

the challenge

Magazine for The Center for Gifted Studies

IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS AT THE GATTON ACADEMY

The Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky has graduated seven classes of students with the first class being the only one to spend just one year at the residential school. In that short time, *Newsweek* has named the Gatton Academy the number one public high school in the United States in 2012 and 2013 (*Newsweek* did not rank schools this year). Intel selected the Gatton Academy as one of three top high school science programs in the country in 2012.

Changes are in the near future for the Gatton Academy – a new director and an expanding footprint to Schneider Hall. The expansion of Schneider Hall will increase the capacity of Kentucky's residential high school for juniors and seniors with exceptional interest and talent in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Dr. Lynette Breedlove has been named Director for the Academy. She comes from Houston, TX, where she was the Director of Advanced Academic Studies and Secondary Counseling for the Spring Branch School District. Lynette of-



1929

University of Louisville Photographic Archives, Caufield and Shook Collection

ficially will assume the directorship in late July in time for the 2014-2015 school year.

An anonymous donor has made a gift of ten million dollars that will make the expansion of Schneider Hall possible. New construction will begin as the 2014-2015 school year concludes. Architectural plans detail the extension of the wings to provide living space for 100 females and 100 males. The expansion will also provide a large space in which 200 Gatton Academy students can assemble for seminars

and many other occasions. All of the new construction will be on the street side of Schneider Hall.

The Kentucky General Assembly provided additional operating funding for the Gatton Academy in the 2014 session. This funding will make it possible to accommodate 200 students or 100 juniors and 100 seniors. Currently, the capacity is 126.

Schneider Hall is home to The Center for Gifted Studies and the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science.

Letter from Julia



Dear Friends of The Center for Gifted Studies,

Kentucky has had the slogan of “unbridled learning” for some time. Of course, horses and references to horses are important in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Recently, Dale Brown, a member of The Center for Gifted Studies Advisory Board, used a phrase that seems to characterize the goal of The Center for Gifted Studies – we are working to “unbridle learning.” And The Center does that by advocating for policies that will allow students to learn what they are ready to learn, providing programming that allows students to learn with others who are ready to learn at advanced levels and who share their interests, and offering professional development for educators and parents to be spokespeople for “unbridling learning.”

Summer is a wonderful time for changing the pace of life for many folks. At The Center for Gifted Studies, the pace picks up with a full summer of programming. There are opportunities for almost all ages to be learning and enjoying the friendship of idea-mates – those who share interests.

The Center fills the year with opportunities for youth and for adults, including professional development for parents and educators. Plan to come to the Fall TAG

Institute for outstanding presentations by members of The Association for the Gifted (TAG) board. TAG presentations will be on target for teachers at all levels, school leaders, counselors, and parents.

IdeaFestival Bowling Green was a new event in 2014, and it marked the beginning of a new tradition. The focus was on creativity and innovation. Speakers had 20 minutes to share their ideas, and then it moved on to the next one. Do you have suggestions for speakers for next year’s IdeaFestival? We welcome your ideas for the IdeaFestival or for any of our programs.

The Center for Gifted Studies has been offering programming for more than three decades. I am so happy when I hear from any of our former campers to learn what they are doing now and what their current contact information is. Thanks to each of you for submitting your current information.

Please continue to share opportunities offered by The Center for Gifted Studies with friends and others who know nothing about these programs and services. You are often the only way many hear about The Center for Gifted Studies. Remember, an opportunity isn’t a real opportunity until you know about it!

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

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

the
challenge

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What do hot air balloons, rockets, and speakers have in common? What makes a concoction gooey, bubbling, and stinky? How do you drop an egg from a tall building without breaking it? Is the science in *The Hobbit* real? How can analyzing dirt and fingerprints help you find a kidnapped Big Red? How do Newton's Laws of Motion help you design model-sized carnival rides? And is "rocket science" really that complex?

Curious young people found out the answers to these and other questions during Winter Super Saturdays this past February. Of the 35 classes offered, hands-on science classes were offered for every grade level from K to 8. What makes these

classes so much fun and educational is the scientific method employed by the Super Saturdays teachers. Instead of just presenting information as fact, these teachers encourage their Super Saturdays students to come to class curious – to question and to explore.

The teachers of these science classes include high school and elementary science teachers, a middle school math teacher, engineers, and a chemistry professor. They are experienced in educating high-ability learners through the scientific method of learning. Questioning, experimenting, failing, and asking "what happens if..?" will whet the knowledge appetite for any child. Read what these

teachers say in their own words about how they use the scientific method in their Super Saturdays teaching – and then wish that you were young enough to sign up!

Allison Bemiss (Little Learners, Big Ideas, grade K–Part of the Grow Up Great Grant, see pages 6-7 for full story), *Abstract Art.*

Food Coloring. Vinegar. Baking Soda. Children squeal with excitement and hop out of their chairs. They are talking, smiling, testing ideas. But at the heart of it all, wonder. The children were charged that day to use their mystery materials to create a work of abstract art. I remember

THE WONDER OF IT ALL

SCIENCE AND IMAGINATION IN SUPER SATURDAYS

BY GAIL HILES



BRIAN CAMPBELL

the way a couple of kids sat and looked at me through their too-large science goggles waiting for me to come over to give them step-by-step guidelines or a worksheet with directions, which was not going to happen. If kids are going to learn, they need time to explore, wonder, and dare I say it... **PLAY!** When the first brave group decided to try experimenting turning colored liquid into powder, something magical happened, and, after the magic, it didn't take long for the excited questions to start—"What happens if we use the large dropper?" "I mixed those colors, and it made pink. I wonder if I can do it again?" "Why is it fizzing?" Inquiry, creativity, and wonder were at the heart of our exploration. When learning is limited only by the questions children ask, we remove the ceiling.

Nita Cole (Science R Us, grades 2 & 3)

All scientists, even junior scientists, need to have an understanding of the scientific method. This step-by-step process provides the necessary tools to solve problems. Teaching students how to use their five senses when observing during a test to solve a problem is crucial. One activity my junior scientists do when learning the scientific method is called "Popcorn Fun." During this activity students learn about popcorn, hypothesize, estimate, listen, smell, feel, hear, and finally taste it. Step by step, the scientific method process provides many opportunities for scientists of any age to not only solve problems but to also have a better understanding of the world around them. Science is the springboard to life, and if a teacher can show a student the way, the student will be a lifelong lover of science.

Patricia Bertke (Bridging the Gaps with Bridge Building and Design, grades 2 & 3)

The scientific method is a map for critical thinking and, as such, can be used and enforced across multiple subject areas in order to solve problems. With younger students, my favorite questions are why or how. Many times I never have to ask the question because the students are already asking it. In our bridge design class we focus on how engineers solve problems by answering the questions of who, what, why, how, which, where, and when. Reasonable answers must have support or proof, and this leads to the next questions after students investigate: How do we know? Who designs bridges and why? Why are there different shapes in bridge designs? What materials are better for each design? Students begin to think critically: "If I do this, then that could hap-

"Science, my boy, is made up of mistakes, but they are mistakes which it is useful to make, because they lead little by little to the truth."

