

School News



Where success is measured one student at a time

March 28, 2008

R-290

Westlake teacher named as Agnes Meyer recipient

On a typical Wednesday at Westlake High School, English teacher Vera Young is reading aloud from the novel "Of Mice and Men." She walks quietly around her second-floor classroom, which is filled with bookshelves packed with books, reading to her students, her voice booming with excitement. Her students' eyes grow with excitement as her voice illustrates the story and draws them into the book.

She is most noted for her pleasant attitude, outgoing personality, her passion for teaching and her ability to motivate her students. It is these qualities, and the ability to reach her students and draw them into whatever their lesson may be, that earned Young the 2008 *Washington Post* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award for Charles County.

Young said she was filled with emotion when she learned she was this year's recipient of the award.

"My parents were both teachers in the county. Growing up and seeing how hard they worked, I never thought that I would be a teacher. I was interested in business and took a couple of education classes, to see what education courses were like. I really enjoyed them and I enjoy finding ways to challenge my students. I am extremely honored to be chosen as the recipient of this award," she said.

Young is described by her nominators as being able to instill a desire to learn and achieve, and her enthusiasm for teaching is visible to other teachers, staff, students and parents.

"An observer in Young's classroom need only watch her students' faces to know that this is, indeed, a very special place with a teacher who is one in a million. The students' eyes are glued on her, no matter where she goes; her arms gesture dynamically, her voice both powerful and compassionate," wrote Linda Flanagan, the content specialist for English Language Composition for Charles County Public Schools, in an award nomination letter.

Westlake Principal Chrystal Benson, who co-chaired the nominating committee with Westlake Vice Principal Lori Gibson, said Young defines what a role model is. "At Westlake High School, Vera is a true leader and helps to establish a positive school climate. She has established a great relationship with her colleagues, students, administration and parents.

Anyone that has the opportunity to work with Vera is honored by her presence, knowledge and perseverance."

Many of Young's students, including some of the more than 100 she has helped mentor through the senior portfolio process, say she is their favorite teacher and has truly impacted their lives.

Westlake student Cameron Washington said Young's teaching style and positive attitude changed his views on English classes. "Your class inspired me to stay positive about English even though it isn't my favorite class. You gave me a newfound respect for the subject and life. You do not know how much your class has changed my life and you handed me tools and knowledge on how to become an intelligent individual willing to accomplish any task set before me," Washington said in an award nomination letter.

"I often hear 'Oh no' when I tell people I teach high school. You really have to enjoy teaching to be in the classroom. I feel that this is what I was born to do. One of the things I particularly enjoy is when I see students experience the joy of learning. I want them to understand the joys and encourage them to be lifelong learners. It makes me smile when I see joy on their faces," she added.

Young obtained her master's degree in curriculum and instruction from McDaniel College in 1995 and earned her bachelor's degree in English from St. Mary's College of Maryland. She also holds an advanced professional certification in English. In 1990, she began her career in Charles County Public Schools as an English teacher at Maurice J. McDonough High School. She taught at McDonough for five years and transferred to Westlake in 1995, where she has taught English and Advanced Placement English Language and Composition for the past 13 years.



Vera Young

Calling future leaders

Charles County Public Schools is looking for educators to attend the 2008 Leadership Institute. Candidates for the institute are educators who want to develop their leadership skills in order to successfully transition into an instructional or administrative leadership position.

The 2008 CCPS Aspiring Leaders training is open to all Charles County educators who seek leadership positions such as department heads, instructional leadership teams, high school resource teachers and vice principals.

The leadership institute is designed to be highly engaging with motivational and participatory experiences. The focus of the institute is on critical areas of educational leadership: vision, accountability, instruction, communication and group dynamics.

The 2008 CCPS Leadership Institute is taking place on June 23-27 from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at North Point High School. Participants can receive three MSDE credits.

For information or to register, e-mail the office of program support, staffdevelopment@ccboe.com.



Notebook

Borders offers savings

Borders Books is hosting Educators Savings Week April 2-8. Staff members receive 25 percent off personal and classroom purchases. A special reception is planned on Friday, April 4, 4-8 p.m., which includes food and prizes. To receive the discount, staff members must present a classroom discount card, staff identification badge or a pay stub.

Harris in line for award

Connie R. Harris of Westlake High School will be honored as the Eastern District High School Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) at its national convention in Fort Worth, Texas, April 8-12. The Eastern District represents an 11-state area from Maryland to Maine. The Eastern District Physical Education Teacher of the Year Award is given in recognition of outstanding teaching performance at the high school level. At the convention Harris, a physical education teacher for 18 years, will vie with five other district winners for the National Physical Education Teacher of the Year Award.

