

# Special Edition

A Newsletter to Parents and Staff

Volume 17 Issue 1 Autumn 2004

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## Horizon Award Program recognizes Megan Goff

Megan Goff, Early Childhood Special Education teacher at Grandview Elementary in El Dorado, was named Kansas Horizon Award recipient recently. The Kansas Horizon Awards are sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education and recognize exemplary first-year educators.

The Horizon Award program, currently in its second year, allows all school districts in the state an opportunity to nominate one elementary and one secondary teacher for the award. To be eligible for a Horizon Award, teachers must have successfully completed their first year of teaching and have performed in such a way as to distinguish themselves as outstanding. The Horizon Award program is a regional competition with four regions corresponding to the state's U.S. congressional districts. Four elementary and four secondary classroom teachers may be selected for the award from each district.

Recipients of the 2005 Kansas Horizon Award were notified of their selection by Dr. Andy Tompkins, Commissioner of Education. They will be recognized at a special luncheon in February.

In nominating Ms. Goff for the award, Grandview Principal Ginger Glenn said, "Megan was an outstanding first year teacher, and continues to be an outstanding teacher as she strives for continued successes with students. She is a true professional and a very dedicated teacher. Ms. Goff demonstrates a strong personal commitment to her students and to education. What a joy it



Pictured above are Megan Goff and her students (l-r) Daniel Moore, Samuel Lane, Ariana Latham, Jacob Wheeler, Joey Ayala, Makenzie Jackson, Gavin Starkey, Kolton Melugin and Jamey Korth.

is to have such a motivated and dedicated new teacher in our building! Her enthusiasm for teaching and for children is contagious."

As a recipient of the Kansas Horizon Award, Ms. Goff will be invited to join the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network (KEEN), a network of educators from around the state who have been formally recognized for exemplary performance. Members of KEEN have an opportunity to network with other outstanding educators and participate in a number of professional development programs throughout the year.

## Direct Line from the Director

By Greg Buster  
Director of Special Education

In late November Congress passed a law reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act. Some of the major changes in the bill include:

- Ensures students with disabilities are included in accountability or testing systems.
  - Reduces the special education paperwork burden by deleting short-term objectives and benchmarks from IEPs (except for students who take alternate assessments), initiates a 15-state paperwork demonstration project, and pilots the three-year IEP. Kansas will apply to become one of the pilot states.
  - Establishes methods to reduce the number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are inappropriately placed in special education.
  - Ensures the discipline provisions for students with disabilities continue to protect the rights of these students to a free, appropriate public education.
  - Provides funding for professional development for special education educators.
  - Requires all special education teachers to be certified in special education. New special education teachers teaching multiple subjects must meet the highly qualified standard in at least one core subject area (language arts, math or science).
  - Parents and districts can agree to change an IEP without holding a formal IEP meeting. Creates the opportunity for a resolution session within 30 days of a complaint being filed.
  - Encourages the use of mediation as early as possible. Establishes a two-year statute of limitations from the date of the alleged violation to file a complaint in the absence of a specific state time limitation.
  - Identifies providing effective transition services to promote successful post-school employment or education as an important measure of accountability for children with disabilities. Requires formulation of
- See **Direct Line** on Page 2



Ringling bells for the Salvation Army this holiday season are (l-r) Prospect paraeducator Teresa Smith, students— Zach Kaplan, Justin Hall, Sheldon Cain, Brandon Wiklund— and paraeducator Sarah Coiner.

## Prospect students enjoy community service projects

More than classroom bells are ringing for Prospect's high school students this holiday season. Lisa Arndt's students have volunteered to "ring bells" for the Salvation Army every Friday from 9-10 a.m. at El Dorado Dillons.

Ringling bells for the Salvation Army is just one of the weekly community service projects Arndt's students are involved in this school year. Other projects include: sorting clothes at the Goodwill store; cleaning pens at the El Dorado Animal Shelter; sweeping floors and organizing shelves at the city water treatment plant; dusting and vacuuming in the

See **Students ring bells** on Page 2

## Cochlear implants allow people who are profoundly deaf to perceive sound

Three out of every 1,000 children born in the United States have a severe to profound hearing loss.

"By state law all newborns are screened for hearing loss," Audiologist Carmen Schulte explained. "They perform one of two tests on the infants. The Otoacoustic Emission Test tests hearing ability at the level of the hair cells inside the cochlea (inner ear). It tests the robustness of the echo in relation to hearing sensitivity. This test can rule out everything except a mild hearing loss.

"The other test is the Auditory Brainstem Response Test. It tests hear-

ing at the level of the brainstem, determining if there is a neural response to a sound stimulus."

Schulte said if a hearing loss is found, the child is referred to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist. Depending upon the severity of the hearing loss, she said, the specialist may recommend cochlear implants.

