During the month of March, Breathitt RJDC students and staff participated in an embryology (chicken incubation) project as a hands-on learning experience. Thanks to the Breathitt county 4-H program and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service, who provided the chicken incubator, eggs, and educational materials, students were able to learn about animal science in the classroom.

Students learned how to keep the temperature and humidity in the incubator at a steady level ideal for egg hatching. They were responsible for charting the temperature, humidity, and hatching progress daily. Both students and staff anxiously watched the eggs for 21 days, and finally watched them as they hatched out of their shells.

After they were dry enough to move, students were also responsible for their care which included moving them to a brooder with a heat lamp, food and water. They were diligent in keeping food and water in the brooder and with cleaning it regularly. The experiment originally started with 40 eggs and 26 hatched successfully.

“We were happy with this many hatching as the eggs went through a five-hour electrical outage on a cold evening,” explains School Administrator Debra Drake. “After a student reminded the staff to check on the eggs, they
The other day I was enjoying my daily 30-minute commute to work and thinking about life and possibilities and purpose. My thoughts usually center around two of my life’s passions: education and real estate. I describe it as a passion because to me it is much more than just a hobby; more than just a casual endeavor or thought. Since I was a little kid these two things have been at the center of my thoughts and have moved me into action on more than one occasion. Each spring, my mom would drive us down to Knoxville, Tennessee to see the Azalea Tour, a driving tour of some of the nicest homes in the area with beautiful gardens and tree-lined streets. I would dream about those houses and imagine how Christmas inside them must be. I knew even then that if I was going to get inside one of those homes, I had to get an education. I had to learn about the world and somehow make my way into that social circle. I may not be there yet, but education has opened so many other doors since that early time in my life when I thought those houses were the most important thing in the world.

Just recently, I began describing myself as a real estate mogul. I say that tongue in cheek, as just a few months ago I purchased my first flip house, which in and of itself does not really make me a mogul of anything, but I still use that phrase if for no other reason than to keep sane during construction and renovations. Nonetheless, to hear me tell stories about this flip, you would think I was a mogul; that I was some high flying real estate investor jetting around fixing old, abandoned houses and transforming them into lovable homes. It was during one of my commutes that I started relating this to my real purpose in life, the education of at-risk youth.

I think it’s easy to draw comparisons between my flip house and the children we serve. My flip house is beautiful. It is grand. It has the bones to be amazing and I know that someone will love it, that I do love it and that at one point in its life, someone else loved it too. But, it fell into disrepair. I don’t know the circumstances, but I imagine the previous owners just let one thing too many slip by without addressing it. Maybe they fell on hard times and while trying to hold their family together, the house fell apart. I suppose anything is possible. But I know, like our kids, that with some love, understanding, guidance and a lot of hard work, this house will be a home again.

Instead of working to rebuild old houses, our teachers and administrators have spent their entire careers working to rebuild broken children. They see the beauty within the child and do everything they can to polish it and make it visible to not only us, but to the child themselves. When a new child arrives in our programs, the teachers see the possibility, the promise of a purpose driven life. They see a remodeled, beautiful, loving child, whereas an amateur may just see a troubled youth. It’s our goal, at both the KECSAC office, and in our educational programs across the Commonwealth, to help others see our kids in the same light we see them – as children with a future; as an engaged contributing citizenry; and as something worthy of our time and efforts.

Our work isn’t easy and is never done. Our children need constant attention, maintenance and support. They need us to stay committed to their needs and for us to continue working to help them build the life they deserve. Then, just as a real estate mogul turns an abandoned house into a beautiful home, we can help a broken child turn his dreams into reality.
hurriedly took them to one of the emergency outlets and plugged the incubator back in. We were worried the whole batch didn’t make it.”

As a result of the science experiment, students made posters to illustrate the life cycle of a chicken, charted progress, learned about animal environments, functions of growth, and much more. It was a fun and educational project for the students and staff.

The chicks were ready to go to their new home on a staff member’s farm about seven days after the hatch. “Kids wanted to take them home with them, and we all hated to see them leave,” Ms. Drake said. “We had gotten used to the chirping and it was a lonely feeling without them.”

The incubation program was one that was already in place throughout the schools in Breathitt County, and thanks to the local 4-H extension agent, Breathitt RJDC students were able to benefit from this and many other hands-on activities. The center has also participated in a Reality Store program and a Christmas cookie decorating class through 4-H. Students also conducted a Butterfly Life Cycle project this spring, releasing their matured butterflies in May.

