

# the challenge

Magazine for The Center for Gifted Studies

## The 20th Biennial World Conference Planned for Louisville, Kentucky

In January, 2011, the international headquarters of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children moved to Western Kentucky University. The 20th Biennial World Conference will be held in Louisville, KY, August 10-14, and the venue will be the Galt House in downtown Louisville.

In mid-July, 2012, members of the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children met in Bowling Green, KY. This visit provided an opportunity for the Executive Committee to visit the international headquarters as well as to conduct the business of the organization. This meeting was made possible due to the gift from the Mahurin family to support hosting the World Council at Western Kentucky University. A highlight of the visit was a dinner at the Baker Museum hosted by Jerry Baker. The Museum displays a vast collection of works by the late world-renowned artist Joe Downing, a native of south central



Mandy Simpson

Kentucky. The photo includes members of the Executive Committee, Dixie Mahurin, and Gary Ransdell, President of Western Kentucky University. Members of the Executive Committee include Taisir Subhi Yamin, President, France; Ken McCluskey, Vice President, Canada; Julia Link Roberts, Treasurer, U.S.A.; Umit Davasligil, Turkey; Leslie Graves, Ireland; Leonie Kronborg, Australia; and Klaus Urban, Germany. Tracy Harkins is Executive Administrator of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children.

All educators and parents interested in gifted education are encouraged to register for the World Conference in Louisville. There will be a special reduced rate for Kentucky residents and a daily rate opportunity. See the World Council website at [www.worldgifted.org](http://www.worldgifted.org) or the World Conference website at [www.worldgifted2013.org](http://www.worldgifted2013.org) for more details. If you are willing and available to volunteer during the World Conference, please email [gifted@wku.edu](mailto:gifted@wku.edu). Volunteers

will be welcome on any or all days of the World Conference. The conference will be a wonderful opportunity to highlight gifted education in Kentucky, the United States, and the world. Other World Conferences have been held in London, San Francisco, Jerusalem, Montréal, Manila, Hamburg, Salt Lake City, Sydney, The Hague, Toronto, Hong Kong, Seattle, Istanbul, Barcelona, Adelaide, New Orleans, Warwick, Vancouver, and Prague.



# Letter from Julia

Dear Friends of The Center for Gifted Studies,

As the 31st year for The Center comes to its conclusion, I reflect on a year filled with opportunities for children and young people, parents, and educators. These opportunities are varied, and four initiatives will be highlighted in this letter.

Innovate Kentucky is an initiative with The Center, the Gatton Academy, the WKU Honors College, and the WKU Student Business Accelerator as partners. The goal is to enhance the importance of creativity and innovation across Kentucky. Ways you could be involved in this campaign would be to sponsor a speaker on innovation and creativity in your community or to find a business or individual to pay for a billboard that will highlight innovation, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Another opportunity to help will be to volunteer when the 20th Biennial World Conference is held in Louisville August 10-14. We also will appreciate your ideas for highlighting Louisville as conference attendees from around the world will visit our state.

In our advocacy role, the Victoria Fellows met with Commissioner Holliday mid-summer. After our conversation, Dr. Holliday offered to appoint a state task force on gifted education, and that small group will begin its work in December. Stay tuned for more information on The Center's website and Facebook page.

The two-week October visit from 17 educators from Saudi Arabia was planned to enhance their knowledge and experiences as gifted educators. A similar Saudi delegation will arrive in January for a two-week visit. Sharing with others, including international colleagues, is important to The Center's mission.

Thank you for being a friend of The Center for Gifted Studies.

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts

*Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies*

## THE MISSION FOR THE CENTER

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

## THE VISION FOR THE CENTER

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

the  
challenge

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Even as the holidays grew closer and closer, Fall Super Saturdays 2012 kept students excited about fun in the classroom rather than the food and festivities to come. More than 600 first through eighth graders from three states and more than 60 school districts participated in nearly 40 classes held each Saturday from October 27 to November 17. The program took place at Western Kentucky University's Main and South campuses and the Kentucky Science Center (formerly the Louisville Science Center). Imaginations took flight in classes like *Secret Identity: Unleashing Your Inner Superhero* and *Zombie Survival Guide*. International exploration began in *Let's Learn German! Lernen wir Deutsch!* and *Australian Adventure*, and mysteries unraveled in *Junior Detective Agency* and *The Science Behind Lord of the Rings*. The hands-on, minds-on learning Super Saturdays is known for will continue this year with Winter Super Saturdays 2013 on January 26 and February 2, 9, and 16. Applications are available on our website.



# Interest Rises as Leaves Fall During Fall Super Saturdays



The Center for Gifted Studies celebrated its 30th year of the Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School students this summer with nearly 200 sixth through eighth grade students from six states and 54 Kentucky school districts. In three decades of SCATS, many things have changed — the number of students, the variety of classes, the popularity of red ringer t-shirts and John Cougar (before the Mellencamp) songs— but the core elements that make SCATS an unforgettable experience for gifted young students have stayed the same — the opportunity for independence and responsibility, the engaging and exciting courses, the feeling of acceptance among all campers.

To attest to this fact, we asked Wade Stone, who lives in Glasgow and attended SCATS in 1985, '86, and '87, and his son Nelson Stone, who was a first-time camper in 2012, to share some thoughts about their SCATS experiences.

### What songs and movies were popular among SCATS campers when you attended?

**NELSON:** The song “We Are Young” by Fun and the movies *The Avengers* and *The Dark Knight Rises*

**WADE:** The songs “Sussudio” by Phil Collins and “Raspberry Beret” by Prince... (How’s that for a combo?) and the movies *Back to the Future*, *The Breakfast Club*, and *Top Gun*

### Why did you initially want to attend SCATS?

**NELSON:** It sounded like a lot of fun, and the classes sounded very interesting. It was also a chance to get away from home for two weeks and be independent.

