

the challenge

Magazine of The Center for Gifted Studies

The Center is Awarded a \$2 Million Federal Grant for Project GEMS (Gifted Education in Math and Science)

The Center for Gifted Studies has been awarded a five-year research grant by the U. S. Department of Education under the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, one of only seven awarded in the country. Julia Roberts indicated this grant offers a unique opportunity: "This Javits grant provides the means to engage in research to develop effective strategies to identify talent and create interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics among upper elementary children."

Project GEMS, a partnership between The Center and the Warren County Schools in Bowling Green, will target upper elementary children from low-income backgrounds and minorities who are underrepresented in STEM careers. The project will provide services for children gifted in math and science at four elementary schools that have more than 50% of their children qualifying for free and reduced lunch: Cumberland Trace, Lost River, North Warren, and Bristow. In addition, two schools will serve as the control group in the study: Oakland and Richardsville. The under-construction Academic/Aquatic Center at Warren County Board of Education Central Office



is incorporating two state-of-the-art science classrooms. This facility will house a magnet program for the students who will come one day a week to participate in problem-based learning in math and science.

Dale Brown, Superintendent of Warren County Schools and Advisory Board member for The Center, finds the grant to be a wonderful opportunity for young people in the county: "We believe this is the first step in addressing underrepresented students in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math."

Professional development is an important component of Project GEMS. Seventy teachers will be targeted to receive professional devel-

opment in problem-based learning and gifted education. Project GEMS research results will be used to design services and programs that implement curriculum and develop talent in children who are advanced in STEM disciplines, with the ultimate goal being to replicate the successful program in the district, the state and beyond.

Project GEMS also has a critical business component. The Center will partner with local businesses to foster an understanding of technological and scientific application in the work force. Trace Die Cast, Inc. and Bowling Green Metalforming have agreed to partner. Lowell Guthrie, CEO of Trace, said, "I look forward to our involvement with these young people to help create an interest in science and math fields."

Project GEMS reflects the purpose of the Javits legislation: to carry out a coordinated program of scientifically based research, demonstration projects, innovative strategies, and similar activities designed to build and enhance the ability of elementary and secondary schools nationwide to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented children.

Letter from Julia

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE CENTER
FOR GIFTED STUDIES,

Let's make 2009 the year of talent development. It is time for educators, parents, and citizens to join together with this message: Academic, leadership, and creative talents are essential and important to develop as are athletic and musical talents. All talents must be developed to their highest levels.

Whose talent? The immediate answer to that question is everyone's talents. No limitations should be applied to the development of talent. In fact, talent development should start early and continue throughout a lifetime.

Why should talent development be a priority? In a time in which proficiency is the goal in many schools, children who are already demonstrating proficiency often find themselves in a holding pattern. Proficiency is a wonderful goal for a child who has not reached that standard; however, children who are already proficient or who are beyond proficiency find that proficiency is no goal at all. Instead, settling for proficiency as the standard is like settling for a C grade. C-level talent will not fuel our economy or produce the exceptional talent that is



needed in science, math, the arts, history, writing, or any area of human endeavor in which excellence is needed.

No ceiling should be applied in the talent area, no matter the age of the child. The fact that a child is in third grade should not hold her back from learning what she is ready to learn in science nor should it prevent him from reading at the level at which he is ready to read even if age-mates are not at that same level at that particular time. The prevailing focus on proficiency places a low ceiling on learning for children who are ready to move way beyond that level. We can't risk the consequences of limiting the areas in which we develop talent to top levels. Our economy as well as the culture in which we live cannot afford to overlook potential that can be developed to optimum levels.

Everyone cannot be equally talented in all areas. This statement is not to preclude children having talents in several areas, but often an effort to be well rounded keeps a child from being outstanding in one specific talent area. Stephen King said, "Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented from the successful one is a lot of hard work." It is the work ethic that a young person acquires that leads to top level talent in any content area, athletic venue, or any of the visual or performing arts.

Who is responsible for introducing a talent area to children? Remember that talent doesn't have a chance to develop until the talent area is introduced. Parents play a huge role in talent development. They recognize interests in their children, support their passions, and encourage them in the pursuit of excellence in their talent areas. Educators open doors for developing interest as they expose children to areas of inquiry and allow the development of expertise in areas of interest.

Opportunities for developing talents extend beyond the school and even beyond the community. The Center for Gifted Studies provides opportunities to introduce potential interests and to develop interests that young people have.

Speak out on behalf of talent development. Your state and nation need the top talent to be developed. That won't happen without a strong message to decision-makers in your schools and communities.

Sincerely,

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

Julia Link Roberts
Executive Director

the challenge

Editor/Writer
TRACY INMAN

Designer
MARCUS DUKES

VAMPY CELEBRATES A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

BY HARPER LEE

This summer marked the 25th anniversary of the Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth. VAMPY was held June 22 – July 12 and provided the opportunity for over 200 gifted young people to spend three weeks studying one course in great depth. Students attended from 57 different Kentucky school districts and private schools, seven different states including Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, and four countries including China, Korea, Indonesia and the United States.

To celebrate VAMPY's 25 years of success, The Center is launching The VAMPY Project. Between the time you receive this issue of *The Challenge* and June, all VAMPY alumni are invited to submit a quote, memory, and/or photo to The Center.



The Center will compile all the information into an audio slideshow which will be available for viewing on our website. Contribute anytime! Just call 270.745.6323 or send an email to harper.lee@wku.edu.

We know that VAMPY has touched the lives of thousands of gifted young people across Kentucky, the nation, and the world. Celebrate this important year with us by sharing your memories. We hope to hear from you very soon.

THE VAMPY PROJECT

"VAMPY was a pivotal program in my life. I reflect on my time there periodically and always conclude the same thing: many of my personal joys and career successes are built on a foundation laid three weeks at a time in the hot southern summers at Western Kentucky University. The program intro-

duced me to a cohort of friends who faced the same challenges and opportunities I did and allowed us to move forward together with confidence academically and socially.

I am honored to have participated in VAMPY and awed by the positive, life-changing effect Dr. Julia and all of those who have worked, volunteered,

supported, or camped with The Center for Gifted Studies have had in Kentucky and in the many communities of which we are now a part.

Congratulations on 25 years. I look forward to the positive impact of 25 more."

— Wake Norris (VAMPY 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992; Counselor 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998; and founding member of the Alumni Association)

For more VAMPY memories from alumni, watch The VAMPY Project at www.wku.edu/gifted.

"SO HOW DID VAMPY START?" With a phone call from Susan Leib, the gifted consultant at the Kentucky Department of Education, asking if The Center would offer Duke TIP's first cooperative program. Susan had received the request from TIP and called me. In turn, I contacted Dr. Donald Zacharias, President of Western, to check out the university's commitment to offering such a program. The decision was made by Dr. Zacharias and me to make a two-day visit to Duke to check out their program. We returned with the commitment to offer the first cooperative program with Duke TIP. The rest is history – twenty-five years of VAMPY."