— **JULES VERNE**, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*

Andrea Heming (Kitchen Table Chemistry, grades 1 & 2)

For many of my students, it is their first time using the scientific method. I usually demonstrate how to select a hypothesis first before they do it individually. They talk it over with their learning partner and then share their hypothesis. For example, students made a density rainbow in a jar with different liquids. Working in groups, the students asked questions, tried different theories, and then came up with their desired result. After this first class activity, the students completed experiments more independently and used the scientific method with confidence.



pen." Each week students return with stories of things they have noticed that relate to the concepts we are working on. The conclusions students reached on their own are much more valuable than anything I would directly state. Method in action!

Chad Snyder (The Hobbit and Wizardry, grades 4, 5, & 6) Much of the scientific method seems to be inherently understood with children. There is always asked a "Why?" or "How?" for something, and then the experimenting usually follows. On some level there is an understood action and reaction to learning about the world around them. In *The Hobbit and Wizardry Class* we merge two exciting topics: science and fantasy. We asked "How did a Uruk-hai ex-



plode part of King Theoden's Helm Deep wall?" Students solved that question by asking what makes a good fuel, and then testing different compounds. Using science to explore fantasy opened up students' eyes to how much fun science can be!

Ashley Murphy, (What's the Matter? Playing with Polymer Chemistry, grades 5, 6, & 7) My Super Saturdays topic of "playing with polymers" includes a lot of "Wow! Neat!" moments, such as observing Instant Snow, a white plastic powder that rapidly expands in water. But when those moments of just looking end, the real science begins. After defining hydrophilic polymers as those that expand in water, students began to imagine what household liquids might produce the most expansion. Students used data tables, graphs, measurements, and more to test predictions about their "Gro-Gators," small hydrophilic-polymer toys. Most of the students planned to continue using their findings outside of the class.

Joe Napier, (Rocket Science, grades 6 & 7) Kids really open up when they know that the scientific method is something all of us use all of the time. Being curious, asking



questions, seeking answers, being satisfied with valid explanations – these activities are part of being human and exploring the world around us. Using a model rocket as a platform from which to teach physics makes the scientific method easy to understand and apply.

"What happens when we enlarge the rocket fins?" The kids think through the concepts demonstrated in experience from earlier that day. They sift through data in their minds – quantitative and qualitative – and compare this change in input (larger fins) to the rocket flight we previously simulated on the computer. "The center of mass will shift toward the rear." Right. "The center of drag will also move to the rear, more than the center of mass." Correct. "This will

increase the rocket's stability!" Right on. "Won't the force of drag also increase?" Yep. "Then the rocket won't go as fast, and it will slow down more suddenly when the engine burns out, so it won't go as high!" Exactly.

Craig Frey (Carnival Ride Camp, grades 6, 7, & 8). The engineering design process can be used to further kids' own sense of wonder, interest, and exploration by encouraging them to ask "what would happen if I did this?" This process offers students an opportunity to be creative in building projects and problem-solving, as they usually find that there is not one correct answer that works everywhere all the time. In our Carnival Ride Camp class, some students were initially stunned when something did not

work out as they thought it should and that I would not tell them the "right" answer. They were encouraged instead to explore possible solutions using other pieces from their kits and their own knowledge of simple machines, force, and motion to explore "what would happen if..." These explorations helped them step out of their own academic comfort zones and explore multiple solutions, learning to treat "failure" of a particular project as a step in ruling out options en route to a "successful" project solution.

Socrates said, "Wisdom begins with wonder." These Super Saturdays teachers and their classes are examples of how providing an environment that encourages questioning and exploration make learning only as limited as a child's imagination.

The next Super Saturdays opportunity is November 1, 8, 15, and 22. Check our website for more information.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

These wonderful Super Saturday teachers had much more to say than space allowed for this article. Read their entire stories on The Center for Gifted Studies website at www.wku.edu/gifted.



PHOTOS BY ZACK RYLE

OUTSTANDING KENTUCKY 7TH GRADERS HONORED

On May 23, more than 1,500 people traveled to WKU from all over the Commonwealth to celebrate the academic accomplishments of 7th graders. These middle schoolers scored as well as or above incoming college freshmen on the ACT or SAT. In fact, their scores rivaled those of half of the college-bound seniors who took the test.

Since 1981, Duke University Talent Identification Program's (Duke TIP) 7th Grade Talent Search has identified students across the United States who have scored at or above the 95th percentile on a grade-level achievement test in 6th grade. As part of the program, these academically talented students are eligible to take above-level college-entrance exams (ACT or SAT) to learn more about their abilities. Off-level testing removes the ceiling that can mask the abilities and potential of students with gifts and talents.

Talent searches nationwide open many doors for students. For example, the Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY), was the first cooperative summer program with Duke TIP in 1984.

Duke TIP hosts annual recognition ceremonies to honor the seventh graders who score highest on these ACT or SAT

exams. This year, of the over 64,896 participants nationally, 21,775 students were invited to attend state recognition ceremonies, and 1,894 students were invited to the grand recognition ceremony. The Center for Gifted Studies has hosted the Kentucky Recognition Ceremony since 1982. This year, 1,227 Kentuckians qualified for state recognition out of the 2,222 who tested.

Senator David Givens addressed the honorees at the ceremony. Through riddles and a poem, he emphasized the importance of passion, knowledge, and opportunity: "Our passion leads us to the pursuit of knowledge which creates your opportunity." He encouraged these 7th graders to discover what they love, learn as much as they can about it, and take advantage of opportunities in life.



A very special thanks goes to the Kentucky Education Savings Plan Trust (KESPT) for sponsoring the reception for the honorees and their families. For more information on KESPT, go to www.kysaves.com.

Sometimes in gifted and talented children's academic journeys through school, they encounter barriers to their learning. The Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE) is a nonprofit organization which actively seeks to identify the barriers and to do something about them. The organization has worked since the late seventies to bring about positive changes in Kentucky schools for gifted and talented children.

One way to bring about change is to help others learn about gifted children. KAGE recently sponsored two events for that purpose. Every year during the legislative session KAGE hosts a Proclamation Signing Ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort. The purpose of the event is to proclaim the following week as Gifted Education Week in Kentucky. KAGE hopes that during that week gifted and talented programs around the state will celebrate by showcasing what they do in their districts for gifted children. Students, educators, legislators, and others interested in gifted children are invited to the ceremony. Legislative leaders, KAGE Distinguished Students, a Gatton Academy student, and the Governor or his representative are invited to make presentations. In 2015, KAGE plans to make it a month-long celebration of giftedness instead of just the week.

