “It Can Wait” campaign, AT&T brought pairs of virtual reality goggles that simulated texting and driving. The Chamber of Commerce set up chalkboards and asked participants to share their ideas for making Bowling Green a better place to live. Down the hall, iffers had the chance to share what they were inspired to do in the Inspiration Station or learn how to pitch their ideas in a class led by Dr. Dawn Bolton and students from WKU’s Entrepreneurship Lab.

Down in the auditorium, artist Andee Rudloff oversaw the completion of a mural celebrating IFBG 2016 and probed participants for ways to fill a 4’ x 4’ cube made of PVC pipes. Artist Chad Singer, who paints color combinations that promote butterfly habitats in urban gardens, displayed his



SAM OLDENBURG



SAM OLDENBURG

work and interacted with curious iffers. There were also 10-minute “flash classes” throughout the day taught by various speakers.

All these hands-on, minds-on activities reflected the festival’s theme of “Bring Your Ideas.” Participants not only heard innovative ideas from the main stage, but then got to work off their creative energy in fun and instructive ways. The new interactive focus created a natural incubator for those light bulb moments that offers could carry out into the world. The video that closed out the day and featured audio clips recorded in the Inspiration Station answered IFBG’s big question: Where do your ideas go from here?

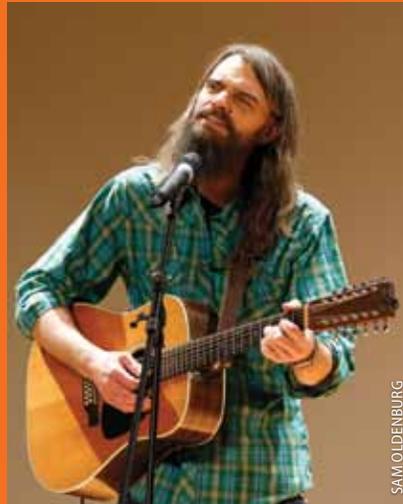
“All the hands-on activities available during the breakout sessions sparked so many ideas and made me want to ask a lot of questions,” said Maddie Alexander, a junior at Franklin-Simpson High School. “I also appreciated the way

Bill and Keith explained the step-by-step process of creating and testing Victor.”

Taboo Dance & Fitness owner Samantha McCormick, a WKU graduate and featured speaker during the Fall 2015 WKU Entrepreneur Speaker Series, joined Bill, Keith, and Ben during the first session. As a young entrepreneur, Samantha shared how she opened her business by utilizing her resources, taking advantage of the assistance that was being offered, and keeping a smile connected to an awesome attitude.

The Rise Group headlined this year's keynote session. Rise is a New York City-based business consulting and leadership development company that has been involved with the IdeaFestival in Louisville since 2013. Dan Heasman and Gareth Miles presented "Unlocking Your Inner Entrepreneur" and focused on the tools

and behaviors that bring out the every-day entrepreneur in everyone, including asking the right questions, choosing your words wisely, embracing constraints, and more.



HISTORY

Ever since Innovate Kentucky was awarded a \$500,000 challenge grant by the James Graham Brown Foundation in 2012, one of the initiative's top priorities has been establishing an annual speaker series at Western Kentucky University. Thankfully, a perfect model for a speaker series already exists in Kentucky: IdeaFestival. Founded in 2000 and held annually in Louisville since 2006, IdeaFestival brings in world-renowned speakers and has attracted thousands of participants. IdeaFestival branched out in 2013 with IF Lexington, which focused on creative disruption. Following that event, Innovate Kentucky was offered the opportunity to host an IF event in Bowling Green.

Within a matter of months, IdeaFestival Bowling Green (IFBG) was born.

The tagline for IFBG is "All About Ideas." Now in its third year, this one-day event has featured thinkers and innovators from a variety of fields who were eager to share their innovative ventures and creative solutions. With the introduction of new interactive elements in 2016, Innovate Kentucky believes IFBG is well positioned to help accomplish the initiative's goal: spark innovation – one idea at a time.

"IdeaFestival Bowling Green jumped in size significantly from the first to the third year as a result of increasing interactive opportunities coupled with targeting high school students. As a committee member and presenter, I have enjoyed the attendees all three years but definitely could feel the heightened curiosity and willingness to explore this year. I truly believe attendees left inspired and energized with new ideas!"

– ANDEE RUDLOFF, IFBG planning committee member, mural curator, and presenter

"Ninety percent of the time, expertise is a valuable thing. But it's important also to avoid fixed thinking," they cautioned the crowd. Among the other tidbits they shared was: "Entrepreneurs make things happen by borrowing brilliance from elsewhere." Rise also included practical tips for unlocking your inner entrepreneur, such as approaching every issue by asking "how" and "why." When you identify your how and why, they explained, "you give yourself a chance to ask a better question."

The third and final session began with "Finding Your Voice Through the Arts" by professional visual and performing artist Mark Whitley. In addition to entertaining the crowd with some music, Mark discussed how his journey in the arts began and explained how artists have to be shameless in promoting their work.

"Don't be afraid to stand before the world with arms out and say, 'Hey, I'm doing something cool, and you should come see it,'" he told an enraptured crowd.

