

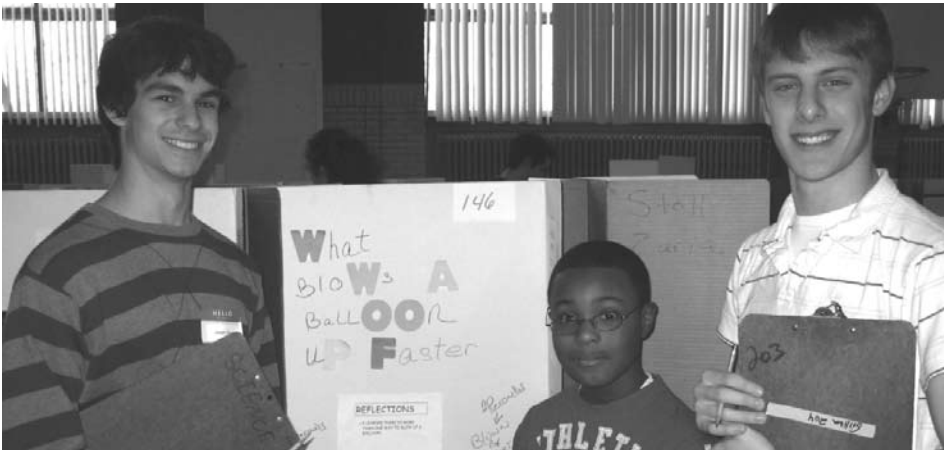
Canterbury

TALES

A Publication of Reaching Heights

The New Scientists

by Florence D'Emilia, Reaching Heights



Heights High Science Fair judges Joey Fox (left, a Canterbury alumnus) and Seth Kluk-Barany concur: People power beats baking soda and vinegar when it comes to inflating a balloon. They judged Canterbury 4th grader Jaelen Lattimore's experiment at the school's recent science fair.

Gone are the days when the grade school science fair featured erupting volcanoes and clay models of the moon's surface. Those projects may have been a lot of fun, but today, even kindergarten students are being inducted into the scientific method.

"The science fair was an opportunity for students to develop critical thinking and non-fiction writing skills," says faculty coordinator Stacy Kroger. "Teachers explain the scientific method in class and help students choose topics. Then it's up to the older students, with the help of families, to carry out their experiments."

Canterbury's annual science fair featured class projects from kindergarten through the 2nd grade, and individual projects developed by all 3rd, 4th and 5th graders.

Some 3rd-to-5th-grade students resist all adult assistance, while others welcome family support, so the fair is filled with a variety of projects. All students are given a framework that helps them write

about their hypothesis and conclusion, plus make note of manipulated and responding variables, constants, materials and procedures. Students present information on science boards, and sometimes bring materials as well.

Students in kindergarten through 2nd grade conduct experiments and create displays as a class. Two or three students are chosen from each class to represent the experiment at the fair and answer questions.

University professors, NASA scientists and accountants joined Beaumont and Heights High students, who served as judges at the fair. Several judges were also members of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity – recruited by fellow member Mr. Harrell.

Cleveland Heights High student Dana Walker said she tried to put the students at ease before asking them questions, as "some students were really nervous." She also noted that "The best-looking boards didn't mean as much as their explanation of the experiment." ■



Kevin Harrell, Canterbury Principal

by Florence D'Emilia, Reaching Heights

Canterbury principal Kevin Harrell will tell you that his goal is to develop 21st century learners through critical thinking. "Critical thinking will affect every aspect of our students' lives," he says. "Success in the world, not just academic success, will be determined by the problem-solving skills that begin to develop in elementary school."

Critical thinking is developed through a rigorous curriculum and this year Canterbury will use non-fiction writing to provide the challenging curriculum. Reading and researching non-fiction topics gives students an opportunity to think about challenging subject matter, talk about it, and then write about it. The process helps them to become better at inferring meaning, and to identify main ideas and detail. The Science Fair for grades 3 through 5 is another opportunity for students to work on non-fiction writing and critical thinking skills as they create hypotheses, make observations and draw conclusions.

