

# The Collaborative



Volume XVI Issue IV

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## KECSAC Awards Mini-Grants to Eighteen Programs Across the Commonwealth

In May, KECSAC awarded eighteen mini-grants to programs across the Commonwealth. This initiative was designed to meet the significant academic achievement needs for state agency children in KECSAC programs and all of the successful grant-proposal teams were able to demonstrate that their planned use of the funds would help them to better serve state agency children. Some of the proposed projects include technological innovations, library growth and development, science lab updates, therapeutic educational activities (such as gardening programs) and much more! Congratulations to all programs receiving these funds!



KECSAC was able to give the following programs mini-grants: Adair Youth Development Center, \$4,276.60; Barren County Day Treatment, \$2,850; Buckhorn Children's Home, \$3,000; Calloway County Day Treatment, \$3,500; Dessie Scott Children's Home, \$2,000; Frenchburg Group Home, \$2,405; Lake Cumberland Youth Development Center, \$4,000; Life Connection, \$4,800; Madison County Day Treatment, \$859.90; Newton Education Center, \$2,527.56; Northern Kentucky Youth Development Center, \$5,000; Phelps Day Treatment, \$3,588; Phoenix Program, \$1,057.75; Ramey-Estep High School, \$2,209.28; Rockcastle Hospital, \$4,708; Shelby Valley Day Treatment, \$3,588; Sunrise Children's Services, Wilderness Program, \$5,675; Wilkinson Street, \$2,881.63. The total of the grant awards was **\$58,926.72**.

### Gardens are Blooming this Season in KECSAC Programs!

Several KECSAC programs have begun gardening projects this Spring in order to integrate science, math, agriculture, vocational education, and community service. Mr. Bradley Stevens, science teacher at Adair Youth Development Center, partnered with the Building Maintenance staff, the math teacher, and the vocational coordinator, Mr. Don Marx, in order to develop a gardening project that teaches students about plant anatomy, comparative propagation techniques, germination ratios, growth rates, fertilizing, watering, and weeding requirements, the building of raised beds, the use of floating seedling beds, and of course caring for living things.

Mr. Marx remarked: "the caring about living things is psychologically beneficial—there's power to it." His sentiments reflect Adair's DJJ Superintendent Dwayne Mills' belief in "restorative justice," a process where the youthful offenders are given opportunities to work on their character development and commitment to society through community service opportunities.

Since Adair YDC is a highly restricted environment, many of these community service projects must be completed on campus



# Director's Corner



KECSAC's Acting Director, Dr. Ronnie Nolan.

It seems everywhere I go the conversation always leads to the current budget situation and our level of funding and support for state agency children. Certainly, we are in tough economic times with our legislative leaders working diligently to find creative, innovative means for supporting our state infrastructure while respecting the budget gaps created by the economic downturn. It would be easy to get discouraged. It would be easy at this point to throw up your hands and call it a day. I know many of our state

partners, including local school districts, are having conversations across the Commonwealth about the future of their programs serving state agency children. I also know that now is not the time to walk away.

Now, more than ever in our history, we have not just a legal obligation, but a moral and ethical obligation to provide the best education possible to the children who are in the care and custody of the Commonwealth. If, through my years, I have learned anything it is that education is the only life changing endeavor that has lasting, significant social and economic impacts on our children and our society as a whole. I have met our kids while visiting programs serving state agency children and I know they are better prepared today than when they first entered our doors.

I recently met a young girl in Graves County who hails from my original hometown of Manchester, KY. She was rambunctious, spirited, passionate and articulate. All great qualities and for the first time she was being taught how to use those qualities to help build a future for her and her family. She told me about

her past and where she came from and then, as if reading my own personal history, she told me that she never wanted to go back to being the person she was before arriving at that program. She had a vision for a future that was better than she had ever imagined. She didn't spell it out in that detail, but it was clear she was heading in the right direction.