— JULIA ROBERTS

As an image of Salvador Dali's painting *Swans Reflecting Elephants* beams brightly against the wall, art teacher Teresa Christmas asks her students if they can see the swans and elephants hiding in plain sight in the painting. Several hands shoot straight up. Dali and surreal art are typically the stuff of college-level art history courses, but the tiny hands waving frantically in the air right now do not belong to eager college freshmen. Instead, these are eager first graders enjoying their first serious taste of art in Fall Super Saturdays. Dali and his fellow surrealists often painted hidden images into their work, and this enthusiastic group is happy to be showing their teacher just where the swans and elephants are hiding.

"The surrealists were adults who tried to get in touch with their inner feelings and the hidden things in their imagination," Teresa explained. "And, when you're an adult, you have to really try to do that. Kids are already in touch with that. They have super imaginations already."

Teresa's class, entitled *Delightful Dreamscapes and Magical Monsters*, introduced students not just to surrealistic art and artists but also to the way surrealism permeates popular culture. As part of the class, students created their very own exquisite magical monsters, painted bottles in the style of surrealist Rene Magritte, did rubbings, made fashion collages, and ultimately created dreamscapes — just like Dali himself once did.

"We decided to do the Mad Hatter's tea party on the last day because *Alice in Wonderland* is surreal," Teresa said. "It's very dreamlike. Sal-

Fall Super Saturdays Gets Surreally Cool

BY HARPER LEE

vador Dali actually did illustrations for a version of *Alice in Wonderland*."

In what Teresa calls a "surreal coincidence," during Super Saturdays Google celebrated the 110th birthday of surrealist Rene Magritte by incorporating some of Magritte's most famous images into the Google logo. Teresa was so ex-

cited when her students came to Super Saturdays and told her they had seen Magritte's art on Google.

Currently the artist-in-residence at Cumberland Trace Elementary, Teresa began her career in early childhood education before moving into teaching art. Last year, her first year teaching Super Saturdays, she taught Japanese print-making. But after a visit to the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida, Teresa developed a keen interest in Dali and surrealism because, she says, Dali was a versatile artist, experimenting not just with painting but also dabbling in fashion and photography. She began researching and decided that a class on surrealism would be perfect for gifted young people.

"I think they're really good artists," Teresa said. "Naturally good, naturally creative. It's something you lose touch with as you grow older unless someone decides to value it."

For Teresa and many other students and teachers, Super Saturdays is a treasured opportunity to explore academic territory that is likely to be neglected in a typical classroom due to constraints on time, large class sizes, and curriculum requirements. Teresa says she loves the fact that Super Saturdays allows her to devote a great deal of time to each individual student.

"The whole point, what makes Super Saturdays so great, is small group size because one-on-one is so important," she explained.

"The more individual time you can spend with a child — that's what makes all the difference."

Furthermore, Teresa adds that as both a parent and a teacher she has always





Photos by Harper Lee

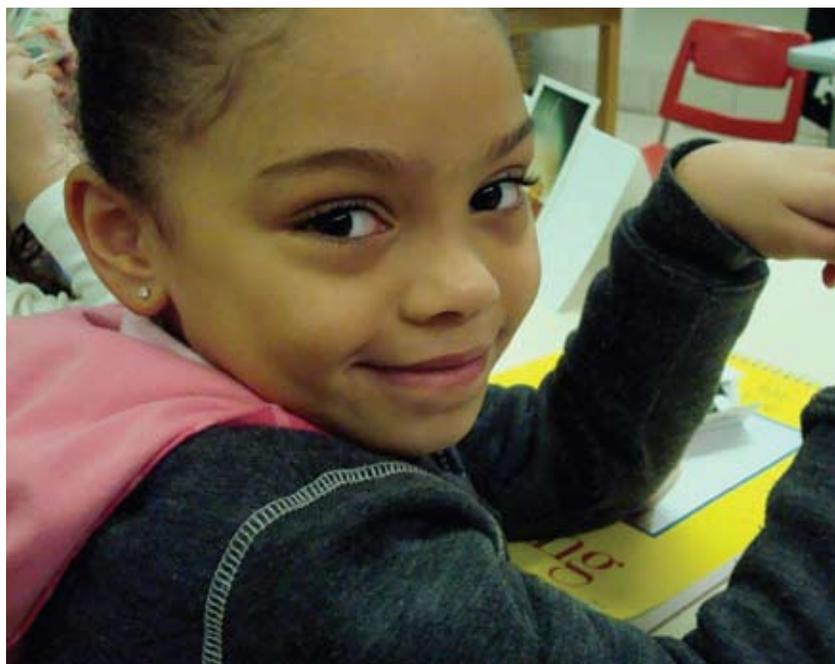
been deeply impressed with the quality of instruction offered at Super Saturdays.

“My own children had gone to Super Saturdays. It really meant a lot to them,” she said. “And I was really amazed at what great quality teachers they had. When I was asked to teach Super Saturdays, I was just kind of honored to be in a league with people that I thought were such great teachers.”

Super Saturdays provides gifted young people with a wide variety of experiences, excellent instruction, and, most importantly, an opportunity to express their gifts and be themselves. Teresa was especially happy to hear many parents of her students say that their children enjoyed her class. Many students found an outlet for talents that might otherwise have gone undetected.

“We had some natural born surrealists in there,” Teresa laughed.

Our next Super Saturdays will take place on the four Saturdays in February. Check the website at www.wku.edu/gifted for the application and information about classes being offered.



Technology moves quickly. Gifted learners do, too. Not so long ago, students who attended SCATS could take a photography class in which they built their own camera – out of an oatmeal box. Now, they still take photography, but with a digital camera.

“That’s how the world goes,” instructor Lisa Logsdon said. “I have to laugh because when I think of teenagers today – I call them ‘screenagers’ because they are so into technology. I feel that here, in this area of the country, a lot of kids are at a disadvantage because they just don’t have it. It’s not accessible to them. But they’re starving to know about it. So it’s good that SCATS allowed me the opportunity to teach a class like this.”

Lisa spent class time explaining the settings on the students’ cameras, analyzing professional photos, and reviewing photography fundamentals: rule of thirds, lighting, framing, leading lines, etc. Then, toting point-and-shoot digital cameras, campers combed the Western Kentucky University campus in search of the perfect photo op.

“You could come in with whatever,” Lisa described. “I had kids coming in with cameras you might say were from the dawn of the digital age. And some coming in with fancier, newer ones. So it really didn’t matter if you didn’t know much more than how to turn it on and click the shutter.”

Owensboro camper Ella Shipp (Super Saturdays 2003) claimed that she had just received a camera this year and was anxious to learn how to use it. The class was very beneficial for her as she loves taking pictures.

“I take much better pictures now than I did before I took the class,” Ella said.