**WADE:** Two weeks away from home was a very cool thought at 12 years of age. My best friend was interested in rooming, and we thought it would be great to live on campus like college students.

# SCATS Celebrates 30th Anniversary



### What was your favorite thing about the camp?

**NELSON:** Making new friends was my favorite part of camp. I also enjoyed doing group projects in class. I loved playing Capture the Flag.

**WADE:** Making new friends from all over the state was my favorite part of camp. Many of us kept in touch afterwards through the mail. I probably wrote more letters at that time than any other time in my life. I also enjoyed the trip to Opryland, the talent show (group performance of Bob Seger’s “Old Time Rock and Roll”), the dance on the final evening of camp, hanging out at DUC, and roaming The Hill.

### What courses did you take?

**NELSON:** *Kentucky’s Future by Way of the Past*, *Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, *Appalachian Folktales*, and *Bill of Rights*

**WADE:** It’s been 30 years, but I distinctly remember a photography class in which we made a camera out of an oatmeal box. I also recall a cool biology class where we dissected various animals. I also took a storytelling class that was a lot of fun.

### How did it feel to bond with other gifted students your age?

**NELSON:** It was some of the most fun I’ve ever had in my life. It was neat to learn different perspectives from kids with different backgrounds.

**WADE:** I loved it. When I look back on my days at SCATS, I realize that it was the first real opportunity I had to be exposed to kids from very different backgrounds and perspectives. We challenged each other in many ways. We learned a lot in the classroom, but I think that paled in comparison to what we learned socializing and living together for two weeks.



**ERIN ELLIOTT** (SCATS 2002-03; VAMPY 2004-05) recently left a job at the Nashville Zoo working with hoofstock to follow her passion of marine biology. She is now employed by the Nashville Aquarium while concurrently working on a Master's degree in biology from Western Kentucky University. Her undergraduate biology degree was also from WKU.

**KATIE FLEMING FRASSINELLI** (SCATS 1993-94; Travel to Paris; Counselor; Super Saturdays Instructor; Advisory Board), Marketing and Communications Manager at the National Corvette Museum, was chosen for the inaugural class of "Forty for the Future: Travel's Leading Talent" by the Southeast Tourism Society.

**MERYL LEE** (SCATS 2003-04; VAMPY 2004-06) graduated with honors from Eckerd College with majors in literature and creative writing. She has devoted much time to writing, a love she developed at VAMPY. She attended two writing conferences while at Eckerd plus studied with Dennis Lehane and Tom Perrotta. She plans on pursuing a graduate degree in library science and possibly becoming an academic librarian who has plenty of time for writing.

## Alumni Update

**PEI-PEI LIN** (VAMPY 1993) attended Stanford University where she majored in economics and minored in Chinese. After graduation, Pei-pei did marketing and public relations for tech startups in the Bay Area. She then earned an MBA in Marketing, International Business, and Management and Organization from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. After earning MBA, Pei-pei returned to her beloved Bay Area to work in marketing for Apple, cheer on the Stanford Cardinals in person, and spoil her two adorable nephews.

**CORTNEY PARIS STEWART** (SCATS 2002) earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Morehead State University. She is now pursuing a Master's in English at Western Kentucky University.

# Innovate Kentucky: Create a Spark

In his book *Creating Innovators*, Harvard Innovation Education Fellow Tony Wagner identifies the key to America's continued economic prosperity: "The long-term health of our economy and a full economic recovery are dependent on creating far more innovation."

Born out of this need is Innovate Kentucky, a statewide initiative that seeks to foster creativity and innovation, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Innovate Kentucky has taken a multi-faceted approach to inspiring Kentucky's big thinkers. Its website – [innovateky.org](http://innovateky.org) – has podcasts and videos showcasing young innovators and STEM events, interviews with professionals working in STEM fields, and a host of resources for students, parents, and educators.



This summer Innovate Kentucky sponsored two classes at The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY). The *Sustainability* course was an in-depth exploration of a subject that goes far beyond recycling and reusable grocery totes, while *Rube Goldbergengineering* challenged students to conceptualize, create, and perfect Rube Goldberg machines, which complete simple tasks in complex ways.



Innovate Kentucky is also sponsoring *Capturing the Innovative Spirit*, a January-term class for students from the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science and the WKU Honors College that focuses on the entrepreneurial process. But inspiring students is just part of Innovate Kentucky's mission. The initiative also seeks to get parents, educators, and citizen leaders excited about innovation. That's why Innovate Kentucky will bring Fark.com founder Drew Curtis to WKU this spring for a lecture, the first in a series of lectures on innovation that will take place in various cities across Kentucky.

Innovate Kentucky's mantra is "Create a Spark." The phrase arose from the idea that revolutionary ideas often start with a singular spark of innovation and grow into transformative wildfires through passion, purpose, and planning. It is the hope of Innovate Kentucky that the culmination of its efforts will inspire Kentuckians to reach the innovation point, described by educator W. Arthur Porter as "the pivotal moment when talented and motivated people seek the opportunity to act on their ideas and dreams." In other words, that singular moment when a spark becomes something more.

*Innovate Kentucky is made possible by a grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation and donors, including Sue and Brown Badgett.*



Susan Summers



Susan Summers



Susan Summers



Julia Roberts

# THE CENTER ROAMS THE BRITISH ISLES



Susan Summers

The British Isles were the destination for spring and fall travel. The spring travelers toured London, Stratford, Stonehenge, and Windsor; while The Center for Gifted Studies traveled to Scotland in the fall. Travelers included eighth graders and high school honors students and interested adults. Many of the travelers were repeaters, having been on other trips with The Center.

