

The Partnership for Community Learning Centers is a collaborative effort of the Clarke County School District, the University of Georgia, and the Athens Clarke-County Community working together to meet the intellectual, social and cultural needs of all students.

## Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder

Written by Shannon Wilder,  
Ph.D. student in Art Education  
and Instructional Design & Technology Specialist, UGA  
Office of Instructional Support & Development (OISD)

UGA's art education community partnership under the direction of professor Pamela G. Taylor continued this semester with the theme "Earth's Careful Gardeners" at Gaines Elementary School. Gaines children and UGA art education majors expanded their study of artist and UGA professor Joseph Norman. They focused on his "Dangerous Gardens" series of lithographs. The young students discussed, planned and created works of art about ecology and gardening. All of the lessons were linked to grade-specific art and science standards of the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum. Activities included creating safe garden tools from organic and geometric shapes, printing on garden gloves, scientific drawings of imaginary plants, making ephemeral and therefore earth-friendly clay pets (the clay sculptures were not fired, but left to wash away back to the earth), recycling grid drawings, imaginary

seed packets and plants (such as the "Raise-your-hand-before-you-speak" plant), and Veggie face sculptures. As a culminating event, all Gaines Elementary students participated in a docented tour of the exhibit in the "Gaines Art Museum" created in the school cafeteria. The entrance to the museum features fifth-grade murals and Pre-Kindergarten plants beside a bubbling water feature and fenced by tiny hands made to represent the need to work together to take care of the earth. All of the work made by the young students is displayed with recycled banners of newspaper along with photos of the students and posters explaining their process. The exhibit was on display throughout the Spring. The partnership between UGA art education and Gaines Elementary School continues to reap benefits on both sides. Principal Phyllis Stewart commented, "Besides the wonderful learning opportunities this program offers both our students and our teachers, the children feel special and they deserve that." "I now know that I have chosen the right career because being with those kids is the best part of my day," said art education student Heidi Stell. ■

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The Partnership  
students are the featured  
artists of the Gaines  
School Museum of Art  
(pictured below)

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## Extra Days Enrich Curriculum

The Partnership schools have adopted an extended year, year round calendar which provides 15 additional days of instruction for all children. The extended calendar plus the GA READS grant of \$700,000 designated for grades K-3<sup>rd</sup> helped to make this opportunity even more enriching. On March 14, 2003 three Gaines Elementary School teachers talked about how they chose to utilize the extra instruction time. Katrina Monegan, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Janna Dresden, Kindergarten, and Bashie Ebron, 4<sup>th</sup> grade share their experiences.

**Moderator: What were your initial goals for the extra instruction time?**

**Ebron:** You spend all this time on content and [the students] don't have the opportunity to actually enjoy what your teaching. I thought I would be able to get in some of those extra things that you always want to do for students because of the extended year.

**Monegan:** We never had a chance to give them the personal experience that they need, that hands-on, being able to see some of the things we are teaching in action. The extra days allow for this enrichment.

**Moderator: By utilizing the extra days of instruction as field trip opportunities how have your students benefited? Have you seen any specific examples of students who were excelling under the new calendar?**

**Dresden:** Its too early to say that students are benefiting or excelling. I think we are going to have to wait 3 years before we can say we're seeing results in terms of achievement. Although I thought field trips were a wonderful idea when we wrote them into the grant, now I'm even more in favor of them! What I have seen in my children is more than what I would have predicted or expected. Their audience behavior is getting better and better because now they know what it means to sit in an audience. Now the superficial thing of sitting in a seat, which used to take up all their energy, they are not interested in that anymore and now they pay attention to what's happening on stage. That has been wonderful!

**Ebron:** We have a field trip scheduled to the Atlanta History Museum where they are going to learn about customs and cultures of the southeast region.

We are planning an all day field trip to Discovery Place in Charlotte, NC. For some of my students [this] will be the first time that they have stepped foot out of Athens, much less the state. I am hoping the exposure will broaden their horizons because there are a lot of [misconceptions] that you have to break down. Simple things that we take for granted like looking at a map and seeing the borderlines. Some of my students actually think those lines are on the ground. And it's things like that we take for granted that these children don't get a chance to see.

**Dresden:** It would be wonderful if we can maintain this kind of exposure for children over the next four years. For my kids, if they keep having these kinds of experiences, year after year, by the time they get to fourth grade they will really be able to focus on [other] aspects of the learning. So, it's really important that we build on this and layer these experiences for our kids.