Following Mark was WKU Sustainability Coordinator Christian Ryan, who presented "Why Sustain When We Can Disrupt?" Christian's talk asked why we should sustain the status quo for future generations when we can disrupt for a better world. She shared some of her favorite big and beautifully disruptive ideas in the world of sustainability.

Tessa Duvall, the education, children and families reporter at *The Florida Times Union*, wrapped up the day with her talk, "When We Say 'Bad Schools.'" Tessa addressed how easy it can be to write off a school's problems as simply bad kids, lazy teachers, and absentee parents. But the answer, as Tessa demonstrated with stories from Eugene J. Butler Middle School in Jacksonville, is never that simple.

Videos, photos, podcasts, and social media posts from IFBG 2016, as well as more information about the festival, can be found at www.ideafestivalbg.com.

Since the time we began The Summer Camp (now known as SCATS) in 1984, we have provided financial assistance for students who could otherwise not attend our programming. Last year we provided close to \$68,000 for students to participate in Super Saturdays, SCATS, VAMPY, Camp Innovate, or Camp Explore. This would not be possible without our Friends of The Center. One-time gifts are certainly appreciated, but the biggest impact is made from endowed scholarships – those gifts that continue to provide financial assistance as long as there is The Center for Gifted Studies. Thanks to our friends, the following scholarships make a difference in the lives of young people.

The Cann Scholarship

Dann and Kathi Cann of Leitchfield, KY, established a full scholarship for two students to attend VAMPY. These students must live in Grayson County.

The CGS Alumni Fund

When The Center turned 30, a group of devoted Alumni led by Wake Norris (VAMPY 1989-92; Counselor 1995-98) started the Alumni Fund. It is designed to not only provide scholarships for summer programming but also monies for a Coordinator of Alumni position. The goal was \$500,000 in five years.

LEAVING A LEGACY HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS



EMILIE MILCAREK

The Doctors Mody Minority Scholarship

Doctors Bharat and Bharati Mody of Glasgow, KY, have established a scholarship for minorities to attend VAMPY. The doctors explain, “We have felt that minority students do not get the same exposure and opportunity as others. They have a desire and a will but often do not have the means to fulfill that desire.” This family has a long relationship with The Center. Both Mody daughters attended camps: Bhavana (SCATS 1991) and Bhavini (SCATS 1993-94). Dr. Bharat Mody served a two-year term on the Advisory Board for The Center for Gifted Studies.

The Highland Scholarship

Friends who wish to remain anonymous donated this full-tuition scholarship. It is designated to support a student from Louisville, KY, to attend VAMPY. The donor requested that the scholarship be made available to a student who “would never in a million years have the opportunity to experience VAMPY due to the financial condition of the family.”

The Lynne Elizabeth Hamlett Memorial Scholarship Awards

This annual scholarship is intended to help qualified McCracken County, KY, students who require financial assistance to attend summer programming. In memory of a teenage relative who died in a tragic car accident, Jackie, Bill, and Lauren (SCATS 1996-97) Capp, formerly of McCracken County, established the fund in 1997. Their generosity will ensure that young people from McCracken County will be able to attend the programs for years to come.

The Mahurin Scholarship

The Mahurin Scholarship is awarded annually to two students from Grayson County to participate in SCATS. These scholarships are made possible through an endowment which has been established for this purpose.

The Riley Jane Lawrence Memorial Scholarship

In 2008, VAMPY alumna Sarah Markham Lawrence (1988-90) and her husband, David, lost their only child, four-year-old Riley Jane Lawrence. VAMPY friend Melissa Middleton Biliter (1988-90) wanted to honor Riley Jane’s life by creating a scholarship in her memory. The Riley Jane Lawrence Memorial Scholarship will go to a student who is gifted and talented and eligible for VAMPY but cannot afford to attend without assis-



tance. All contributions made to this fund will honor the memory of a special little girl and also support the education and enrichment of a gifted child in need. Sarah and her sister Katherine Markham Ballard (1997-99) both attended VAMPY. Their goal is to endow this scholarship through individual contributions.

The Stephanie D. Woodward Scholarship

“Stephanie made a bigger impact on my life than anyone I’ve ever met.... Stephanie Woodward taught me to make the most of every situation, how to believe in myself, and how to form friendships that last forever,” writes Cynthia Gilson

(VAMPY 1984-87), former VAMPY roommate of Stephanie Woodward (VAMPY 1984-86). “At the end of the first summer, we promised to keep in touch. We did, and we were roommates for a second and third summer. As time passed, we both matured and our friendship grew. A few months before our fourth summer, Stephanie sent me a card telling me she was looking forward to our fourth and final summer program. She ended with ‘only 43 days more’ until camp. About a month later, on May 31, 1987, Stephanie was killed in a car accident.” People who loved Stephanie set up a scholarship in her memory. It is awarded to a VAMPY student who exemplifies high ethical and scholastic standards and has a need for financial assistance in order to participate.

The William Gladstone Begley II Scholarship

This scholarship provides funding for eastern Kentucky students to attend SCATS or VAMPY. Originally from Hazard, KY, Dr. W. G. Begley and the Begley family have been ardent supporters for excellence as well as dear friends to The Center. Drs. Dick and Julia Roberts wish to memorialize this fine man and his memory by perpetuating one of his missions in life: the love of learning. His daughter Jennie Lou Eidson was a counselor for SCATS and VAMPY for several years.

