



# the challenge

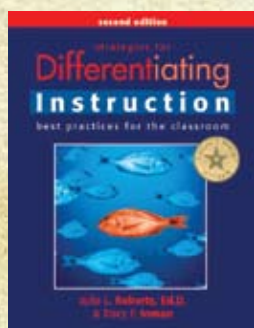
Magazine of The Center for Gifted Studies

## *A Gift of Love*

On July 25, 2008, VAMPY alumna Sarah Markham Lawrence (1988-90) and her husband, David, lost their only child. Four-year-old Riley Jane Lawrence and her cousin were crossing the street to go to a swim lesson when they were killed by a car. VAMPY friend Melissa Middleton Bilter (1988-90) wanted to honor the life of Riley Jane by creating a scholarship in her memory. The Riley Jane Lawrence Memorial Scholarship will go to a student who is gifted and talented and eligible for VAMPY but cannot afford to attend without assistance. All contributions made to this fund will not only honor the memory of a special little girl, but they will also support the education and enrichment of a gifted child in need. Thanks to the generosity of Melissa, Sarah, and David – and hopefully many other friends of The Center, gifted and talented young people will now be able to experience the magic of VAMPY just as Sarah and her sister Katherine Markham Ballard (1997-99) did. The goal is to endow the scholarship which means that it will be awarded summer after summer after summer. The amount to endow it is \$46,000, so every gift is greatly appreciated.



## LEGACY AWARD WINNERS



*Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom* (2nd ed.), written by Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman, won the 2009 Legacy Book Award sponsored by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) this past December. TAGT describes the award as honoring “outstanding books published in the United States that have long-term potential for positively influencing the lives of gifted children and/or youth and contribute to the understanding, well-being, education, and success of the students with gifts and/or talents” ([www.txgifted.org](http://www.txgifted.org)). Their book won the Educators Division. Excited and humbled, Julia and Tracy traveled to Texas to receive the award at the annual conference held in Houston, TX, and to present sessions on this book as well as their book on products.



Dear Friends of The Center for Gifted Studies,

Today is the first day of the new year, actually the first of a new decade – a time for reflecting. Let's look at what is new this year, what is traditional with a new twist, and what continues traditions for The Center for Gifted Studies.

Top billing on the list of what is new is the recognition by *Newsweek* of the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science as one of the sixteen Public Elites in the country. This recognition puts the Gatton Academy in a list with magnet programs that have been around for decades.

New at The Center is a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr. Two small grants supported the launching of Science Says, a media presentation to encourage girls to pursue interests in science. The presentation will be available on the web soon. Also new to The Center is the GEMS Academy, a magnet program in math and science for elementary children. This opportunity for budding scientists and mathematicians is made possible through a partnership with the Warren County Schools and a Javits grant. The Center is hard at work on a new website which will be ready this summer.

Traditions with a twist are important at The Center. The goals will always include striving to better meet the needs of gifted children, their parents, and educators. Super Saturdays continues, but the age range has expanded to include eighth graders – an important stretch to make. The Advanced Placement Institute will offer the standard courses plus a couple of new workshops. Additions

include Biology for experienced AP teachers and Calculus BC for beginning AP teachers. SCATS and VAMPY are Center traditions that add new classes and bring young people from many states and other countries each year.

Of course, The Center has continued the tradition of offering services for children and young people, educators, and parents. The Berta Seminar Series hosts separate events for parents and educators. Other traditions include parent seminars during Super Saturdays. Travel for students and adults is another tradition that continues; the next travel/study opportunity is planned for London in April. The

Administrators Institute, the Leadership Institute, and professional development for organizations, schools, and districts are also important fare.

Wishes for next year and the years to come are numerous. First of all will be the wish for enough scholarship money to support children and young people who qualify for The Center's programs but need financial assistance to participate. Another wish is to fill Schneider Hall, the building that houses The Center for Gifted Studies and the Gatton Academy, with art. A third wish is that friends of The Center will share information about our numerous opportunities with children, young people, educators, and parents.

Happy New Year or perhaps Happy New Decade rings true as well!

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts

Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies



## Letter from Julia

### *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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front views, and side views of their pieces to guide them as they carved their blocks of sand.

"I consider myself a teacher — both a college professor and a teacher for The Center for Gifted Studies. Sharing my knowledge and expertise and passing on these skills to others are very rewarding," Greg remarked. "Helping the SCATS students develop their creative and artistic abilities and seeing their final works of art were my favorite parts of the class. Transitioning between 2-D and 3-D thinking was a big part of the class that was very beneficial to students. It was like reading blueprints, like looking at a set of plans and visualizing a building."

# SCATS: Anything Is Possible

BY HARPER LEE

Eyebrows furrowed, fingers flying, attention focused on shaping a nose, programming a command, formulating the perfect question. At SCATS this summer, nearly 200 campers from across the Commonwealth and nation got to experience learning as an adventure, a challenge, a thrill.

## FUN IN THE SUN... AND THE SAND!!

*It's pushing 95 degrees outside. The air hanging over the parking lot outside The Center's office feels heavy with humidity and heat. But nestled in the shade of a nearby tree, a tent full of SCATS campers and instructors are ankle-deep in nearly a ton of fine, golden sand...*

In the first ever Sand Sculpting class, veteran SCATS instructor and WKU engineering professor Greg Mills helped a handful of eager campers



move beyond the old mix-sand-and-water-in-bucket-and-flip technique of sand art. With Greg's guidance, students used files and delicate brushes to mold pieces of art. Greg worked with students on taking their project from a two-dimensional idea to a three-dimensional product. Students drew top views,

## GIRL, ROBOT

*She hooks her hair behind her ears, sets the lifeless, multi-limbed mechanical contraption on the smooth tile floor and moves to join the three anxious faces crowded around the computer screen. The digital electronic glow illuminates their eager faces. "Okay," she says. "Now try it." Bright blue fingernails sail across the keyboard, entering commands and, suddenly, the contraption, a robot, lurches across the floor...*

"I wanted to try it," teacher Carrie Koedyker said. "I've captained LEGO teams that were all male. I wanted to offer a robotics class just for girls to see if they would sign up."

They did. Carrie's first attempt at a girls-only SCATS class in robotics was a huge success with the overwhelming majority of participants thrilled to have a class just for them. In class, girls were

broken up into teams and assigned the task of building and programming a working robot using a special kit. To prepare for constructing a working robot, the class did exercises that emphasized team building and engineering.

"They had a great time," Carrie said. "And they really did a great job. Their strength was compromising. They learned how to draw on one another's strengths."

### **THE GREAT DEPRESSION: BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A MEMORY...**

*"Who would like to ask Dr. Jackson the first question?" Several small hands skyrocket, wave, and flap frantically, desperate to be called on. "Me!" "I do!" little voices chime. "Dr. Jackson," one student finally exclaims. "Did you vote for Herbert Hoover?" "Oh well," Dr. Jackson, a smiling, white-haired fellow chuckles. "I'm not THAT old."*

When preparing for her SCATS class on the Great Depression, teacher Abby Lentz dug deep into her treasure trove of teaching resources that she usually reserved for her high school classroom.

"As I was considering what I would teach at SCATS, I knew I wanted to offer something different, something that middle school students rarely, if ever, get in a history class," Abby said. "I then looked at what I love to teach. I combined those ideas and came up with a class focusing on the human aspect of the Great Depression."