I share this story with our partners because I want our students' voices to explain why we do the work we do. I am sure many of you know students like this one; students who have grown emotionally and intellectually during their time with your program. Money may be tight and we all need to continue being great stewards of the funds we receive, but we also need to realize that money is only the means to the end. Our students are the real reason we do our work, the real reason we strive daily to raise the bar in our programs and the real reason we will continue to advocate on their behalf. With this in mind, I hope that during our tough times, we keep our heads held high, we keep our focus on what really matters and we do what is best for the children we serve. I am committed to this journey and I am honored to share it with talented educators and partners who care about the over 19,000 children served in our programs each year.

## Universal Assessment

KECSAC has been working with KDE to obtain a universal assessment tool in reading and math for all KECSAC programs. Our hope was to have a tool in place by the beginning of the 09-10 school year. While the primary goal for this assessment is to provide diagnostic information that will assist in improving content knowledge and skill development for individual students, KDE and KECSAC desire the ability to use the assessment results and normative data provided by the assessment to examine growth of students and/or the growth within the facility or program.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted on the Department of Education's website in April and May and it was distributed to potential vendors during that time as well. Unfortunately, the search for a vendor that can fulfill our many requirements has been unsuccessful. KECSAC will not purchase a universal assessment tool for the 2009-2010 school year. This is as big a disappointment for us as I'm sure it is for you. We plan to meet with the assessment team at KDE to review our requirements and discuss the feasibility of continuing our search for a universal assessment tool. We will keep you up to date as events progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronnie Nolan".

## Programs Across Kentucky



and given to the greater community by staff members. Adair YDC students build picnic tables for parks and elementary schools and with this new garden project, they will give some of the vegetables to the needy through a food-bank.

Mr. Marx hopes to be able to expand the program by applying for a Vocational Learning Integration Grant through the Department of Juvenile Justice in order to build a greenhouse and purchase more gardening equipment.

Some of the DJJ programs growing gardens utilize the Square Foot Gardening Technique pioneered by Mel Bartholomew, who hosts a PBS gardening show. DJJ produced a Square Foot Gardening guide which is available from Richard Thomas in the Education Branch at DJJ (RichardK.Thomas@ky.gov or 270-766-5201).

The ten basic steps of Square Foot Gardening include:

- LAYOUT: Arrange your garden in squares, not rows. Lay it out in 4' by 4' areas.
- BOXES: Build boxes to hold the soil mix above ground.
- AISLES: Space boxes 3' apart to form walking aisles.
- SOIL: Fill boxes with 1/3 blended compost, 1/3 peat moss,

and 1/3 coarse vermiculite.

- GRID: Make a square foot grid for the top of each box. A MUST!
- CARE: Never walk on your growing soil. Tend your garden from the aisles.
- SELECT: Plant a different flower, vegetable or herb crop in each square foot, using 1, 4, 9 or 16 plants per square foot.
- PLANT: Conserve seeds. Plant only a pinch (2 or 3 seeds) per hole. Place transplants in a slight saucer-shaped depression.
- WATER: Water by hand from a bucket of sun-warmed water
- HARVEST: When you harvesting a square foot, add compost and replant with a new and different crop.

In addition to Adair's gardening project, several other KECSAC programs have gardening projects. Lexington Day Treatment's gardening project is in its second year and the students have been able to share their bounty with their families at home as well as the staff at LDT. Madison County Day Treatment was granted funds from KECSAC's mini-grants in May to start their own gardening project next year.

Let's hope that Mr. Marx's sentiment about the power of "caring for living things" echoes across these gardening projects throughout the Commonwealth.



The floating beds used in the Adair Youth Development Center's gardening project for Mr. Stevens' science class.



Mr. Stevens explains to KECSAC's Associate Director, Kaye Parker, the floating seedling bed technique used in Adair YDC's gardening project.



Lexington Day Treatment utilizes cold frames in their gardening project in order to teach students how to extend the growing season into cold weather.



