

April, 2007

About Our Students

- Philip (P.J.), a fourth grade student at Cunningham Park Elementary in Vienna, has been selected by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) to receive the "Yes I Can!" award. The Foundation for Exceptional Children established the *Yes I Can!* International Awards Program in 1981 to acknowledge the achievements of children and youth with disabilities, to overcome barriers caused by public misconceptions, to encourage children and youth with disabilities to seek their highest potential, and increase public awareness of the abilities, aspirations, and personal qualities of people with disabilities. P.J. is one of twenty-seven award winners who will receive a bronze statue and other recognition at the CEC Annual Convention in April 2007 in Louisville, Kentucky. P.J. was nominated by his classroom teacher and pyramid resource specialist for his academic successes despite his significant challenges. He is described as an engaged and engaging learner. His fourth grade general education peers have learned to challenge him gently, support him encouragingly, and congratulate him wholeheartedly when he is successful. They report that they have also learned from P.J, as a model of what it means to work hard and to persevere despite difficulties.
- W.T. Woodson High School takes fourth place in regional Academic Bowl! Congratulations to the team from the Deaf/Hard of Hearing program at W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, which recently took fourth place in the 2007 Mid-Atlantic/At Large Regional of the Gallaudet University National Academic Bowl!

Especially for Parents

- Almost 200 parents attended workshops sponsored by the Parent Resource Center about college planning for students who receive special education services. Post-secondary educational options have expanded tremendously over the past few years, with many schools offering highly specialized services for students across a broad range of cognitive abilities. Vickie Barr, a college counselor, discussed how parents can determine the level of services their child needs and explore schools that might be appropriate.
- Preschool social workers are continuing to offer parent workshops, through May, on the topic, *"What is Your Child's Behavior Telling You? Understanding, Appreciating, and Working with Your Child's Behavior"*. The presenters help parents understand developmentally appropriate behavior expectations for preschoolers with special needs. In addition, they emphasize appropriate discipline strategies for parents to use with preschoolers with special needs to support positive behavior. Two of the workshops are offered in Spanish.
- The Third Annual Special Education Conference: Linking Parents and Schools, will be held on Saturday, April 28 from 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Marshall High School. This conference is sponsored by Fairfax County Public Schools Department of Special Services, Office of Special Education in collaboration with the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD). Pre-registration is requested but not required. To pre-register, please go to: <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEducationForum/signup/request.htm>. For more information about the

conference, please go to: <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEducationForum>. If you have questions, please contact the Parent Resource Center at 703-204-3941.

- The Chatterbox Fun Fair will be held this year at Kings Glen Elementary on Saturday, May 12 from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.. This free family event, sponsored by Assistive Technology Services (ATS), is specifically designed for children, preschool through sixth grade, who use picture boards or devices with sound output to communicate and learn in school and at home. Students receiving assistive technology support through ATS and their families will be invited. This fun fair provides students and families with an opportunity to meet and talk with other children and families who use technology or picture boards to communicate. Families will also have an opportunity to explore state of the art technology and assistive devices currently used in the school system. In addition to information about Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) services, other Fairfax County agencies will share information regarding public safety, health, and human services. Students will be able to experience public safety demonstrations, K-9 search and rescue drills, helicopter maneuvers, and motorcycle drills. Entertainment will include a musical performance of Aesop's Fables by FCPS students. This performance will incorporate the use of assistive communication devices.

Especially for Staff

- The following presentations were made at the Speech Language-Hearing Association of Virginia conference in Richmond March 1-3 by Speech-Language clinicians and other FCPS staff:
 - *ACE-IT: Achieving Communication Excellence by Integrating Technology*
 - *Why Working Harder Is Hardly Working!*
 - *Using Technology to Support Marzano's Instructional Strategies and Bloom's Taxonomy in Speech-Language Therapy*
 - *Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) and T/TAC Online: Working Together For Virginia's Students*
 - *HELP! My Fourth Graders Need to Pass the VA History SOL's*
 - *Issues in Telepractice*
 - *If You Build It, Will They Come? Forming Virtual Community*
 - *Addressing the Shortage of SLPs: Be Part of the Solution by Recruiting New SLPs*
- Over 130 school teams have received Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan (FBA/BIP) training. FBA is a team problem solving process designed to identify the events that reliably predict and maintain problem behaviors. The process is about identifying patterns of behavior rather than describing individual occurrences and examines the motivation or function of the behavior.
- On March 9 and 28, members of the Office of Special Education (OSE) team collaborated with staff from the Gifted and Talented Office of the Instructional Services Department to present a two-day Leadership Academy Seminar to administrators and teachers entitled, *Twice Exceptional (2e) Learners*. The seminar focused on meeting the unique needs of twice exceptional learners through effective programming options and by using research-based learning strategies that promote differentiation in the classroom.
- On March 14, a member of the OSE secondary team presented a workshop entitled, *Serving the Needs of Secondary Students with Asperger's Syndrome and High Functioning Autism (AS/HFA)* to secondary general and special education teachers and administrators. Topics included Asperger's syndrome characteristics, classroom accommodations, and school supports. All participants received a copy of the FCPS *Understanding and Teaching Secondary Students with Asperger's Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism* guide and supplementary manual.

- On March 19, members of the OSE secondary team attended a full-day session hosted by the Office of Middle School Instruction entitled, *The Thinking Summit: Planning for Success*, given by Dr. Janet Allen. Middle schools sent teams comprised of school-based instructional leaders in each core content area, special education, and ESOL. Dr. Allen shared processes for the explicit teaching of thinking strategies across the core content areas.
- On March 19, OSE staff collaborated with Instructional Services Department specialists to teach designated special education high school teachers to use KeyTrain, on-line instruction to help students prepare for the WorkKeys alternative assessments, identified by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) as alternatives to the Standards of Learning (SOL) End of Course (EOC) English: Writing Tests and to tests required for students to meet literacy and numeracy requirements for the modified standard diploma.
- On March 20, members of the OSE secondary team conducted an Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) focus group meeting for teachers who are currently working with *Autism Partnership* consultants. Teachers shared curriculum ideas and materials to support instruction of the Virginia Aligned Standards of Learning.
- On March 22, members of the OSE secondary team collaborated with the Office of Middle School Instruction and the Office of Professional Learning and Training to present the final session of the Cluster VII Math Professional Learning Community workshop series hosted at Rocky Run Middle School. The workshop series, designed to improve middle school mathematics SOL scores for special education students in Cluster VII, focused on using state and county resources as well as using data to guide instructional decisions.
- On March 21 and 28, members of the OSE secondary team collaborated with members of the Office of Student Services to host the *Emotional Disabilities Roundtables* for teachers of students with social/emotional needs. Topics included the development and use of functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans and effective strategies to support students' social/emotional and academic needs.
- On March 28, middle and high school special education reading teachers participated in an on-line seminar on using technology to improve reading achievement.
- On March 29 and 30, members of the OSE secondary team attended the *2007 VGLA Scoring Train-the-Trainer Workshop* offered by the VDOE in Fredericksburg, VA. Members attended sessions in scoring the Reading/Writing/History components as well as the Math/Science components.