Through her course, Abby hoped students would gain an understanding of more than just the politics and economics of the 1930s. She wanted her students to leave with some idea of what people and families actually endured. She was thrilled when Dr. Carlton Jackson, a professor at WKU, agreed to let her students interview him

about his experiences as a young boy during the Depression.

"More than anything," Abby said, "I wanted students to recognize that American history is not simply written in history books. Rather, it is a story told from a multitude of perspectives and seen through an array of lenses — a collective history."

"I did enjoy being part of SCATS," Abby recounted. "It was great to be part of a program that strives to provide gifted young people with the challenges they may not regularly experience. It speaks volumes for the young people that give up a portion of their summer break to experience learning in new ways. I cannot imagine a teacher that would not find such an experience enjoyable."

*The summer is not far off! SCATS will be held June 13 – 25. Contact The Center for more information.*

Longtime friend and supporter of The Center, Dr. Mary Evans received the 2009 Administrator of the Year Award during the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) Summer Institute. Chosen by a statewide panel representative of all KASA members, the principal of Cumberland Trace Elementary was recognized for her outstanding contributions and leadership.

The recognition came as no surprise to The Center. When Mary first moved to Kentucky from her native Missouri, she was hired as The Center's Program Coordinator. This was the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with The Center and with gifted education in Kentucky. Mary began the Super Saturdays program that is now 18 years old having served close to 17,000 students! She also played an integral role on a Javits grant that focused on the primary program. A strong supporter of the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE), Mary has served as president, presented often at KAGE confer-

## **Mary Evans Named Administrator of the Year**



ences and workshops, and supported the KAGE Foundation. In 2008, she received the KAGE Service and Advocacy Award. Not only did Mary serve on the task force who wrote the white paper on gifted education for the state, but she was also a principal writer of Project GEMS. She is definitely a leader in gifted education.

Mary left The Center in 1996 to become principal of Cumberland Trace. Under her leadership, the school is a four-time reward school for academic achievement and a designated Kentucky Department of Education Pacesetter School. Her school was also designated a Model Site in Gifted and Talented Education. Mary believes that each educator in her school is a talent scout, identifying and developing the talents in their students.

***Mary Evans sets the bar high for herself, educators in her building, and students. The results are exemplary.***

— JULIA ROBERTS



# WHEREVER VAMPY GOES, LEARNING FOLLOWS

For many gifted young people, The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY) is a many-layered adventure: a time to discover hidden talents, unexpected friendships, new topics of interest and to explore the world around them. This past summer, four VAMPY teachers and their students took their imaginations and love of learning and stepped outside the classroom into theaters, bookstores, museums, and even forests and places of worship.

Veteran VAMPY instructor and WKU professor of English John Hagaman has been taking his VAMPY writing students on field trips since he began teaching VAMPY. His class takes a variety of small trips to the Shaker Museum at South Union in Logan County, Barnes and Noble bookstore, and the hiking trails around Lost River Cave. There are so many interesting places nearby, John said, that are much better for inspiring a young writer than the inside of a sterile computer lab.

"I think my students really welcome the chance to get out," John explained. "They want to go some place else. And it's really great to go and see wonderful artifacts and be in a place that relates to what we're doing in class. I can't think of what is more inspirational than to be in a place where history took place. And we're so lucky to have the wonderful staff at The Center that help make it happen."

Harper Lee, a first-time VAMPY teacher, was eager to see her students see the world. In the second week of class, her theater students took an excursion to Louisville. While there, students wandered through the Speed Art Museum. Later they spent a few afternoon hours with internationally known sculptor and friend of The Center Ed Hamilton, discussing his new statue of Lincoln, and then were treated to a special performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in the park.



"You can't just sit in a room and read about theater," Harper said. "You have to do two things in order to really know what theater is all about. You have to see theater — live and in person. And you have to actually do some theater yourself. At VAMPY, we were lucky enough to do both. I hope my students enjoyed their adventures. I know I loved listening to their questions for Mr. Hamilton, a remarkable individual, and I was delighted to witness their reaction to *Romeo and Juliet*."

Another veteran VAMPY instructor, Tracy Inman, took her humanities students on fascinating trips such as St. Meinrad's Monastery in Indiana, Sri Ganesh Temple in Tennessee, and the Parthenon in Nashville. Her students'

classroom discussions about belief in the afterlife were brought vividly to life in such spiritual places.

"We want VAMPY to be the best learning experience possible," Tracy said. "For Humanities, that includes several field trips each summer, considered by many to be the highlight of the class. No textbook or lecture compares to sitting cross-legged on a temple's floor listening to a Hindu speak about his beliefs, talking directly to an Orthodox rabbi about the Jewish belief in the afterlife, or transporting one's self to Athens 500 BCE by looking at the 42-foot gilded Athena in the Parthenon."

And Ron Skillern, also a longtime

VAMPY instructor, has for years taken his Nazi Germany and the Holocaust students all the way from BG to DC to visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. A long trip and a challenging experience, Ron says he believes students can know hundreds of facts, but walking through the museum, listening to stories, seeing photographs and experiencing the exhibits give new meaning to their knowledge and bring them to a deeper level of understanding.

"It's a tough trip for a lot of kids," Ron said. "But it's the best way to learn. To be out in the world and to not just memorize but to also internalize."

More VAMPY field trips are right around the corner! This summer, VAMPY will be held June 27 – July 17.

# Super Saturdays: Excellence, Innovation, ADVENTURE!

BY HARPER LEE

As the days shortened and the leaves changed, The Center once again welcomed over 500 gifted young people from across Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee to the WKU campus. Over the course of four busy and thrilling Saturday mornings, these young people challenged themselves to expand the scope of their knowledge, dive into new topics, and make new friends — all as part of this year's Fall Super Saturdays.

Since its creation in 1992, Super Saturdays has worked to respond to the

academic needs of gifted first through sixth graders by providing hands-on, minds-on learning in a variety of topics not typically explored in the regular classroom. This fall, Super Saturdays took its tradition of excellence and innovation three steps further, by opening its doors to eighth graders (seventh graders were added a few years ago), offering two courses at the Louisville Science Center, and partnering with award-winning teacher educators to offer fresh, rich courses in science.

Super Saturdays participant Tara Prasad can count on one hand the number of Super Saturdays sessions she has missed since first grade. Now an eighth grader and captain of her school's academic team in Henderson, KY, she thought she had aged out of Super Saturdays. But upon hearing that The Center had added courses for eighth grade students, she was eager to get back in a Super Saturdays classroom.

"I've gone to Super Saturdays ever since first grade, basically twice a year," Tara said. "I love Super Saturdays. It's a real learning environment, and it's a lot more interactive than a regular classroom. I was pretty psyched to come back for another year."

This year, Tara tackled WKU instructor Melissa Rudloff and Harper Lee's class, Science Says. A brand new Super Saturdays course, Science Says offered a unique blend of science and theater to seventh and eighth grade girls. Funded by grants from the National Girls Collaborative Project and WKU's Science Alliance, the all-girl Science Says team solved mysteries using science, filming their adventures as they went. Meant to be both instructional and entertaining, their class video will be posted on the web for teachers around the world to use in their science classrooms.