Fellow camper Madison Bowden, from Glasgow, agreed, and said she was especially excited to share her new knowledge with her family.

“Before I took the class, I didn’t know how to work my camera,” Madison explained. “My mom didn’t either, so when I got home I taught her how to use it, too.”

SCATS IS PIXEL

PERFECT

BY HARPER LEE



Photos by Clinton Lewis



As students explored campus, they tried to take pictures using what they had just learned. Afterwards, they would return to class, do a review of their work, and begin photo editing in Photoshop. Lisa wanted students to leave the class with a better understanding of how to compose and edit a good picture. In addition, the class discussed ethics and the risks and benefits of publishing their images to the Internet.

"What you do with images out there on the Internet can have a lasting effect," Lisa said. "I'm hoping they sort of opened their eyes about how they should be careful with their images out in the world."

On the blazing hot June days, one of the class's favorite spots for taking pictures was the fountain outside the Fine Arts Center on Western's campus.

"It's harder to keep kids out of a fountain than I thought it would be," Lisa laughed. "They really enjoyed going in the fountain and taking pictures of each other playing in the water."

Lisa, who has been teaching high school journalism for the past six years at Allen County High School, feels that students enjoy learning media-type skills like photography and that such skills can serve them well in the future.

"It's a very useful skill, in my opinion," she said. "Regardless of what kind of field the kids decide to go into ... they can always use photography skills, in their personal life even."

STUDENT PHOTOS



2008 was SCATS 26th summer! Over 150 participants came from 42 Kentucky districts and 17 private schools representing 8 states, including Kentucky, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

EMMA BOLDEN (VAMPY 1995 and 1996) is Visiting Assistant Professor in Creative Writing at Georgetown College in Kentucky. She earned a BFA in Creative Writing at Sarah Lawrence College and an MFA in Creative Writing at UNC Wilmington. She has published two chapbooks, *How To Recognize A Lady* and *The Mariner's Wife*. Her third, *The Sad Epistles*, is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Journal*, *the Greensboro Review*, *Feminist Studies*, *the Indiana Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and on *Linebreak.org*. She received a Tennessee Williams Scholarship to the Sewanee Writers' Conference and was a finalist for a Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation/Poetry magazine. The Center is excited that she will be teaching a VAMPY class this summer.

"Though I only attended VAMPY for two years (1995 and 1996), I consider VAMPY to be perhaps the most important part of my education — and of my journey to adulthood! I loved my time at VAMPY and have such happy memories. In fact, when I received a call from Georgetown College, I was excited to hear that I had a campus visit; because of my experience at VAMPY, coming to Kentucky felt like coming home."

JULIE CRUDELE (VAMPY 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000) recently finished two years of teaching high school chemistry in Newark, NJ, for Teach for America. She is currently working on a PhD in Gene Therapy and Vaccines at the University of Pennsylvania. She did her undergraduate work at Dartmouth, majoring in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and graduating in 2006.

"At VAMPY, I finally had a place where I fit in. I didn't have to hide my intelligence because it was cool to be smart!"

JENNIFER FRITSCH (Super Saturdays and SCATS Instructor) was named Kentucky Middle School Art Teacher of the Year 2008. Jennifer has taught at Glasgow Middle School for six years; she also is an adjunct faculty member at

Western Kentucky University. In addition to regular art classes, she teaches Early Morning Advanced Art for her students gifted in art. Jennifer, a professional artist, will have a solo exhibition at the Capitol Arts Center in Bowling Green in the spring. Her work has been displayed in the Senate building in Washington, D.C., as well as been part of an international traveling exhibit. Jennifer has her own business, Coraleigh Designs, and makes couture custom hats.

ALISHA KAPLAN WETHERELL (VAMPY 1995, 1996, and 1997) is a civil engineer with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. in Tallahassee, FL. She earned a BS in Civil Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology in 2004.

"The courses were fantastic. Being from a very rural town, opportunities for fun, extracur-

ricular learning in the type of topics offered at VAMPY were non-existent at home. Plus, the friends I made were so special and made me realize I wasn't weird for being kind of smart."

HARPER LEE (SCATS 1995 and 1996; VAMPY 1997 and 1998; Teaching Assistant; Counselor) spent one year in northern Japan where she taught high school English and organized a summer English day camp for area students. She then completed a Master's degree in Arts Journalism at the Newhouse School at Syracuse University. Harper has recently joined The Center for Gifted Studies as Technology and Communications Coordinator. Having attended SCATS and VAMPY and then later returning to work as a TA and counselor, Harper has had a long and happy relationship with The Center. She is thrilled to once again be helping The Center reach out to gifted students, their families, and educators.

RYAN WERMELING (VAMPY 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001; Counselor 2004 and 2006) began medical school at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in fall 2008. He spent 2007-2008 teaching a science program for 5th graders in the San Francisco Bay area. He did his undergraduate work at Notre Dame, graduating with a Pre-Med degree in 2006.

ALUMNI UPDATE

DALTON HUBBLE NAMED SEMIFINALIST IN 2008 SIEMENS COMPETITION

BY COREY ALDERDICE

Dalton Hubble (Winter Super Saturdays 2001, 2002, and 2003; Fall Super Saturdays 2002), a senior at the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky and John Hardin High School, has been honored as a Semifinalist in the 2008 Siemens Competition in Math, Science, and Technology. Dalton was one of only three Kentucky students to be honored in the 2008 competition and the first Gatton Academy student to receive recognition.

Dalton's research entitled "Fabrication of Poly (2-Hydroxyethyl Methacrylate) by Hot Filament Chemical Vapor Deposition" was conducted this past summer as part of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's summer research program. Dalton's work focused on the fabrication and test of a polymer, which could be used to grow intestinal tissue. The results of his project include implications for improving the tailoring of specialized polymers for a variety of biomedical and tissue engineering applications as well as further demonstrating how prescription drugs are absorbed by the body.

Rebecca Carrier, assistant professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Northeastern University, served as Dalton's mentor. They met frequently throughout the program to plan his experiments and gauge his progress. Rebecca noted he quickly adapted to the rigorous environment. "Dalton was always troubleshooting," she said.

She later assisted Dalton in preparation for the competition and was not surprised by his success. "I was very happy," Rebecca said. "but I wasn't surprised. The work he did was very interesting."



Gatton Academy director Tim Gott expressed his excitement over Dalton's accomplishment. "We are very excited to have our first student honored as part of this prestigious competition," he said. "Dalton is an outstanding young scholar who will set the standard for student excellence both in and out of the classroom in our program for years to come."

The Siemens Competition is the nation's premier science research competition for high school students. The annual competition, administered by the College Board, awards college scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000 in individual and team categories. Over 1,200 high school students nationwide submitted projects this year.

The Gatton Academy celebrates the success of Dalton Hubble as well as students at its peer institutions — the Texas Academy and the North Carolina School.