KAGE recently held its 34th annual conference at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington. KAGE conferences provide best practices and new information to be used by educators and parents to better meet the unique learning needs of gifted children. Attendees had the opportunity to hear noted state and national speakers in the field of gifted education speak on timely topics such as identification and service options, common core

standards, curriculum differentiation, using technology to meet the needs of gifted, strategies for teaching gifted students, and social-emotional needs of gifted. The Administrators Institute, a strand at the conference, gave school district leaders a chance to gain information rooted in research-based strategies and best practices in gifted education that are needed to make informed

decisions. Parent Night is always an integral part of the conference. The evening is designed to provide parents with information and ideas to use in parenting their gifted children. This year's session was on perfectionism in gifted students.

KAGE has been housed at The Center for Gifted Studies since 1990. This long-standing partnership provides opportunities for sharing advocacy efforts. Each year KAGE and The Center for Gifted Studies sponsor the Update in Gifted Education in August and work closely together on other projects. It is a vital partnership built on a joint interest and a willingness to do what needs to be done to see that gifted children are well served by all.

KAGE and The Center invite all to join us as we work together to build connections, relationships, and opportunities for positive change for gifted, to be a voice for gifted children.

Become a member of KAGE to have your voice added to advocacy messages and for other benefits. Go to www.kagegifted.org for more information and other resources.



Kentucky Association
for Gifted Education

Center Connections

Both Tracy Inman and Julia Roberts serve on the KAGE Board. Tracy is president, and Julia is legislative liaison. Gail Hiles works tirelessly for both The Center and KAGE.

LITTLE LEARNERS, BIG IDEAS

(PLAY, EXPLORE, INNOVATE)

BY ALLISON BEMISS

When we think of helping young children become innovators, we often imagine them exploring, investigating, and creating. We envision them designing buildings, exploring bubbling science experiments, or writing the next great novel. We know our little learners are full of BIG ideas, but we also know they cannot do it alone. As educators and parents, how do we help our children become the next great innovator? The truth is the foundation for great thinking starts long before a child steps foot inside a school. The first years of a child's life are a magical time full of curiosity and wonder. It can be a daunting task for parents and teachers to think about how to harness all of that wonder and turn it into an opportunity for learning.

The Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University and Innovate Kentucky received a \$150,000 grant from the PNC Foundation. This PNC Grow Up Great grant will be used to create a six-part video series to help educators and parents learn practical, easy-to-implement strategies to support young children in the development of critical thinking skills. Filming occurred throughout the spring 2014 semester at a wide variety of locations including a Winter Super Saturdays class in February for a group of kindergarten learners with BIG ideas, a fun filled day of science investigation with twenty-



ZACK RYLE

three parents and children at the Kentucky Science Center in Louisville, an afternoon of reading at the Warren County Public Library, and an outdoor adventure at Lost River Cave.

The videos center on the following BIG ideas in Early Childhood Education:

An Environment for Learning

Think back to the best classroom you were a part of when you were in school. What made it the best? Sometimes it's hard to pin down just one reason. Maybe it was what the room looked like. Maybe it was how the teacher made you feel. Maybe it was because you got to explore something you were interested in. Really though, it was probably a combination of all of those things. The video *An Environment for Learning* will help parents and teachers understand how to create an environment that supports thinking.

Wonder and Curiosity

Why does the rain fall down? How did my paint water turn green? What makes flowers grow in spring? Children are naturally curious. They question everything around them. One recent survey suggested that preschool aged children ask between 200-400 questions per day. Children are born to be little learners. We know that questioning is a critical part of thinking and problem solving. However, as

parents and teachers, these curious minds provide us with a fragile opportunity. Our reactions to their questions give us a chance to either encourage or stifle learning. The same survey found that by the time children are nine they are asking only about 140 questions per day. Often that number will continue to drop as they go through school. This video will focus on helping parents and teachers understand how to respond to questions and kindle the fire of wonder and curiosity.

A Thinker's Toolbox

Can you imagine trying to build a house without wood or nails? Or to bake a cake without flour and sugar? You couldn't do either of those things without the proper tools. The same is true of critical thinking. If we want our little learners to be able to explore, investigate, and create,

he or she will need specific tools to do so. This video will explore ideas to help children investigate ideas. Noticing patterns, making choices, and hands on-minds on learning opportunities provide children with the skills they need to fill their *Thinker's Toolbox*.

Little Learners and Literacy

When we hear the word *literacy*, we often think it means reading. However, the truth is literacy begins long before a child identifies her first letter or reads his first word. Literacy is speaking. Literacy is listening. Literacy is writing. Literacy is connected to everything we do. If we expect our little learners to explore their great ideas, they need to be able to share them through listening and speaking. As children get older, they will communicate through reading and writing. All areas of literacy are connected; therefore, it is important that we give them many opportunities as young thinkers to practice these skills. This video will focus on helping



parents and educators take advantage of opportunities to promote literacy skills in their little learner.

Growing Young Minds

Like a tree, a young mind is constantly growing and changing. It needs challenge, reassurance, and modeling to reach its full potential. If we expect children to learn and innovate, we should also expect them to make mistakes. Working through failure is difficult, even as adults. However, if a person is really working to

her full potential, she will make mistakes. It is a natural part of learning, but it is not always easy. Oftentimes children do not know how to react to failure and challenge. They will sometimes want to shut down which, in turn, stops learning. Children need an opportunity to be challenged in order to experience this type of learning. They also need adults to help them learn to persevere when things are difficult. This video will give parents and educators quick

and easy tips to help ensure that children are challenged and strategies to help children learn from their mistakes. After all, mistakes are just proof you are learning!

Learning on the Go

Learning doesn't have to always take place in school or the home. As a matter of fact, it shouldn't always occur in those places. Authentic learning can happen anywhere: the museum, the library, the backyard, the grocery. John Holt, author of *How Children Learn* says, "There is no difference in living and learning.... It is harmful and misleading to think of them as being separate." Learning while out in the real world provides children the opportunity to be curious about the world around them, to understand that they can learn anywhere at any time, to use new vocabulary, and to solve problems as they make sense of the world around them. It is also very engaging. Engagement is the key to learning. *Learning on the Go* will give parents and educators simple but powerful ideas to help their young child learn.

The videos will be completed the summer of 2014. The Center for Gifted Studies and Innovate Kentucky will work with schools, early childhood programs, child care centers, local museums and libraries to disseminate the six videos. The videos will also be available on YouTube and other social media outlets.



TWO VAMPY ALUMS NAMED 2014 UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

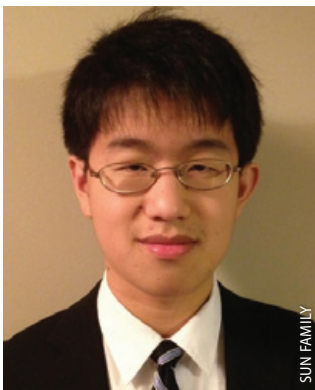
Center alums Kevin Sun (VAMPY 2011-12) of Collierville, TN, and Athena Kern (VAMPY 2009-10) of Lexington, KY, were named 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars. This is quite an honor as only 141 high school students in the United States receive the award each year.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was created in 1964 and has since recognized 6,500 of the nation's top performing students. The 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars comprise one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad, 15 chosen at-large, and 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

To be eligible for the award a student must be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent U.S. resident, graduate between January and August of 2014, and either score exceptionally well on either the SAT or the ACT or be nominated by the Chief State School Officer (CSSO) based on outstanding scholarship.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the 50th class of U.S. Presidential Scholars: "The extraordinary young men and women being honored for the 50th anniversary of the Presidential Scholars have excelled in their educational, artistic, and civic pursuits. They show all of us that when students challenge themselves and commit themselves to excellence, the results can be astounding. These scholars will help move our country forward and will have a lasting impact on their families, communities, and on our society. They represent the potential of all young citizens to lift up America."