"Science Says is one of the best partnerships I've even been a part of," Melissa said. "The focus on science, learning, and artistic development combined to make a unique and tremendously successful experience for both the students and leaders."

Just down the hall from Science Says, another WKU teacher educator Rico Tyler and six student teachers helped a classroom of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students unravel the complex science behind the everyday world in the class Balloons, Tunes and Secret Messages.

"The opportunity to practice teaching with these outstanding students is a win-win for my students and The





**CHANTAL WEEDMAN (SCATS 1983, 1984) and JOE NAPIER (SCATS 1983; SCATS and Super Saturdays Instructor)** are partnering to build a community of alumni, dating back to the earliest years of student programming. Chantal and Joe plan to use social media to locate and interact with alumni, share stories, photos, and other memorabilia from early camp experiences. "It's been nearly 30 years since many of us attended those early summer camps," Chantal says. "With social media, it's easier than ever to get in touch and stay in touch, so we look forward to the process of building our alumni community." Campers or staff who wish to be part of the alumni community can email Chantal for additional information on what's happening: [Chantal@MarketMeNC.com](mailto:Chantal@MarketMeNC.com).

# Alumni Update

**KATIE DAVIS** (VAMPY 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002; Travel to London) earned a degree in Stage Management from Boston University. She moved to New York City and worked on and off Broadway for two years before joining AmeriCorps to work as a construction crew leader with Habitat for Humanity in Wichita, KS.

**ANNA HITRON** (VAMPY 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999; Counselor 2004, 2005, 2006) graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy with a Pharm.D. in 2007. After spending a year in San Francisco for her first year of pharmacy practice residency, she returned to UK to complete a second year, oncology pharmacy specialty residency. She has recently started a master's program in pharmaceutical outcomes and policy research program at UK where she is investigating the effects of antidiabetic medications (namely insulin) on the progression of prostate cancer. Anna and Thomas Johnston (VAMPY 1999, 2000; Counselor 2004, 2005, 2006) were married in October.

**AMI KARLAGE** (VAMPY 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997) worked for three years at the Harvard School of Public Health after graduating from Harvard. She then entered the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine to pursue a Ph.D. in the history of medicine. She is currently taking a year off to work as Study Skills Coordinator at the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky. She lives in Bowling Green with her rambunctious Great Dane and an infinite supply of half-finished sewing projects. She will teach a VAMPY class, History of Medicine, this summer.

**LUCY ALEX MADDOX** (VAMPY 2000, 2001, 2002; Teaching Assistant 2004) teaches English in Seoul, Korea, a job she started in January 2010. In 2008, she graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's degree in linguistics, and then moved to Washington, DC, to work in the editorial office of a medical journal.

**SUZANNE NICHOLS**, now Suzanne Lorenz, (SCATS 1995, 1997; VAMPY 1998, 1999) is nearing the end of her Ph.D. studies in physics at Purdue University. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Louisville in physics and since then has been working on cosmology research related to clusters of galaxies. Much of her work is with the upcoming telescope LSST [www.lsst.org/lsst](http://www.lsst.org/lsst).



Center," Rico explained. "My students grow so much as we work together to help the students learn in a hands-on, engaging way. The Super Saturdays students always enjoy the interactions and learning that takes place."

And just a couple hours north of WKU, Super Saturdays extended its reach to the Louisville Science Center, offering two terrific classes in Mousetrap Engineering. In the class, students discussed design engineering, energy transformations, construction techniques, and project management while building a vehicle powered by a single mousetrap. Teacher Catherine Harper suggested the course to Julia Roberts.

"This was my first experience teaching Super Saturdays, and I have enjoyed it immensely," Catherine remarked. "My favorite part was watching the students work through their frustration level once they realized that they were not going to have any set of written instructions. Once their first design was constructed and their first set of modifications was complete, the students had a wonderful *ah-ha* moment. I believe the students were excited to visit downtown Louisville. Some even took in an IMAX showing while they were there! I was just thrilled that I was able to expose these kids to pre-engineering through the Super Saturdays class."

Be on the lookout for Super Saturdays Fall 2010.

The Center congratulates VAMPY alumna Monica Marks on being named a Rhodes Scholar, the oldest and most prestigious award in academia. One of 32 recipients in the U.S., Monica is a graduate of the University of Louisville. Originally from Rush, KY, Monica is currently a Fulbright Scholar studying Islamic law in Turkey. Monica is a prime example of how gifts to The Center change lives. She attended VAMPY on full scholarship. Katie Davis, her roommate for two of the three summers Monica came to VAMPY, said of her, "I still have to laugh when I remember some of the jokes I shared with Monica at VAMPY. She is not only incredibly funny and absolutely brilliant but also a great friend."

Monica recently took a few minutes to speak with The Center about her experiences as a gifted child, a Fulbright recipient, and now a Rhodes Scholar.

#### **What went through your head when you found out you were a Rhodes Scholar?**

When I found out I'd won, I was overwhelmed by the gravity of where I came from. Neither of my parents finished high school. And I saw my dad mopping floors growing up. I still go back to eastern Kentucky to help him do floors. My father is a janitor. Most importantly, I was raised as Jehovah's Witness, a religion where education is just a completely prohibited topic – especially for women. I grew up thinking of Rhodes Scholars as these gold-plated figures of history. I just thought it was something you had to be born into a certain caste to get. Achieving the Rhodes felt significant because of where I came from.

#### **What are some of the academic and learning experiences that shaped your development as a scholar?**

I grew up in a small town where we didn't have a public library. All of my books were provided by my parents. My mom was generous enough to read to me every night when I was growing up. I think parental involvement is absolutely key. VAMPY was the first chance I had to be around a stimulative peer group – a group of witty and unapologetically different kids. And that was absolutely wonderful. VAMPY taught me not to be ashamed of being bookish or different.



## MARKS OF EXCELLENCE: Center Alumna Monica Marks a Rhodes Scholar

BY HARPER LEE

#### **Your family was incredibly supportive of your dreams and aspirations. What advice would you give to parents of gifted young people?**

I think parents have a choice. They can teach their children to look at their future as defined by opportunities or as defined by boundaries. If you can identify your gifted child's interests and give them the resources to fly with those interests, then gifted children will take off. Gifted children are self-propelled learners. It's their comfort zone. They want to feed their own appetites for knowledge. Parents can, at the least, be facilitators for that. Ideally, parents can be amazing catalysts to stimulate growth.

But I think freedom is the most important thing a parent can give a gifted child: freedom and encouragement to be themselves. I was an unabashed nerd growing up. I still am. I think you can be an amalgamation of anything you want. You can be a nerd and be cool, be bookish and be popular, or be sporty and have an absurd sense of humor. And so many gifted kids are like that. That's the beautiful thing about VAMPY. It was this wonderful environment where a couple hundred kids got together

and were all just phenomenally themselves. So for parents, if you can encourage your child to be confident in their own skin – that's amazing. Confidence goes a long way to putting you in the arena where you can be competitive for something like the Rhodes Scholarship. There are lots of brilliant people. But that alone won't win you a Rhodes. Nor will it really get you where you want to be in life. You have to be confident in your own skin.