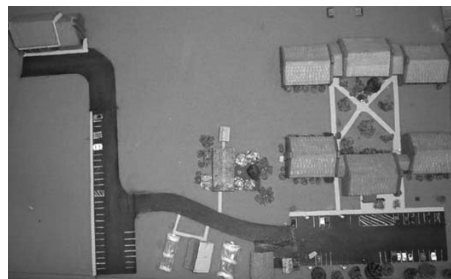
Lexington Day Treatment students can take home the produce they produce in their garden!

### DAVISS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Owensboro Treatment Center

Residents of Owensboro Treatment Center's Meadows Cottage created a scale model of the facility as a class project designed to incorporate the learning styles and career aptitudes of the students. The planning stage of the project began in February 2008 and work began in June of that same year.

Students primarily directed the sequence of tasks, from writing job descriptions, creating tools, finding materials, measuring the facility grounds, and

converting the numbers to scale (1 inch equals 22 actual feet). A variety of materials comprise the model, such as



Residents of Owensboro Treatment Center's Meadows Cottage created a scale model of the facility.

florist's foam to carve the structures and vehicles, pipe cleaners and toothpicks for landscaping, and sandpaper for concrete

and shingles. Meticulous painting added realistic detail. Phase two of this project will begin soon, which will include adding the vocational building as well as the Owensboro Day Treatment building.

### GRAVES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Mayfield Youth Development Center

Residents at Mayfield Youth Development Center have built replicas of bridges in science class. The projects were displayed showing their strength and weight bearing capabilities. See image on page 4.

## Bright Future by David Brock of the Danville Advocate-Messenger

Many teenagers might take graduating from high school for granted, but not Danville High School senior Troy Smith. Less than four years ago, Troy could not foresee standing on the cusp of graduation with his name on the academic honor role.

His story seemed largely written by the time he began to get into trouble. "I was thinking about dropping out automatically when I got old enough," he said. "That was my fate." Expelled from Bate Middle School and Bruce Hall Day Treatment during his eighth-grade year for behavioral incidents, Troy appeared determined to become a statistic.

Now those who have watched his remarkable turn-around say he has become a shining example rather than a cautionary tale. Instead of slipping further away, Troy started to climb. After a year of taking online classes from home and receiving weekly tutoring from Harry Conn, a social studies teacher at DHS, he was re-admitted to Bruce Hall. While he was there, he had to show that his behavior and his willingness to learn had improved. It was during this time that Troy truly realized where he was headed.



*Troy Smith battled his way back after behavioral problems threatened his education and his future. (Clay Jackson photo)*

"From midway through middle school, I was barely passing, so I had not really experienced success," he said. "I had people close to me doubting me and telling me I had too much to overcome. But I just knew I was a lot smarter than I was acting, and I knew I wasn't taking myself seriously enough."

Troy grew more determined to make the most of his time at Bruce Hall and began to take pleasure in meeting his objectives. "I didn't want to be a dropout. I realized that mattered to me. Mr. (Joey) Kirk and I started to work really hard, book by book. I got

to the point where I was caught up with my class and I decided that a GED was not going to be enough for me. I wanted to graduate with my class."

Mr. Kirk, who manages Bruce Hall, said it was evident that Troy was grateful for another chance and was determined not to waste it. "You could tell that there was a sense of appreciation for anything he learned that was genuine, and you don't see that often in even the best students," he said. "Troy has a resiliency that you wish you could give every student."

Troy's story has particularly impressed administrators at DHS, where he has become a fixture on the A and B honor roll since rejoining the class of 2009 there. Danville High School Principal Win Smith was clearly affected by Troy's transformation. While Troy is quick to credit his grandparents and all those in the schools who have helped him, his principal says it started with Troy. "He has made this possible for himself," he said. "There were things that could have become excuses for him."

Smith noted that some of the safety nets the school system uses to keep students from giving up once they are outside the mainstream worked.