**Monegan:** [For] our unit on Citizenship we went to the Athens Clarke County Courthouse and we put Peter Rabbit on trial. [The children] actually got to see the process of someone being [prosecuted]. We had a jury with some of the children. They were very attentive and really interested in what was going on. The jury got a chance to deliberate and come up with a verdict.

**Moderator: Considering the systemic nature of the extended day initiative, what options do you see for continuing this initiative for the future?**

**Dresden:** I realize now that we need to continue this and the Georgia READS grant we have for one more year and after that it may or may not be a funding source we have available. So yes, I would really hope that the Partnership would help us find alternate sources of funding so we can continue this.



YUMMY!

Would our tour guide be upset if we ate the exhibit? A student enjoys learning how different cultures influenced the way we eat today at the Atlanta History Museum.

**Moderator:** Before you go on a field trip do you teach a lesson plan that pertains directly to the field trip?

**Ebron:** All of our field trips are pulled from our QCC's [requirements] for testing. They need to know about the different regions of the United States and how they are different politically, economically, and culturally. The trip [to the Atlanta History Museum] will allow them to have a foundation of the southeastern region for them to transfer to the other regions when I am talking about certain things. There are also learning the general concepts of observing, collecting, listening and gathering information. I know for Discovery Place we have a whole unit on magnetism, electricity, sound, and color. When they go to Discovery Place it's a hands on museum for the children so they will be able to experience some of these things.

**Dresden:** Every field trip that we take, first of all we do something before and after. In kindergarten our QCC's [requirements] are about landforms: we have to learn what a mountain is, a lake. You can show children pictures of those and they're interested and they'll try to learn it but we did that first and then we went to Stone Mountain.

They were beside themselves with excitement seeing a real mountain and a real lake. Now that we are back we are building a mountain out of paper and we are going to add to it all of the things we saw on top of the mountain and around the mountain. On the train I gave my kids clipboards and we were on the train for almost 30 minutes and almost the whole time all the kids were looking out the window and drawing and talking to the person next to them. And I thought they would mainly draw pictures because I didn't tell them they had to be sentences. You should see the mounds of written work they did, it's the best writing they've ever done! So its like all the work we've done in writing workshop prepared them for this. It's just incredible!

**Moderator:** *How do you come up with the field trip ideas?*

**Dresden:** We start with the QCC's [requirements]. They need to see a river and a lake where are we going to go to show them a river and a lake?

**Ebron:** For me, like you said, I started with the QCC's [requirements]. I also took from my personal experiences. When I was in school where did we go? What did I enjoy the most? What stands out in my mind? I went to Discovery Place my fourth grade, fifth grade year ...when I was in high school. That was something I always remembered, for me it was just a big field trip.

**Monegan:** I grew up in South Georgia so the first thing I did was look at the QCC's [requirements] okay what are we teaching? I relied on my colleagues. I've spoken with some of the teachers finding out what's around here and what's close by.

**Moderator:** *How do you encourage parent participation?*

**Dresden:** We've had a fair number of parents go along; parents have been really excited about it. But when we used to have only 1 or 2 field trips a year, somehow the permission slips used to kill me getting them out and back. But now they are actually getting easier because they are becoming more of the routine parents know.

**Moderator:** *Are their any added costs for the students to attend these field trips?*

**Dresden:** Fourth and fifth and grade are not covered under the grant, basically the field trips for K-3<sup>rd</sup> come from the grant.

**Ebron:** Yes 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade we have to fund our own field trips. I know PTO is nice enough to help our students who are having a hard time financing. We want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to go on the field trips but generally speaking parents usually fund the field trips for the children.



Time Out! Ms. Ebron and her students take time to enjoy the exhibits at the Atlanta History Museum.



What a Lye!

These kids are enjoying looking at the lye soap in the Shotgun House at the Atlanta History Museum.

# An Affair to Remember ...A Summer in Xalapa sparks initiative at Clarke County Schools

While still in her first year at UGA, Misha Cahnmann, a professor in the Department of Language Education, is encouraging a group of Chase Street teachers to use their experience from visiting Xalapa, Mexico in the classroom. During the summer a group of Chase teachers, along with several others, participated in a two-week program in Xalapa, Mexico. The teachers visited schools, Spanish classes, evening seminars, resided with host families, and were immersed into daily life.