The spring trip was timed to be in London during Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee. Travelers waved British flags to appear in a television show for the opening of the renovated Kensington Palace. They saw the venue for the rock concert at Buckingham Palace and later enjoyed the fireworks over the palace from the hotel windows.

The fall travelers experienced 10 days in Scotland. Highlights were a trip to St. Andrews and sights in Edinburgh and Glasgow. As is always the case, some listed Lindisfarne as the best day, others loved seeing *Phantom of the Opera*, while others thought walking in the Scottish Highlands was the most memorable of the experiences.

The next travel experience with The Center will be to Paris and Normandy May 27 to June 5. Check The Center's website for the application and itinerary.

For the first time since VAMPY's Humanities class has focused on the beliefs in the afterlife (that's 18 years), this year's seventh through tenth graders explored Chinese afterlife beliefs, including ancient Chinese ancestor worship and Daoist concepts. This enhancement was the result of Chinese teacher Winny Lin's desire to collaborate with other classes.

In addition to Humanities, Chinese also partnered with the two writing classes. Writing teacher Lisa Logsdon explained, "They presented several short plays based on Chinese folklore, and the Writing students wrote and performed original one-act plays and monologues based on Kentucky folklore. We made

videos of both performances and posted them on the class blog." Winny commented, "The results were just amazing! The winning script was presented by that group in skit format to us. That was fun." Lisa emphasized the importance of an authentic audience: "The kids really enjoyed performing for one another because all writers want an authentic audience to share their work with. This kind of collaboration is good for students because it generates interest in other classes, and it allows students to interact with peer groups that they may otherwise not approach." Even more joint projects between the two classes are planned for VAMPY 2013.

Chinese teamed up with Sustainability teachers Jennifer Smith and David Baxter as well. David described the collaboration: "Winny's teaching assistant, Linda (Chunling Niu), really helped our students grasp the global implications of sustainability. Using current examples from Chinese society, Linda emphasized that every decision we make has lasting consequences. We also joined Winny for a presentation on China's 'green movement,' and her class provided an authentic audience for our students' culminating projects." Jennifer added, "Students from both classes were very interested in the sustainability challenges that we have in common

***VAMPY is a teacher's dream scenario: motivated and enthusiastic students, small class size, and access to a full range of academic and community resources. I was so impressed with students' levels of thinking and their willingness to both challenge and build upon each others' viewpoints and perspectives during our class discussions as well as the high quality of the student-created projects. This experience reinforced my belief that gifted students can and will excel when given challenging learning opportunities.***

**— JENNIFER SMITH, Sustainability**

# VAMPY: Collaborations Strengthen Summer Experience



**View VAMPY's 2012 Talent Show on [vampyblog.org](http://vampyblog.org). You will be amazed!**



Mandy Simpson

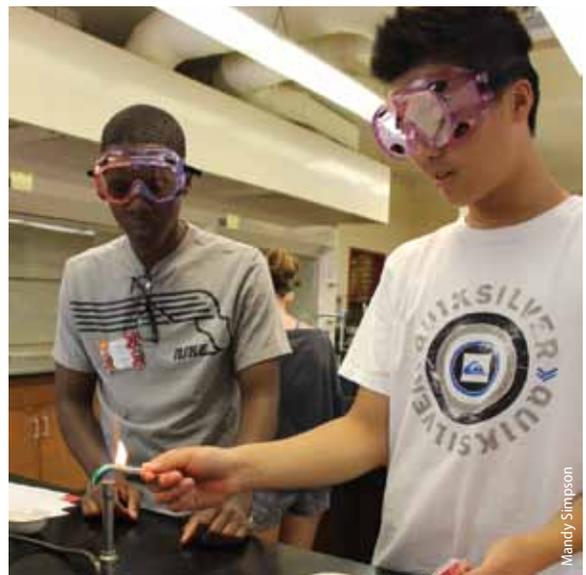
in the United States and in China, and the similarities and differences in how some of these issues are viewed by the citizens and governments of both countries.”

Collaboration added so much to the VAMPY classes. David believes that “one of the greatest benefits of this collaboration was a heightened sense of global awareness – seeing that nothing happens in isolation. We were studying issues in our class that are just as vital on the other side of the world. Beyond that, the collaboration sparked some interesting discussions regarding the role of government regulation versus individual responsibility. We didn’t always find definitive answers, but we always welcomed the questions.” Winny saw multiple benefits: “First of all, my students loved the collaborations. They felt they were not confined in our classroom and enjoyed sharing their fun with other classes. That made them so proud as a group and gave them an identity. It also has made students in other classes with Chinese ancestry proud of their heritage. Second of all, teachers of other classes found another channel to be creative.... One teacher already asked me to collaborate again and try something more in depth next summer.”

Whether the collaborations were a joint field trip for Physics and Astronomy classes to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL, or team teaching, the experiences certainly strengthened and enriched VAMPY 2012.

***I was so impressed with the caliber of students I met at VAMPY! They had the ability to think critically and ask tough questions. They were eager to learn on their own, and I had the privilege of learning with them.***

**— DAVID BAXTER, Sustainability**



Mandy Simpson



# The Center Debuts New Summer Camp for Elementary Students

Middle and high school students performing advanced science experiments, reading John Milton in the grass, and discussing the most pressing issues of the day are common summer sights on Western Kentucky University's campus thanks to The Center for Gifted Studies' programs. But this summer, new scenes emerged — elementary school students building interactive geometric models, analyzing new interpretations of fairy tales, and confidently performing improvisations for classmates.