"It feels amazing and unbelievable at the same time to be a Presidential Scholar," says Kevin, who attends Collierville High School. "Personally, I was so surprised when I got the email telling me that I had won that I went to the Presidential Scholars website to double check that there was no mistake. I felt so hon-



ored to be given this award." Kevin remembers his VAMPY experience: "The very last night of VAMPY was my favorite night. On this night, I came to truly realize what VAMPY had done for me; it had afforded me memories to hold dear and friends to remember for the rest of my life." Kevin plans to pursue electrical engineering at Princeton University with plans on either entering the world of quantum computer design or pursuing a job in the finance industry.

"It feels a little surreal but pretty exciting," said Athena, who attends Paul L. Dunbar High School. "I didn't expect to have this honor." Athena reflects on her time with The Center. "My favorite memories, because I cannot choose just one, would be going on field trips with my writing class taught by Dr. Hagaman, going to the dances, and playing lots of Magic: The Gathering with other Scandinavian symphonic metal nerds." Athena is going to attend the University of Chicago where she plans on majoring in comparative literature and biology. She hopes to work in conservation with birds of prey one day.

Sarah Schrader, another VAMPY alum, earned the honor of being named a U.S. Presidential Scholar in 2011. She attended VAMPY in 2008 and has graduated from the Gatton Academy and Western Kentucky University with a biology and chemistry double major. Along with the U.S. Presidential Scholar, Sarah received the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for science research in 2012 and was named a 2013 Harry S. Truman Scholarship finalist.

"Being honored as a U.S. Presidential Scholar is a tremendous tribute," said The Center for Gifted Studies Executive Director Dr. Julia Roberts. "I want to wish both Athena and Kevin congratulations on this tremendous honor."

If you are a friend or alum of The Center and have been named a U.S. Presidential Scholar, please let us know by contacting us at gifted@wku.edu or by phone at 270-745-6323.

Gavi Begtrup (VAMPY 1996-97; travel to Paris and London) is CEO of the technology startup WaveTech that has developed light filter technology to optimize sunlight and revolutionize agriculture. He is also founder of Polymath Strategies LLC, an innovation consulting firm. Gavi earned a BS in Physics and Mathematics from Western Kentucky University and a PhD in Physics from the University of California, Berkeley. He has served as a fellow at the National Academies of Science and a policy analyst at a homeland security and defense contractor. Gavi is the author of popular and scientific articles and holds a U.S. patent for a novel method to measure temperature gradients on nanoscale devices.

Miranda Brown (VAMPY 2002-05) currently works for the Kentucky Equal Justice Center as health outreach coordinator, doing educational programs on health insurance and the Affordable Care Act and enrolling immigrant families in free and low-cost health coverage. She completed a BA in Spanish in 2011 at Murray State University and uses her degree every day in meaningful ways that help people. In her spare time, she volunteers with other immigrant support and cultural organizations, plays music, and produces audio documentaries on local and regional struggles and history.

Alumni Update

Rebecca Connor (VAMPY 1991-93) has received a Research Corporation Cottrell College Science Award to study the effects of potential chemotherapeutic compounds on cellular stress response. She is an assistant professor of chemistry at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA. Previously, she completed a BS in chemistry from Carnegie Mellon University and a PhD in chemistry from Caltech. Her husband, Jason Weibel, is an assistant professor of chemistry at Shenandoah University (Winchester, VA), and they have two boys, Dylan (13) and Rhys (4). Dylan will be attending SCATS this summer at WKU.



Sarah Jo Mahurin Mutter (SCATS 1990-93; VAMPY 1993-96; Counselor; Teaching Assistant) was recently named the dean of Timothy Dwight College at Yale, the first female to be named dean of that college. Sarah Jo received her doctorate from Yale's English department and is currently a visiting assistant professor of English and African American Studies at Wesleyan University. At Wesleyan, she earned the Wesleyan Residential Life Award for her commitment to co-curricular planning and the Edgar Beckham Campus Inspiration Award for promoting a "better campus climate." She holds a AB in English and American Literature from Harvard University.

Jonathan Thomas (SCATS 1986-87), assistant professor of Mathematics Education at Northern Kentucky University and assistant director of The Kentucky Center for Mathematics, recently received two national awards. The School Science and Mathematics Association named Jonathan the recipient of the Early Career Scholar Award. One of his publications, *Developing Quantitative Mental Imagery*, was recognized as a National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Linking Research and Practice Outstanding Publication. Jonathan currently co-directs the N³ (Noticing Numeracy Now) project funded by the National Science Foundation

From Rome with

Travelers are fully dependent. Dependent upon the whims of transportation. Dependent upon the guides to lead. Dependent upon the weather. But a group of travelers is also dependent upon one another. The family of travelers that emerges from a week-long escapade across the globe displays a bond unique to that particular trip. It was no different for those who travelled with The Center for Gifted Studies across Italy for Spring Break 2014.

The 21 travelers grew close over the week-long adventure, beginning with an inopportune travel miscue when a delayed flight grounded the group in Philadelphia for an overnight stay and a spontaneous trip to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. Although some of the travelers donned the same clothing for multiple days, people were happy and eager to arrive in Rome. A short ride via private coach to Florence reflected all the symbolic images often associated with Tuscany: cypress trees, fields with vineyards, hillside villages, and a green landscape often reserved for the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci. Upon their arrival in Florence, the group's whirlwind tour began.

An art history lesson fit for scholars began before the jet lag wore off. Art history professor and Florence guide Rocky Ruggiero first led

the group through the Uffizi Gallery and instructed the group on the main differences between key pieces of art. Room after room filled with paintings and sculptures could easily overwhelm the typical observer, but with Rocky, the travelers honed in on impressive pieces such as Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Annunciation*. Viewing the da Vinci painting caused a hush to fall over the group, as it moved in a way that's almost inconceivable for a two-dimensional art form living inside of a frame.

The days spent in Florence were like a carousel of artwork and sculptures putting themselves on display for what sometimes felt like a private gallery show for The Center travelers. Michelangelo's *David*, Donatello's *St. George*, and Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* were among the highlights. From chapels to churches to basilicas, Florence's sights required the travelers to crane their necks to see the intricate frescoes of the Duomo, the architectural features of the Michelangelo Room, and the over-the-top, richly colored marble of the Medici Chapels.