Mr. Harrell also encourages
(Success continued on page 2)

Success Hinges on Critical Thinking

Canterbury Tales is published by Reaching Heights, a citizen organization that mobilizes community resources to support the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools.

Newsletters featuring news about each elementary school are written and distributed by Reaching Heights and a team of parent and community volunteers, under the direction of Reaching Heights Assistant Director Joy Henderson. Florence D'Emilia is the lead writer.

We welcome your ideas and help. Contact us at 216-932-5110 or joy@reachingheights.org. Learn all about Reaching Heights and see how you'd like to become involved, by visiting us online at www.reachingheights.org.

Canterbury School is located at 2530 Canterbury Road. To contact the school, call 371-7470.

Beyond Bluebirds: The Value of Flexible Grouping

by Dan Palmer, Canterbury parent

"Anyone who thinks that there is one right way to teach reading has never worked with two children." So wrote Michael P. Ford in *Where Have All the Bluebirds Gone?: How to Soar with Flexible Groups*, which illustrates the importance of tailoring lessons to individual learners.

The days of fixed reading groups—the bluebirds and redbirds from decades past—are gone. "Today, it's all about ongoing evaluation," says Canterbury 5th grade teacher Janice Kurtz. "Some students may struggle with reading comprehension. Others need to work on understanding the difference between facts and opinions."

Using informal assessments, including teacher observation, targeted questions, reading and math forms and homework assignments, Kurtz identifies which students need to revisit unmastered skills. By placing these students together, she creates a "flexible learning group" from Ford's title, and can focus on teaching to their needs more directly.

Everyone benefits. Students who have mastered a skill can work on something else. Next week, next class, or next unit,

groups will be different depending on the subject and new feedback.

"Assessment is now used more as a teaching, rather than a grading tool, Mrs. Kurtz says." In addition to providing data for targeted mid-course adjustments, informal assessments also help students prepare for the concept testing at the end of a unit. So it's bye-bye to those birdies for good. 📖



Congratulations to these victorious 5th graders, who beat a team of teachers 46-43 in a Student-Faculty Basketball Shoot-Out. The game capped a four-week fundraising campaign that raised more than \$2,000 for the United Negro College Fund, United Way, and Community Shares, as part of the school's Charities for Choice program.

(Success continued from front page)

development of critical thinking through his approach to discipline and behavior. "When I talk to kids about their behavior, I want them to understand how discipline and behavior affect the school community and how the world outside operates," he says. "I want them to think through their actions."

Dressed in a suit and tie, Mr. Harrell sets a tone that is both professional and accessible. He has a school-wide

presence – in classrooms, during drop-off and dismissal, and even in the gym. One student said he barely recognized Mr. Harrell without a suit.

This year, the principal teamed up with staff members to compete against student representatives in a 3-point shoot-out for the school-wide Charities of Choice campaign. Lunch and open gym with Mr. Harrell are some of the most sought-after rewards for kids who have earned character coupons.

There are some students who check in with Mr. Harrell three times a day. Touching base in the morning helps the student get off to a positive school day. Talking midday gives the student a chance to problem-solve before a big problem develops, and ending the day with a brief good-bye reinforces the sense that Mr. Harrell believes in the student. Mr. Harrell will tell you that he has a personal mission to see that no child in his care will fail. 📖

Reaching Heights invites you to Thank-a-Teacher! Send a note of thanks with a donation of \$10 or more. Reaching Heights will send a recognition card with your note to the teacher you're honoring, and let the school's principal know about the recognition.

The Canterbury Experience

SUPPORTING CANTERBURY FAMILIES

We asked two parents to describe their experiences at Canterbury, so that other parents could have a small snapshot of life at the school. Both families needed individualized staff support for their children's medical challenges.



Natalie Noble with Principal Harrell at the September Ice Cream Social.

Allergy No Obstacle to Success

by Susanne Noble

In late August 2006, my only child began her school career as a kindergartner at Canterbury Elementary. I braced myself for the dangers school can hold for a kid like her with a deadly peanut allergy.