These moments came courtesy of the The Center's newest program, The Summer Camp. Forty students from nine school districts participated in our first week-long day camp for children in first through third grades July 9-13. The students spent the week studying patterns across disciplines — including language arts, math, and science — and participating in activities differentiated for their particular needs and advanced levels. Additionally, campers improved their self-confidence and social skills with acting and clowning classes focused on creativity and resilience.

Language Arts Teacher Julie Grim said she was thrilled by the students' desire to learn and ability to innovate within the parameters of an assignment. "The children seemed to enjoy the fact that they could explore and investigate topics," she said. "They were given opportunities to use their gifts

and talents and were not 'put in a mold,' as one young man told me. They felt special and appreciated for their inquisitiveness and curiosity."

The Center's Executive Director Julia Roberts noted that it is essential for gifted children to learn to capitalize on rather than shy away from their talents at an early age with programs like Super Saturdays. She said the week-long experience helped all campers, including her two granddaughters from Missouri who inspired the program, work toward this goal.

Teacher Julie agreed, highlighting the impact educators can have when they acknowledge the abilities of a gifted student early in his or her edu-

cational career. "Many times these children are not challenged and are not able to extend and go in-depth with their learning," she said. "The Summer Camp allows for these special learners to feel appreciated and instills excitement and eagerness towards their learning. They are able to take topics of relevance and of interest, make connections, and explore them in ways that best meet their needs, while also expressing their thoughts and ideas in a nonthreatening atmosphere—promoting self-confidence and self-assurance."

The Summer Camp 2013 will be July 15-19. Check out our website for applications this spring.



The U.S. Department of Labor reported in recent years that women are 46.5 percent of the workforce but hold just 25 percent of jobs in mathematics and computer science. Additionally, only 10 percent of all civil engineers and 8 percent of electrical and electronic engineers are women. Considering a large percentage of today's high-wage, high-demand jobs are in STEM (science, engineering, technology, and mathematics) fields, these statistics are concerning.

Armed with the knowledge that we can and must help change these numbers, The Center for Gifted Studies, the Kentucky Girls STEM Collaborative, and Western Kentucky University's SKyTeach Program partnered to offer educators, parents, business and community leaders, and female students opportunities this fall to come together and explore the issues surrounding women in STEM. The three organizations hosted the Fourth Annual Kentucky Girls Collaborative Conference "Collaboration: The Key to Successful Programming for Girls in STEM" on October 12 at the National Corvette Museum and a Girls STEM Day on October 13 in WKU's Snell Hall.

The Collaborative conference featured keynote speaker Dr. Claudia Rawn, University of Tennessee Materials Science and Engineering faculty member and senior research and development staff member at Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Ron Crouch, director of research and statistics for the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet; and panels of women in STEM fields sharing their strategies for success and educators discussing Kentucky programs that work. More than 100 attendees from schools, universities, and businesses across the state attended the event, which Collaborative Co-Chair Sue Scheff called a success for all. "The role models that



## THE CENTER COLLABORATES ON EVENTS TO ENCOURAGE GIRLS IN STEM

we identified in the state came out in force to talk to the conference participants, including a large group of middle school girls, about STEM fields and their careers and how wonderful they are because there are a lot of misunderstandings out there about what the fields are really like."

The Saturday following the conference, about 75 girls in grades five through eight delved further into future STEM careers during the Girls STEM Day designed by SKyTeach, a WKU program

initially funded by National Math and Science Initiative aimed at recruiting, preparing, supporting, and providing outreach to science and mathematics teachers. The afternoon program featured sessions during which participants performed chemistry lab experiments, conquered engineering challenges, used applied mathematics to problem-solve, explored glacier science with geoscience graduate students, and more. STEM professionals also spoke with students during the sessions about how the activities mirror their professional work.

SKyTeach Master Teacher Melissa Rudloff said this kind of programming is particularly important for girls in middle grades, who tend to lose interest in STEM fields even if they enjoyed them in elementary school. "We're hoping that by gearing this learning experience toward middle-grade girls they can see how relevant and how dynamic a career in a STEM discipline can be," she said. "This way, they can make some important choices as they approach high school to stay in advanced science and mathematics classes and continue to push themselves with opportunities outside of school that will relate to developing futures as STEM professionals."

Taylor County Middle School student Rylen Smith said she felt encouraged to begin pursuing a STEM career in these ways after attending both the conference and Girls STEM Day. "Not only did I get to learn more about STEM, I had the opportunity to talk with a professional computer scientist," she said. "She showed me that computer science would be an excellent job for a kid like me. Also, I got to experience hands-on things that helped me understand that STEM isn't just for those interested in science and math, but also people who are 'out of the box' thinkers."

# Executive Director Honored



This fall, Julia Roberts has been honored university-wide, state-wide, and nation-wide for her many contributions. At Western Kentucky University's 2012 opening convocation, President Gary Ransdell presented her with the 11th annual Spirit of WKU Award. The award recognizes an individual who represents enthusiasm for WKU and loyalty to the institution, principles of the WKU experience, and its motto "The Spirit Makes the Master."

On the state level, the Girl Scouts of Kentucky's Wilderness Road Council recognized 100 Women of Distinction to celebrate 100 years of Girl Scouting. The honorees were women whose professional accomplishments made them positive role models who inspired girls to achieve their own goals and dreams. They exemplified the Girl Scout Promise and Law through ethical leadership and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of their fellow citizens through community service. Julia was honored as one of the 100 in Lexington, KY, this November.

On the national level, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) annually presents its Distinguished Service Award to an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of gifted education and to the development of the organization. This award is given to an individual who has been in the field for more than 10 years and has made a significant contribution with lasting impact on the field of gifted education. Dr. George Betts, Professor Emeritus at University of Northern Colorado, described Julia's contributions in his letter of recommendation: "I believe she is happiest when she is providing opportunities for others to grow and to become more enhanced. Service is not an activity or prescribed act for Julia. It is a way of life, a commitment to gifted children and the gifted community." In November, Julia received the award in Denver, CO.