If you or a business or foundation that you know, would be willing to offer financial aid support, contact Dr. Julia Roberts at 270-745-6323 or Mrs. Amanda Coates Lich, Senior Director of Development, at 270-745-2340. Opportunities for providing scholarships can be funded on an annual basis for the cost of the program or on an ongoing basis through an endowment. Whether it be an endowment or a one-time gift, we would be delighted to hear from you. You, too, can make a difference in a young person’s life.

Mark & Benita Albert
Oak Ridge, TN

Sue & Brown Badgett
Hanson, KY

Steve & Jennifer Bailey
Villa Hills, KY

Marilee Benson
Bardstown, KY

Gary & Karen Bickett
Owensboro, KY

Sunny Boling (VAMPY 1990-92)
West Hollywood, CA

Jarrod & Kristi Brown
Beaver Dam, KY

Miranda Brown
(VAMPY 2002-05)
Lexington, KY
Alumni Fund

Ray Buckberry
Bowling Green, KY

Harold & Virgilia Carrender
Somerset, KY

Tyler Clark (Counselor)
Bowling Green, KY

Nijel Clayton
Louisville, KY
*In Memory of
Amanda Hollingsworth*

Stuart & Anna Coats
Louisville, KY

Matthew & Melanie Cook
Bowling Green, KY

Raymond Cravens
Bowling Green, KY

Randy & Fran Crawford
Franklin, KY

Dennis & Janet Cruse
Magnolia, KY

Steve & Jennifer Davis
Bowling Green, KY

Eric Edds (SCATS 1988-89;
VAMPY 1988)
Bowling Green, KY

Warren & Darlene Eisenstein
Boca Raton, FL

Adam Ellis
Russellville, KY

Diane & Ilan (Super Saturdays
2002-04; SCATS 2004;
VAMPY 2005-08) Esrey
Louisville, KY

Mark Evans
Louisville, KY

John Fitts
Bowling Green, KY

James & Mary Ann Flueck
Lexington, KY

Michael Flueck
(VAMPY 1989-92; Counselor)
Brownsburg, IN

Kenny Foley
Longview, TX

Tom & Connie Foster
Bowling Green, KY

Brian & Susan Fox
Russellville, KY

John Gallagher
Louisville, KY

Charles & Mary Giovannini
Kirkville, MO

Ruthene Glass
Bowling Green, KY

Jack & Janice Glasser
Bowling Green, KY

William & Nancy Gravely
Glasgow, KY
*William & Nancy Gravely
Speakers Fund*

John & Barbara Grider
Bowling Green, KY

John (SCATS 1995)
& Alexis Griffin
League City, TX
Alumni Fund

Anne Guillory
(Teaching Assistant)
Louisville, KY

John & Phyllis Gump
Richmond, KY

Stephen & Jennifer Hall
Frankfort, KY

Bill & Sue Hamilton
Pflugerville, TX

Randy & Jane Hansbrough
Bowling Green, KY

Charles & Carolyn Hardcastle
Bowling Green, KY

The Haskins Foundation
Bowling Green, KY

Humberto Hernandez
& Nelly Acosta
Bowling Green, KY

Bill & Renita Hines
Calhoun, KY

Marvin Hirn
Louisville, KY

John & Dawn Hitron
Louisville, KY

Scott Holladay
(VAMPY 1993-95)
Knoxville, TN
*Alumni Fund
In Honor of Alice Jane Johnson*

Rocky & Mary Beth Hudson
Benton, KY

Jim & Karen Hughes
Fairdale, KY

Geoffrey & Shannon Hulse
Owensboro, KY

Mark & Catherine Hunt
Lexington, KY

Rick Husk
Mountain View, CA
Innovate Kentucky

John & Tracy Inman
Bowling Green, KY
In Honor of Julia & Dick Roberts

Harold & Bea Isable
Bowling Green, KY

Jimmy & Marina Jenkins
Greenville, KY

Meredith & Harriette Johnson
Bowling Green, KY

Thomas Johnston
(VAMPY 1999-2000; TA;
Counselor) & Anna Hitron
(VAMPY 1996-1999; Counselor)
Louisville, KY
Alumni Fund

Tom & Jennifer Kanaly
Louisville, KY

Jason & Engrid Lai
Blacksburg, VA

David & Laura Harper Lee
Bowling Green, KY

Stewart & Amanda Lich
Brownsville, KY

Christopher & Melissa Lind
Nashville, TN
VAMPY

Steven & Judy Lippmann
Louisville, KY

Grayland & Lacy Lloyd
Bowling Green, KY

Charles & Fannie Louise Maddux
Pembroke, KY
*In honor of Dr. Julia Roberts
& Dr. Tracy Inman*