Cahnmann started studying Spanish in Middle School and developed a love for language learning. When asked why the teachers visit Xalapa instead of anywhere else in Mexico Cahnmann states "it offers a wide range of opportunity. It's a bustling university town." The city offers Internet access, a foreign language school, a variety of restaurants, and other kinds of cultural activities. According to Cahnmann "it's also surrounded by rural areas so taking students to Xalapa provides an urban Mexican experience and that has a diverse range of middle and upper income families". She also commented that it was less "touristy" than other destinations providing an opportunity for everyone to speak Spanish. Afraid that a two-week program would not be enough Cahnmann initiated a follow-up initiative. The initiative began out of excitement for the Xalapa program impacting teachers and the way that thought about cultural and linguistic diversity. Through the Partnership Cahnmann was able to build connections with the teachers. The Partnership also provided a structure that Cahnmann could contribute her research to, while she is only working with a small group of teachers it is a subset of a much larger shift in education for Clarke County. Financially the Partnership supported Cahnmann's summer salary that afforded her the time to concentrate on developing a teaching model and collaborating with others. The Partnership also helped to buy bilingual books, which Cahnmann then made available to the teachers. When asked how the teachers were incorporating their summer experience into the classroom she says "I think its very challenging for teachers to make change in their classrooms and address the needs of English Language Learners and each of the different participants has added to their curriculum in a variety of ways!" Cahnmann hopes this initiative would lead to discussions about Clarke County's language learning policies. .

## Did You Know?

Did you know that the Partnership has a twofold evaluation plan featuring a qualitative and quantitative research component. The research is focused on:

1. providing direction for improving programs as they evolve
2. assessing program effectiveness after they have had time to produce results
3. providing more comprehensive feedback on a wide range of questions

## The Partnership Growing in New Ways with Intersession!

*Written by Donna Q. Butler, Ph.D. Director of Outreach for the College of Education at the University of Georgia*

The partnership between UGA, the Clarke County School District, and Athens-Clarke County Department of Leisure Services held its very successful Spring Intersession March 24-28, 2003 at Chase Street. Approximately 170 elementary students participated. Intersession is the term used to describe the vacation breaks that occur within the school year on an extended calendar. The theme for this year's Spring Intersession was "Science."

The Intersession Committee, made up of representatives from the CCSD, UGA, and ACC Department of Leisure Services, began its work last year and decided early in the process of planning that the Intersessions would be remarkable experiences for the students. The primary goal was to provide low cost enrichment experiences for students who might not otherwise have constructive activities for the weeks when the partnership schools are not in session. The Committee decided to go beyond a basic goal and to design the Intersession as an academic camp for students— an academic camp during which they learned in new ways.

The Committee wanted to ensure that the students could take advantage of the myriad of science-related resources available to them in Athens and at UGA. All activities were designed to ensure that students received extra instruction in many areas of science. During the week-long camp, students attended sessions on-site at Chase Elementary, on-site at UGA, the zoo, Sandy Creek Nature Center and Park, and the Athens Recycling Center. Smokey the Bear visited Chase on Monday to introduce the children to forest and wildlife conservation. The department of natural resources taught the children about water conservation. Animal control brought animals to the school and worked with the children as they learned about the importance of humane education and animal science. An expert on reptiles also visited the school.

The partnerships formed with academic departments in The College of Education and Arts and Sciences have provide opportunities at many different levels. For example, the elementary students studied under the direction of UGA faculty and students and, while furthering their professional development, the University students engaged in service to the CCSD students. Through the UGA faculty and student volunteers, the elementary students learned about cells, life under the ocean and working in submarines, how crystals are formed, forest resources, science fair basics, and cryptology. The fourth and fifth graders also visited the UGA Equestrian Team to observe their early morning practice.



**Growing New Ways of Learning** a pictorial view of Intersession 2003!



Partnership students enjoy their intersession break by learning about Science from UGA students!



**Pictured above is the Scout Hut on the Chase Street Elementary School Campus**

The Gold Kist Foundation in Atlanta is awarding the Partnership a \$10,000 grant to support renovations and refurbishing of the scout hut on the Chase Street campus. The renovated building will house the Family Resource Center. Jenny Penney Oliver, a UGA partner says "We are grateful to our local Gold Kist plant who has been an exemplary Partner in Education to Chase Street for several years and supported this request 100%!"

### HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

Join us! For this partnership to be successful, we need the full participation of the Athens-Clarke County Community. You can become involved by volunteering in a partnership school, participating in focus group discussions, or sharing ideas with someone on the Design Team.

The Partnership provides opportunities for you to share in the responsibility for improving educational experiences, options, and outcomes for all students. Today, everyone has a full schedule, but if working to improve the effectiveness of education in Athens-Clarke County is important to you, we invite you to make time in your schedule for working with other committed community members.

Got Questions? CONTACT US AT  
lpatrick@coe.uga.edu

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[www.clarke.12ga.us/ccsduga](http://www.clarke.12ga.us/ccsduga)

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