The Center Congratulates Dr. Nielsen Pereira on his National Association for Gifted Children Outstanding Doctoral Student Award. The honor, which he received at the NAGC's National Conference in Denver, CO, in November, recognizes those who have demonstrated exemplary work in research, publications, and educational service, as well as their potential for future scholarship. Nielsen is an assistant professor of education at Western Kentucky University, and he taught the Rube Goldbergengineering course at the 2012 Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY). He received his doctorate from Purdue University and has worked with colleagues to develop STEAM Labs™ programming for students, which challenges students to construct Rube Goldberg-like machines using science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics skills.

# GATTON ACADEMY NAMED INTEL SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION FINALIST

The Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky was named a finalist in the Intel Corporation's 2012 Schools of Distinction Awards in the high school category for its excellence in science. The Intel Schools of Distinction program recognized the Gatton Academy for its achievement in science, providing a rich curriculum incorporating hands-on investigative experiences that prepare students for 21st-century jobs. The Gatton Academy's program encourages student achievement in sciences and engineering, while simultaneously helping students become knowledgeable consumers of news and data in order to grow as engaged leaders and informed citizens.

Tim Gott, director of the Gatton Academy, noted that it is an incredible honor for the school to be selected as an Intel Schools of Distinction finalist: "It is a major affirmation of the work our students have accomplished over the past five years. Our partnerships with Western Kentucky University and The Center for Gifted Studies have opened exceptional opportunities. From exploring the micro-world of genomes to the macro-world of dark matter in the universe, the classroom and research experiences here have allowed students the chance to enrich their education in powerful ways. This environment continues to equip our students to be the future leaders in STEM fields."

Ossining High School (Ossining, NY) and Boston Latin School (Boston, MA) were recognized as finalists in the high school science category, as well. Ossining High School was named the Star Innovator for the Intel Schools of Distinction program.



Carrie Guggenmos



Carrie Guggenmos



Carrie Guggenmos



# GOVERNOR STEVE BESHEAR CELEBRATES THE ACADEMY'S NUMBER ONE NEWSWEEK RANKING

Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear and Western Kentucky University President Gary Ransdell both spoke on September 24 about what the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science gave to Kentucky when *Newsweek* magazine named it the number one high school in the nation — pride, hope, opportunity, affirmation. But Gatton Academy senior David Brown told a crowd of more than 300 people gathered on WKU's campus what Kentucky gave to the students of the Gatton Academy. "We have a community that you cannot find anywhere else," he said. "We learn from each other. We push each other, and, most importantly, we pick each other up when we fall.... We are number one because no one is concerned with being number one."

The audience of Gatton Academy students and parents, WKU faculty and staff, legislators, and community members, however, relished the honor during a celebration of the *Newsweek* designation sponsored by The Center for Gifted Studies Advisory Board. Governor Beshear, The Center for Gifted Studies Board Member Charles Zimmerman, and event emcee Sarah Jo Mahurin highlighted the importance of bringing together the private sector, the government, and educational institutions to ensure the future success and expansion of the Gatton Academy. "This is the future of Kentucky. This is the future of our country," the Governor said. "It doesn't get much better than this, but it has to get better than this for more students."

Special thanks for providing Gatton Academy opportunities went out to Carol Martin "Bill" Gatton for his gift, Gatton Academy and The Center for Gifted Studies Executive Director Julia Roberts, Gatton Academy Director Tim Gott, and Representative Jody Richards, who was Kentucky Speaker of the House in 2006 when the General Assembly approved funding for the Gatton Academy. The Governor praised these individuals as well as the Gatton Academy staff and WKU faculty and administration for removing the learning ceiling for Kentucky's best and brightest students. "Too often we don't challenge our young people enough. The work here shows what happens when you make things more difficult, and you throw challenges at students and give them the tools to overcome those challenges," he said. "They soar. They soar."

A diverse group of 50 parents, educators, therapists, counselors, administrators, and professors gathered October 10 to learn about twice-exceptional students. And they weren't disappointed. Dr. Beverly A. Trail of Regis University focused the six-hour day on Maximizing Outcomes for Twice-Exceptional Children: What Educators and Parents Need to Understand and Be

Able to Do. Author of *Twice-Exceptional Gifted Children: Understanding, Teaching, and Counseling Gifted Students*, Beverly shared strategies and information that would help these children thrive. The following questions and answers provide an overview.

### What does *twice exceptional* mean?

The term *twice exceptional* refers to individuals who have the potential for exceptional levels of performance in one or more domains and an accompanying disability in one or more of the categories defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

### What are some of the characteristics of students who are twice exceptional?

Twice-exceptional children have characteristics of gifted students that include superior vocabulary, wide range of interests, advanced ideas and opinions, and a special talent or consuming interest. They are highly creative, curious, imaginative, and resourceful; they also have a sophisticated sense of humor. In addition, twice-exceptional individuals have the characteristics of students with disabilities, such as inconsistent academic performance, lack of organizational skills, and difficulty with written expression. They are easily frustrated, opinionated, stubborn, argumentative, and sensitive to criticism.

# Maximizing Outcomes for Twice-Exceptional Children



### How are these children identified?

Unfortunately, the most common identification practices require the student to qualify for both gifted education and special education services to be considered twice exceptional.

A special thank you goes to Flora Templeton Stuart's Arts in Education Task Force for providing the funding for the seminar, making it free to all participants.