Rich & Jenny Maddux
Hopkinsville, KY

Pete & Dixie Mahurin
Bowling Green, KY

Sarah Maines (SCATS 1998;
VAMPY 1999-2002)
Versailles, KY

Charles & Bobbi Mann
Calhoun, KY
*Matching gift:
Texas Gas Transmission*

Carl & Donna Martray
Elberta, AL

Jim & Diane Matherly
Bay City, MI

Dorothy McCubbin
Summer Shade, KY
*In Memory of
Amanda Hollingsworth*

William McLean
Lumberton, NC

Jack & Doris Mills
Owensboro, KY

Karl (SCATS 1983)
& Jennifer Miller
Round Rock, TX

Mike & Melissa Montgomery
Bowling Green, KY

Tom Moody
Franklin, KY

Brad & Phyllis Mutchler
Paducah, KY

Wake Norris
(VAMPY 1989-1992; Counselor)
& Elizabeth Zimmerman
(VAMPY 1992-93; Counselor)
Troy, OH
*Alumni Fund
Matching Gift: Emerson Electric*





The Center for Gifted Studies **STARS**

In Recognition of 35 Years

As The Center for Gifted Studies celebrates 35 years of providing opportunities for gifted and talented children, their parents, and their educators, we want to recognize our alumni who have made positive contributions to society – whether that be in their professional fields, their areas of interest, their local communities, or to people in general. As illustrated in The Center’s star logo, it has always been our hope that our programs provide young people with the foundation to develop their talents, enabling them to make a positive impact throughout their lifetime.

As part of our anniversary celebration, we want to honor those “Stars of The Center” who embody our mission. The nomination period for this recognition will take place through November 10. Alumni may be nominated by any individual or may nominate themselves. Up to thirty-five “Stars of The Center” will be selected and will be honored at an event in the summer of 2017.

We encourage you to nominate a Star of The Center by visiting wku.edu/gifted/stars.

Clarence & Carolyn Traum
Princeton, KY

Bob & Catherine Ward
Bowling Green, KY

Jon Warren
(Counselor & Head Counselor)
Bowling Green, KY

Elaine Webb
Burkesville, KY
*In Memory of
Amanda Hollingsworth*

Hillel Weinberg & Debra Weiner
Falls Church, VA

Kendrick & Claudia Wells
Louisville, KY

Denny & Peggy Welsh
Philpot, KY

Brian & Elisha Wiggins
Central City, KY

John Max Wilson
(VAMPY 2003-06; Counselor)
Davis, CA

Joe & Judy Wismann
Talent, OR

Lori Wittlin (VAMPY 1987-89)
Houston, TX

Stuart & Linda Yeoman
Alvaton, KY

RILEY LAWRENCE SCHOLARSHIP

Johntel Barraclough
Tijeras, NM

Karen Herbert
Florence, SC

Jane Howard
Louisville, KY

Ann Jorgensen
Brunswick West, Australia

Ellis & Marchelle Joseph
Louisville, KY

David & Sarah Lawrence
Louisville, KY

Jaele McColgan
United Kingdom

Novartis Corporation
New York, NY

Melissa Record
Alameda, CA

Marsha Serdenis
Louisville, KY

David & Carolyn Tandy
Louisville, KY

John & Astrid O’Boyle
Elizabethtown, KY

Roger & Mary Ann Pardieck
Columbus, IN

Deepak & Neema Patel
Hopkinsville, KY

Richard & Jeanne Patterson
Bowling Green, KY

Paul & Anne Pedersen
Barbourville, KY

Kim Lorch Perrins
(VAMPY 1994-97)
Atlanta, GA
Alumni Fund: VAMPY

Rankin & Dolly Powell
Corydon, KY

James & Jennifer Proud
Prospect, KY

Jeff Ream (VAMPY 1992)
Chicago, IL
Alumni Fund: VAMPY

Sandra Reff
Brandenburg, KY

Kevin & Belinda Richards
Bowling Green, KY

Jeff & Marlene Richardson
Campbellsville, KY

Dick & Julia Roberts
Bowling Green, KY
*Dr. William Gladstone Begley
Memorial Scholarship*

Nicholas Sabotchick
(SCATS 2015)
Wurtland, KY

J.T. & Martha Sandefur
Bowling Green, KY

Jo Jean Scott
Alvaton, KY

Tim & Kittie Smith
Brandenburg, KY
In Memory of Jim Ford

James Snider
Franklin, KY

TIAA-CREF
New York, NY
*Duke TIP Kentucky
Recognition Ceremony*



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PROJECT RAP DEVELOPS TALENT IN UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

The Center for Gifted Studies is partnering with the Kentucky Department of Education, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), and the University of Louisville in the Reaching Academic Potential (RAP) Project. One of 11 Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Statewide Grants awarded nationwide, RAP Project is a demonstration of the Young Scholars Model, designed to increase identification of and services to students from underrepresented populations in grades K-3.

In addition, project goals and objectives include increasing teacher understanding of the behaviors that correlate with high potential in underrepresented populations; enhancing teacher professional practice to foster and support diverse learners and emerging talent; and informing decision-makers about the Excellence Gap. Coined by Plucker, Burroughs, and Song (2010), the Excellence Gap is the “differences between subgroups of students performing at the highest level of achievement” (p. 1); unsurprisingly, minorities and children from low-income backgrounds score lower on national measures than their peers. Not only will Julia Roberts, Tracy Inman, and Mary Evans from The Center provide professional development to teachers in the grant, but they will inform leaders throughout Kentucky about the Excellence Gap and ways to reduce it.