"They first fit the child with hearing aids," she said. "The child may use them up to six months to see if they have success and are making progress. If there is progress, they may not implant."

Schulte explained the difference between the function of a hearing aid and a cochlear implant is that a hearing aid takes a sound and amplifies that sound, whereas, a cochlear implant does not make sounds louder, it provides useful sound information by directly stimulating the surviving auditory nerve fibers in the inner ear, allowing individuals to perceive sound.

A cochlear implant is an electronic device that performs the function of the damaged or absent hair cells in the inner ear, providing electrical stimulation to the remaining nerve fibers.

"The age at which they are implanting children is getting younger and younger," she said. "The age limit used to be 18 months. Now they are implanting as early as 9 months because the technology to diagnose hearing loss has improved to where they can get good thresholds on very young children. Implanting young children takes the developmental delays out of the picture.

"Infants can pretty quickly adapt to an implant and make progress. If an adult or teenager is implanted, they have to really learn how to interpret the information being sent to the brain because it's not what they are used to hearing."

Schulte said that hearing aids do not work for some people because of sound distortion. An implant, she explained, bypasses the distortion and sends a signal straight to the brain.

Currently there are three students attending Butler County schools with cochlear implants — a high school student, a middle school student and an elementary student.

"It's a rapidly changing technology," Schulte said. "There are some studies going on right now that are looking

at partial implants, that is, implanting the device only part way into the cochlea. With partial implants, people are able to use hearing aids to boost the lower frequencies. The implant then gives the brain the higher frequency information. Older adults, for example, who have noise-induced hearing loss are candidates for the partial implants.

"I think we are going to see more and more kids with cochlear implants in our schools," Schulte said. "Rainbows United has 10 to 12 children right now with implants who will be moving into our school systems in the near future."

## Students ring bells

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Salvation Army store; picking up trash after football games at Galen Blackmore Stadium; doing janitorial work at the El Dorado YMCA and El Dorado Recycling Center; measuring and packaging flour and counting and sacking diapers for United Methodist Urban Ministries in Wichita; cleaning the city parks; and growing poinsettias in the school's greenhouse and delivering the flowers to every school in Butler County.

"One of my favorite things we've done was to go to a nursing home and play 'volleyball' with the people there," junior Miguel Blanco-Diaz said. "Everyone sat in chairs and we used balloons as the ball."

Arndt said, "I started the community service projects with my students about seven years ago because I had a few kids on probation and they needed to complete community service hours. Today, we do the community service projects just because the students like to do them.

"It's also neat for the community to see what great kids we have here at Prospect. This is our second year to ring bells for the Salvation Army. The students like it a lot and they are so polite to the public. It's neat to see our students helping other people and feeling so good about helping them."

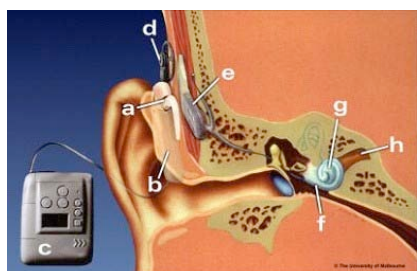
## Direct Line

*Continued from Page 1*

measurable post-secondary goals and transition services needed by a child, beginning not later than the first IEP, and to be in effect when the child is 16 and updated annually thereafter.

Overall, most school personnel and parent advocacy groups are pleased with the changes in IDEA. The increased focus on student accountability and the efforts to reduce repetitive paperwork for teachers will provide staff with direction and with time to provide appropriate instruction to our students.

## How does a cochlear implant work?



*Drawing by The Bionic Ear Institute*

- Sounds and speech are picked up by the microphone at the ear level.
- The information from the microphone is sent to the speech processor.
- The speech processor analyses the information and converts it into electrical coded signals.
- The coded signal travels via a cable to the transmitting coil in the headset. Radio waves from the transmitter coil carry the coded signal through the skin to the implant inside.
- The cochlear implant decodes the signal. The signal contains information that determines how much electrical current will be sent to the different electrodes that have been inserted into the cochlea.
- The appropriate amount of electrical current passes down the lead wires to the chosen electrodes.
- The position of the stimulating electrodes within the cochlea will determine the frequency or pitch of the sounds. The amount of electrical current will determine the loudness of the sounds.
- Once the nerve endings in the cochlea are stimulated, the message is sent up to the brain along the hearing nerve. The brain interprets the stimulation as a meaningful sound.

Source — The Bionic Ear Institute, [www.bionicear.org](http://www.bionicear.org)

## Special Edition

The newsletter *Special Edition*, from the Butler County School Board Council Special Education Program, is intended to provide information to parents and staff about special education activities and classrooms throughout the county.

*Special Edition* is published semi-annually by Butler County School Board Council, USD 490 Director of Information, Jacalyn Clark. BCSBC Special Education Program, 124 West Central Avenue, El Dorado, KS 67042, (316) 322-4800, [www.bcsbc.org](http://www.bcsbc.org).