### Why is it so challenging for them to be identified?

The early struggles of twice-exceptional children often go unnoticed. The students' gifted potential can mask their disability while, in other instances, the disability or behavior problems can mask the gifted potential. For other twice-exceptional students the masking affect hides both gifted potential and disabilities, so they appear to be average students. Relying on separate identification procedures for gifted education and special education is problematic because these students have the characteristics of both exceptionalities. As a result, their characteristics are atypical of gifted students or students with disabilities, and the twice-exceptional students do not meet the qualification criteria for one or both exceptionalities.

### What service options are appropriate for them?

In order to meet the diverse needs of twice-exceptional children, comprehensive planning is necessary to provide a continuum of services to address their cognitive, academic, social, and emotional needs.

### **Describe teaching strategies that can be effective with these students.**

Twice-exceptional students need specific strategies to nurture gifted potential, support cognitive style, encourage academic achievement, foster interpersonal relationships, and promote interpersonal understanding. The teaching strategies must be tailored to the individual needs of the student.

### **Describe their unique social-emotional needs.**

Disabilities increase the vulnerability of twice-exceptional learners. They are more prone to low self-esteem, underachievement, emotional problems, and higher dropout rates than peers. Intense frustration, intense emotions, oversensitivity, and dysfunctional perfectionism negatively influence achievement. Asynchronous development results in discrepancies between academic and social abilities which are contributing factors to the feeling of being different. Twice-exceptional students can have a difficult time interpreting social cues and generating solutions to social problems. Small group and individual counseling is necessary to help them deal with social and emotional issues.

### **Describe their unique cognitive needs.**

Twice-exceptional learners tend to be highly creative divergent thinkers and conceptual learners who need choice in assignments that allow them to use their preferred cognitive style to process information and demonstrate what they have learned. Slow processing speed can make performing simple cognitive tasks fluently and automatically difficult. Weak executive functioning skills impact the students' ability to plan, prioritize, and organize their projects and homework. These students need explicit instruction to teach them the skills they need to be successful in school.

### **What advice do you have for special education teachers regarding twice-exceptional students?**

Special education teachers have to realize it is the contrast between the students' strengths and challenges that causes extreme frustration. The gifted students often resist traditional special education interventions. Help them understand their disabilities and explain how explicit instruction, accommodations, and developing compensatory skills can help them overcome their disability.

### **What advice do you have for gifted education specialists regarding twice-exceptional students?**

Gifted education specialists are often the first to recognize the struggles of these gifted children. It is their role to advocate for these twice-exceptional students and to help others understand the issues. In addition, they must nurture the development of the students' gifted potential and help them to understand they can be successful despite their disabilities in the same way many

famous people have overcome their disabilities. Gifted education specialists must work collaboratively with the classroom teacher, special education teacher, other education specialists, parents, and the student to plan and implement the interventions to provide the support these students need to be successful in school.

### **What advice do you have for regular classroom teachers regarding twice-exceptional students?**

The most important thing a classroom teacher can do is acknowledge the strengths of twice-exceptional students and provide challenging learning opportunities to keep them engaged in school. The classroom teacher must provide encouragement and support when the twice-exceptional students struggle.

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*To learn more about twice-exceptionality, visit Prufrock Press's website for Beverly's book. Also plan on attending the third annual Twice-Exceptional Seminar next fall. More information will be forthcoming.*



Mandy Simpson

# Advanced Placement Teachers Continue Learning through Experienced Institutes

Sharon Pickrell, Advanced Placement English Literature teacher at Williamstown High School in Kentucky, learned many things about curriculum enhancement, writing instruction, and reading assignments during the Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) at Western Kentucky University. But she also learned something vital about the institute itself.

“I know if I go back the next year, I’ll learn something new,” she said. “I know that I have to learn continually because it’s the best way for me to give students everything they need, and this is by far the best place to do that.”

Educators who share Sharon’s feelings are the reason The Center for Gifted Studies offers AP workshops for teachers new to AP institutes and teachers who have previously attended at least one week-long AP workshop. This summer Sharon was one of 420 total APSI participants and one of 96 participants attending an experienced workshop. Educators traveled from three countries, 15 states, and 76 Kentucky school districts to attend 20 courses for beginning teachers and seven for experienced teachers with subjects ranging from biology to United States history to calculus to English.

APSI Experienced U.S. History Consultant Christopher Averill noted that



Mandy Simpson

these experienced sections allow teachers to learn the most up-to-date curricular and methodological approaches in their ever-changing disciplines as well as exchange knowledge with other teachers. “With their wealth of information and experiences in tried approaches that have both succeeded and failed, we can help each other save ‘wasted energy’ by sharing best practices that have worked,” he said. “This is invaluable for those looking to bring back from their workshops activities, websites, and methods that they can modify to their particular school environments.”

Hephzibah Roskelly, experienced English Language and Composition consultant, agreed that collaboration within the experienced sessions is one element that makes them uniquely fulfilling. As a result, she said she has heard reports of student progress, inquiries about newly learned lessons, and comments about implementation of new teaching strategies from more than half of her 2012 participants. “What these comments reveal is how the institute for experienced teachers sparks teachers’ imaginations about their own classes and curricula,” Hephzibah said. “They listen to others, they practice new methods of instruction, they consider alternatives to texts they’ve used for awhile, and, most of all, they interact with other teachers, who offer new insights into strategies, texts, and assignments.”

Experienced English literature participant Sharon said she would like to attend APSI again next year to continue the enrichment that ultimately benefits her students. She thanked both her consultant and fellow teachers for sharing their knowledge and experience. “Just sitting and talking with the other teachers I learn so many new things,” she said. “We share like you wouldn’t believe. It is a very rewarding experience.”