Wen Chyan, a senior at the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science, was named the 2008 National Champion and recipient of a \$100,000 scholarship. Wes's study, "Versatile Antimicrobial Coatings from Pulse Plasma

Deposited Hydrogels and Hydrogel Composites," examined antimicrobial coatings in order to design a specialized coating aimed to prevent nosocomial infections. These infections, which are caused as a side effect of treatment in a hospital, afflict more than two million patients each year and result in more than 100,000 deaths annually.

Sajith Wickramasekara and Andrew Guo, seniors at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, were named the Team National Champions and recipients of a \$100,000 scholarship. Their study, "A Functional Genomic Framework for Chemotherapeutic Drug Improvement and Identification" has the potential to easily identify new chemotherapeutic drugs and greatly improve existing ones. The team's project combined traditional genetics with cutting edge computational modeling to streamline the gene discovery process.

The goals of the Gatton Academy are to assist Kentucky school districts in providing appropriately challenging learning opportunities for advanced students and to prepare leadership in STEM disciplines for the Commonwealth. Through the program, Kentucky's exceptional young scientists and mathematicians learn in an environment which offers advanced educational opportunities while preparing them for leadership roles that will develop a twenty-first century economy for the Commonwealth. The opportunity to conduct research alongside university faculty and industry professionals is key in developing students' interest in STEM fields while providing them with real-world experience.

For twenty-five years, The Center has brought in beginning and experienced Advanced Placement teachers from all over the world to hone their skills and better prepare them to teach AP classes. For twenty-five years, AP consultants Gene Pickel and Benita Albert have spent one week each summer helping us do that. Each June these award-winning educators share their expertise, passion, and compassion with dozens of educators providing a rich and challenging professional development experience.

Benita currently teaches AP Calculus BC at Oak Ridge High School in Tennessee. This 40-year veteran educator has a rich history with AP. She has served as an exam reader, table leader, and member of the AP Test Development Committee as well as a certified consultant for College Board in the Southeast. Of late, her committee work with Math Vertical Teams and Building Success in Mathematics has concentrated on Pre-AP educational services. She coauthored the *AP Teacher's Guide* to accompany the third edition of *Calculus* by Hughes-Hallett, et al., and, through Skylight Publishing, has coauthored *Be Prepared for the AP Calculus Exams* and *Calculus Calculator Lab*. This member of the 2008 USA Today All-American Teacher Team has earned multiple honors: Presidential Award for Teaching, 1991; Tandy Scholars Teacher, 1993; Edith Mae Slyffe Award for Math Teaching, 2005; and the College Board Distinguished

Advanced Placement Summer Institute Celebrates 25 Years: Consultants Gene Pickel and Benita Albert Do As Well

BY TRACY INMAN



Service Award, 2006. But as far as The Center is concerned, it is the magic she works that one week each summer she spends in Bowling Green that makes her so remarkable.

"I wish I had had an AP institute when I started teaching," Benita explains. "Often the AP teacher of a subject is only one person in the school – a job that is often lonely for peer collaboration. It was great fun and enlight-

enment for me to begin teaching the summer institutes – I was given the opportunity to share and to, more importantly, also learn from my AP summer teachers. I have used so many of their good ideas in my classroom to reset my lessons and even my style. The old cliché 'one is never too old to learn' is so true, and I find that many very experienced teachers return year after year to WKU because they love the professional interactions and uplift."

A true friend of The Center, Gene Pickel, a National Leader for the College Board from Kingston, TN, has been a consultant for the College Board since 1981, conducted one-day workshops and summer institutes for AP history teachers, and has served on several College Board committees. For the Pre-AP programs, he helped to design and pilot AP Interdisciplinary Strategies for English and Social Studies. He is now a consultant for both that program and the AP Vertical Team for Social Studies workshops. For the Educational Testing Service, Gene served on the Test Development Committee for AP U.S. History and has been a reader and table leader for scoring AP U.S. History examina-

It is my pleasure to work with Julia Roberts and to provide implicit support for all her dedication to gifted education. Obviously, the AP program is a capstone high school experience for many gifted students, and, as such, having WKU and Julia Roberts involved in a comprehensive AP teacher training program is a natural fit.

—BENITA ALBERT

friends

- Nancy Bell Brandenburg KY
- Kathryn & Mark Bigler Bowling Green, KY
- Kristi Brown Beaver Dam, KY
- Martha & Douglas Brown Winchester, KY
- Laura & Stewart Couch Elizabethtown, KY
- Emerson Electric Company Saint Louis, MO
Matching Gift Elizabeth Zimmerman & Wake Norris
- Darlene & Warren Eisenstein Glasgow, KY
- Mary & Sam Evans Bowling Green, KY
- Ruthene Glass Bowling Green, KY
- Carolyn & Lowell Guthrie Bowling Green, KY
Trace Die Cast, Inc.
- Dana & Timothy Jenkins Belton, KY
- Betsy & Jeff Harned Glasgow, KY
- Susan & Nelson Helm Louisville, KY
- Ted Helm Somerset, MA
- Linda & John Kelly Bowling Green, KY
- Laura & David Lee Bowling Green, KY
- Mary & Paul Lewis Cecilia, KY
- Dixie & Pete Mahurin Bowling Green, KY
- Bobbi & Charles Mann Calhoun, KY
- Therma & Bo Marcol Glasgow, KY
- Donna & Carl Martray Macon, GA
- Jennifer & Karl Miller Round Rock, TX
- Gene Pickel Kingston, TN
- Dolly & Rankin Powell Corydon, KY
- Mary & Allen Ralph Scottsville, KY
- Pat Richardson Louisville, KY
- Julia & Dick Roberts Bowling Green, KY
- Pam & Bob Robinson Cox's Creek, KY
- Karen & Christopher Seidler Bowling Green, KY
- James Snider Franklin, KY
- Joe & Beth Stamps Bowling Green, KY
- Cynthia Sullivan & Mark Hussung Louisville, KY
- Cindy Tanner Bowling Green, KY
- Amy & Steve Winger Bowling Green, KY
- Judy & Joe Wismann Louisville, KY

tions. While in secondary education, Gene was for many years an adjunct instructor in American history for The University of Tennessee and Roane State Community College. Gene, too, has earned many awards: Tennessee Teacher of the Year Award presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution and, most recently, The College Board Southern Regional Distinguished Service Award for contributions made to The Board programs. From 2001 to 2007 he represented College Board programs in Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, London, Honolulu, Shanghai, and Panama City; he will do so again in Bogotá, during March of 2009. And he comes to The Center this June.

My long tenure in this position has been motivated primarily by two factors. One is the personal benefits of working for Dr. Julia Link Roberts. I have learned more about professionalism, leadership, management, and the joy of giving of oneself from this woman than any other person.