“Our extension agent works closely with UK to provide these types of opportunities to the students in our area,” said Ms. Drake. “We are very pleased and thankful that we have been included in some of the hands-activities which are very limited given our setting.”

In conjunction with World Book Day, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) provided additional books to the detention center library for students to enjoy while they are there. According to Principal for KECSAC and Special Programs in Fayette County Ann Lyttle-Burns, the youth really enjoyed the visit and Mrs. Beshear was impressed with the number of students who had such a love for reading. Mrs. Lyttle-Burns said it is thanks to KECSAC funds over the years that they have been able to provide books for students to enjoy in the library. Also present at the event was DJJ commissioner Hasan Davis and DJJ Education Branch Manager Sylvia Kuster.
Corbin Independent Schools Honor Graduates

Corbin Center hosted a high school graduation ceremony for the Corbin Educational Center, ASPIRE Mental Health Day Treatment, KAPPA Program, and Even Start Program on May 10. Both the Corbin Educational Center and ASPIRE program are KECSAC-funded programs.

At the ceremony, 26 students were honored and received their high school diploma. Guest Speaker, Reverend Bobby Joe Eaten, spoke at the ceremony and praised the students on their accomplishment, assuring them anything is possible.

Assistant Superintendent Dave Cox also gave advice to the graduates. “It’s not always about what you know but how you present yourself and overcome obstacles,” he said.

A reception was held after the graduation for family and friends of the graduates.

Corbin Educational Center Student Wins Perfect Attendance Award

Corbin Educational Center student Steven Austin Ferguson, won a perfect attendance award for the 2012-2013 school year. In recognition of his achievement Ferguson was awarded a $1,500 gift certificate from Tri-County Cycle. He made an amazing turnaround after missing 60 days of school last year. His parents, grandparents, friends, and the staff of Corbin Educational center were able to attend to celebrate his accomplishment.

Phenix Academy Competes at 2013 SuperNationals in Nashville

Six students of the Phoenix Academy Chess team, Austin Ousley, Jacob Pesina, Jacob Levy, Drew Isaacs, Jacob Richards, and Patrick Lee, traveled to Nashville, TN on April 5-7, 2013 to compete at the SuperNationals Chess Tournament. Once the competition was over the Phoenix Academy team finished at 33rd place nationally in the K12 -Under 800 Rating. There were more than 300 teams that competed at the high school level across all divisions. Overall, the team won 10 chess matches and obtained one draw, including victories over players from six different states.

In an e-mail, Phoenix Academy Principal Dustin Howard expressed gratitude to all who made participation in the tournament possible, including the Clark County Board of Education and everyone who participated in and donated to their chili cook-off fundraiser held to raise money for the trip. “I am very proud of our kids!” Mr. Howard expressed. “In addition, money raised through fundraising allowed us to buy 15 chess boards sets for our chess program that were actually used during the National Tournament.”

Kentucky National Guard Youth ChalleNGe!

Kentucky National Guard Youth ChalleNGe is dedicated to creating positive change in the lives of Kentucky’s at risk youth 16-18 years of age. This program utilizes a Quasi-Military structure meant to instill leadership and develop self-esteem; it is not a boot camp. Our academies focus on eight core competencies; fitness, academic excellence, health, job skills, leadership, responsibility, service and life skills. All while assisting them in obtaining their GED or in the credit recovery program which gets them back to their classroom to graduate with their class. We provide a 12 month post-graduate mentor program that sustains their progress and assist them in furthering their goals. Our two academies are located in Harlan, KY (Appalachian ChalleNGe) and Ft. Knox, KY (Bluegrass ChalleNGe). For additional information visit http://acaharlan.org, http://www.ngycp.org/site/state/ky/ or 1-855-596-4927 (ACA) or 1-877-599-6884 (BCA).
KY Poet Laureate Teaches Academy Students How Poetry Helps With Coping

This article is edited from Michelle Sokol’s article in the Frankfort State Journal

Kentucky’s poet laureate, Frank X Walker, visited The Academy program in Frankfort May 15 to share a creative exercise with students to illustrate how poetry is connected to the brain. Walker drew a rectangle with a circle in the middle of it and asked the students to tell him what they saw. Each student saw something different, and they could imagine what Walker suggested he saw.

“I want you to pay attention to how quickly your brain tells you that’s what it is,” he said. “You can’t not see it, it’s your brain forcing it on you.”

“That’s what poetry does,” Walker said. “It makes people feel what the author feels and see what the author sees. If a poem can do that, that’s a good poem.”