Cover photos

Pictured on the cover are employees honored as exemplary on March 11. Pictured, from left, are: Linda H. Foshee, food service manager, Arthur Middleton Elementary School; CSM Charles W. Henson, JROTC instructor, Thomas Stone High School; Cynthia A. Wells, physical education teacher, Piccowaxen Middle School; Joyce E. Campbell, gifted education teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School; and Winsome P. Waite, instructional specialist,

Board agenda -- April 8, 2008

The Board of Education has released its agenda for the April 8 meeting, which begins at 12 p.m. in executive session. The public portion of the meeting begins at 1 p.m., student recognition is at 4:30 p.m., and Public Forum starts at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata.

Executive session – 12 p.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Maurice J. McDonough High School JROTC Unit

Superintendent's update

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Correspondence/board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County update
- Student board member update
- Deputy superintendent's update
- Information item: CIP update
- Information item: Minority achievement program
- Report item: 2009-10 calendar

- Information item: Budget update
- Information item: Legislative update

Unfinished business

New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

Recognition – 4:30 p.m.

- Employees
- Students
- Resolutions: *Teacher Appreciation Week; Administrative Professionals Week; Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week; National Physical Education and Sport Week*

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Report Item: Presentation of Superintendent's FY09 budget
- Public hearing on Superintendent's FY09 budget

Public Forum – 6 p.m.

Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel

Adjournment

Students honor Wise, Olsen for promoting leadership

William Wise, principal of Mattawoman Middle School, is the 2008 Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC) Principal of the Year. Joann Olsen, student government advisor and teacher at Mattawoman, is the MASC Middle School Advisor of the Year.

Students recently announced the selection of Wise and Olsen for the awards at the MASC annual convention.

Wise was honored for his many years of promoting student leadership at the middle school level. Wise was nominated by the Mattawoman student council and his nomination was forwarded to MASC by the Charles County Association of Student Councils (CCASC).

The principal of the year award highlights the many contributions made by principals throughout the state who support student activities and student leaders. MASC, through the Principal of the Year award, seeks to identify and recognize those principals who enable and empower student leaders and student organizations while maintaining high standards for the comprehensive school program. One principal is chosen for the state award, which is named for Wayne Perry, a Harford County principal and long-



William Wise
Principal



Joann Olsen
Advisor

time friend of MASC.

Previous Charles County recipients of the award were former principals John Cox in 1996, Donald Cooke in 1997 and Heath Morrison in 2003.

Olsen was honored for her contribution to the success of the student council at Mattawoman. The MASC Middle School Advisor of the Year Award was created to recognize the special contributions of middle school advisors in promoting middle school involvement at the school, regional, and state levels. While the award singles out an individual on the state level, the purpose of the award is to highlight the many contributions made by all student council advisors throughout the state, according to MASC.

Seniors reflect on the past, look to the future with portfolio projects

More than 2,100 Charles County high school seniors are expected to graduate in June. Other than graduating, they all have one more thing in common. Each senior must complete a portfolio in order to walk across the stage at graduation.

The purpose of the portfolio is to prepare students for career and college beyond high school. The process also prepares students for job and college interviews and their portfolios can be used in job interviews, when completing college applications and obtaining scholarship money.

During the week of February 25-29, the 450-plus seniors at Thomas Stone High School participated in mock exit interviews with volunteers from county businesses and local agencies, as well as school system officials. As a group of students, dressed in their best suits, ties and jackets, arrived at the school media center that Friday for interviews, looks of nervousness and anxiousness were exchanged amongst the group.

Mary Bilmanis, Stone's career center coordinator, said it is common for students to become nervous with anticipation, but many are relieved after the interview is over. Some students have part-time jobs and have already been placed in similar situations. "The day of the interviews, no matter how often we say 'It's not as bad as you think it will be.' The waiting is the hardest part and they cannot accept this. With very few exceptions, the students are so relieved after their interviews, that they admit it was fun," Bilmanis added.

Senior Bryant Jackson-Green, looked relaxed and calm as he waited his turn to be called for his interview. "I am not really nervous. I have been on many college interviews already and feel prepared for today," he said. His portfolio contained a resume, letters of recommendation and a mission statement, focusing on his plans for life after high school. "The goal of the process, I think, is for us to reflect on career goals and academic experiences," Jackson-Green added.

Students begin to work on their portfolios in their English classes at the end of the junior year and into the senior year. Students also select mentors from among school staff to help guide them through the portfolio-creation process. Portfolios may include a mission statement, introduction,



Michelle Hardesty, right, is interviewed by Jane Mignogno of the College of Southern Maryland during a portfolio review. In the background, Megan Farley speaks with John Flatley of Chick-Fil-A. Community members participate in the interview process at all high schools.

resume, school or community awards, college acceptance letters, paycheck stubs and other examples to show how the student has grown throughout his or her academic career.

The portfolio project is part of the five-year plan career readiness goal. Seniors have created portfolios that are reflective of their accomplishments in the areas of career readiness, academic achievement and personal responsibility. The exit interview is the final part of the portfolio process. Interviews are scheduled anytime from November to March or April of the student's senior year.