Leann Pickerill, State Gifted Consultant and Primary Investigator of Project RAP, explained: “It is anticipated that as a result of the grant, students identified as Young Scholars will demonstrate higher achievement and greater growth in reading and math than comparable students at nonparticipating schools. If the outcomes prove to be effective, in the future the state could consider scaling the Young Scholars Model to other schools throughout Kentucky.”

REFERENCES

Plucker, J. A., Burroughs, N., & Song, R. (2010). *Mind the (other) gap: The growing excellence gap in k-12 education*. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation & Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://ceep.indiana.edu/mindthegap/mind.html>



Second graders work on a math assignment at Gilmore Lane Elementary School in Louisville November 5. Gilmore Lane is among several Jefferson County elementary schools that will be involved in the Reaching Academic Potential (RAP) Project funded by a federal Javits Grant. The project is a partnership between WKU, Jefferson County Public Schools, the Kentucky Department of Education, and the University of Louisville.

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HISTORY

As the recipient of three other federal Jacob K. Javits grants, The Center has provided meaningful research to the field of gifted education. In 1990, The Center was awarded a three-year grant, Enhancing Educational Opportunities for Gifted Middle School Students, which examined curriculum and other services offered in the middle school

setting to determine what makes the gifted and talented thrive. The Center received its second three-year Javits grant in 1992. Restructuring Primary Education: Responding to Kentucky's Educational Reform focused on the ungraded primary. The grant compared the progress of ungraded primary students to graded primary students out of state. A Field-Initiated Research grant in 1996 extended the Javits grant dealing with

primary students another three years. In 2008, The Center was awarded a third Javits grant to fund Project GEMS (Gifted Education in Math and Science). Project GEMS created opportunities to generate interest and develop talent in gifted young people in science and math and encourage careers in STEM disciplines through problem-based learning. These grants plus RAP Project totals \$5.5 million.

"In the Primary School Grant, we worked with teachers to develop thematic curriculum and piloted the curriculum in a Summer Academy for primary children at Warren Elementary School. Some of the teachers felt they gained a whole new perspective on how to teach young children through using broad-based themes and allowing students to explore big ideas rather than just learning discreet skills. The thematic units developed by teachers involved with the grant were compiled into a book that was widely

disseminated. Cumberland Trace Elementary School where I was principal participated in the GEMS Grant. Our teachers had wonderful training with the M³ Mathematics Curriculum with Dr. Linda Sheffield and the Problem-Based Learning Curriculum from William and Mary. The teachers felt very prepared for implementing the Common Core, and our students performed at high levels on the state assessment. Identified students from our school participated in the GEMS Academy one day a week where they

were involved in a dynamic science and mathematics program. The GEMS Academy was so successful that the Warren County School district continued to fund the Academy after the grant period ended, and it now serves all Warren County elementary schools. It has been exciting to be a part of these Javits Grants and to be on the cutting edge of exciting research that brings wonderful learning opportunities for teachers, administrators, parents, and students." – MARY EVANS, Javits Grant Program Developer

WORLD COUNCIL RENEWS CONTRACT TO BE HOSTED AT WKU

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children will continue to have its headquarters at Western Kentucky University through 2020 after the contract between the organizations was renewed last year. The World Council is a worldwide non-profit organization that provides advocacy and support for gifted education.

Hosting the organization fits with WKU's vision to be a leading American university with international reach, but the partnership is a natural fit for the World Council as well, explained Tyler Clark, the Executive Administrator of the World Council. "We're doing a lot of great things in gifted education here at WKU," he said. "Having the insights from people who understand the needs of gifted learners is very important."

Tyler was hired as executive administrator in 2015, but he's no stranger to The Center for Gifted Studies, having worked previously as a SCATS teacher, graduate assistant, student worker, and summer counselor. A member of The Gatton Academy for Mathematics and Science in Kentucky's 2008 inaugural class, Tyler



stayed at WKU to pursue a B.A. in math as an Honors College student. He then went on to earn two M.S. degrees in math, one at WKU and another at the University of Central Florida. Back at WKU, he's now pursuing his third master's degree, an M.A. in gifted education and talent development. While studying at UCF, he returned to The Center each summer as an integral part of the summer programming staff.

Becoming involved with the World Council has opened Tyler's eyes to a wider community of gifted educators, he said.

"I really like interacting with all the people from around the world and seeing all the different aspects of gifted education," he commented.

That global networking is what many members cite as the biggest benefit of the World Council, Tyler remarked. "Being at the conferences, a lot of people think that the U.S. has figured everything out with gifted education," he said. "They'll tell me about problems that they're having in their countries and ask what we're doing to fix that. We're seeing that we have a lot of the same problems, so being able to work together across country lines is helpful."

The 2015 World Conference was held in Denmark, and the 2017 conference will be held in Australia. In addition to conferences held every other year, the World Council facilitates networking and resource sharing through a newsletter and a twice-yearly journal *Gifted and Talented International*. Both publications offer valuable ways to share information. "In our last newsletter, we had 15 countries report about what's going on locally in gifted education," Tyler said. "It's easy to forget about other places doing different things, but the newsletter is a great way for people to share what's going on and to gain new ideas about what they might want to do in their own country." Tyler hopes to offer more opportunities for collaboration and education to members in the future.