After three days in Florence the group traveled to Assisi. From far off, the village and the pinkish hue of its stone could be seen glimmering atop the hills.



PHOTOS BY ALI RAYMER

The Center Travels to Italy

BY ALI RAYMER



hill. Words fail to describe the views travelers were treated to atop Assisi. With the Tuscan landscape below, the Basilica of Saint Claire to the left, the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Francis to the right, and the homes and shops flanking the hillside behind, the scene could only be described as one of the most beautiful in the world.

From one mountainous village to the next, the group left Assisi and traveled to Orvieto, which was situated on top of an ancient volcano and was accessible by a red cable car known as a funicular. The winding, steep streets of Orvieto boasted a mountainous feel and atop the hill an unknown treasure dominated the sightlines: the Duomo of Orvieto. Travelers marveled at the intricate detailing, gold façade, and twisting marble, but no amount of time would have been sufficient to take in every beautiful detail of the cathedral. An afternoon roaming the shops and streets of Orvieto proved a relaxing change of pace for the travelers, who ate at small restaurants and collected souvenirs.

Compared to the small town quaintness of Assisi and Orvieto, the next stop on the group's journey would prove to be a fast-paced world: Rome. Jam-packed days of touring enabled the group

to enjoy the highlights of Rome, including the Colosseum, the ancient catacombs, Palatine Hill, the Vatican, and the Spanish Steps. The group made memories along the way by eating gelato next to the Trevi Fountain, taking photographs with Pinocchio figurines, and listening to live musicians outside of the Pantheon.

In the middle of the stay in Rome, the group travelled to Pompeii for a rainy but fascinating day of touring the ancient city. The sheer size of the city shocked The Center's group of travelers. As they toured the ancient streets, it was like stepping back into time – every restaurant, shop, theatre, and public bath so closely resembling its original state. Ancient paint adorned the walls of the rich, and graffiti was carved into the walls of alleyways. The innovative quality of the city was evident in raised sidewalks, streets with gleaming stone for night travel, and heating systems for ancient public baths.

The commotion of the week died down with the students, parents, and other travelers packing their bags to head back home with a mountain of memories. As much as travelers are dependent upon so many factors during the trip, the individuals who emerge from such an enriching experience become highly independent. The wealth of knowledge amassed in the minds of each traveler created an Italian art and history expert out of each of them.



The secrets of Disney and Pixar's creative brilliance were revealed. There were crash courses on two types of building: satellites and "from the dream up." Small towns were deemed sexy, underwear was declared innovative, entrepreneurs were challenged, the old ways of making a TV pilot were thrown out, and jobs were in-

vented in the minds of audience members. The Kentucky Bourbon Trail ended the day with a discussion of Kentucky's signature industry.

These topics were front and center at the inaugural IdeaFestival Bowling Green (IFBG), which took place February 28 at the Downing Student Union on WKU's campus and boasted a theme of "Creativity and Innovation." Kentucky's thinkers were invited to enjoy talks by speakers that represented Kentucky's innovative potential, help

artist Andee Rudloff complete an 8' x 26' mural, and share their inspirations and questions via social media.

The goal of IFBG was to have participants be inspired by the speakers they heard. But if you ask Andrew Swanson, who presented along with Chris "Booba" Young on their TV pilot *Alone Down There*, he'll tell you that inspiration was flowing both ways that day: "The feedback we received from the IFBG was astounding. After we spoke, we had 15 inspired people come up to us and tell us how much we had struck a chord with all of them. Based off that reaction alone, I knew the IFBG was something special."

Among the threads woven throughout the 10 talks at IFBG was the idea of learning from failure. Twyman Clements of Kentucky Space told the audience that failing was a critical part of designing satellites no bigger than a tissue box. Advances in technology allowed Twyman and his team from Morehead State University to "fail fast and cheap and small" and come back ready to build a better satellite.

Brian Mefford, founder of Connected Nation, shared that inventing your own job is bound to lead to failure. "If you're not failing, you're not trying," he told the audience. "I'm an

DREAM BIG AND EMBRACE FAILURE

LESSONS FROM IDEAFESTIVAL BOWLING GREEN

ongoing failure, and I'm proud of that." The key, he said, is to focus on your passion as you brave the waters of job creation: "Love your idea and the people you're doing it for."

The idea of an annual speaker series in Bowling Green was born with the creation of the Innovate Kentucky initiative in 2012. "We want to make Bowling Green and this region a destination for dreamers and entrepreneurs," said Julia Roberts, Executive Director of The Center for Gifted Studies and the Gatton Academy, two of the partners behind Innovate Kentucky. "This is the beginning of a wonderful new tradition at WKU."



Gabriel & Stephanie Abbott
Radcliff, KY

Pete & Melissa Ashby
Owensboro, KY

Brown & Sue Badgett
Hanson, KY

Peter Budny (VAMPY 1996-99)
Duluth, GA
Alumni Fund

Dann & Kathi Cann
Leitchfield, KY
*Established the Cann
Scholarship for VAMPY*

Harry Chalmers (SCATS 2002-4;
VAMPY 2005-06: Counselor)
Murfreesboro, TN
Alumni Fund

Tom & Ann Clark
Raywick, KY

Bryan & Megan Coffman
Lexington, KY

Wayne & Jean Dudgeon
Elizabethtown, KY

Daniel & Lori Fusting
Versailles, KY

Ruthene Glass
Bowling Green, KY

Richard Harris
Columbia, MO
*Established the
Brian J. Wattenbarger
& Kristen M. Harris
Endowed Scholarship
Fund for VAMPY*

Bill & Renita Hines
Calhoun, KY

Nick & Pat Kafoglis
Bowling Green, KY

Mark & Elisabeth Kuhlman
Crescent Springs, KY

Jose & Dianne Labrado
Dawson Springs, KY

David & Laura Harper Lee
Bowling Green, KY

Stewart & Amanda Lich
Brownsville, KY

Iraklis & Elena Livas
Lexington, KY

Pete & Dixie Mahurin
Bowling Green, KY

Jerry & Ann Matera
Horse Cave, KY

Barbara McClard
Scottsville, KY

Friends

Lee & Holly McMillin
Paris, KY

Mike & Julie Muscarella
Paducah, KY

Wake Norris
(VAMPY 1989-92; Counselor)
& Elizabeth Zimmerman
(VAMPY 1992-93; Counselor)
Troy, OH
*Alumni Fund
Matching Gift: Emerson Electric*

Rankin & Dolly Powell
Corydon, KY

Kevin Reilly & Ann Marie
Sarnese-Reilly
Elizabethtown, KY

Susan Ritter
Roach, MO

Richard & Julia Roberts
Bowling Green, KY

Elizabeth Rush
Lexington, KY

Susan Ryan
Elizabethtown, KY

J. T. & Martha Sandefur
Bowling Green, KY

Wilma Smith
Bowling Green, KY

Gustaf Swanson
Owensboro, KY
Gift of Art

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

Joe & Judy Wisman
Talent, OR

Stuart & Linda Yeoman
Alvaton, KY

That new tradition started with an inaugural event that dared participants to innovate like Walt Disney and the Pixarians. The end result, according to IFBG planning committee member Troy Coleman, could be a new wave of Kentucky innovators: "It wouldn't be surprising if someone sitting in the audience in 2014 returns to the stage as a leader and innovator in the future to speak about the inspiration they received when they attended the first IdeaFestival ever held in Bowling Green. In this first year, Innovate Kentucky has set a high bar for future festivals and created a template for success that will continue to foster creativity and intellectual curiosity in Bowling Green and surrounding areas."