#### **What do you think it takes to become a Rhodes Scholar?**

I think you have to be excited about the world and concerned about the world. You have to enjoy learning and enjoy discovery of atypical places and ideas. And then you have to have a concern – an academic concern for what's happening in the world. Engaging in the atypical is probably my best piece of advice. If you're a person who does that naturally like a lot of gifted kids do – don't settle. Don't settle for well-traveled ideas; don't settle for necessarily the same degree that everyone else has or the same language that everyone else has. Instead, have



# THE CENTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## Want to stay current with The Center? It's easier and more fun than ever!

Over the past few months, The Center has been hard at work developing a strong social media presence. As part of this effort, we've created a Facebook page, a Twitter feed, a collection of photo albums on Flickr, and a YouTube channel for all of the exciting, new, rich multimedia content we're producing. We want to keep you, our friends, in-the-know on what's happening at camp, what's being discovered at Super Saturdays, what's being discussed in professional development seminars, and what's being debated regarding gifted in our Commonwealth, our nation, and our world. The Center is a worldwide leader in gifted education, shaping the discourse, guiding practices, and providing opportunities and support to gifted young people, their teachers, and their families. With a strong social

media presence, The Center hopes to not only stay in better touch with old friends but also reach countless new ones.

Also as part of our online endeavors, we are busy creating a vibrant, dynamic, and engaging new website — a beautiful and informative web space where you can come for gifted news and for answers to questions regarding programming, applications, and advocacy. The site is currently under construction and will launch later this year.

When gifted students meet their great potential, our communities, our nation, and

our world become better places. The contributions to society in arts, sciences, and the humanities coming from gifted young people are staggering. But gifted young people cannot all make it alone — they need support from educators, families, and advocates for gifted education. We invite you to join the exciting conversation happening online regarding gifted education. Be a fan on Facebook, follow The Center on Twitter, subscribe to our YouTube channel, and enjoy our new site — all great new ways to support gifted young people and gifted education.



## FIND THE CENTER ONLINE

<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wku.edu/gifted">www.wku.edu/gifted</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/giftedstudieswku">www.facebook.com/giftedstudieswku</a>
<b>Twitter</b>	<a href="http://www.twitter.com/GiftedStudies">www.twitter.com/GiftedStudies</a>
<b>YouTube</b>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/giftedstudieswku">www.youtube.com/giftedstudieswku</a>
<b>Flickr</b>	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/giftedstudieswku">www.flickr.com/photos/giftedstudieswku</a>

experiences that open up critical areas of exploration and critical fields of study that aren't commonly engaged. So much of what made me a viable applicant for both scholarships had to do with the places I have been — growing up in a small town in eastern Kentucky to living in Africa and the Middle East. It gave me a very different constellation of experiences; and, out of that, I was able to identify key areas of research interests that would never have been illuminated for me otherwise. These scholarships aren't just given to people who are academically successful. They are given to people who could make a positive dent in the world. And you don't do that by spending your life following other people. You do that by forging new pathways in socially critical fields.

## THE FUTURE

Monica will be in Turkey until August. She will then make a brief stop in the States before moving to Oxford University in England, where her Rhodes Scholarship will fund her pursuit of a doctorate in Modern Middle Eastern Studies with a research focus in Comparative Islamic Jurisprudence. When she finishes at Oxford, she hopes to attend law school at Harvard and pursue a career in the study and understanding of comparative Islamic human rights law. Congratulations, Monica!

Check out our website for a slideshow of Monica.  
[www.wku.edu/gifted](http://www.wku.edu/gifted)

***Difference fuels greatness.*** Great people don't follow other people. All people who are highly successful are people who stand out. That feeling of temporary exile that gifted children often have when they are young, while painful, is a testament to their difference. And that difference can carry you to greatness.

— MONICA MARKS (VAMPY 1999, 2000, 2001)



# GATTON ACADEMY STUDENTS ENGAGE IN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

BY COREY ALDERDICE

Students at the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky spend their junior and senior years of high school taking college classes at Western Kentucky University. While the classroom environment affords students the opportunity to study advanced mathematical and scientific concepts, the opportunity to conduct and share scholarly research alongside faculty members allows them to see those concepts in the real world.

During the fall 2009 semester, 70 Gatton Academy students participated in mentored research projects with WKU professors. Fourteen of these students presented their research at local, state, and national academic conferences. These are big opportunities for our students and would not be possible without the strategic partnership the Gatton Academy has with WKU and the Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

Katie Brown, a class of 2010 student from Shelby County, presented at The University of Nebraska – Lincoln's 2009 Conference for Undergraduate Women



Clinton Lewis

in Physics. The conference presented an outstanding opportunity for students like Katie to expand upon their current research experiences, interact with physics students from other universities, and attend scientific talks given by invited physicists from other Midwestern universities.

As one of the conference's youngest participants, Katie expressed she was a

bit nervous leading up the session: "Presenting to such a large community of my peers was a nerve racking prospect, but after getting on stage I was able to focus on my research and connect with the audience."

In addition to lectures, social activities provided time for participants to share their experiences and interests with other students. These experiences provided opportunities for students to develop their ability to convey ideas, establish relationships with other physicists, and obtain advice and guidance for pursuing career goals.

Katie, like other Academy students, sees research as an important first step in preparing for careers in STEM disciplines.

"Research is a very important part of the Academy experience because it allows you to apply the knowledge you learned in the classroom – practically," Katie noted. "If you foresee research in your career, it is a great way of actively preparing for your future educational prospects and even your occupation."



Derick Strode, the Gatton Academy's coordinator for research, scholarships, and internships, sees a variety of benefits for students participating in research. "When Gatton Academy students engage in research, they have the incredible opportunity to actually create new knowledge," Derick said. "By understanding the relationship of textbook knowledge to real-world applications early, our students will be the scientists, engineers, and mathematicians that find ways to improve each of our lives in the future."

Ballard Metcalfe, a class of 2010 student from Henry County, thinks that a student's role in creating that kind of change doesn't have to wait. Ballard, along with representatives from six other specialized high schools, shared research on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to The Keystone Center's National Energy Board in a session held in Washington, D.C. The Energy Board is a unique group of 50 national leaders on energy policy issues.

Ballard wasn't worried that his audience would dismiss the group's message because of their age. Instead, it made him all the more confident. "Students are able to create solutions that are ultimately bipartisan and pragmatic solutions, without many of the anxieties our current leaders face, such as protecting their own power," Ballard said. "We are objective, and our only goal is for the future."

Sustainability and practical energy solutions were also on Thomas Choate's mind when presenting to the Bowling Green City Commission. Thomas, a class of 2010 student from Warren County, conducted applied research under the supervision of Nancy Givens, Sustainability Programs Development Coordinator with the WKU Center for Environmental Education and Sustainability.

Sustainability indicators recognize the essential links between the economic, social, and environmental aspects of a community and are used to identify problem areas and develop solutions that impact all areas. For example, poor air quality (environmental) may affect asthma rates (social) and worker productivity (economic).

By improving air quality, cities can positively impact social and economic factors in the community as well. Within a sustainability framework, "development is about improving aspects of the community and the environment that contains that community without detrimental effects to other aspects; it is not about growth beyond our means or growth at the expense of others or our environment," said Thomas.

While students like Katie, Ballard, and Thomas were sharing findings developed over the last year, many students were engaging in research for the first time.