School was new to us and the principal was new to the school. To me, the principal of a school sets the tone for the whole school and I felt that our time at Canterbury would be stamped by his presence in every way.

Our first interaction with Principal Kevin Harrell was at the annual September ice cream social, where he posed with my proud 5-year-old for a picture and we had a chance to talk to him. Since then we've come to know and appreciate Mr. Harrell and he has taken the time to know us.

He has made sure the staff knows about Natalie's peanut allergy so they can protect her from peanut exposure. He notices when she is having a bad morning and needs a hug, and he keeps all the kids academically challenged and safe from the after-school traffic jams.

Thank you, Canterbury School and Mr. Harrell. I can't wait to see their picture together when she's in the 5th grade ... and all the years between.

Compassion in a Time of Need

by Sabrina Kempson

We have two children, Jordan, age 11, a 6th grader at Wiley Middle School; and Isaiah, 10, a 5th grader at Canterbury. In August 2006, Jordan was diagnosed with Denetric Cell Leukemia, a rare blood cancer. School has always been important to our daughter, so this diagnosis a week before school (or any other time!) was disappointing and discouraging.

It meant so much to us when school counselor Betsy Vegel called to let us know that she and teachers Terri Gilliam and Stacy Kroger would visit our daughter at the hospital. They reassured us that they would help us deal with our crisis. I can't tell you how grateful we were to be part of Canterbury at this time in our lives.

Jordan missed a lot of school while receiving treatment in the hospital. The support we received from the Canterbury staff exceeded our expectations. There were days when our daughter was too sick to come to class, but her tutor, Rita Haag, stayed after school and even met with us on the



Isaiah Kempson, Jordan Reid and parents Gary and Sabrina Kempson.

A Walk-through with the Principal

by Florence D'Emilia, Reaching Heights

Canterbury principal Kevin Harrell visits each classroom for three to five minutes most days. This walk-through gives him a consistent snapshot of the teaching and learning at Canterbury.

The time he spends in each classroom is mostly devoted to listening and observing. Both the staff and the students are used to seeing him in the classrooms and are familiar with his regular appearance.

Mr. Harrell and all the other CH-UH principals are learning about how to identify quality instruction and how to guide and lead teachers to high-quality learning in each classroom. The knowledge that he gains on the walk-throughs gives him a good understanding of the instruction at his school.

After some of his visits, he creates a reflective question. It might be for a particular teacher, but it is more commonly for all teachers. The question is intended to provoke reflection and discussions about an aspect of instruction. The question might be: What does success look like for a particular student? or How will we respond if a student already knows what we're teaching?

The resulting discussions and exchange of ideas about teaching and learning is one way that teachers at Canterbury meet their goals of great teaching and learning for all students. 📖

weekends to help Jordan keep up with her class.

Jordan graduated from Canterbury and made the merit roll in her first semester in middle school. This would not have happened without the efforts of her teachers at Canterbury. Jordan is becoming a beautiful and loving young lady. Our trust in God and the support of people such as the Canterbury staff got us through a very difficult time.

I write this testimonial to let all parents know just how wonderful the Canterbury staff really is. Thank you, Canterbury staff, for your commitment to our children. 📖

Dalcroze for Kindergartners

FUNDED BY THE PTA



Kindergarten students in their Dalcroze class. Left to right: Emma Vail, Seth O'Neil, Marquise Campbell, Kathryn Cronin and Jayla Loius.

Kindergarten students enjoy a six-week Dalcroze Eurhythmics program taught by Linda Miller of the Cleveland Music School Settlement. Students learn music through rhythm, first with movement and then transferring to simple written notation. The goal of the program is to foster joy and alertness of mind through music.