To learn more about IFBG and watch video of the presentations, visit ideafestivalbg.com.



The two presentations on the Excellence Gap that Dr. Jonathan Plucker delivered March 19 and 20 at the 2014 Wedge Annual Scholar Presentations elicited a universal reaction from the audience: Shock. Outrage. Deep concern. Such reactions were expected since both presentations dealt with the growing problem of excellence gaps, a term that describes the large gaps in academic achieve-

ment between certain demographics on state and national assessments. Jonathan explained that low-income and minority students are far less likely to reach advanced levels, and the gap is significant between the top-performing disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers.

Jonathan shared data from two significant studies he co-authored – *Mind the Other Gap* and *Talent on the Sidelines* (see sidebar) – that illustrated just how grave the excellence gap has become in America in recent years:

- Only 7 percent of U.S. 8th graders scored advanced on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) math assessment.
- In 2011, 10.9 percent of white 4th graders scored advanced on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test compared to just 2.7 percent of Hispanic students and 2.3 percent of black students.
- On the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) given to 15-year-olds, the U.S. ranked 36th in math and 28th in science.

There was one statistic that Catherine Cliburn, a library media specialist for Cloverport Schools, found most disturbing. “Of all the statistics presented, the fact that currently 3.5 million jobs in the United States cannot be filled because our workforce lacks graduates with the proper skill

WEDGE SPEAKER OPENS EYES TO EXCELLENCE GAPS



set was most surprising,” she said. “My hope is that such statistics will encourage educators to target the underlying problems which certainly include providing appropriate challenge and acceleration for our gifted and talented students.”

The fact that Catherine’s mind jumped to the problem at a national level was an intended consequence Jonathan planned for with his excellence gap presentation. “I wanted participants to come away with a sense of the enormity of the problem we’re facing in America today,” he said. “Essentially, everyone should walk

away asking themselves, ‘Where will our talent come from in the future?’” Jonathan included those eye-opening statistics in the hopes of inspiring participants to search for answers at societal and personal levels of how to best shrink excellence gaps.

After troubling participants with achievement woes Wednesday night and Thursday morning, Jonathan finished up with a Thursday afternoon session titled “The State of the Art in the Science of Creativity: Theory, Research, Education, and Assessment.” Creativity models were dis-

cussed and several myths were dispelled (see sidebar for further reading):

- Creativity cannot be enhanced.
FALSE.
- Creativity is domain or task-specific.
FALSE.
- Young people are more creative.
FALSE.

Participants got their creative juices flowing with a writing assignment that broke everyone into groups and tasked certain groups with crafting a constraint-free piece, while other groups had requirements like a palindrome, the character's first, middle, and last name in separate lines, exclamations in two different languages, and a concise word count. Laughter erupted every time a group recounted the tale of an animal whose story flowed unabated or zig-zagged to accommodate Jonathan's quirky requests.

The point of such an uproarious exercise was to reinforce the importance of appropriate constraints for students. Logan County educator Lyndsey Duke said this discussion was the most intriguing part of Jonathan's presentation for her. "We naturally possess constraints based on our everyday experiences, and we automatically put those constraints on ourselves when we are working or creating," she explained. "We have to work to remove those con-



straints to fully express our creativity and experience creativity to its fullest."

Catherine was challenged to reconsider how she constructed writing assignments. "Learning from the writing activity we did, I will think more carefully about the parameters of any creativity assignment or activity," she said. "I will consider how the amount of specific directions may assist or distract from the creative process and product."

While creativity and excellence gaps may seem unrelated, Jonathan said there was a very clear thread tying his two presentations together: "Both topics focus on

the broad theme of talent development in the U.S. Helping every child develop her or his talent is of critical importance in the 21st century. The world simply needs more talent, and our society's general indifference toward developing that talent is a problem."

Efforts like the annual Wedge lectures, presented free of charge thanks to a gift from the Wedge family, lend a feeling of hope that the problem of talent development might one day be solved. To learn more about the Wedge Annual Scholar Presentations and advocating for gifted students, visit www.wku.edu/gifted.

Mind the (Other) Gap! and ***Talent on the Sidelines*** are both available for free and highly recommended for anyone interested in learning more about achievement gaps.

You can find *Mind the Other Gap!* here:
<http://tinyurl.com/mindothergap>

You can find *Talent on the Sidelines* here:
<http://tinyurl.com/talentonsidelines>

Jonathan Plucker recommends the following resources for further reading on creativity:

Beghetto, R. A., & Kaufman, J. C. (Eds.). (2010). *Nurturing creativity in the classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Beghetto, R. A. (2014). Creativity: Development and enhancement. In J. A. Plucker & C. M. Callahan (Eds.). *Critical issues and practices in gifted education: What the research says (2nd ed.)* (pp. 183–196). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Kaufman, J. C., Plucker, J. A., & Baer, J. (2008). *Essentials of creativity assessment*. New York: Wiley.

Kaufman, J. C., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2010). *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Plucker, J., Beghetto, R. A., & Dow, G. (2004). Why isn't creativity more important to educational psychologists? Potential, pitfalls, and future directions in creativity research. *Educational Psychologist*, 39, 83–96.

DON'T FEED THE BULLY

AUTHOR BRAD TASSELL SPEAKS ON BULLYING AMONG GIFTED

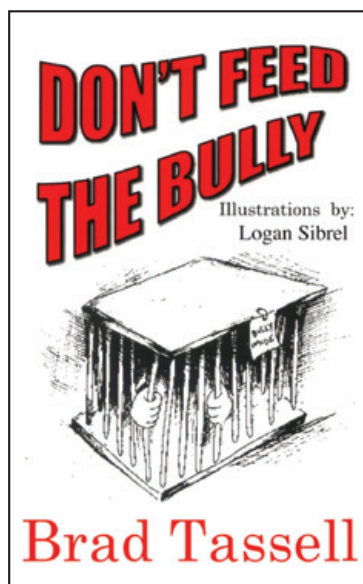
To help illustrate bullying from the perspective of a gifted student, *Don't Feed the Bully* author Brad Tassell shares a story about a young girl and her love of dragons.

One day on the playground two boys in the girl's class tried to deflate her dragon obsession by saying the creatures weren't real. She defended dragons, but her defensiveness didn't last long. She ended up chasing the boys around the playground, screaming and having fun. The next day the duo amped up their bullying rhetoric by saying dragons were stupid. Once again, the girl was offended, and this time she vehemently defended the objects of her obsession.