**Greg Buster, Director**

**Karen Wright, Assistant Director**

### Butler County School Board Council

#### Member District

Andover USD 385  
Augusta USD 402  
Bluestem USD 205  
Circle USD 375  
Douglass USD 396  
El Dorado USD 490  
Flinthills USD 492  
Remington USD 206  
Rose Hill USD 394

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Above, students from Butler County high schools look on as Chris Sorensen of the Kansas State University Presidential Lecture Series demonstrates how lasers work. Sorensen conducted one of the breakout sessions offered at the second annual Butler County Gifted Seminar.

Pictured above are (l-r) Sorensen, Augusta High School freshman Cammie Christner, Andover Central sophomore Kyle Whiteside, Circle High School sophomore Bev Borne, El Dorado High School freshman Bailey Brush and El Dorado High School junior Kristina Burger.

## Butler County Gifted Seminar

Almost 100 of Butler County's high potential secondary students gathered December 3 on the Butler Community College El Dorado campus for the second annual gifted seminar centering on career exploration, socialization and college exploration. The event featured speakers from the Kansas State University Presidential Lecture Series, Butler Community College and Butler Community College Phi Theta Kappa Chapter. The day-long seminar was organized by Charlie Mahoney, El Dorado/Remington gifted education coordinator, and Marjorie Landwehr-Brown, Douglass gifted education coordinator.

Students who attended the seminar heard speakers discuss "Entrepreneurship" (Brian Niehoff), "Ethical Leadership" (Jack Taylor), "Career Planning" (Michelle Haupt), "How Lasers Work" (Chris Sorensen), "Brain and Memory" (Dr. Stephen Kiefer), and "Youth Enacting Social Change" (Jake Lowen). Butler Community College Phi Theta Kappa members held a pop quiz bowl and offered sessions on leadership styles and the Knute Rockne crash site and other popular culture Kansas landmarks.

Brown said, "Gifted students make up three to five percent of the total student population at any given high school, so socialization in a large group setting is very important. The added bonus is that we were able to provide college and career information at the same time."

Mahoney added, "Each gifted student selected three sessions to attend on the 3rd. Seeing our students eating pizza with a college dean and talking with an expert about the finer points of laser research made all the scheduling and organization worthwhile."

El Dorado High School junior Kristina Burger said, "My favorite part of the seminar was the session on lasers. The teacher was awesome! I learned a lot from him. We are learning about lasers in one of my classes right now and I've always wondered how they work."

Participating school districts included Rose Hill, Augusta, Circle, El Dorado, Andover, Douglass and Remington.

## Infant/toddler program moves to new location

After seven years in cramped quarters, Bright Beginnings' employees are enjoying their new office space located at 409 North Main in El Dorado. Bright Beginnings, a service of Rainbows United of Wichita, provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers throughout Butler County. This federally funded program serves 55 to 60 children at any given time.

The new offices are by no means large, but as Coordinator Susan Harsh explained, all her employees are only together once a month anyway. She said that 95% of all therapies and services are provided in the home, with a few services being provided in day cares, school classrooms and occasionally in the Bright Beginnings office.

Harsh said, "Our therapists provide services for infants and toddlers in the nine districts in Butler County. They work out of their cars as they go all over the place to get to these children. They are very effective at managing their time. I rarely see my employees."

Harsh said Bright Beginnings has eight employees — one early childhood teacher, two speech/language pathologists, one occupational therapist, one physical therapist, one licensed specialist clinical social worker, a master level social worker (Harsh) and a part-time receptionist. In addition, this year the program has a college student helping out who is working on her masters in social work.

She explained that Bright Beginnings services address the following areas — receptive and expressive language, fine and gross motor skills, self-help skills, social skills and cognitive skills. She said children qualify for services if they have a 25% developmental delay in one of these areas or 20% delay in two of these areas.

"All our therapies are play-based — to help parents enhance those skills their children are normally going to be doing," she said. "Our goal is to improve on a child's skills, not fix skills they do not have. The whole key to our program is family involvement. If we have that, these children are going to

do a whole lot better.

"It's fun to watch the children's progress. They are so smart at this young age. Research shows that there is a window of time during their early development that the needs must be addressed. With early intervention, a child may only need six months of therapy.

