

July, 2007

### **About Our Students**

- Joe K., age 19 and a Falls Church High student receiving special education services, was responsible for getting his friend, Ben Affleck, to speak at the Falls Church High School graduation. Paying tribute to Joe, Affleck said, "I'm here because what I learned about the distance between how you see someone and who they are I didn't learn in Hollywood. I learned from a classmate of yours, my friend, Joe K."

### **Especially for Staff**

- On June 5, the Office of Special Education (OSE) secondary team staff members participated in an Instructional Services (IS) workshop on middle and high school International Baccalaureate programs. The purpose of the workshop was for participants to become familiar with options and accommodations available for twice exceptional students.
- On June 21, OSE secondary team staff members conducted *Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)* training for secondary teachers and instructional assistants. The one-day training covered the basic principles of ABA as well as examples of how the principles are applied to address behavior and instruction of students with low incidence disabilities.
- OSE secondary team staff provided two two-day workshops for teachers to learn how to implement several content enhancement routines of the strategic instruction model developed at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. The routines are research-proven instructional strategies that enable teachers to make challenging curriculum accessible to a wide diversity of learners. The *Course Organizer Routine* was offered on June 21 and 25 and the *Unit Organizer Routine* was offered on June 27 and 28. The workshops were attended by middle and high school general and special education teachers.
- The Office of Special Education is sponsoring a summer curriculum project to expand the web-based resource site of activities that support the Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives assessed on the Virginia Grade Level Alternative Assessment (VGLA). Elementary and middle school teachers will be involved in the curriculum project from July 17 – August 3, 2007. Elementary teachers will research activities and resources that meet the SOL objectives addressed in the area of mathematics for grades four, five, and six. Middle school teachers will research activities and resources that meet the SOL objectives addressed in the areas of language arts and mathematics for grades seven and eight. The web-based resource site that is developed through this project will be used throughout the school year by elementary and middle school teachers to assist them in assembling a portfolio of evidence for special education students who are assessed through the VGLA.
- The Office of Special Education is coordinating training for implementation of the Virginia Grade Level Alternative Assessment (VGLA) with Instructional Services and ESOL office during the summer and fall. Over twenty training sessions are scheduled during July, August, and September. The training sessions provide school teams a framework for organizing and managing the collection of

evidence required to demonstrate a student's access and performance on the grade level Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives.

- The Office of Special Education is offering *Foundations for Teaching Students with Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities* on July 13-20, 2007. This Academy course will include classroom observations and a hands-on component that will take place in either an elementary *Life Skills* class or an *Expanding Fundamental Skills in Language Arts and Math* class. Topics will include: classroom organization and structure, behavior management, curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment.
- The Summer of Learning program will be held from August 6-10, 2007, at Lee High School. The Office of Special Education is offering the following sessions:
  - *Read Naturally*, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on August 7, 2007. Read Naturally is a supplemental reading program that provides a structured way for students to improve their oral reading fluency skills.
  - *Improving Comprehension through Visualizing and Verbalizing*, August 9, 2007, from 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Teachers will learn procedures and strategies for facilitating comprehension from an instructional technique called visualizing and verbalizing.
  - *Instructing Students with Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties*, August 9 from 8:30 -11:30 a.m. Participants will learn a variety of useful strategies to instruct students with emotional and/or behavioral difficulty.
- Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering three summer writing camps for rising fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders currently receiving ATS support for writing and taking the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) or End of Course (EOC) writing test during the 2007-08 school year.
  - Write-On! for rising fifth graders from August 6 – August 10 at Dunn Loring Center and West Potomac High School
  - Rock-On! for rising eighth graders from August 13 – 17 at Dunn Loring Center
  - Blog-On! for rising eleventh graders from August 13 – August 24 at West Potomac High School
- On August 21, the Academic Diversity Institute will be held at South County Secondary School for Pre-K through grade 12 teachers, administrators, and specialists from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. This year the Office of Special Education is providing two workshop sessions at this event including: *How Can Students Get Better at Solving Problems?* and *Meeting the Needs of Twice Exceptional Learners*.
- On August 29, 2007, the Office of Special Education and T-TAC are co-sponsoring a presentation by Dr. Jed Baker, *Social Skills Training and Behavioral Supports for Students with High Functioning Autism Asperger's Syndrome, or other Social-Communication Problems*. His presentation will focus on how to design effective behavior plans to reduce frustration and anxiety strategies to motivate students to learn ways to teach and generalize social skills and how to increase acceptance and tolerance from peers.
- Career and Transition Services will be conducting three summer curriculum projects for developing new and revising existing curricula as well as articulating guidelines and procedures for Chantilly Secondary Transition and Employment Program (STEP), Northern Virginia Community College Collaboration, and Work Awareness and Transition (WAT) program areas.
- Sue Cohn, a FCPS physical therapist is a featured author in the recent edition of the *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics* professional journal. Ms. Cohn wrote a commentary that was titled *School-based Practice: Physical Therapists Collaborating with Physical Education Teachers. Give It a Try!* This journal is published quarterly and focuses on developmental therapy. The

commentary is available on line at <http://potp.haworthpress.com> . Ms. Cohn is a senior staff physical therapist in FCPS who has a master's degree in adapted physical education and is near completion of her doctorate in physical therapy with a concentration in pediatric physical therapy.

- Marla Pollack, FCPS lead sign language interpreter, provided sign language and voice interpreting for an assembly at Oak Hill Elementary School on May 11. The speakers were the deaf parents of a blind/autistic child and another son who wrote the essay that led to their family being chosen as the recipients of a house makeover from the ABC show “Extreme Makeover Home Edition.” Marla provided sign language interpretation for the parents and voice interpretation for the audience.
- Staff members in Instructional Services and Special Services continue to work collaboratively to address the needs of twice exceptional students. At the annual Summer Diversity Institute in August, gifted and talented (GT) and special education program staff will co-present on the needs of twice exceptional learners. In addition, all GT resource teachers and each elementary GT center will receive a copy of *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties*, which will be used in conjunction with professional development activities on meeting the needs of twice exceptional learners.