Brad said the girl's reaction gave the bullies the ammo they needed to keep coming back for more, and, sure enough, they did on the third day. This time their verbal assaults became personal. Not only were dragons made up and stupid, but she was stupid for liking them.

"Now you have real pain and conflict for someone who is gifted," Brad explains. "They know they're smart, but now they're being called stupid. The thing they care about is being attacked. Now that threat is really on top of them."

The third day of bullying caused a shift in the girl's behavior. She came home acting like a different person, and the parents knew something was wrong. They coaxed the story out of her and instructed



her to go back to school the next day and tell the bullies she'd be grounded if she even mentioned dragons. When her tormentors tried to wind her up with more dragon insults, his daughter recited the lines her parents gave her. The bullies lost interest and walked away.

Brad tells that story to illustrate three important lessons about gifted students who are bullied. The first is that gifted kids sometimes get upset over seemingly insignificant issues. "With some gifted young people, sometimes they get so hooked on things that aren't worth getting upset over," Brad said. For example: dragons. This leads to irrational reactions as gifted

children struggle in vain to help bullies understand why their passion is worthwhile. But it's that desperation that keeps bullies coming back for more.

The second important lesson is that when parents or educators see people changing into different people, they may be victims of bullying. In the dragon-loving girl's case, this happened after a third consecutive day of her beloved dragons being torn to shreds. The parents saw her acting differently and got to the bottom of what was happening. Adults can't wait for gifted children to open up. Most of the time, they'll keep quiet about what's happening to them.

"Gifted kids hold in these experiences a lot deeper when it concerns something they're passionate about or something specific," Brad elaborated. "They think no one will understand."

Then there's the ugly bullying trend among gifted students: gifted kids are becoming bullies now more than ever. Gifted children who bully sometimes use their talents to feel intellectually powerful. They say things in order to make someone cower when violence is not an option. Sometimes, though, it may be unintentional, for example a sarcastic comment from a gifted child that hurts someone without them knowing it.

To illustrate this point, Brad shares a story of two boys – Tom and Sam – who

Don't Feed the Bully is a fictional detective story aimed at boys 10-14, although, anyone who can read will love this funny and meaningful story. Hannibal Greatneck III, detective, sixth grade student, or Handy to his friends, walks into William B. Travis elementary and finds a cage in the middle of the classroom. The school has dealt with its bully problem by handing over all the power to another bully. Handy must find the clues, outwit the villains, and get control of William B. Travis back to the students and faculty. The story is a funny one with hilarious and serious undertones, but with great purpose.

attended one of his in-school presentations. When Tom and Sam's teacher asked for a volunteer to read, Tom, whose parents were from India, raised his hand. Upon seeing that the teacher picked Tom, Sam shouted, "Oh, the Indian!" The class chuckled, and Tom shrugged off the comment. The teacher wanted Sam to be punished, but Brad asked for the issue to be shelved for a couple days.

Two days later, Sam and Tom returned for another presentation, and Brad reminded Sam that he called Tom "the Indian." When asked, Tom admitted he didn't like being called that name. Sam had no idea his comment had hurt Tom's feelings and agreed not to say it again. Brad's approach demonstrated his belief that educators should turn their efforts to guidance and solutions, not punishment. The teacher wanted Sam removed from the session for what he said. But how would that help Sam understand that what he said was wrong? "We have to keep the drama of bullying down," Brad argued. "Humiliation doesn't help the bully."

Knowing that gifted children may tend to overanalyze and sometimes struggle to remain humble about their talents, dealing

with bullying on either side can prove a challenge. But the alternative can be worse. Brad has had adults who were victims of bullying as gifted children tell him they were unable to let go of their anger even after their tormentor apologized later in life. They brushed off the apology and downplayed how much the bullying hurt them.

"They're non-forgivers," Brad said. "They want the bully to continue hurting."

That's why bullying has to be dealt with effectively as it happens. Brad has tackled this task with a program he created called "I'm Gonna Write That Down." His definition of bullying is simple: "Anything that's happening to you that you don't like. It hurts you, and you want it to stop." When bullying occurs in a school that has participated in this program, a victim tells the bully "I'm gonna write that down" and then fills out a card. The card is passed along to a caring adult, such a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor. Telling the bully "I'm gonna write that down" often defuses the situation immediately, and if not, an adult follows up with the bully in a discrete way.

Gifted or not, Brad advocates for a four-step method to handling bullies:

1. Stay calm in all situations. Don't get yourself in trouble with your reaction.
2. Assess the threat of actual violence. What are the chances you'll actually get hurt?
3. Have a thick skin and a sense of humor.
4. Collect evidence and say "I'm gonna write that down" if it doesn't stop.



Brad believes bullies aren't the monsters they've been made out to be: "I tell kids all the time that I haven't seen one bad kid in the school, yet there's bullying everywhere. Why is that?"

No matter the reasons gifted children become victims or bullies, Brad says there's one thing adults must do to help them cope: "We have to teach our gifted kids to use their gifts in smarter ways. When faced with bullying, they need to be able to make the smart decision."

Learn more about Brad Tassell's book *Don't Feed the Bully* at www.dontfeedthebully.com. It's there you can learn about the "I'm Gonna Write That Down" program and the videoconferencing option that Brad does with schools to help address bullying.

SPOTLIGHT: Zack Ryle

Whenever Zack Ryle spends hours editing a video for The Center for Gifted Studies or works through dozens of lineup possibilities for the Christ Fellowship softball team, he hopes people will see the act and not the person behind it. Hard work is its own reward, Zack believes, and attitude is the most vital part of your approach to any kind of task.

"I try to work hard," Zack said. "My parents instilled in me a hard working attitude. They also instilled in me that, even when you work hard, you need to stay humble."

For over a year Zack has humbly excelled in his role as the Coordinator for Communications and Technology at The Center. He'd never admit it, but under Zack's watchful eye The Center's website has seen increased traffic and its social media platforms have continued to grow and flourish. Zack had a passion for social media long before he arrived at The Center, and, thanks to a unique perspective on this evolving form of digital communication, he's helped The Center shine in a social media world.

"People think of social media as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, and that certainly is social media," Zack explained. "I see social media as putting information out there and having interactions with people back and forth."

Sharing information is something Zack became familiar with from the moment he came to WKU in 2007. During his freshman year, he signed up to tape practices and games for the football team. As an admissions tour guide for two years, Zack shared WKU's story with potential Hilltoppers. His love of video manifested in a virtual tour for Public Affairs that won several awards for its groundbreaking depth. Zack shared about brotherhood as a founding member of Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji), talked WKU sports on *The Extra Point* radio show he started, and

represented the university he loved so much as a Spirit Master.