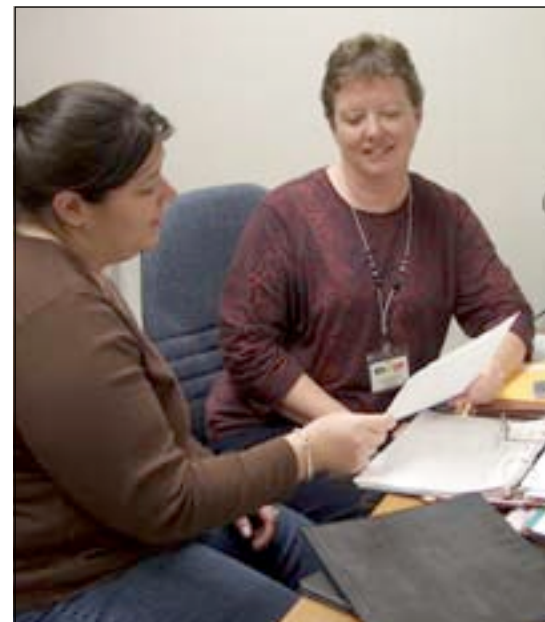
"And, it's FREE — the evaluation and the services! Insurance may be accessed if parents allow it. So, if it's free, why wait? Why not take advantage of this program — to make the most of that window of opportunity when the child can make so much progress."

Harsh said she is concerned that there are some areas of the county that are not utilizing the services of Bright Beginnings.

"Our numbers increase every year, but we will never be full. If anyone wants an evaluation, we will do it. In addition, we have a family service coordinator whose job is to work specifically with teachers and other school personnel to transition our children into whatever program they are going into, whether it's Head Start, public schools, outpatient speech/language services or a private preschool."

Parents who have a concern about their infant or toddler's development, or who want to know more about Bright Beginnings, can contact Harsh at (316) 320-1342 or toll free at (800) 650-9260.

Pictured below (l-r) are Bright Beginnings social work student Sierra Bauer and family service coordinator Luann McFadden.



## Inclusionary playground nearing completion at Summit Park in El Dorado

A unique inclusionary playground, unlike any other playground in the United States, is close to reality now that the fund-raising goal of \$155,000 has been met and construction has begun.

The off-street handicap-van accessible parking is finished. Workers are installing the accessible sidewalks and the playground equipment. Yet to be installed is the soft surface tile (rubber 3 1/4 inches thick) beneath the equipment. Brenda Clarkin, adapted physical education coordinator for the Butler County Special Education Cooperative, said the playground is scheduled to be completed around December 17.

Clarkin wanted to build an inclusionary playground at Summit Park in El Dorado so that children of all ages with physical disabilities would be capable of playing with their peers on the "same level."

Clarkin said the new playground equipment will have ramps from the ground up, making the playground accessible to all children and adults regardless of their physical limitations. She said special consideration was given to the surfacing material, to allow accessibility for individuals using mobility devices to move throughout the entire playground with independence.

Clarkin said she wants to thank everyone who had a part in this fund-raising project. A spring dedication program is planned. If you have questions about the project or wish to make a donation, contact Clarkin at Everyone Plays at the Summit, 16500 SE Stony Creek Road, Latham, KS, 67072.



Above, a construction worker prepares the area before the sidewalk is poured that will encircle the new "inclusionary" playground at Summit Park in El Dorado.

## Butler County students find freedom in the water

Once every three weeks, all year long, 10 to 12 students from several Butler County school districts meet Mark Towner at the El Dorado YMCA for an hour of fun in the swimming pool. Then they all go out to lunch together afterwards.

Towner, a physical therapist with the Butler County Special Education Cooperative, said, "The students who participate are in all grades and have varying levels of disabilities. Some of the students walk into the building on their own, and some come in in wheelchairs. The hardest part is getting them out of the pool at the end of the hour.

"Several students, who I thought would be cautious in the water, weren't. Some jumped in the pool all by themselves the first time at the Y. It's amazing how free they feel in the water.

"Some of these students haven't been exposed to many of the physical activities that other children have, and being in the water is a wonderful way to allow them to move around. We try to provide opportunities for them that other children have. It's always interesting getting some of them up on the water slide."

"Our main goal with this activity is to provide the students the opportunity to begin enjoying physical activity in



Pictured above in the El Dorado YMCA pool are (l-r) paraeducator Alicia Chapman, Benton fifth grade student Renata Herrmann and Towanda Intermediate fifth grade student Kayleen Sabala.

the water. If they have fun they will tell their parents and maybe make swimming a life-long activity. If they make it a regular activity on their own it can make a difference. If they don't have fun in the water, they won't keep doing it.

Paraeducator Alicia Chapman, a former YMCA lifeguard, assists Towner with the students in the pool. The El Dorado YMCA provides the facility to the students free of charge.



### Free Preschool Screenings

Count Your Kid In is a free developmental screening for infants and preschool children. The purpose is to help parents identify potential learning problems and find help. If your child has difficulty walking, talking, seeing, hearing or learning, please call the Special Education office at 322-4800 or 1-800-353-8561 to schedule a free appointment.

Following are some screening dates and locations during the next few months:

January 7	El Dorado
January 14	Augusta
January 28	Towanda
February 18	Leon
April 1	El Dorado