*Continued on page 5.*

### FAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Bluegrass YDC

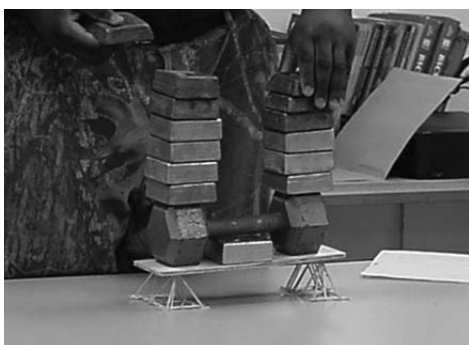
In March, eight residents from Bluegrass Youth Development Center, accompanied by six youth workers and educational staff, visited Barnes & Noble to take part in a book fair specifically catering to KECSCAC programs in the Lexington area.

The coordinator of this event was Wanda Jacquith, a former Fayette County English teacher, who serves as librarian for several of Lexington's KECSCAC programs. She and the bookstore staff planned several enjoyable activities for the residents, including meeting and

speaking with local author Jack DuArte, taking a tour of the bookstore, solving brain teasers and enjoying refreshments from the B&N Café.



*Bluegrass YDC students meet a Kentucky writer at Barnes & Noble in Lexington.*



*Residents at Mayfield Youth Development Center have built replicas of bridges in science class.*

Continued from  
page 4.

However, he said Troy is exceptional. "We always continue to provide educational services, and you operate under the assumption that a kid is going to make it through. You tell them to take advantage of their opportunities. Troy is definitely one who made the most of them."

Assistant Principal Ed McKinney credits Troy's determination. He also points to the importance of believing in even the most difficult student. "It was really on him to make it, and once he got older, he saw that," said McKinney. "That is why it is so important to get them through their freshman and sophomore years. Once they mature, like Troy has, they understand they are doing it for themselves."

Conn said he has seen this self-reliance flourish since the time that Troy was in the relative isolation of being home-schooled. "He developed a strong sense of self that not many kids have," he said. "He was always a good kid, but he has really learned that doing well in school or life is about being disciplined and doing the right things."

The growth of Troy's career ambition has been just as dramatic as the improvement in his academic profile. He attends Garrard County Area

Technology Center to take courses in electrical technology.

In addition to becoming an electrical engineer, he plans on enlisting in the National Guard.

"Becoming an electrical engineer was a goal I set for myself at the end of my junior year, and I can already see that happening," he said. "Last semester I decided to join the Guard and it will help with college. I also like some adventure."

Donald Bowker has been Troy's instructor at Garrard County ATC this year. He said Troy has been a strong role model for his classmates since he set foot in the building. "Troy is probably one of the best students I have in every way," he said. "Students follow him, because he is a leader by example. You don't have to put him in the leadership role. It's natural for him."

As he looks forward to finishing up high school alongside his classmates, Troy takes a great deal of satisfaction in every moment. He also understands how far he has come. "I'm definitely happy with where I am," he said "I have thought about where I would be if I had not gotten myself together.

Probably just another person roaming the halls, not doing anything to better myself."

He said he would like to be an example for other students who make bad choices at an early age and offers simple advice. "You need to make short-term goals, even just one test score, that lead to long-term goals," he said. "Look 10 years down the road and then figure out the steps for how to get where you want to be."

Asked what the future looks like to him, Troy doesn't have to hesitate. "I see an educated man with the skills it takes to succeed in life. I know I am no more or less than anybody else, but I feel great about the path I chose. I am not worried about my outcome or concerned about where I might end up, and that feels great."

Smith has no doubt that Troy is well equipped for whatever he encounters.

"He's going to be successful when he leaves here," he said. "He has the tools to do whatever he wants."

One highlight of the trip was allowing residents to find and purchase a book each to be cataloged into the school's library back at BYDC.

*Submitted by: Casey McDonald, BYDC English teacher*

### **FAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Lexington Day Treatment**

Eleven seniors graduated from high school at Lexington Day Treatment on June 3, 2009. The students will also take part in their home-school graduation ceremonies. Students represented all Fayette County A1 high schools at the ceremony, including Bryan Station, Dunbar, Henry Clay, Lafayette, and



*One graduating senior hugs his mother in appreciation and joy for reaching this milestone together.*

Tates Creek. At the ceremony, seniors presented a red rose to their parents or guardians in thanks. In addition to

the eleven seniors, fourteen students graduated from the program to go back to their home school in the Fall.