APSI 2013 will be June 23-28. Visit our website for application materials.

The Center for Gifted Studies congratulates Phyllis Hillis, a 2012 recipient of Presidential Award for Excellence for Mathematics and Science Teaching — the highest honor given by the government specifically for K-12 math and science teaching. Phyllis has been a calculus consultant at The Center for Gifted Studies' Advanced Placement Summer Institute for more than 15 years, but in 2012 we were proud that she attended the Presidential Award ceremony in Washington, D.C., in June instead.

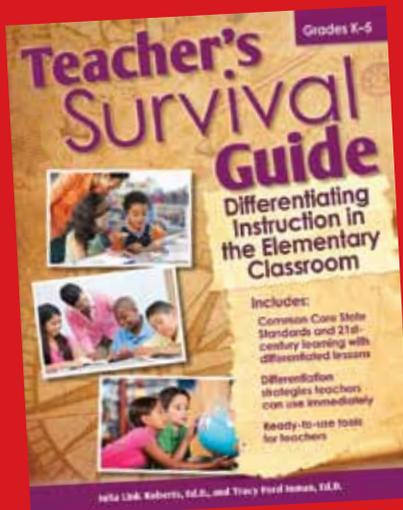


Phyllis has taught at Oak Ridge High School in Tennessee since 1979, and she currently teaches precalculus honors and AP Calculus AB. Phyllis has presented sessions at numerous conferences and is coauthor of a calculus workbook, *Calculus Calculator Labs*. She served for six years on the SAT II Mathematics Test Development Committee, and she has been a reader and table leader at the AP Calculus Reading for 12 years. She is also a Tandy Outstanding Educator awardee.

# The Center Congratulates Phyllis Hillis

“Teaching young people on a daily basis has always been a privilege and joy,” Phyllis said. “Receiving recognition for what I love to do, teach the beauty and power of mathematics, validates my efforts. I thank my students, who inspire and challenge me to be my best every day. To my teachers and colleagues, whose guidance and support have impacted my teaching, I am grateful. I want to also thank my husband and family, who have provided unwavering support. I am honored to receive the Presidential Award.”

## Teacher's Survival Guide: Differentiating Instruction in the Elementary Classroom



Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman have a new resource through Prufrock Press ([www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)). *Teacher's Survival Guide: Differentiating Instruction in the Elementary Classroom* answers the most common questions about differentiation, including what it is, how teachers can set up a classroom that promotes differentiation, which topics should be differentiated, what strategies are most effective, and how

teachers can assess students engaged in different classroom experiences. Each chapter provides proven differentiation strategies along with examples of their use in elementary classrooms. From 21st-century learning to the Common Core State Standards to established differentiation models, this resource will guide teachers of children in grades K–5 to successfully differentiate instruction for all of their students.

# Volunteer Victoria Kelly Receives WKU Summit Award



Victoria Kelly is an essential part of The Center for Gifted Studies' team. She works hard to tackle some of the most important tasks at the office, finishes projects with polish, and inspires the staff with her drive and dedication. This fall, however, Victoria's efforts as a volunteer encouraged not only those who witness and benefit from her commitment, but also those who attended the Western Kentucky University Summit Awards where she was honored as a WKU volunteer of the year on October 18.



Bryan Lemon

The 26-year-old daughter of John and Linda Kelly has been assisting The Center since 2006 and was recognized for her efforts alongside volunteers from nearly 30 other WKU departments and organizations during the homecoming week ceremony.

Dr. Marty Boman, director of the Kelly Autism Program, works closely with Victoria and others diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders and said that receiving the Summit Award was deeply meaningful for Victoria. "She enjoys her work at The Center for Gifted Studies immensely due to the fact that she is being productive, and she truly enjoys accomplishing her task for the day," Marty said. "If Victoria is given a task, she is on a mission to accomplish everything that is set before her. There is no task which is too large for her to accomplish."

The Center's Director Julia Roberts agreed, noting that Victoria's efforts allow The Center to accomplish its goal of providing quality programming for gifted students, educators, and parents throughout each year. Victoria's helping hands and giving spirit are true gifts to The Center.

Marty said Victoria is happy to be part of The Center for Gifted Studies' family and will continue to enjoy her work as a volunteer. "She is accepted by all the professionals and students who show great compassion, friendship, and understanding," she said. "This is truly important for Victoria."

The Center would like to thank all the volunteers who make our programs and services possible. Our volunteers take on many tasks from serving on our advisory board, to helping with Saturday and summer programs, to sharing with others information about our programs. We are grateful for all of them. If you are interested in volunteering for The Center, email [gifted@wku.edu](mailto:gifted@wku.edu) or call 270-745-5991.

Gifted and talented children need more than academic challenge and opportunity to reach their full potential. They need the support of parents, educators, and role models who understand both their intelligence and the social and emotional needs that accompany it. To help illuminate issues surrounding the psychology of gifted students, The Center for Gifted Studies hosts the Berta Excellence in Education Workshop each fall.

About 50 parents, educators, and community members gathered at the Carroll Knicely Conference Center for an evening geared toward parents on October 22 and a full day tailored for educators on October 23. Both workshops featured presenter Dr. Tracy L. Cross, Executive Director of the Center

they can manage information about themselves to create the image of themselves that they want the world to have. They learn how to do that differently by groups, so some friends might get certain kinds of information, classmates another, distant relatives another, and immediate families another. All this is simply managing the information that other people have about them.”