"The fall semester 2009 was a huge success, too, because three out of every five first-year students started a research project," Derick said. "These students will have the opportunity to develop their projects over the course of their two years at the Gatton Academy, which will lead to richer and more meaningful research experiences."



### FIND THE ACADEMY ONLINE

#### Website

[www.wku.edu/academy](http://www.wku.edu/academy)

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"I don't have time to preassess" is a frequently heard refrain from teachers. Quite the contrary, preassessment saves time for teachers as they discover which students already know or don't yet understand the content for the unit. When students already know the material, time can be spent on concepts they do not know. Time is one of a teacher's most precious commodities, so it makes sense to preassess.

Preassessment makes it defensible to differentiate learning experiences to ensure that all students make continuous progress. Information from preassessments informs the teacher which students need modifications to make the grade-level curriculum more basic and others who need modifications to make it more complex. Information

from preassessing tells the teacher who already knows much of the content as well as who needs modifications to adjust the pace. Preassessment also can inform the teacher who is interested in specific aspects of the content and who might be interested if he had the opportunity to learn in a preferred style. Preassessment provides information

on readiness, experience, interests, and preferred ways of knowing. Preassessment informs decision-making that facilitates making a match with the learning and the students.

Preassessments come in many forms. If the content is sequential, the end-of-the-unit test for the previous unit can be a preassessment. The end-of-the-unit test can provide information about what students already know and are able to do before the new unit begins. Student reflections on a completed product may provide information on experience and comfort level with a specific product and also the content that was the focus of the product. Student-generated mind maps can tell the teacher what students know and understand about a particular topic as can an open-ended prompt to write what the students know about a concept or topic. A K-W-L Chart generates useful information when planning, especially if the *K* stands for what the student *knows* about the topic, *W* for what the student *wants* to know about the topic, and *L* for how the student wants to *learn* about the topic. Yet another preassessment is a short quiz about the unit topic. When determining previous knowledge or readiness for study, written preassessments are preferred. If a teacher uses a nonwritten measure such as a discussion, it is best for the educator to write anecdotal notes. The bottom line is that

# Preassessment: The Linchpin for Defensible Differentiation

BY JULIA ROBERTS

## The Great Depression Preassessment

### Circle all that apply.

- I have heard of the Great Depression.
- I have read some about the Great Depression.
- I have talked with relatives about the Great Depression.
- I have not yet been interested in the Great Depression.

### Circle the response that best describes your experience interviewing people to get information.

- I enjoy interviewing to learn.
- I have no experience interviewing for a project but think I would like to give it a try.
- I have interviewed for a project but would prefer getting information another way.

### Circle the aspect of the Great Depression that most interests you.

- Life in your town during the Great Depression
- The life of a hobo during the Great Depression
- The stock market crash of 1929
- Other? You suggest a topic related to the Great Depression in the United States.

### Circle the final product that you would prefer to complete to showcase what you have learned.

- A radio show
- A series of illustrations or graphs to accompany a report
- A monologue
- Other? Specify.





the preassessment serves as the proof of the need for differentiation. Preassessment is what makes differentiation defensible.

Preassessment also can be used to determine the learners' preferred way of learning or their interests. Preassessments can be written for a specific project or longer-term assignment. An example would be the preassessment for a unit on the Great Depression. The teacher gathers information on students' knowledge about this period, which topics about the Great Depression have the greatest potential to pique interests of various students, their preference for the final product, and their experience with interviewing, a technique for gathering information from a primary source. All together, the preassessment gathers a lot of information to maximize the opportunity that this learning experience about the Great Depression will be engaging to the students. (See page 10.)

Don't overlook preassessment. It is a critical step in differentiating instruction, as it is the best and perhaps only way to match learning experiences to students. What you gain in the process will be invaluable to you as you plan your units. Preassessment is essential if you want to ensure that students make continuous progress. After all, preassessment is the only way to guide instruction so that the teacher does what Julian Stanley recommended and which is the title of his article *Helping Students Learn Only What They Don't Already Know* (2000). Teaching what students are ready to learn is a great way to save that most precious commodity in a classroom – time.

***“A landmark review by Black and Williams (1998) found that focused efforts to improve formative assessment provided learning gains greater than one-half standard deviation, which would be equivalent to raising the score of an average student from the 50th percentile to the 85th percentile.”***

— BLACK & WILLIAM (1998)

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Black, P., & William, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment and Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*. 5 (1), 7-75.

Roberts, J. L., & Inman, T. F. (2009). *Strategies for differentiating instruction: Best practices for the classroom* (2nd ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Stanley, J. C. (2000). Helping students learn what they don't already know. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 47, 216-222.



Very rarely in life can we say that a person has never let us down. Dale Brown, new Western Kentucky University colleague and valued Advisory Board member, is one such person. A man with a vision, he diligently and earnestly does whatever it takes to make the vision a reality. This is especially true

when it comes to educating children, including those who are gifted and talented. Julia Roberts explains, “There was never a time that Mr. Brown didn't drop everything to come to Frankfort when we were advocating for the Gatton Academy.” An accomplished lobbyist and trusted professional, Dale well knows the critical importance of advocating on the state level.

## The Center Thanks Summit Award Winner Dale Brown

In fact, it was Dale, then-superintendent of Warren County Public Schools, who approached Julia a few years ago about the possibility of a white paper on gifted education. He spearheaded the task force that developed *Kentucky's Future: Mining Untapped Treasure Children and Youth of the Commonwealth Who Are Gifted and Talented*; this is a position paper that argues how critical it is that we identify and service Kentucky's young children who are gifted and talented and that we train educators to do this. It also stresses how important it is to Kentucky's future that funding be increased for gifted education.

His passion for children helped bring in \$2 million for Western Kentucky University and The Center. Project GEMS (Gifted Education in Mathematics and Science) is a federal Jacob K. Javits five-year grant, one of only seven in the country awarded in 2008. As one of four people writing the grant, Dale played an instrumental part in ensuring the success of the partnership.

We are so honored to have Dale be a member of our Advisory Board. The only educator ever to be a part of our board, Dale has been recognized on the state and national levels for his contributions to gifted children. He has received the highest award given to administrators by the National Association for Gifted Children and the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education. He also received the highest honor paid to superintendents in our Commonwealth: The F. L. Dupree Kentucky Superintendent of the Year Award. In short, he has bettered the lives of gifted children throughout Warren County and Kentucky. This impact has reached national proportions through his dedication of time, talent, and ideas to The Center's Advisory Board. It is with great pleasure and extreme gratitude that we honor him with the 2009 Summit Award.



Students identified as gifted and talented should mirror their school in terms of demographics such as the percentages of children from low socio-economic backgrounds and English language learners. How does a school make this happen? The answer is education.

In September, The Center teamed with board members from The Association for the Gifted of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC-TAG) to offer a full-day workshop called Diversity and Developing Gifts and Talents. Designed to equip educators with information and tools regarding diverse populations and talent development, the workshop drew 101 educators from three states. Participant Janet Fraser, Elementary GATES Resource Teacher for Oldham County Schools, appreciated the opportunity to learn: "Attending the Diversity Workshop was time well invested for me and two of our district's instructional coordinators. We left talking about how we could immediately use the information with our teachers and students in Oldham County. Specifically, Dr. Susan Johnsen's session on twice-exceptional students both affirmed and encouraged us to continue finding ways to support this interesting and difficult-to-identify subgroup of gifted students. Hearing from knowledgeable presenters who came from all over the United States to share about current work they are doing in the field of gifted education was extremely beneficial."