### **MCCRACKEN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT McCracken RJDC**

The residents at MRJDC have been weaving sock hats for babies and Mrs. Roof has arranged for students to donate all their hats to Hope Unlimited. Hope Unlimited was formed in December of 1989 in response to the overwhelming needs of women facing crisis pregnancies in the Paducah-McCracken county area.

# KECSAC Presents the 8th Annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference

KECSAC will host the 8th Annual "Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk" Conference, July 21-23, 2009 at the Perkins Conference Center on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University. The conference is designed to provide educators and administrators who work with students at-risk the skills and resources to adequately meet the various challenges they face daily. It will highlight model programs, services, instructional strategies, curriculum challenges, assessment techniques and motivational tools for working with students at-risk.

Featured speakers include; Dr. Adolph Brown, renowned educator and speaker as well as the author of *Real Talk: Lessons in Common Sense* (his website is: [www.docspeaks.com](http://www.docspeaks.com)); Brian Mendler, educator, trainer and classroom management specialist and he is the co-author of *Strategies for Successful Classroom Management*; Kim Geddie educator, administrator & education consultant and the co-author of *The Write Connection: A Differentiated Approach to Writing*; and Eddie Slowikowski, a United State champion runner

and an internationally known speaker/trainer.

In addition to the excellent keynote presentations at the conference, some of the break-out sessions include topics such as: "Get the Monkey Off



Adolph Brown



Brian Mendler



Eddie Slowikowski



Kim Geddie

Your Back: Team Building to Tailgating on a Shoestring," "Writing for Hope and Community Connections," and "Another Chance at Life: the DJJ Greyhound Program."

Keeping within the tradition of the conference, a three credit hour graduate course will be offered that provides a comprehensive review of research-based best practices that can ensure all students learn effectively and achieve high academic standards, including at-risk students in alternative settings. This course will examine successful teaching strategies, training for school teachers and staff, successful at-risk curriculum and instructional designs, school climate issues, building student relationships,

special education issues, and a variety of educational resources. You must be admitted to Eastern Kentucky University's graduate program in order to register for the course.

As part of registering and attending the conference, participants will receive a copy of Adolph Brown's book, *Real Talk: Lessons in Uncommon Sense*. For this year only, thanks to the generosity of KECSAC's State Agency Partners, the conference fee of \$150 will be waived for all

participants. KECSAC recognizes that districts are facing fiscal challenges this year, and to make quality professional development available to as many educators as possible, we are happy to offer this conference free of charge.

We have received a tremendous response for this conference and are no longer taking registrations, but you can get on the waiting list by emailing Katie Helton ([katie.helton@eku.edu](mailto:katie.helton@eku.edu)).

## KECSAC Reading Corner



At the annual Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference on July 21-23, 2009, KECSAC will give out copies of our keynote speaker's latest book, ***Real Talk: Lessons in Uncommon Sense***. Dr. Adolph Brown tells stories from his own teaching career as well as the stories of other "master teachers" in order to



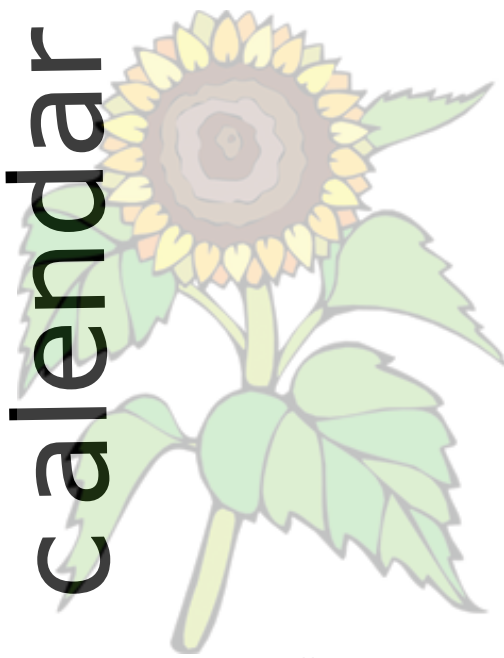
illustrate successful strategies for nurturing potential and inspiring excellence in young people.