—GENE PICKEL

Gene strongly desires to improve the quality of secondary education wherever he can: “All fifty states and the federal government annually give billions of dollars to education in the United States. For the most part, however, states that rank high in education continue to rank high, and states that rank low continue to rank low. If education for the nation’s young people is to truly improve on all levels, more than money is needed. I have seen first hand how an AP culture in an individual school or school system can improve the quality of education for all students, not just AP students. Teachers trained in an AP institute learn that they must teach more than subject matter. They must also teach high level skills and positive educational attitudes in close association with subject matter. AP demands this, and the obvious improvements that result motivates the desire to pass the benefits on to all students in all classes. I invite teachers who long to make a difference to try AP and experience the joy for themselves.” Gene has certainly done his part in instilling joy and knowledge in teachers.

Julia Roberts explains, “Twenty-five years ago The Center offered its first AP Institute making us one of the earlier institutes in the country. What a joy it has been to work with outstanding consultants and teachers over the summers.”

This summer, 371 participants came from 20 states and 5 countries. For more information about next summer’s AP Institute, go to the web at www.wku.edu/gifted or call The Center at 270.745.6323.

Using Products to Differentiate While Engaging Students in Learning

BY JULIA LINK ROBERTS & TRACY FORD INMAN

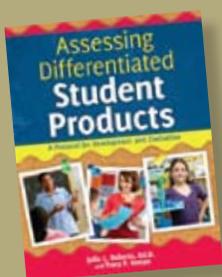
Hopefully, students are interested in learning for the sake of learning. Sometimes that is the case, but not always. Another means of hooking young people on learning is through products that picque their interests. Products are ways students demonstrate what they have learned. Traditional school products are written and oral reports, papers, and worksheets. Such limited fare misses opportunities to engage students in learning through their preferred learning mode and their specific interests.

For example, the chance to show what one has learned through developing a podcast, writing and illustrating a comic book, conducting interviews, or designing a museum exhibit may motivate students to learn, even a topic in which they have little initial interest.

A steady diet of your favorite foods would make them less desirable. Likewise, variety in product choices can spice up the learning for all concerned. Now this is not simply any choice of products to provide the variety, but

rather teachers provide deliberate product options for each learning experience. Teachers have the knowledge that allows them to select product options that allow students to work in their preferred mode of learning, at least occasionally. For example, visual learners need to have assignments from time to time that allow them to make graphs or illustrations. This intentionality is what separates simply offering a choice of products from differentiating through specifying a range of products matched to the student's interests, needs, and abilities. The latter is what happens when a teacher uses assessment as a means to differentiate so that each student will be challenged and make continuous progress.

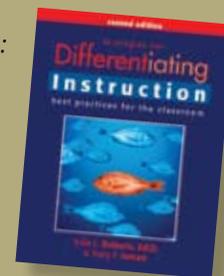
Once the teacher has selected the product options for a learning experience, the next step is often to design a rubric for the assignment. Herein lies the problem. Designing a new rubric for each product choice in each assignment creates stress in that it is time consuming. Pinpointing the necessary criteria is also stressful when creating new rubrics. There is a simple answer to these stresses. Having a standard way to guide the development of the product and to assess the final product is what



NEW PUBLICATIONS BY CENTER STAFF

Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman have a new book focusing on products. *Assessing Differentiated Student Products: A Protocol for Development and Evaluation*, published by Prufrock Press, explores the DAP Tool – the Developing and Assessing Product Tool.

Their first book, *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom*, also by Prufrock, has been revised for its second edition. For more information about the books, go to www.prufrock.com or visit The Center's site, www.wku.edu/gifted. The Center is committed to providing quality resources that help teachers remove the ceiling on learning.



Meaning of DAP Tool Performance Scale

- 6 – Professional Level:** level expected from a professional in the content area
- 5 – Advanced Level:** level exceeds expectations of the standard
- 4 – Proficient Level:** level expected for meeting the standard
- 3 – Progressing Level:** level demonstrates movement toward the standard
- 2 – Novice Level:** level demonstrates initial awareness and knowledge of standard
- 1 – Non-performing Level:** level indicates no effort made to meet standard
- 0 – Non-participating Level:** level indicates nothing turned in

Adapted from *Assessing Differentiated Student Products: A Protocol for Development and Evaluation* by J. L. Roberts and T. F. Inman, 2009, Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. Copyright © 2009 by Prufrock Press. Adapted with permission.

the DAP Tool does (DAP stands for developing and assessing the product). The DAP Tool provides a systematic way to provide feedback to students. The DAP Tool removes the need to spend time on designing rubrics.

The DAP Tool also standardizes the components that are important, almost essential, in all products – the content, presentation, creativity, and reflection. Content, of course, is the focus of the product, so it is always the first consideration in both the development and the assessment of a product. Presentation is what makes the product the product (i.e., What does the product have to include if it is a technical paper, a graph, a monologue, or an interview?). Presentation is the only DAP Tool component that differs from one product to another. Creativity is an important consideration for all products – creativity in looking at the content from a new perspective and designing the product in a way that enhances its meaning. The fourth of the components is reflection. Reflecting on what has been learned about the content and the specific product adds meaning to the learning experience and can lead to ongoing learning rather than the student viewing each

assignment as an isolated experience. The DAP Tool guides the learner in developing the product and the teacher in assessing the product by focusing on content, presentation, creativity, and reflection being the components of each product. After all, consistency in the development of products as well as the assessment of products helps both the teacher and students. This consistency also leads to the development of higher quality products, as the consistent expectations remove questions and the need to reinterpret each new rubric with every new assignment.

DAP Tools have three tiers for each product that allow the teacher to raise the level of expectations for different children in the class in order to challenge each one. Of course, preassessment information guides the teacher in the decision to use the next tier of the DAP Tool for a specific product. The three tiers allow for differentiation in the development and assessment of products. Differentiating assessment as well as the content, process, and product allows increasingly appropriate learning opportunities for all children, including those who are gifted and talented.

The grading scale in the DAP Tool uses the standard as the benchmark to guide both the student and the teacher. The performance scale has seven levels with the lowest one being indicated by a zero, and the others being numbered to six. (See above figure.) The most important aspect of this performance scale is that it raises the learning ceiling for all students with the top level being that of a professional. This professional level communicates that adults who are professionals use products in their careers and their avocations, and it also provides a level to which students can aspire.

If you want to learn more about using products to engage students in learning and about the DAP Tool as a means to guide students in the development of products and the teacher in assessing the products, check out *Assessing Differentiated Student Products: A Protocol for Development and Evaluation*. The revised DAP Tool also is described in a chapter of the revision of *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom*. Both books are “hot off the press” of Prufrock.

Creativity, a category of giftedness in Kentucky, is the key to success in the 21st century, and encouraging creative young people is critical to attaining this success. Recognizing and engaging creative young minds is a process, a creative process that involves not only students and teachers but parents as well.

The Center is committed to providing services to students who are identified as gifted in creativity. In late October, as part of The Center's Berta Excellence in Education Series, Dr. Bonnie Cramond conducted two seminars on developing creativity in young people. Bonnie, an expert on this subject, directs the Torrance Center for Creative Studies and Talent Development at the University of Georgia. Both seminars were free and open to the public thanks to the generosity of the Berta family in Bowling Green.