The Canterbury PTA funds many enrichment activities for students, both during the school day and after school. Other school-day activities funded by the PTA include a 1st grade Lake Farmpark outreach program, featuring bread-making; a trip to the Cleveland Orchestra for 4th graders; and a model rocket project with NASA scientists for 5th graders

Every grade level team can submit a request to PTA for up to \$1,200 for an enrichment activity. The PTA also organizes fun afterschool activities. These include yoga, Spanish, chess, art with Heights Arts, and modern dance with Inlet Dance Company. 📌

speech/language pathologist Amanda Geil developed a program to co-teach students with and without special needs in one classroom. Mainstream and special ed teachers meet several times a month to plan lessons, share ideas, and discuss behavior-management strategies. Regular teachers bring knowledge of the curriculum, statewide testing requirements, and large-group instruction and behavior management. Special ed teachers bring knowledge of learning differences and supports. All students benefit.

Recently, Mrs. Khalfoun's 5th graders received a lesson from Ms. Geil on creating a story line. Her understanding of language development and structures and ways to teach language skills helped the whole class learn how to create narratives. On another day, Mrs. Zabukovec prepped the students for their Science Fair projects.

Mrs. Khalfoun is one of 11 Canterbury educators honored with the Outstanding Educational Team Award by Cuyahoga County's Educational Service Center. The award recognizes a program that brings mainstream and special education teachers together in one classroom. Canterbury has an inclusion classroom for grades 1-5. Other team members are Carla DeRubeis, Evelyn

Co-teaching Team Receives Award

by Michelle O'Neil, Canterbury parent

Judi Khalfoun's 5th grade students benefit from a daily agenda posted to remind them of the day's schedule, a mid-morning stretch and healthy snack, a quiet work table reserved for those requiring extra concentration, and small-group lessons that allow for focused attention. Another great addition to the classroom is Sandra Zabukovec, a special education teacher who works with all students. In Mrs. Khalfoun's room, you don't need an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to benefit from strategies that help everyone learn better.

A few years ago, special education teacher Julie Meese realized that pulling students out of the classroom for lessons was socially detrimental. So she and



Fierer, Amanda Geil, Terri Gilliam, Rita Haag, Emily Hesse, Stacy Kroger, Julie Meese, Marie Woods, and Sandra Zabukovec. This year, Sherry Esper joins the team. 📌

Fifth grade teachers Sandra Zabukovec (left) and Judi Khalfoun.

WILEY WELCOMES

Kelli Cogan

by Joy Henderson, *Reaching Heights*

Principals sometimes join students in making the leap from elementary to middle school. Kelli Cogan, Wiley Middle School's new principal, held the same job for five years at Roxboro Elementary School. She's enjoying the excitement of working with older students.

"At this age, students need more freedom, but they also need clear expectations for behavior in classrooms, hallways, the cafeteria and at dismissal time."

"Middle school kids are fun and funny – they're sophisticated enough to understand adult humor and are good problem solvers," says Mrs. Cogan. She brings her experience to bear as she introduces internal structures and common language for behavior expectations at Wiley.

"At this age, students need more freedom – like having a locker," she says. "But they also need clear expectations for behavior in classrooms, hallways, the cafeteria and at dismissal time." She met with the staff last summer to describe responsible, respectful and organized student behavior. The result has been distilled into a chart that is posted in all classrooms, clearly describing behavior expectations. After just six weeks of school, the number of students sent to the principal's office for discipline referrals had decreased dramatically from last year.

Mrs. Cogan grew up in Cleveland Heights and, except for one year she served as an assistant principal in Twinsburg, has worked in the CH-UH system for her entire career. Before becoming an administrator, she taught at Oxford Elementary School for 10 years. "I love this district," she says. "We have great students, a wonderful staff and a supportive community." 📖



Common Area Expectations Improve School Climate

by Susie Kaeser, *Reaching Heights* volunteer

Each day, the youthful energy, shifting moods and diverse needs of more than 400 early adolescents converge on Wiley Middle School. All must be channeled into learning. And every day, students congregate in hallways, the cafeteria and restrooms, outside any individual adult's responsibility. As most office referrals at Wiley addressed behavior in these places, students' choices there set a tone for the school.

This year, Wiley teachers and administrators, working with Jeffrey Johnston, the school district's Coordinator of Student Support Programs, launched a plan to create respectful and calm behavior in common spaces. They defined procedures for organizing and monitoring students in the halls, cafeteria and restrooms, then clearly stated expectations for student behavior in each location. Teachers used role-playing exercises and class discussions to teach expected voice volume, where to walk, appropriate language, and other appropriate behavior.