Educators, parents, and other individuals interested in joining the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children or learning more information can visit www.world-gifted.org.

HISTORY

Julia Roberts, an elected member of the Executive Committee (2009 – present), had the opportunity to bring the headquarters to WKU in 2011, thanks to a generous gift from Pete and Dixie Mahurin.

"A tremendously significant nonprofit organization with members from more than 60 countries, the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children provides opportunities for high-ability young people across the globe; supports the parents, educators, and researchers who work with them; and disseminates information via its website, publications, and conferences. Indeed, the WCGTC's Biennial World Conference is a major networking event that connects scholars and practitioners worldwide and 'sparks' numerous international service-delivery projects to help meet the needs of a historically underserved population." – KEN MCCLUSKEY, WCGTC past vice-president



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Gatton Renovation on Schedule

Like the past eight years, excited high school juniors and seniors packing all the necessities for dorm life will descend on WKU's campus this August eager for their experience at Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science to begin. This year, however, forty more students and their families will make the trek to Bowling Green from all over the Commonwealth, thanks to Mr. Bill Gatton and other generous donors.

Florence Schneider Hall has been under renovation since May of 2015 in preparation of being the new home to 200 students. Director Lynette Breedlove explained, "We eagerly anticipate moving back into Florence Schneider Hall. Every day I drive by the building, slowing to scan for progress made. The building facilitates The Gatton Academy community in important ways with its many common spaces, the welcoming lobby, the piano, and conference room."

Naming the two new wings after his parents, Bill Gatton continues to support the Academy named in his honor. Other private donors helped to make the expansion possible: Sue and Brown Badgett, Ben Cundiff, Janine Cundiff, the J. Rogers, Badgett Sr. Foundation, Mike and Julie Muscarella, Daksha and Prabodh Mehta, Bill and Sue Hamilton, and Lydia Latham. The state budget included additional funding to educate the new students.

This fall the Academy will include its first class of 100 students, the Class of 2018. "It is very exciting to be expanding to serve more of Kentucky's gifted and high ability students," Lynette added. "Each year the competitiveness of the Academy's admissions has increased, clearly demonstrating the need for advanced programs and services for students across the Commonwealth. It was wonderful to say 'yes' to 40 more students this year."

HISTORY

The idea for a state residential school with a focus on mathematics and science was articulated in a proposal that Dr. Julia Roberts and Dr. Charles McGruder, a physics professor at WKU, submitted in 1997. Ten years later, The Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky opened. Funding and bonding capacity had made possible the renovation of Florence Schneider Hall that would accommodate 120 high school juniors and seniors. The next step is the current expansion to Schneider Hall, expanding the capacity to 200 (Julia's original goal) of Kentucky's most capable high school juniors and seniors with a high interest in careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

"I have been thinking about and advocating for such a school for two decades. It is a joy to watch the expansion of Schneider Hall and to witness the fulfillment of my dream for a residential school that will nurture some of Kentucky's young talent in STEM fields." – JULIA ROBERTS, Executive Director, The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science

If you had walked past room 113 in WKU's Knicely Conference Center on January 12 or 13, you would have heard a range of sounds coming from seemingly unrelated activities. There was the rapid-fire chatter of one activity that involved participants sharing their thoughts on leadership statements like "Effective leaders are popular and well liked" or "Leaders generally come from large, urban environments."

A spirited debate over choosing a new flag would have definitely caught your attention, as one participant vehemently argued for a red flag while another undermined the group leader's authority. Then again, you might have walked right past the door when the audience broke into groups and built houses of cards without speaking. The room might have been quiet, but the lessons being taught were heard loud and clear.

Hands-on instruction was the approach that Dr. Mary Christopher took

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE DIVES INTO DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN GIFTED STUDENTS

during the annual Leadership Institute hosted by The Center for Gifted Studies. Mary's session, which was entitled "Building Leadership Capacity in Gifted Learners," was designed to teach the theory, characteristics, and models of leadership to participants in a way that could then be implemented with their students. "I'm not going to talk a lot," Mary told the group at the beginning of the first day, and she stuck to that mantra by modeling activities with the participants and allowing them to explore leadership development for themselves.

The enthusiasm of the participants to learn about leadership was evident during each of these exercises, and for good reason – developing leaders has become a top priority across the state and even the nation. "Leadership is a hot topic right now," Mary explained. "Everybody is trying to figure out how they develop those skills in not just a school setting, but also a professional setting."





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Educators in Kentucky are seeing a newfound emphasis on developing leadership skills in gifted students, which makes program development an essential next step. “This is my first year as the gifted coordinator for Elizabethtown,” revealed Joanna Breunig. “Leadership is a focus that I need for myself in developing a program for our students.”

Jana Kirchner is the instructional supervisor for Simpson County Schools, and she agreed that the new focus on leadership makes professional development opportunities like the Leadership Institute extremely valuable to those who work with gifted children. “Leadership is one of the areas of giftedness in Kentucky, and the school system is working on how to identify it and then service students that are gifted in leadership,” she said. “It’s



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an area of need for us; we must find out information and resources.”