The meeting of the CEC-TAG board (of which Julia Roberts is a member) brought with it a rare opportunity to host nine nationally known gifted education professionals at Western Kentucky University. Coming from such institutions as William and Mary, Ball State, Baylor, and Oklahoma State University, they led sessions focusing on a variety of issues and topics: twice exceptionality, rural students, students

# Finding & Developing Talent in Diverse Populations

BY TRACY INMAN

from poverty, social-emotional issues of diverse learners, communication, misconceptions, and identification. Dr. Jennifer Jolly from Louisiana State University teamed with Ms. Jenny Robins from Baylor to present sessions that focused on myriad resources in the field. Jennifer remarked, "The large turnout of educators reflected their commitment to learning more about diversity within gifted education and exploring diversity beyond just race and ethnicity. The educators I encountered were open to the ideas presented and wanted

to know how to make their own educational communities more responsive to diversity." The varied options made it possible for participants to self-select sessions that would prove most beneficial to them.

Pam Geisselhardt, Gifted and Talented Coordinator in Adair County, found the day very worthwhile: "The stereotypical gifted child is not the norm. It is our job as advocates for gifted children to continually remind teachers that gifted students don't always 'look or act the part.' As a result of the Diversity Workshop, I am determined to regularly send all teachers in our district an article,

quotation, etc., reinforcing the fact that gifted students may be a member of any of our student populations (free/reduced lunch, ADHD, ELL, LD, foster children, etc.)."

The Center is all about providing opportunity – that includes opportunities for professional development in gifted education for educators. This particular learning experience should ultimately provide opportunities for students of diverse populations to hone and develop their talents – a win for everyone.



Bryan Lemon

Relaxing in a bright yellow bean bag after a long, but exhilarating day in the classroom, Allison Bemiss still radiates excitement and enthusiasm. Allison is a born-teacher: committed, creative, and constantly on the lookout for the next great lesson – the thing that will give her students that ‘WOW’ experience. “When I was studying math and science in school,” she said, “it was a lot of memorization. We never understood why things worked. At the ExxonMobil Teachers Academy, we focused on the question why. Then we would take the answer to that question and connect it to prior knowledge.”

Currently one of two teachers at the Gifted Education in Math and Science (GEMS) Academy, Allison was one of 600 teachers nationwide selected to participate in the Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy last summer. Much like The Center, Exxon Mobil has recognized the need in the U.S. to develop young talent in math and science. Through a partnership with PGA golfer Phil Mickelson, ExxonMobil created the Teachers Academy. During this all-expenses-paid, week-long program, Allison and hundreds of other third through fifth grade teachers gained knowledge, resources, and connections meant to improve and enhance their math and science instruction. “It was wonderful!” Allison enthused. “Hands down, the best professional development I have ever had. It was a great



community. I had the opportunity to talk to hundreds of teachers. Everyone does something a little differently. When I got back, I emailed a teacher I met from Washington. My students are going to do a presentation on caves through Skype for her class, and her students are going to do a presentation on a landform they have for us.”

Allison said a lot of what she learned about math and science as a child were skills and procedures. But what’s really important, she said, is the creative and critical thinking that comes from problem solving. Allison liked the first activity she did at the ExxonMobil Teachers Academy so much she incorporated it into her own science class at the GEMS Academy immediately. “I thought it was so cool!” she said. “And I wanted my students to have that ‘WOW’ experience as well!”

Want to try the activity Allison mentioned? You’ll need a broom, a pizza pan, a cup, a toilet paper tube, and an egg. Stack the pizza pan on top of the cup, the toilet paper tube on top of the pizza pan, and nestle the egg in the top of the toilet paper tube. Challenge: Use the broom to make the egg go in the cup!

# GEMS Academy Teacher **Allison Bemiss** Attends Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy

BY HARPER LEE

**Project GEMS** (Gifted Education in Math and Science) is a five-year federally funded Javits grant awarded to The Center for Gifted Studies in partnership with the Warren County Public Schools. A talent development initiative serving students with an interest and/or potential in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, Project GEMS has several components: professional development, parent and business partnerships, curriculum development, and a magnet school. Working only with schools that have more than 50% of their population qualifying for free and/or reduced lunch, Project GEMS will ultimately produce a protocol geared at identifying and developing science and math talent.



# Focus on Project GEMS Academy: Lighting the Fire

BY GEMS TEACHERS ALLISON BEMISS & DAVID BAXTER

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." These words from William Butler Yeats guide our work with students at the GEMS Academy. Fostering peer relationships, providing challenge, stimulating excitement, and integrating technology are the pillars that form the foundation of our program. At the Academy we focus on problem-based learning in math and science, all with a minds-on and hands-on emphasis. In the words of the students themselves, here are some highlights from our first semester:

***I enjoy algebra because it puts your mind to work.***

(Nicholas, grade 4)

***When I'm at GEMS, I really have to work hard and do the best I can. They always push me to do better in math and science.***

(Taylor, grade 6)

***GEMS has challenged me by not only getting answers but telling how we get those answers.***

(Austin, grade 6)

***When I come to GEMS, I don't have to work at a level that is so easy that I get it done in five minutes. Here I have to think hard and challenge myself. At GEMS I feel like I am working at my own level of thinking.***

(Jodi, grade 5)



***GEMS really makes me think harder and deeper about questions.***

(Keelee, grade 4)

***I've been surprised by all the new friends I've made and how focused the teachers are.***

(Sara, grade 5)

***GEMS has really challenged me because they teach you to think.***

(Baxter, grade 3)

***The thing about GEMS that has surprised me most is it feels like a field trip every day.***

(Elise, grade 3)

***The thing about GEMS that surprised me most is all the people that turned into friends.***

(Courtney, grade 3)

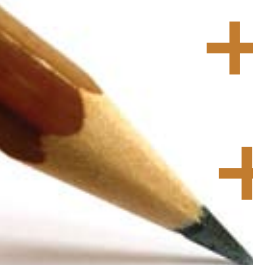
***Being at GEMS is really challenging because they make you think about every question.***

(Rajee, grade 6)

Enthusiasm and excitement radiate from these statements. Yeats would be pleased with the fire beginning to burn for these students.

Visit the GEMS Academy website. [www.warren.kyschools.us/~abemiss/gems\\_academy](http://www.warren.kyschools.us/~abemiss/gems_academy)





# WKU AP Training + Committed Teacher + Motivated Student = College Graduate

BY HARPER LEE

Research shows that good grades in high school do not equate to college success if those grades were earned without rigor and challenge. However, success in an AP classroom is a great indicator of success in the future. Advanced Placement courses mean opportunities for challenge, growth, and ultimately success.

College Board Advanced Placement (AP) courses are college level courses offered in a high school setting. Students learn content and thinking skills in a fast-paced, challenging setting and, at the end of the course, have the opportunity to take an AP exam. A score of 3 or above typically means that a student does not have to take a college class in that subject area at the beginning.