Principal Melissa Rogers, who like Walker grew up in Danville, made some calls to invite the poet to speak. She wanted to show students at the alternative school what is possible for their futures. “I want our students to see that we have a state poet laureate who, by his own words, came from a dysfunctional family and is hugely successful,” she said. “He was able to bring it home to our students that reading and literacy can get you places.”

Some students attend The Academy for the day treatment program, which provides services for mental health and behavioral issues. Walker told the class that poetry can serve as a way to cope with internal problems; it’s a way to release steam.

“Just living in the world, sometimes I’m pissed off,” Walker said, explaining what inspires him to write. One student understood that. “I feel that, I’m pissed off all the time,” the student said.

Walker answered questions about his background, which included living in poverty and being a first-generation college student and let the students lead the discussion. Students asked him about his childhood, the scars on his arm and hand, how old he was and what the ‘X’ stands for in his middle name.

And he didn’t hold back. He told the class about growing up in a family of 10 children in poverty and about a fight between his sister and mother. He told the class how three of his siblings have served a combined 37 years in the penitentiary, and two of them are addicted to drugs. Growing up wasn’t easy for Walker, but through poetry and football he found outlets to allow himself to excel. “Part of being human is you feel stuff,” he said. “Part of the challenge is what you do with that stuff.”

Providence School Students Learn Valuable Career Skills

At The Providence School, teacher Jean Thompson’s first and second block business classes are partnering with the store, Jessamine Proud Products, located on site at the school. The store is run by students and offers a variety of items including hand crafted items, candles, canned goods, pottery, jewelry, seasonal crafts, and more. Before students could start working in the store they had to go through the process of getting the job. Students completed applications, résumés, asked teachers to serve as a reference, and then finally went through an actual interview. Ms. Thompson said students did a wonderful job and are proud of themselves for earning the job. At the end of the process students had to write a reflection paper. Below are some statements students wanted to share about their experience of applying and securing a job.

I learned that when you are being interviewed just be yourself and don’t lie. I learned all of the proper things to do in an interview and what not to do. -Damian Rucker 2013

This experience has helped me because it has taught me how to write a résumé and cover letter. It also taught me what to do and not to do in an interview. -Bri Houp 2014

I know I have to put résumé, cover letter, and application together to try to get a job. When these items look good I will more than likely get an interview. -Jake Lindsay 2014

When I get a real job I’ll have plenty of knowledge. I’ll be able to go in confident. I want a job soon so this knowledge is fresh so I can apply it. I now have a good résumé to present. -Dakota Gill 2015

Before my interview I did a practice application. After I knew what I would say on the application I did another one but with better handwriting. On my résumé I did my best to give my important information but I tried to keep it short, because I know that people get bored reading a big long résumé. -Ty Bishop 2015

I have never had to fill out an application or do a résumé. In about three weeks I’ll be 18 and I’m wanting to get a job, and now I know the process. I can’t wait to take what I’ve learned in this class and apply it to the real world. -Zach Johnson 2013

This experience will help me in the future because if I get a job similar to the job at the store then I will know what to do. This will also help me build up my people skills because I am around people all day when I am working at the store. -Tyler Land 2015
CLEP Educators Dedicated to Helping Cadets Earn Diplomas and GEDs

Since the Cadet Leadership and Education Program’s (CLEP) inception in 1999, it has remained committed to its motto, Building Strong Minds and Bodies. CLEP is a specialized Youth Development Center in Jackson, KY that operates as an evolved form of boot camp, as it combines traditional military drilling and regimen with intensive therapeutic services and supported transition back to the community. They are known for producing clean-cut, respectful, well-disciplined, physically-conditioned young men who are also equipped with an education to prepare them for their futures.

Cadets are often reminded that the word education is part of the program title for a reason. CLEP’s role within DJJ presents a diverse learning climate because education is an internal investment that both teachers and cadets buy into at the program. Head Teacher Dean Smith leads the way working collaboratively with teachers Linda George, Kim Gibson, and Tim Miller to not only maintain, but achieve new levels of academic excellence. Cadets enter the program in one of four platoons, usually consisting of 8-10 cadets. In addition to academics, cadets also follow a rigorous daily routine of physical training, work details, upkeep of the facility, and time with treatment team staff members including a counselor, youth workers, and facility psychologist.

The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is administered to each platoon upon entering CLEP. Prior to graduation cadets also take the Post TABE to monitor their academic progress. As the 2011-2012 school year ended, data showed that out of six platoons who were enrolled and had taken both Pre and Post TABE tests, three platoons improved on average of 1.0, 1.4, and 1.6 grade levels after completing one semester of coursework. Furthermore, 21 of 46 students in those six platoons improved one or more grade levels, six students improved at least two grade levels, and three students improved more than three grade levels.