Thankfully for those seeking information and resources, Mary’s sessions contained plenty of material that could

be applied in the classroom. Joanna said, “Mary walked us through the activities, so we could do them ourselves and know how to incorporate them with the students. She gave us practical examples that were very helpful.” Jana agreed, adding, “She gave us resources, lessons, some leadership inventories to use, and ways to frame leadership with students that works with multiple grade levels.”

School districts and state governments believe leadership development is crucial, but ultimately the push to develop leaders in schools will fail if those at the grassroots level don’t believe in the mission. If those at the Leadership Institute represented the attitude of Kentucky’s educators, there’s no cause for concern. “Students gifted in leadership have the potential to make a difference in the world,” Jana asserted. “How we foster and nurture those traits in some sort of meaningful way is critical for us to figure out.”

Mary urged participants to take control of their own leadership development. That important step will lead to success in implementing leadership programs in schools. “I hope they strive to increase their capacity for leadership because gifted educators tend to be leaders on their campus,” Mary concluded. “Secondly, I hope they become an advocate and someone who calls out leadership in students, who opens up opportunities for them to lead. If we want to develop leaders, we have to let them be about leading. We’ve got to provide opportunities for them to do that.”

HISTORY

At a symposium in the fall of 1996, educators commented on the real needs in leadership development.

Some suggested that the topic be addressed at the following year’s symposium. Keeping with its philosophy of addressing needs when they arise, The Center held the first Leadership Institute only a few months later. This institute continues to provide sessions for teachers, administrators, and counselors on developing leadership skills and potential in the youth in their schools and communities.

“The knowledge gained from my attendance at several years of Leadership Institutes have reached many professional educators and students in my district. The topics covered are always carefully chosen and the presenters are at the very top of gifted education. I have always been able to hold a 3- or 6-hour gifted education professional development for our district after attending a Leadership Institute every year I have attended. The Leadership Institutes have definitely been an invaluable addition to my own professional learning and continue to be a cornerstone for the material and information I share with my colleagues.”

– LORIE RICHEY, Primary Supervisor, Warren County Public Schools



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Dr. Richard Cash, an internationally recognized educational consultant, leads educators in an activity exploring the need for differentiation during the Wedge Scholar Presentation March 23. The annual workshop is presented by the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences and offered to educators at no cost thanks to a gift from the Wedge family.

THE BASICS OF DIFFERENTIATION

BY TRACY FORD INMAN AND JULIA LINK ROBERTS

Whether you are an educator, a parent, or a gifted student, you need to understand the basics of differentiation. Why is that important? So often differentiation is a service (sometimes the only service) districts provide. You need to understand what it is and what it isn't.

What Differentiation Isn't

Before addressing what differentiation is, it's vital to know what it isn't. Too often well-meaning educators mistakenly believe the following to be differentiation:

- **Individual Lessons:** High school teachers sometimes have 150 adolescents in their classroom in a day's time. A separate lesson plan for each

**"Differentiation isn't a fad.
Differentiation isn't a trend.
Differentiation isn't an invitation.
Differentiation is meeting
the needs of our students.
Differentiation is doing
what is best for our students.
Differentiation is an expectation."**

(Hewitt & Weckstein, 2011, p. 135)

of those students every day is not only impossible, but attempting to do so could put an educator in crisis. For an elementary teacher, even 24 separate

lessons for each subject every day isn't feasible. This misunderstanding sometimes prohibits teachers from differentiating.

- **Additional Assignments:** More of the same is not differentiating. Unfortunately, many gifted learners are required to simply do more – for example, he does the odd problems on the math page since he finished the class-assigned even ones so quickly (instead of giving him fewer, more challenging problems) or she has three essay questions on her test while others in the class have one, but each question is the same level of difficulty, instead of having more challenging questions.

- **Hands-on Only:** Hands-on lessons can be engaging and motivating to students. But what is more important is minds-on learning. For instance, if students have the choice of five active, hands-on learning activities about the cell – but none of them is challenging requiring gifted learners to turn on their minds, then effective differentiation is absent. Yes, the work keeps the hands engaged but not the mind. Which is more important?
- **Set of Strategies:** Teachers may have a wide repertoire of differentiation strategies in their teaching tool box. However, if the class is not open to diversity, if a culture for differentiation has not been established, or if expectations are not adapted for students based on what or how they are learning, those strategies will prove ineffective. So often a teacher will attend a one-day workshop learning a differentiation strategy, return to his classroom eager to implement the strategy in a lesson, and experience frustration and failure. The culture must be developed so that students value varied learning experiences and embrace a community of responsible learners.
- **Not Just Different:** Differentiation doesn't mean that students are simply doing different things. The learning experiences must be appropriate and related to the content. So the student who zips through his math problems and whips out a science fiction novel to read while the others finish has not experienced a differentiated lesson.

What Differentiation Is

You now realize that differentiation isn't just more, it isn't just different, and it isn't just hands-on learning. Then what is it? Primarily "differentiation is a philosophy – a way of thinking about teaching and learning" (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010, p. 13). Ideally an educator should use a differentiation lens for each decision she makes from the physical arrangement of her room and the rules and procedures she implements to the reasoning behind why students are learning what they are to appropriate grading. Teachers must intentionally establish and nurture a classroom climate conducive to effective differentiation. This is one that celebrates diversity, establishes appropriately high levels of expectation, and is open – for example, open to the idea that a student may already know what she is getting ready to teach.