In 1999, a researcher at the U.S. Department of Education made the case in his report that a rigorous high school curriculum was a better indicator of college graduation than high school test scores or high school GPA. The report, *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Attainment*, showed that students who have never taken an AP course had a 33% chance of earning a bachelor's degree while students who had taken two or more AP courses had 76% chance of

earning a bachelor's degree.

In high school, young people who are gifted and talented need access to mentors, time with intellectual peers, challenging classes, and opportunities outside the classroom that relate to their passions and talents. As often as possible we must celebrate and nurture talent. Advanced Placement courses mean opportunities for challenge, growth, and ultimately success

for students interested in art, music, science, mathematics, foreign language, language arts, or social studies.

A successful AP experience requires a great AP teacher. The Center for Gifted Studies has been committed to providing educators with excellent learning experiences for nearly thirty years. In 1984, in cooperation with the College Board, The Center created the Advanced Placement Summer Institute, a week-long course meant to train, motivate, and support educators teaching AP courses.

Since that time, the program has serviced close to 6,000 teachers from every state and over two dozen foreign countries, including Brazil, Canada, Spain, South Africa, Korea, and Australia. Institute consultants are experienced Advanced Placement teachers and endorsed College Board consultants who have demonstrated their ability to help other teachers prepare to teach Advanced Placement classes.

Lisa Thompson, AP Grant Manager of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, said: "Several teachers from Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools





# Top 10 Reasons to Do Advanced Placement Training at WKU

- 1** WORLD CLASS consultants who write AP exams as well as read them.
- 2** One-of-a-kind opportunity to meet and NETWORK with hundreds of other AP teachers. Since 1984, The Center has trained roughly 6,000 AP teachers from over two dozen countries and all 50 states.
- 3** An efficient, friendly staff with 26 YEARS of AP Institute experience.
- 4** Armloads of RESOURCES just itching to be applied in your classroom.
- 5** Separate sessions offered for both BEGINNING AND EXPERIENCED AP teachers.
- 6** Offers MORE SESSIONS than almost any institute in the Southeast.
- 7** A private room in a beautiful, freshly renovated, AIR-CONDITIONED residence hall.
- 8** Access to a state-of-the-art fitness center that includes a POOL, track, weight room, and racquet ball courts.
- 9** Within WALKING DISTANCE of Bowling Green's hoppin' downtown. Think: restaurants, music, and minor league baseball.
- 10** An opening night, all-you-can-eat ICE CREAM SOCIAL and a midweek dinner – on the house!

attended the 2009 AP Summer Institute at WKU. Teachers provided an overwhelmingly positive response regarding the quality of the training. Regardless of the subject, teachers left each session with a sense of purpose, grateful for the insight each presenter offered. They were informed of various topics including scope and sequence of each course, roadblocks they may encounter as well as ways to circumvent each roadblock, and various ways to manipulate the curriculum to fit each teacher's individual classroom needs. Many teachers would welcome the opportunity to attend a second AP Summer Institute at WKU."

Over twenty seminars for both experienced and new AP teachers are offered, reinforcing one of The Center's goals: to provide exceptional professional development for educators. At the AP Summer Institute, teachers embrace the notion of providing a quality learning environment for their students by first challenging themselves to become better educators.

AP Calculus teacher and AP consultant Phyllis Hillis explained, "Working with beginning Calculus teachers each summer is a joy. I liken the experience to a baby bird learning to fly. As nourishment and exercise strengthen the baby bird, so do materials, strategies, technology exposure, and sharing build confidence in a new teacher. My hope is that teach-

ers gain the tools for success and see the beauty of Calculus through their summer experience at WKU."

At the Institute, teachers are able to establish relationships with other teachers. One teacher remarked, "I learned a tremendous amount, and I will use it in my classes. I have a new 'best' friend as a source of info – actually several new friends with whom to network!"

This past summer was The Center's 26th AP Institute. Over 450 teachers attended from 67 Kentucky school districts, 21 states, and 3 countries. The Center is already looking forward to AP 2010! New this year will be AP Calculus BC for beginning AP teachers and AP Biology for experienced teachers, those who have already participated in a one-week AP institute.

Leslie Green, AP English Language teacher and Institute participant from Hunters Lane High School in Tennessee, said: "My AP Language and Composition workshop with John Williamson was excellent. I felt prepared to teach the course after attending. I use the materials I received every day. Fellow students were outstanding as well – a group of pros! I have been to WKU's AP Workshop two different times and have always really loved the experience."



Being a straight A student or the valedictorian will not ensure a successful college experience. Kentucky is one of many states offering renewable scholarships based on high school GPAs. In 2007-2008, only 60% of Kentucky's scholarships were renewable a second year. The reason? Students that had previously had no trouble maintaining a stellar GPA in high school couldn't maintain a 2.5 GPA in college when faced with a more demanding curriculum.

### 3 Reasons to Take AP Courses as a Student

#### 1. Save money

AP credit is recognized at over 3,600 institutions. Earning college credit in high school through AP can save you anywhere from the cost of one class up to a year's tuition. One AP exam costs \$86 while the cost of a credit hour at major universities can easily be as much as \$1,000 and a year's tuition as much as \$50,000.

#### 2. Save time

With AP credit, you can move more quickly into your major and into areas of interest, allowing you to design a college experience that really suits you and your goals.

#### 3. Gain opportunities

AP courses can put you in touch with excellent teachers and a challenging peer group. Spending time in a dynamic classroom filled with motivated learners and led by a passionate teacher is an appropriate and opportunity-rich preparation for college.

# Creating Strong Leaders in Schools and Districts

BY TRACY INMAN

School and district administrators from as far away as Knoxville, TN, joined in a discussion of meeting the needs of students who are gifted and talented at the fourth annual Administrators Institute held in October. This discussion included the topics of funding and the steps needed to increase it as well as the need for challenge and the strategies necessary to ensure challenge exists for all children.

Mary Evans, Tracy Inman, and Julia Roberts joined Dale Brown in the day-and-a-half institute facilitating discussion and providing important information. For example, administrators need to know that, according to the 2009 ACT report *The Forgotten Middle*, fewer than two in ten eighth graders are on target to be ready for college-level work by the time they graduate from high school – fewer than two in ten! They also need to be able to separate fact from fiction in regard to gifted children and best practice in gifted education. Contrary to popular belief, for instance, appropriate acceleration is an excellent service option for gifted children and does not damage children socially and emotionally ([www.nationdeceived.org](http://www.nationdeceived.org)). School and district leaders need accurate, research-based information in order to make informed instructional and policy decisions. That's why each participant left with a copy of Robinson, Shore, and Enerson's *Best Practices in Gifted Education: An Evidence-Based Guide* (2006).

Carolyn Griffith, Gifted and Talented Coordinator from Washington County, reflected on the impact the institute had on her school district: "The major change that we are making because of the institute is that we are writing an acceleration policy and procedures for our district. This is very exciting. I think it will be the key to a lot of changes. This will allow us to put into place changes that can start moving students as they need to be moved. We are moving from 'We can't' and 'That's the way we have always done it' to 'How can we make this work for what's best for this student?' I am thrilled at the possibility to be able to get students where they need to be so they can 'learn something new every day'!"

The Center will host another Administrators Institute in 2010, making it the fifth annual one. Stay tuned for dates.