Wiley's improved school climate

— part of a three-tier Positive Behavior Support plan — strengthens the school community and frees staff to intervene with the few students who need more support and encouragement. "Kids want to know what is expected of them," says Wiley principal Kelli Cogan. "It helps them, and reduces sources of conflict." The plan uses relationships and targeted interventions, not punishment, to help students meet behavior expectations and engage in learning.

Referrals for behavior in common areas are down 80 percent from last year — but Principal Cogan acknowledges that "setting expectations is the easy part." Motivating students to meet those expectations can be more difficult.

Behavioral expectations are tied to academic expectations. "Research states that when students are actively engaged in classroom lessons, negative behavior becomes almost non-existent," explains Mrs. Cogan. That's why she and Wiley's staff address student behavior and academic effectiveness simultaneously. "This will take time," Mrs. Cogan cautions, "but will ultimately lead to student success." 📖

Heights Seniors Earn National Merit and Achievement Scholarship Recognition



Heights seniors who received National Merit and Achievement Scholarships: Front Row, left to right, Meike Ernst, Megan McCoy and Kimberly Wilkins. Back Row, left to right, Hari-Gaura Ziyad, Joseph Fox, James Wherley, Terance Ashford, Murray Davis, Maria Chan, Terrence Banks II, John Waltrip and John Kenniebrew. Not Pictured, Lee Deadwyler.

Four Cleveland Heights High School seniors are semi-finalists in the first round of the National Merit Scholarship and National Achievement Scholarship programs.

National Merit Scholarship semifinalist: **Joseph Fox**

National Achievement Scholarship semifinalists:

Terance Ashford, Terrence Banks II, and Hari-Gaura Ziyad

National Merit Commended students:

Terrence Banks II, Maria Chan, Murray Davis, Meike Ernst, Megan McCoy, John Waltrip and James Wherley

National Achievement Outstanding Participants:

Lee Deadwyler, John Kenniebrew and Kimberly Wilkins

Semifinalists will compete to become National Merit and National Achievement finalists and scholarship winners. Merit Scholarship semifinalists can continue in the competition for 8,200 awards worth \$34 million; Achievement Scholarship semifinalists are eligible for 800 awards worth \$2.5 million. ■

Workshops Help Parents Help Students On the Path to College

by Joy Henderson, Reaching Heights

“The college-going process starts in 6th grade,” says Heights High College Counselor Dr. Kristie Cooper. “That’s when families can encourage and support their children to take rigorous classes, preparing them for high school and college.”

Of course, not all students take honors-level courses in all subjects, but all students have strengths in and should take an honors-level course in at least one subject area, according to Dr. Cooper.

The Heights High guidance department offers this and many other tips during a seven-part workshop series for parents. “The world has changed so much in the last generation,” says Dr. Cooper. “Today’s students will need some kind of education after high school to make a decent living and

expand their career options.”

The workshop content was outlined by Ms. Cooper with input by parents. A Parent Connection Council advisory work group, set up last summer, helped fine-tune the content and offered advice on how to promote the workshops.

Parent/guardian support in the college-going process is extremely important beginning with talking to toddlers to encourage vocabulary development, making time for regular trips to the library and talking about college as a family expectation. When students are in high school, making trips to local or distant colleges to spend time on a campus are important, whether Tri-C, Case, Cleveland State, John Carroll, or out-of-state schools.

Dr. Cooper values parents as important drivers of much of the

college-going process. “Parents lead most of the process when students are younger and parents are still needed in a different way through high school,” she says. Parents, guardians or other helpful adults are needed at every step: keeping track of deadlines, knowing about fee waivers for college entrance tests, or helping with college applications. The workshops at Heights High provide a great resource to help parents help their children get ready for, get into and graduate from college.

For more information call Dr. Cooper at 216-320-3067. ■

Remaning Workshops
Financing College, March 16
College Realities, April 14