In the following interview, Bonnie shares some of her expertise on identifying, engaging, and cultivating creativity in young people.

What are some obstacles to nurturing creativity in young people?

All of the standardized testing that is required in schools has become an obstacle to teachers because, to a large extent, they feel so stressed. They feel their hands are tied because they're told that they have to make annual yearly progress. And a lot of people believe that, if you take time to be creative, it's a waste of time – that you're not learning things. But I really believe that, if we use our creativity when we learn, we learn thoroughly. We learn better.

Why is it important to promote and nurture creativity in young people?

When we touch on people's creativity, we enable them to really be engaged in the world in whatever they're doing. Our creativity is our individuality. It is our essence. Plus the fact that we can't possibly teach our children everything they're going to have to know in the next five years, much less in the

Creativity 101

BY HARPER LEE WITH DR. BONNIE CRAMOND

What is creativity?

I think that Paul Torrance had a definition for creativity that is a good one. That is, whenever you're faced with a problem for which you don't have a ready answer, some creativity is required. I think that's problem-solving creativity. But I also think it's more than that. I think that expressive creativity is the need to look at things in a different way and then express that to others.

Who is creative?

I think we are all creative. It's like saying who is intelligent? We all have creativity. Again, I think it's similar to intelligence in that we may be born with a different propensity, but a lot depends on how we nurture it and develop it in ourselves. I also think, like intelligence, people's creativity is expressed in different ways. We all have some creativity, and we just need to nurture it and develop it as much as possible. And enjoy it.



next ten or twenty years. We have no idea what we're facing. So as we teach our children to think creatively and to be innovative and resourceful, then we prepare them to meet whatever challenges they have.

What three key things could teachers do to really make a difference in nurturing creativity in their students?

I would say the first one would be to provide a psychologically safe environment in their classrooms. I think every teacher can do this. If students come up with an idea and it fails, it's not the end of the world. People won't make fun of them. Maybe the second one I would say is help students find their strengths, find their passion – what they really love to do. The third one would be to listen and see things from the student's point of view. But it seems like if you're really providing a safe place and you're enabling kids to find things they love and you're listening to them, then you will enable people to develop in all areas.

Vertical Team Institute Gears Up for Success

For 12 years, The Center has offered the Vertical Team Institute designed to build capacity for academic excellence in middle and high schools. Districts send teams of teachers to explore ways to vertically articulate the curriculum, thus preparing more students for advanced classes to reach world class standards. This past July, 53 participants from 3 states attended the English, Math, Science, or Social Studies Vertical Team Institute.

Two-thirds of those participants were part of a federal GEAR UP grant. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a six-year grant designed to increase the number of low-income,

first-generation, college-going students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. According to Mike Hughes, Project Coordinator, vertical teaming plays an important role: "One of the goals of GEAR UP is to support rigor and relevance in teaching and learning. As students move through middle and high school, vertical teams work to provide curriculum alignment from grade level to grade level. Teachers are familiar with the content and instructional practices students have been exposed to as they move to the next grade." He explains, "Teachers collaborate to develop curriculum and assessment that best meet the needs of each student. By aligning

the curriculum in each content area, gaps and overlaps in instruction and content are eliminated. Students benefit by experiencing a smooth transition at each grade level without repeating or missing important content."

Julia Roberts commented, "The GEAR UP personnel have recognized the value of vertical teaming. We are happy to offer the Vertical Team Institute for middle and high school teachers, knowing that young people are the beneficiaries of good vertical teaming."

The Vertical Team Institute will be offered again next summer – July 13-16. Contact The Center at 270.745.6323 for more information.

What kind of behavioral characteristics might a child who is gifted in creativity exhibit?

Highly creative children might be class clowns. They march to the beat of a different drummer. I think, sometimes, creative children are individualistic to what might be a fault in school. Sometimes very creative kids are daydreamers in school. And I think creative children – well, research shows – they're often not the ones teachers like the best because they do tend to have their own ideas about things.

Can you give examples of people, schools, states, or countries that do a really good job of cultivating creativity in young people?

Traditionally, I think the U. S. has done a pretty good job because we value the individual, and we haven't traditionally been the kind of culture that said everybody has to conform. There are teachers and schools and people doing great things in a lot of places, but I think they probably don't get noticed. It's just too bad it's not something we're putting a lot of emphasis on. We're putting more emphasis on minimum standards. I don't think minimum standards are going to keep us as a world power or get us out of our current problem situation. We've got to aim higher.

In 2001, Vince and Kathleen Berta of Bowling Green, KY, donated \$100,000 to The Center for Gifted Studies to establish The Berta Fund for Excellence. The Bertas realized that gifted children had needs that came from their strengths and meeting those needs required both parents and teachers. The Berta Fund for Excellence brings in experts in the field of gifted education, such as Dr. Cramond, to conduct seminars and presentations designed specifically for the parents of gifted children. And because educating gifted students requires teachers as well as parents, The Berta Fund for Excellence also sponsors a professional development seminar for educators to learn how to better meet the needs of gifted young people in the classroom.

The Bertas explained their gift: "It is often said but easily forgotten that the future is our youth. The Center for Gifted Studies provides the gifted youth the training, education, and environment with which to maximize their skills. By establishing the Berta Fund for Excellence in Gifted Studies, we are doing our small part of investing in the future of our youth, Western Kentucky University, and our community."



The Center Partners with Prichard Committee to Provide Parent Training

BY TRACY INMAN

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence has provided the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) since 1997, training 1500 parents in advocacy. Their latest CIPL training focused on advocacy as well, but this time it centered on advocacy in the STEM areas (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Through generous funding from the AT&T Foundation, The Center was able to partner with the Prichard Committee and the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science to provide STEM and gifted components in the training. We were also able to provide a list of potential participants – parents of gifted children who had participated in our programming and grown-up participants of our early programming; a third of the inaugural class has ties to The Center.



Allison Thomas Mefford (SCATS 1984 and 1985) is one such STEM-CIPL Fellow. Having attended our camp in its earliest days, she describes the impact the experience had on her: “Being at The Center opened my eyes to amazing possibilities young people have when they are challenged academically. Seeing the students’ enthusiasm and ma-

turity was so refreshing.” In fact, she wants this for other young people: “It made an impact on me by reaffirming my commitment to helping gifted students in the early grades find their passion for learning, so they can some day have the opportunity to attend The Center.”

This Bowling Green native strongly believes she has grown through her CIPL training: “The CIPL process has helped me to understand all the players in the education system — there are so many more to involve than just students and teachers. CIPL has encouraged me to consider all stakeholders in the education arena — business leaders, civic organizations, universities, grandparents — all are essential in helping schools succeed.”