By the time he graduated in 2012, Zack had grown to love his role as a storyteller and sought a new way to do so as he stepped away from the broadcasting world. That new way became social media, and for a year after graduating Zack honed his craft as a volunteer with the WKU Alumni Association and a graduate assistant with Leadership Studies. As he grew the Alumni As-



sociation's social media presence and built Leadership's from the ground up, Zack kept his eye out for the job at WKU that would allow him to combine all his loves – social media, video, and storytelling.

That job finally arrived in the form of Zack's current position with The Center, which he started in April 2013. In addition to growing The Center's social media presence, Zack also maintains the website, writes press releases, takes photos during programming, manages technology needs of the staff, and generally pitches in wherever he's needed.

"Working in The Center is really a team effort," Zack said. "We all rely on each other to make sure the job gets done. Honestly, there are few better feelings than when you work with a group so hard on a project and then see it succeed."

But there's far more to Zack than just his WKU spirit. On March 30, 2013 – only days before starting at The Center – Zack got engaged to Mary Katherine Higginson, whom he will marry on August 2 at a ceremony in Owensboro. The couple met through Greek life, with Zack an officer in Fiji and Mary Katherine a member of Alpha Delta Pi, and their relationship developed in a unique way.

"When I was an officer in the fraternity I would lean on Mary Katherine to see how people were viewing us," Zack said. "What are we doing right? She was my eyes and ears."

Sports are another important element of Zack's life. When he's not working or spending time with Mary Katherine, he works as the PA announcer at WKU baseball and softball games: "If you're down at the Nick or at the softball complex on a nice spring day, you might hear my voice over the intercom." He also roots hard for both Cincinnati clubs – Bengals and Reds – and, of course, for all teams WKU. His love for Cincinnati is more than a byproduct of living in Burlington, KY, near the Ohio state line. His dad, who played baseball at the University of Kentucky and was drafted by the Reds, got him hooked on baseball early in life. "There's a photo of me when I was born with a baseball glove on my hand," Zack explained.

In May Zack graduated with a Master of Science in Recreation and Sport Administration with a concentration in Sport Media & Branding. In August he'll be married. Down the road he'll consider getting his Ph.D., and, one day, he hopes to start a family. Beyond that, he's just happy to continue working hard and spending time with those he loves.

"I'm a simple guy," Zack revealed. "My goals aren't lofty. I think God has a plan, and he'll guide us in the right direction if we listen."



Friday saw a change in presentation as Sylvia focused on what educators can do to help gifted students achieve. One of the innovative topics for Friday was educating participants on the detriments of “The Fashion for Passion.” The Fashion for Passion is, as Sylvia puts it, the overuse of educators and parents stressing to their students that they need to find and pursue their passion in life. “How many of you knew what you were going to do as middle school students? What about high school? What about college? The average college student changes majors several times looking for that passion instead of pursuing something they are talented in,” Sylvia

“Do you parent your children with the ‘V of Love?’” The crowd of parents looked at each other with puzzled looks as Dr. Sylvia Rimm began her presentation to parents at Western Kentucky University. The ‘V of Love,’ according to Sylvia’s book *How to Parent So Children Will Learn*, is “a model for guiding the extent of praise, power, and freedom given to your children. When your children are very young, they begin at the bottom of the V with moderate praise, limited freedom and power, and few choices. As they grow in maturity and are able to handle more responsibility, the limiting walls of the V spread out, giving them gradually increasing freedom and power while still providing parental limits” (p. 1). Heads began to nod in agreement around the room. “In some families, the V is reversed to look like this A. Children who start at the base of this figure are given too much freedom, too much praise, too many choices, and indefinite wide limits. They become accustomed to having power and making decisions before they have the maturity and wisdom to to handle their freedom responsibly.”

ACHIEVEMENT THE FOCUS OF 2014 BERTA SEMINAR

And with that opening message, the 2014 Berta Excellence in Education Workshop was underway. Sylvia, former contributing correspondent to NBC’s *Today Show* and author of a syndicated column and several books including *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades* and *See Jane Win*, presented March 6 and 7, 2014 on understanding the social and emotional issues that lead to gifted achievement during the presentations.

“It was a pleasure to work with both parents and teachers during the Berta lectures,” states Sylvia. The Thursday portion of the Berta Seminar was modeled for parents. “The parents were enthusiastic about learning how they could best encourage their gifted children to fulfill their potential.”

explained. Other topics discussed were the Rimm’s Laws of Achievement (see page 20) and the Achievement Identification Measure Teacher Observation (AIM-TO), which is a test that measures the behavioral and biographical characteristics as they relate to school-age achievement.

More than 25 educators and administrators came for the Friday workshop. Williamson County Schools (TN) Gifted Specialist Toni Brown traveled with several educators from her county for the Friday workshop. “Dr. Sylvia Rimm’s knowledge of families and students was apparent in her presentation,” states Toni. “Our teachers left this workshop with a wealth of practical strategies to implement with our gifted students. We appreciate the opportunity The Center for Gifted Stud-



ies has provided for us through the Berta Seminar.”

“On Friday, the teachers asked in-depth questions for finding the tools that would inspire gifted students who were underachieving to reverse that underachievement,” says Sylvia. “Both the parents and teachers were intensely interested and made me feel as if I were touching their true needs. I appreciate the opportunity to work with such committed parents and teachers.”

“The Berta Excellence in Education Seminar has become a highlight in The Center for Gifted Studies’ annual offerings,” states Julia Roberts. “The recent Berta Seminar was no exception as Dr. Sylvia Rimm shared her ideas on what parents and educators say and do that fosters success among children and young people.”

To find out which seminar The Center is hosting next, visit www.wku.edu/gifted/educators.

RIMM’S LAWS OF ACHIEVEMENT (2004)

1. Children are more likely to be achievers if their parents join together to give the same clear and positive message about school effort and expectations.
2. Children can learn appropriate behaviors more easily if they have models to imitate.
3. Communication about a child between adults (referential speaking) within the child’s hearing dramatically affects children’s behaviors and self-perception.
4. Overreaction by parents to children’s successes and failures leads them to feel either intense pressure to succeed or despair and discouragement in dealing with failure.
5. Children feel more tension when they are worrying about their work than when they are doing that work.
6. Children develop self-confidence through struggle.
7. Deprivation and excess frequently exhibit the same symptoms.
8. Children develop confidence and an internal sense of control if power is given to them in gradually increasing increments as they show maturity and responsibility.
9. Children become oppositional if one adult allies with them against a parent or a teacher, making them more powerful than the adult.
10. Adults should avoid confrontations with children unless they are sure they can control the outcomes.
11. Children will become achievers only if they learn to function in competition.
12. Children will continue to achieve if they usually see the relationship between the learning process and its outcomes.

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June 8–20, 2014

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June 23–27, 2014

Advanced Placement Summer Institute

July 14–18, 2014

The Summer Camp

September 12, 2014

The Association for the Gifted (TAG) Fall Institute

October 3–12, 2014

Fall Break in Spain

November 1, 8, 15, & 22, 2014

Fall Super Saturdays

November 5, 2014

The Workshop on Twice-Exceptional Children

February 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2015

Winter Super Saturdays