Differentiation is all about matching: "A teacher who differentiates effectively matches the content (basic to complex), the level of the thinking process, the sophistication and choice of the product, and/or the assessment to the student or cluster of students" (Roberts & Inman, 2013, p. 2). This matching must be proactively planned and based on student data.

Final Thoughts

Imagine what a child's world would be like if what and how she learned matched her interests, learning profile, or readiness levels to learn? Think of the growth. Think of the continuous learning. Then imagine what the United States could be if educators used a lens of differentiation when making decisions about children's learning. Exciting, isn't it?

HISTORY

The Wedge Distinguished Scholar series began in 2006. Individuals who have come as the Distinguished Scholar have included Carol Tomlinson, Shelagh Gallagher, Jonathan Plucker, Donald Treffinger, Paul Slocum, and Barbara Kerr. This endowment is for the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at WKU.

"The Wedge Visiting Scholar program provides an outstanding opportunity for teacher candidates, P-12 educators, and university faculty members to gain information on the latest research findings in various fields in the profession of education and to apply those findings in workshop experiences lead by the Scholar. The Scholars' knowledge and passion in their chosen field are motivating for individuals engaged in promoting student learning." – SAM EVANS, Dean, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at WKU

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WEDGE SERIES FEATURES RICHARD CASH

A gift from the Wedge family makes possible an annual professional development opportunity, and Dr. Richard Cash was the 2016 Wedge Distinguished Scholar. Richard made presentations on differentiation one evening in March as well as an all-day workshop the next day that was open to the public. Richard has a rich history in education in Minnesota and is currently a consultant who is well known nationally and internationally.

VICTORIA FELLOWS GATHER TO LEARN

The Victoria Fellows came together twice to learn about best practices and research that support gifted education. These superintendents participated in sessions that focused on acceleration, the Excellence Gap, and differentiation.

Dr. Susan Assouline, Executive Director of the Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development at the University of Iowa and the Myron and Jacqueline Blank Endowed Chair in Gifted Education, highlighted the 20 types of acceleration. So often, educators and parents think of grade-skipping as the only way to accelerate, but there are 19 more ways described in *A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students*. (A chapter in the second volume is en-



René Islas

titled "State Residential STEM Schools: A Model for Accelerated Learning" by Julia Link Roberts and Corey Alderdice.)

Dr. Jonathan Plucker, Julian C. Stanley Professor of Talent Development at Johns Hopkins University, addressed the topic of the Excellence Gap for the Victoria Fellows. The Excellence Gap describes gaps between students scoring at advanced levels. Although the percentages of students scoring at advanced levels in the United States are relatively low in general, they are very, very low for children from poverty and those who are African American and Hispanic. Jonathan is the lead author on reports about the Excellence Gap – *Mind the (Other) Gap: The Growing Excellence Gap in K-12 Education, Talent on the Sidelines: Excellence Gaps and America's Persistent Talent Underclass*, and *Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students*.

Dr. Richard Cash was the 2016 Wedge Endowed Scholar and presented an all-day workshop on differentiation for educators. He also shared information about differentiation with the Victoria Fellows. Richard is an educational consultant who travels nationally as well as internationally.

Ms. Jane Clarenbach, Director of Public Education of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), and Mr. René Islas, Executive Director of NAGC, highlighted opportunities for gifted young people in the recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act that is now known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In ESSA, gifted students are now included in Title I and Title II which means more money devoted to identifying and serving these exceptional learners. Because more authority for the implementation of ESSA will come to the states, advocates for gifted children need to stay tuned in for opportunities to speak out for practices that will allow gifted children to learn without learning ceilings.

The Victoria Fellows will continue in the fall and add superintendents who are interested in learning about gifted education practices that provide support for advanced learners.

HISTORY

The Victoria Fellows came about due to the generosity of John and Linda Kelly in 2013. The name of the group honors Victoria Kelly who has volunteered for The Center for Gifted Studies for many years. Her assistance is very important in preparing for various programs and initiatives.

"As a superintendent, I am pulled in a million different directions – from construction to policy to employee issues to finance – and it is sometimes hard to focus on the important because of the urgent. Victoria Fellows provided just such an opportunity. To be able to sit in a relatively small group with like-minded people and learn without interruption from noted experts is intellectually stimulating. More importantly, it provides motivation to make real change in order to better serve a critically important part of our student body. We have made great progress in our GT programs over the past few years, and the impetus was definitely the Victoria Fellows program." – KEITH DAVIS, Superintendent, Bullitt County Schools

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Contact The Center

DR. JULIA ROBERTS
Executive Director

The Center for Gifted Studies
Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Blvd. #71031
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1031

Phone: 270.745.6323
Fax: 270.745.6279
Email: gifted@wku.edu

MS. AMANDA COATES LICH
Development Officer

The Center for Gifted Studies, The Gatton Academy of
Mathematics and Science, and the WKU Honors College

Institutional Advancement
Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11005
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1005

Phone: 270.745.2340
Email: amanda.lich@wku.edu



The Center for Gifted Studies
Western Kentucky University
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