After exploring the psychology of gifted students, Tracy offered several recommendations for parents and educators of gifted students who need social and emotional support to accompany an appropriately challenging learning environment. “First, kids are kids first and gifted second,” he said. “Two, don’t treat your children as their gift. Three, make sure they have time

to spend together with other gifted kids. Four, consider some sort of residential option for the child in the summer, if not year round, but it really helps gifted kids not feel so different from the general population. Also, if you have the opportunity to spend some time at your child’s school, do. Get a sense of the social venue to see if it is intellectually supportive or not. Encourage your kid to do things other than academics, but don’t discourage them from doing things they have passions for. Letting them pursue their passions can be very helpful.”

The Center will host the next Berta Workshop in fall 2013.

## Berta Workshop Shines Light on Social and Emotional Needs

for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary and author of the recently published *Handbook for Counselors Serving Students with Gifts and Talents*.

Tracy highlighted how the social and emotional needs of gifted children often differ from other children because gifted students have higher rates of perfectionism, asynchronous development, and over-excitability tendencies than the general population. Gifted students also grapple with what psychologist Larry Coleman describes as the “stigma of giftedness,” which Tracy explained in three parts. “One, gifted kids want to have normal social interactions, but normal is idiosyncratic to their way of being. So if they are introverted, it would have one pattern, and, if they are extroverted, it might have a different one,” he said. “Two, they learn that, when others find out they are gifted, they treat them differently, not necessarily badly but differently. And, three, they learn that



**Thanks to the generosity of Bowling Green’s Vince and Kathleen Berta, the Berta Education Series has been offered free to the public each fall. Each year nationally-known experts in the areas of social and emotional needs of the gifted have shared ideas and been a valuable resource to parents, educators, counselors, and administrators.**

In response to a request on The Center's Facebook page this summer, we have begun compiling a list of SCATS and VAMPY counselors who have spent the most summers participating, facilitating, and teaching The Center's programs. This list is a starting point as we identify alumni who are candidates for the most years at SCATS and/or VAMPY. During the first half of The Center's history, our records did not include the database that we now have. If you have a similar number of years in The Center's programs as camper, counselor, teaching assistant, and/or teacher, please send your information to [gifted@wku.edu](mailto:gifted@wku.edu) so we may add you to this list.

## Summer with The Center Record-Setters

**14 – Dennis Jenkins**  
(6 counselor, 3 head counselor, 5 VAMPY teacher)

**13 – Sarah Jo Mahurin**  
(9 camper, 3 counselor, 1 teaching assistant)

**10 – Leigh Johnson**  
(3 camper, 5 head counselor, 2 VAMPY teacher)

**10 – Hank Zimmerman**  
(3 camper, 7 counselor)

**9 – Harry Chalmers**  
(5 camper, 4 counselor)

**9 – Anna Hitron**  
(4 camper, 5 counselor)

**9 – Randy Pinion**  
(4 camper, 5 counselor)

**8 – Corey Alderdice**  
(5 counselor, 3 head counselor)

**8 – Mary Johnston**  
(3 camper, 3 counselor, 2 head counselor)

**8 – Thomas Johnston**  
(2 camper, 5 counselor, 1 VAMPY teaching assistant)

**8 – Deanna Laster Lively**  
(4 counselor, 2 teaching assistant, 2 VAMPY teacher)

**8 – Amber Norris**  
(5 camper, 3 counselor)

**8 – Wake Norris**  
(4 camper, 4 counselor)

**8 – Johanna Takach**  
(4 camper, 4 counselor)

## Friends of The Center

**Brenda Adams**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Brown & Sue Badgett**  
Hanson, KY

**Nancy Bell**  
Brandenburg, KY

**Robert & Mary Ching**  
Elizabethtown, KY

**Craig Cobane**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Patrick Cronin & Leigh Johnson**  
(SCATS 1993-94; VAMPY 1994; Travel to Russia; Counselor; VAMPY Instructor)  
McLean, VA

**Ruth Denhardt**  
St. Petersburg, FL

**Bob & Sheila Depp**  
Owensboro, KY

**Emerson Electric Company**  
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**John & Linda Kelly**  
Bowling Green, KY

**David & Nancy Laird**  
Louisville, KY  
*In Memory of Frederick "Frosty" Knoop, Jr.*

**Robert Langley**  
Waddy, KY  
*Riley Jane Lawrence Fund*

**David & Sarah Markham Lawrence**  
(VAMPY 1988-90)  
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**Stewart & Amanda Lich**  
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**William Lutz**  
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**Bo & Therma Marcol**  
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**Carl & Donna Martray**  
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**Rodney & Janet Meeks**  
Custer, KY

**Brian & Allison Thomas**  
(SCATS 1984) **Mefford**  
Alvaton, KY

**Prabodh & Daksha Mehta**  
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Lexington, KY

**Michael & Julie Muscarella**  
Paducah, KY

**Brad & Phyllis Mutchler**  
Paducah, KY

**Scott Nass**  
(VAMPY 1988-91; Counselor)  
Ventura, CA  
*For VAMPY Alumni Fund*

**Melanie Maron Pell**  
(VAMPY 1986-88)  
Silver Spring, MD

**Rankin & Dolly Powell**  
Corydon, KY

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*In Memory of Carol Laird*

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Mandy Simpson

# CALENDAR

January 26, February 2, 9, & 16, 2013  
**Winter Super Saturdays**

May 24, 2013

**Kentucky Recognition Ceremony for  
Duke Talent Identification Program**

May 27 – June 5, 2013

**Travel in France**

June 9 – 21, 2013

**The Summer Camp for Academically  
Talented Middle School Students (SCATS)**

June 23 – 28, 2013

**The Advanced Placement Summer Institute**

June 23 – July 13, 2013

**The Summer Program for Verbally and  
Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY)**

July 15 – 19, 2013

**The Summer Camp**

August 10 – 14, 2013

**World Council for Gifted and Talented Children  
World Conference, Louisville, KY**