***Principals must establish a building-wide philosophy that we are all talent scouts. We are looking to find the talents in our students — mathematical, scientific, musical, artistic, whatever it is — we must find talent and develop it.***

DR. MARY EVANS  
KASA 2009 Administrator of the Year



For many young people who are gifted and talented, being gifted doesn't always feel like a gift. Their craving for rich and complex learning experiences can often make the regular classroom feel downright stifling. Their desire for a like-minded peer group with similar interests can make socializing difficult. Alone, gifted young people can't make their futures bright. In order to meet their own great potential, gifted young people need support from educators and families. And not just academic support. They need social and emotional support, as well. In 2001, Vince and Kathleen Berta of Bowling Green, KY, established the Berta Excellence in

sibly problematic) behavioral manifestations of those characteristics. They discussed the issues gifted children face in school and offered tips for promoting positive emotional development. For educators, the pair focused on how the characteristics and needs of gifted children interact with school culture. They stressed to teachers this interaction can impact motivation and achievement in gifted young people. High ability students, they said, are likely to be more sensitive to their environment, causing social and emotional issues related to school. Through interaction and discussion, participants practiced strategies for addressing the social and emotional

needs of gifted students and for assisting others in understanding gifted children.

***"The Berta Seminar was invaluable in helping me gain insight into the social and emotional needs of my child. The presentation actually made me feel like the speakers knew my daughter personally! I feel much more equipped to know how to best meet the needs of my child at home and in the classroom."***

— LEANNE BOONE  
Nashville, TN

BERTA EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SERIES:

# Addressing the Emotional Needs of the Gifted at School

BY HARPER LEE

Education Series to bring in experts in the field of gifted education to conduct seminars for the parents of gifted children and for educators to learn how to better meet the needs of gifted young people. Thanks to the Bertas' incredible generosity, both events are free. The 2009 Berta Seminars were held October 26 and 27. Both workshops were given by Ball State's Dr. Virginia H. Burney (Ginny) and Dr. Kristie Speirs Neumeister who are experts in educational psychology relating to gifted young people. Over 100 educators and parents attended this year's sessions which focused on the social and emotional characteristics and issues of gifted children and meeting their social and emotional needs at home and in school. For parents, Ginny and Kristie described the characteristics of gifted children and associated (pos-



Clinton Lewis

# Friends of The Center

*Through Early December 2009*

Susan & John Allpress  
Russellville, KY

Matt Beasley (VAMPY 1991-94)  
Nashville, TN

Jenna Begley  
Bowling Green, KY

Joanna Begley-Lindsey & Lex Lindsey  
Bowling Green, KY

Nancy Bell  
Brandenburg, KY

Theresa Bergmann  
Elizabethtown, KY

Melissa (Middleton) (VAMPY 1988-90)  
& Thomas Bilter  
Nicholasville, KY  
*The Riley Jane Lawrence Scholarship Fund*

Kathy & Glenn Brown  
Old Hickory, TN

Krista & Jarrod Brown  
Beaver Dam, KY

Martha & Doug Brown  
Winchester, KY

Jennie (Berry) (VAMPY 1991-93)  
& Ravi Chandra  
Ellicott City, MD

Beth & Dick Chapman  
Nashville, TN

Lynn & An-Yu Chen  
Lexington, KY

Megan & Bryan Coffman  
Lexington, KY

Olivia & Ion Coiculescu  
Glasgow, KY

Jim Cortez  
Jacksonville, FL

Patricia Creager & Greg Lamb  
Central City, KY

Sheila & Bob Depp  
Owensboro, KY

Mina & Kinchel Doerner  
Bowling Green, KY

Darlene & Warren Eisenstein  
Glasgow, KY

Mary & Sam Evans  
Bowling Green, KY

Doris & Jim Ford  
Bowling Green, KY

Kathy, Meredith (SCATS 2005-07;  
VAMPY 2008-09) & Bill Francis  
Louisville, KY

Ruthene Glass  
Bowling Green, KY

Nancy & William Gravely  
Glasgow, KY

Debra & Kerry Habenstein  
Louisville, KY

Betsy (SCATS 1985) & Jeff Harned  
Glasgow, KY

Martha & Robert Haynes  
Bowling Green, KY

Susan & Nelson Helm  
Louisville, KY

JoNell & James Henderson  
Clarkson, KY

Amanda Hines (SCATS 1983-84)  
Bowling Green, KY

Regena & Wimpy Hudson  
Scottsville, KY

Leigh Johnson (SCATS 1993;  
VAMPY 1994; Russia 1995;  
Head Counselor)  
Albuquerque, NM

Tina & Bert Johnson  
Calvert City, KY

Sarah & Harvey Johnston  
Bowling Green, KY

Melissa & Ints Kampars  
Hardinsburg, KY

Linda & John Kelly  
Bowling Green, KY

Laurie & George Kwok  
Bowling Green, KY

Nancy & David Laird  
Louisville, KY

Dianne & Jose Labrado  
Dawson Springs, KY

Harper Lee  
(SCATS 1995-96; VAMPY 1997-98;  
TA, Counselor; VAMPY Teacher)  
Bowling Green, KY

Laura & David Lee  
Bowling Green, KY

Sue & Yung Poe Lee  
Harlan, KY

Mary & Paul Lewis  
Cecilia, KY

Dorothy Link  
Kirksville, MO

Fannie Louise & Charles Maddux  
Pembroke, KY

Dixie & Pete Mahurin  
Bowling Green, KY

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

Therma & Bo Marcol  
Glasgow, KY

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*Matching Gift: Fidelity Foundation*

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Scottsville, KY

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Ann Marie Sarnese-Reilly & Kevin Reilly  
Elizabethtown, KY

Ann & David Scott  
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Marcia (Eisentein) (Super Saturdays  
1995; VAMPY 1998-2000; Counselor; TA)  
& Justin Segall  
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Rebecca (Adams) (SCATS 1986-87)  
& James Simpson  
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James Snider  
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Joyce Ann & Jim Spiceland  
Salisbury, NC

Beth & Joe Stamps  
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Cynthia Sullivan & Mark Hussung  
Louisville, KY

Janet & Brad Tassell  
Bowling Green, KY  
*In Honor of Pat Tassell*

Greg Willoughby (SCATS 1984)  
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Richard Wolfe  
Palm Beach, FL

Donna & David Wooden  
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*In Celebration of the  
Marriage of Anna Hitron  
(VAMPY 1996-99;  
Counselor 2004-06)  
& Thomas Johnston  
(VAMPY 1999-2000;  
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**DR. JULIA ROBERTS**  
*Executive Director*

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**Fax: 270.745.6279**

**Email: [gifted@wku.edu](mailto:gifted@wku.edu)**

**MS. AMANDA COATES LICH**  
*Development Officer*  
College of Education and  
Behavioral Sciences

**Institutional Advancement**  
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# Calendar

January 30, February 6, 13, & 20  
**Winter Super Saturdays**

April 2–11  
**Spring Break in London**

May 28  
**Kentucky Awards Ceremony for  
Duke Talent Identification Program**

June 13–25  
**The Summer Camp for Academically  
Talented Middle School Students (SCATS)**

June 27–July 2  
**The Advanced Placement  
Summer Institute**

June 27–July 17  
**The Summer Program for Verbally and  
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