STEM-CIPL Fellow Jerry Barnaby began his relationship with The Center by producing videos for us almost a decade ago. Now, his son participates in Super Saturdays. Jerry feels that he has grown this fall: “The CIPL process has taken me to a new level of involvement. I now plan to run for the SBDM Council in the spring. To me, this is where the real parent influence on schools takes place. The PTA serves to connect parents to the school, but the SBDM is where parents have a direct impact on the quality of the school. Through the CIPL fellowship, I understand how schools operate and have increased my confidence in being able to facilitate improvements for all kids.”

He especially appreciates the STEM angle: “STEM presents unique challenges. Although the STEM content appears as a unique set of disciplines...

science, technology, engineering and math...each actually cuts through ALL content. Without math skills, social studies content cannot be fully understood. Without a handle on technology, new forms of instruction are not available to teachers and students. Without engineering concepts of problem-solving and critical thinking, no subject matter will be mastered nor will our schools be providing the type of education required in our 21st century economy. Without grounding in scientific curiosity, creative thought cannot be nurtured. STEM content provides the tools needed to succeed in our challenging world.”

Additional STEM-CIPLs are in the works. The J. Graham Brown Foundation has agreed to fund the training for two more years. For more information about STEM-CIPL, go to www.prichardcommittee.org.



CIPL has been a great experience and has given me so many tools to be able to be an effective advocate at my child's school.

—ALLISON MEFFORD



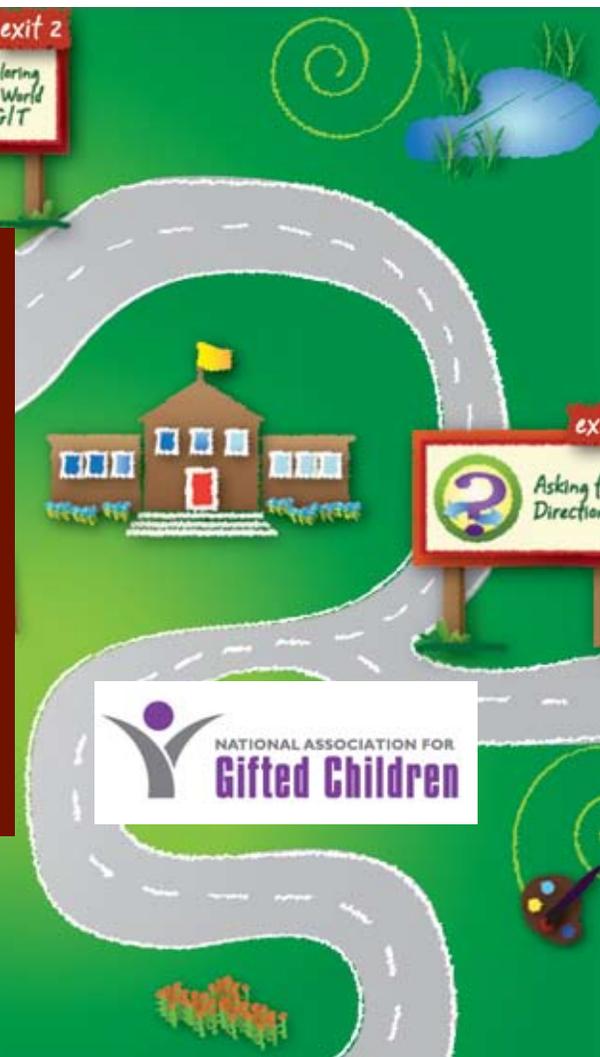


Why is it important to be an advocate? Without parent advocates for all kids, our policy makers, school administrators, and teachers will settle for “proficient.” This is a C. I would not accept that from my child. Why do we accept it from our schools? As parents and taxpayers, we are responsible for creating effective schools. This is more than just a grade; it is an environment that promotes learning, creativity, problem-solving, and citizenship. With these as goals, the content must delve deep into each, enabling our children to become tomorrow’s artists, teachers, engineers, writers, scientists, entrepreneurs, journalists, and policy makers.

—JERRY BARNABY

Mile Marker Series for Your Parenting Journey

The National Association for Gifted Children has a wonderful new tool for parents. The Mile Marker Series is a CD-ROM with almost 300 articles and resources providing answers to parents’ questions. Through her role as chair of the Advisory Board for *Parenting for High Potential* magazine, Tracy Inman participated in the development of the tool. Contact NAGC for more information or go to www.nagc.org for a sampling.



JOE WISMANN: Great Friend of The Center Becomes Award-Winning Volunteer

BY HARPER LEE

Eleven years ago, Joe Wismann picked up his wife's copy of Western Kentucky University's alumni magazine. As he flipped the pages, he found an article about a graduate faculty member named Dr. Julia Roberts who was trying to open an academy for math and science for high school students in Kentucky. Impressed, Joe called Dr. Roberts immediately and volunteered to help her make her dream of an academy a reality.

Joe quickly became a great friend not only to the Gatton Academy but also to The Center. He is currently a member of the advisory board, and he generously donated his time this summer to volunteer at The Center.

"The students that The Center serves are special," Joe explained. "They need those programs. And our society needs those students to excel and achieve all the things that they can be. That's why I feel that it is important (to volunteer)."

Joe received a 2008 Summit Award from Western Kentucky University for his volunteer work at The Center. Although he says he was happy about the award, he maintains that The Center's success relies on a team effort.

"I was thrilled to have my contribution recognized by receiving the Summit Award," Joe said. "However, it's important to also note that I received help from three outstanding students in accomplishing the task. In addition, Dr. Richard Roberts set the team up for



success by tracking incoming deliveries of a small mountain of books and organizing them for us to deliver to their respective classrooms. While my team and I worked very hard, the experience gave me a deep appreciation for all the other behind-the-scenes work it takes to execute the superb summer programs offered by The Center for Gifted Studies."

Joe, along with fellow helpers and Center participants Reese Faust (SCATS, VAMPY, Traveler, Counselor), Ryan Hiles (Super Saturdays), and Zach Inman (Super Saturdays), spent three days delivering textbooks, teaching materials, and training aids to classrooms all over Western's campus in preparation for VAMPY and the AP Summer Institute.

"Our challenges this summer were time, weight, and distance," Joe joked. "It took the four of us under Dr. Richard

Roberts' masterminding direction all of three days to get that material distributed in time. And that's why volunteers are so important. We couldn't have done that without people who were really passionate about doing that work for a really worthwhile effort."

The Center serves three populations: students who are gifted and talented, their parents, and their teachers. After volunteering for three days, Joe realized not only how much The Center needs and appreciates volunteers, but also how even just a little time and effort from a volunteer can make a huge difference in the lives of the people The Center serves.

"It can be done so conveniently," Joe said. "You don't have to volunteer for an entire week or even a three-day period. One day volunteering is very beneficial to the people receiving the benefit of that effort. It's convenient to do, and it's just very worthwhile."