Despite the fact that nearly all cadets enter CLEP being behind in terms of high school credits earned, many graduates of the program either earn their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or a high school diploma. For such cadets, they usually exit the program already enrolled at a university, community college, or technical school. Over the past five school years, an average of 20 cadets per year earned GEDs, with the highest number being 27 GEDs earned in 2007-2008. The number of high school diplomas earned has also witnessed a steady annual progression: 1 earned in 2009 and 2010, 4 in 2011, and 5 in 2012.

The recent addition of credit recovery through Jefferson County Curriculum and the online NovelStars program has opened up new windows of opportunity for cadets to obtain diplomas. Cadets are no longer limited to the traditional standard of earning 3.5 credits in seven courses, with the occasional cadet striving to complete extra credits by working in his spare time. Now 21 student desktop computers and NovelStars provide the credit recovery opportunity to all cadets. The once held average of 3.5 credits earned per cadet increased in two recent platoons to an average of 5 credits earned per cadet, with some cadets earning many more credits individually. These significant improvements are credited mainly to the heightened commitment of the educators at CLEP who are dedicated to the educational success of the cadets.

Innovative Strategies Series
We can come to you!

Does your program or district have a need for training? KECSAC wants to help. Rather than asking you to travel to professional development opportunities, we want to bring those straight to you. Let us know what need your district has and we’ll try to help by bringing in training.

Contact Katie Helton at katie.helton@eku.edu or (859) 622-8538 to find out more!

KECSAC Deadlines

July: School districts will receive year-end reimbursement for 12/13 school year

July 15: Deadline for end-of-year MUNIS reports due to KECSAC central office

Sept. 15: 13/14 MOA due to KECSAC central office
Participants from as far as Northern Kentucky joined KECSAC staff at Corbin Educational Center on April 30 for *Teaching in Action* training. This training is designed to highlight successful and innovative state agency children programs throughout the Commonwealth. Tom Greer, school administrator of the program, warmly welcomed the 11 visitors and shared the overall mission and vision his staff share for their students. Attendees had lots of great questions and really picked the brains of the education and treatment staff to gain strategies to take back to their own programs.

What stood out among this group of people were the amazing collaborative relationships that have been built within the community. Students at Corbin Educational Center receive intensive counseling, both group and individual, from district employed counselors as well as those employed by the local Comprehensive Care facility. All counselors are housed at the educational site and available to students every day. This mutually beneficial relationship between Corbin Independent Schools and the mental health provider has helped to create a program where student behavioral health and educational needs are met in one supportive environment. Mr. Greer also shared other collaborations beneficial to students. Local businesses have provided incentives to youth for good attendance and academic success, which highlights the importance their community places on quality education.

After meeting with administration, the group was able to observe classrooms and group counseling, as well as Response to Intervention and K-Prep sessions. Teachers and administrators had ample time to network and share strategies from their own programs.

KECSAC would like to thank Tom Greer and the staff of Corbin Educational Center for opening up their program and sharing valuable “Teaching in Action.”

---

**KECSAC Innovative Strategies Series Explores Substance Abuse in Drugs: 101**

As any educator can attest, substance abuse is a rising concern in schools. Teachers and administrators working with at-risk youth must be extra vigilant and knowledgeable on the subject in order to help protect their students. That need is what drew participants to the KECSAC *Innovative Strategies Series* training Drugs 101 on April 23 in Richmond, KY.

Adam Argullin, a dynamic trainer as well as an experienced narcotics and DARE officer, provided eye opening professional development. Officer Argullin informed participants about the types and classifications of different substances, signs and symptoms of their use and current trends among students. The training was not only informative but engaging as the trainer shared personal stories from his time on the force.

This training was unique in that it was filmed and is now online as part of the *KECSAC Live Series*. The videos are available in three blocks which participants can watch from their programs and earn EILA credit.

KECSAC would like to thank both Adam Argullin and the videographer, Brandon Turner of Unsung Hero Productions, for making this exciting professional development format possible.

Visit [www.kecsac.eku.edu/professional-development](http://www.kecsac.eku.edu/professional-development) to access the training.
The Collaborative

KECSAC’s Upcoming Professional Development: Sign up Now!

SAVE THE DATE

12th Annual

Alternative Strategies for Educating Students At-Risk

A Conference for Educators in Alternative Settings

July 24-25, 2013 - Richmond, KY