Megan Farley, a Stone senior, interviewed that Friday with John Flatley of Chick-Fil-A. She said she felt prepared for her interview, but some of the questions were challenging. "I think it went well. I answered the questions the best I could. Our English class really prepares us for the process," she added.

Farley said the hardest question she encountered dealt with self-evaluation. "A challenging question I found difficult to answer, where I really had to think hard before I answered, was talking about my greatest strengths and weaknesses. It is hard to talk about yourself sometimes," she said. Farley, who plans to attend either Mount St.

Mary's College, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, or Salisbury University, said she also was asked about difficult situations she had encountered and dealt with and was glad the process was over.

Michelle Hardesty, who interviewed with Jayne Mignogno, a career services specialist at the College of Southern Maryland, said her interview went well and she felt well prepared going in. "My interviewer was very nice and made me feel very comfortable, which I think is important. She asked me to talk about my accomplishments and positive and negative characteristics I think I have," Hardesty, who plans to attend the University of Maryland, College Park, in the fall, said she also talked about her previous employment experiences and situations where she had to reflect on personal responsibility.

Bilmanis said the process is also helpful because it requires seniors to think on their feet. "About one to two weeks before the interview I go into the classrooms and go over interview skills. Even with skills review, the students need to be able to think on their feet. We have evidence from some of our seniors of the value of the portfolio in making a favorable impression," she said.

Personnel

Apply for positions at www.ccboe.com/hur, or in writing to the personnel office. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings

Communications Multimedia Assistant – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; 12-month position; associate's degree in communications or related field or progress toward degree required. Apply by April 2.

Food Service Workers – Positions available at J. P. Ryon and C. Paul Barnhart elementary schools; three-hour, 10-month positions. Apply by March 31 for Ryon and by April 8 for Barnhart.

Summer Math and Reading Academy Program Coordinator – High school level; master's degree or Advanced Professional Certificate required. Apply by March 31.

Summer Math and Reading Academy – Elementary and middle school site coordinators; master's degree or Advanced Professional Certificate required. Apply by March 31.

Music Teacher – William A. Diggs Elementary School; 10-month position.

Art Teacher – William A. Diggs Elementary School; 10-month position.

Instrumental Music Teachers – All elementary schools.

ESOL Teachers – All schools, all levels.

Special Education Science Teacher – La Plata High School

Vocal Music Teacher – Milton M. Somers Middle School

Spanish Teachers – Future high school openings

Library and Media Specialist – Henry E. Lackey High School

Mathematics Teachers – Mattawoman Middle School and John Hanson Middle School

Mathematics Teachers – Future openings at all high schools

Science Teacher – Milton M. Somers Middle School

Special Education Teacher – Henry E. Lackey High School

Fifth-grade Teacher – William A. Diggs Elementary School.

Extended School Year Positions – Direct service providers are needed to provide ESY services to special education students during the summer. Positions open for special educators, regular educators, speech/language therapist, occupational therapists, and teachers of the hearing impaired. E-mail Kelly Short, kshort@ccboe.com, to apply.

Summer School 2008 Teachers — Contact Jason Bursick, jbursick@ccboe.com, to apply. Send information including current teaching position, area of certification and course interested in teaching. Staff reports

June 24. Summer school begins on June 25 at Westlake High School. Summer school ends July 31, and is closed on Fridays.

Summer School 2008 Registration Positions — Registration is at Robert D. Stethem Educational Center on June 19 and June 20, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., and June 21, 8 a.m.-noon. Contact Sandy Rooney, srooney@ccboe.com, to apply.

Extra pay positions

Maurice J. McDonough High School has the following openings: Head football coach; head junior varsity field hockey coach; head junior varsity volleyball coach; head girls' soccer coach; assistant girls' varsity soccer coach; head junior varsity soccer coach; head varsity cheerleading coach; head junior varsity cheerleading coach; head pom poms coach; assistant boys' varsity soccer coach

Call Principal Jervie Petty, 301-753-1755, to apply.

Henry E. Lackey High School has the following openings: Head boys' soccer coach; junior varsity boys' soccer coach; junior varsity field hockey coach; junior varsity volleyball coach; golf coach; junior varsity girls' soccer coach; junior varsity wrestling coach

Call Principal Curry Werkheiser, 301-753-1753, to apply. Application deadline is July 31.

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Keith Grier, Title IX Coordinator, or Patricia Vaira, Section 504 Coordinator (students), or Keith Hettel, Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, Maryland 20646. 301-932-6610/870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

Board of Education Members
Donald M. Wade, Chairman
Robert S. Wise, Vice Chairman
Jennifer S. Abell
Collins Bailey
Charles E. Carrington
Maura H. Cook
Pamela A. Pedersen

Ashin Shah, Student Member

Superintendent of Schools
James E. Richmond

Editors/Writers
Katie O'Malley-Simpson
Shelley Buter

Charles County Public Schools
Post Office Box 2770
La Plata, Maryland 20646
(address service requested)

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 66

The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life, in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.