At the end of their first day as volunteers, Zach pointed out to Joe that it felt like they had walked on every sidewalk on Western's campus. Joe laughed and agreed, but felt good about the fact that his efforts were helping an important cause: serving gifted students.

"It reinforced my dedication to a worthwhile cause, and it reaffirmed my belief in the capacity of people to be caring and capable of helping others," Joe explained. "And it was rewarding to work with people who were dedicated and alert and able to accomplish tasks."

The Center provides year-round programming for gifted and talented young people, and we are passionate about advocating and providing services for gifted young people and their parents and teachers. We need volunteers. If you would like to share your time and talents with us, just send an email to harper.lee@wku.edu.

In the past, volunteers at The Center have helped in myriad ways:

- Assisted teachers in classes,
- Assisted in major mailings (sorting, stuffing envelopes, labeling),
- Assisted at major events (planning, organizing, hospitality, etc.),
- Written for our publications,
- Run errands,
- Done clerical work (filing, copying, answering phones),
- Taken pictures,
- Written grants, and
- Helped get the word out to increase awareness of The Center.

Volunteers help make so much possible at The Center. Every photo, every grant, every phone call, every errand, every envelope helps improve the lives and educations of gifted children in Kentucky and beyond. We are always so excited and thankful to have extra hands and minds helping us help gifted students. If you would like to volunteer at The Center, please let us know!

Want to Volunteer? Let Us Know!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ODYSSEY OF THE MIND!

The Center will host the state competition for Odyssey of the Mind, an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Mark your calendars for April 18, then contact us about volunteering opportunities. Go to www.odysseyofthemind.com for information about the organization. Kentucky's Odyssey of the Mind's web site is <http://kycreative.mis.net>.



Harper Lee

Ann Scott, whose son was recently identified as gifted, volunteered a few hours of her time to help The Center get out a mailing. Ann decided to volunteer after discovering The Center's website, www.wku.edu/gifted.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PETE MAHURIN

Board member and friend Pete Mahurin was recently named to the Higher Education Work Group, a task force charged with developing a plan to reduce the cost of college for Kentucky's students. Hand-selected by Governor Beshear, Pete will co-chair the committee along with Mira Ball of Lexington.

Julia Roberts comments, "Pete Mahurin's talents continue to support The Center for Gifted Studies and now extend to open doors to higher education across the Commonwealth. Thank you, Pete."

BEN CUNDIFF

Ben Cundiff, owner of Cundiff Farms in Cadiz, is the recipient of the eighth annual Joseph W. Kelly Award given by the Kentucky Board of Education to business people who have offered outstanding leadership and service toward promoting school improvement and equitable educational opportunities for all Kentucky children. Ben was nominated by Trigg County Superintendent Tim McGinnis, who said, "Ben Cundiff is not only a man of prominence; more importantly, he is a man of significance." Ben is certainly a good friend to The Center and to the Academy. Congratulations, Ben!

KATIE FRASSINELLI

Katie Frassinelli (SCATS 1993, 1994; Travel to Paris; Counselor) was named the 2008 Marketer of the Year by the Professional Marketing Association of Bowling Green. She has served as Marketing Director of the Bowling Green Area Convention and Visitors Bureau for over three years. Each year, the PMA membership recognizes one of its own for outstanding achievements in marketing within the past year. What makes this award special is the fact that honorees are nominated and chosen by their peers. We're proud of you, Katie!

Help Us Help Others

Send to The Center for Gifted Studies

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The Center for Gifted Studies in my estate plans.

I would like to talk to someone about other
ways to support The Center (e.g., endowment,
scholarships, specific programs, etc.).

Make checks payable to the WKU Foundation. All gifts are tax deductible.



**FRIENDS
WISHING TO
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Clinton Lewis

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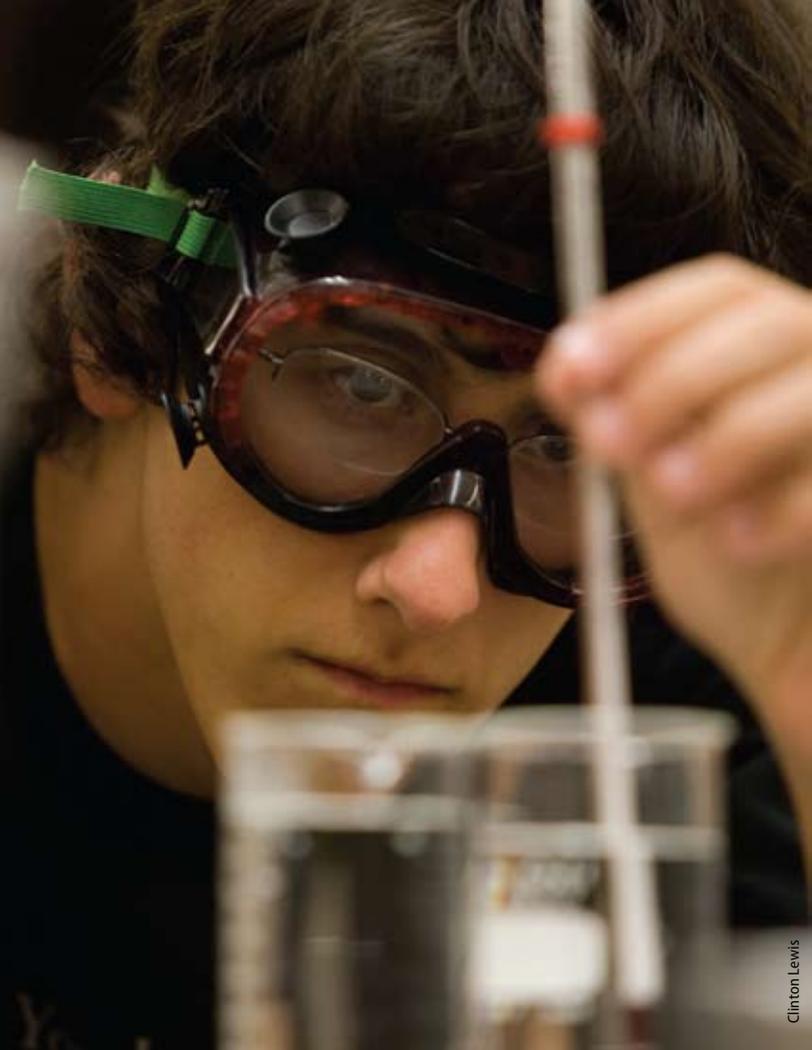
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CALENDAR

February 7, 14, 21, & 28
Winter Super Saturdays

March 27 – April 5
Spring Break in Paris

April 18
Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament

June 4 – 5
Administrators Institute

June 14 – 26
**The Summer Camp for Academically
Talented Middle School Students (SCATS)**

June 28 – July 3
The Advanced Placement Summer Institute

June 28 – July 18
**The Summer Program for Verbally and
Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY)**

July 13–16
The Vertical Team Institute