One endorsement for the book states: "You'll want every educator and parent you know to read this workbook and complete the exercises!" (Bill Cosby, actor and activist) and another suggests: "Dr. Adolph Brown believes, as I do, that every young person can achieve. He is

driven to reach out to youngsters who are falling and failing. And he is inspired to explore ways to help all children reach their full potential" (Reg Weaver, President of the National Education Association).

The book is a short read, filled with many varied exercises and space for journaling, encouraging the reader to explore his/her own "uncommon sense." Dr. Brown will deliver the keynote address on the opening day of the conference, Tuesday, July 21, 2009.

# calendar



## KECSAC Deadlines

### July 2009

- School districts will receive year-end reimbursement for 08-09 school year.
- 15th Deadline for end-of-year MUNIS reports due in to the KECSAC Central Office.

### September 2009

- 15th 09-10 MOA due in to the KECSAC Central Office. Note: Reimbursement to the District cannot be processed until all of the required attachments to the Memorandum of Agreement have been received.

## Bulletin Board

### Arts Educators Conference

The Kentucky Art Education Association will hold its annual conference Oct. 16-17 in Lexington. Participants can earn professional development hours after 3:30 p.m. Friday and all day Saturday. For more information, contact Lisa Jameson at jamesonl@fuse.net. [www.kyaea.org](http://www.kyaea.org)

### Free Workshops

KET's Regional Education Consultants are ready to visit schools or offices to present free workshops on how its range of instructional resources can help

teachers and students reach proficiency. All workshops support Kentucky and national academic standards and are approved by the Kentucky Department of Education for professional development training. They can be tailored for groups, general audiences or content-specific teams. Some newer workshops address both the 21st-century classroom and students with the incorporation of relevant Web 2.0 tools and current International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. KET offers EILA PD credit for most sessions. To schedule a workshop or to have one designed to meet your school's specific needs, contact your regional KET education consultant or call (800) 432-0951, ext. 7261.

### 2009 Lincoln Tri-State Summer Institute

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance, the Geography Educators' Network of Indiana and the Illinois Geographic Alliance present the 2009 Lincoln Tri-State Summer Institute June 21-29 for P-12 social studies teachers interested in learning new ways to introduce the life of Abraham Lincoln into the curriculum. Three hours of college credit are available through Western Kentucky University at a reduced cost. This institute is limited to eight participants from each state. For more information, contact Kay Gandy at [kay.gandy@wku.edu](mailto:kay.gandy@wku.edu).

## Professional Development

### July 21-23

**Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk Conference**  
*Perkins Conference Center  
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond*

### August 25-26

**New Educators Training**  
*Perkins Conference Center  
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond*

### September 11

**Fall Statewide SACSAA Meeting**  
 *Elizabethtown Tourism & Visitors Bureau  
Elizabethtown, Kentucky*

### October 11-12

**Co-Sponsoring 14th Annual Safe Schools Conference**  
*Galt House East  
Louisville, Kentucky*



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[www.kecsac.eku.edu](http://www.kecsac.eku.edu)

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A Conference for Educators in Alternative Settings

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Perkins Conference Center  
Eastern Kentucky University

For this year only, thanks to the generosity of KECSAC’s State Agency Partners, the conference fee of \$150 will be waived for all participants. KECSAC recognizes that districts are facing fiscal challenges this year, and to make quality professional development available to as many educators as possible, we are happy to offer this conference FREE OF CHARGE!

Space is limited, so sign up now to reserve your spot online ([www.kecsac.eku.edu](http://www.kecsac.eku.edu)) or if you have any questions, email [katie.helton@eku.edu](mailto:katie.helton@eku.edu)