

Exceptional children enjoy performing in classrooms, on campus, on job sites

BY COURTNEY BROWN

News Editor

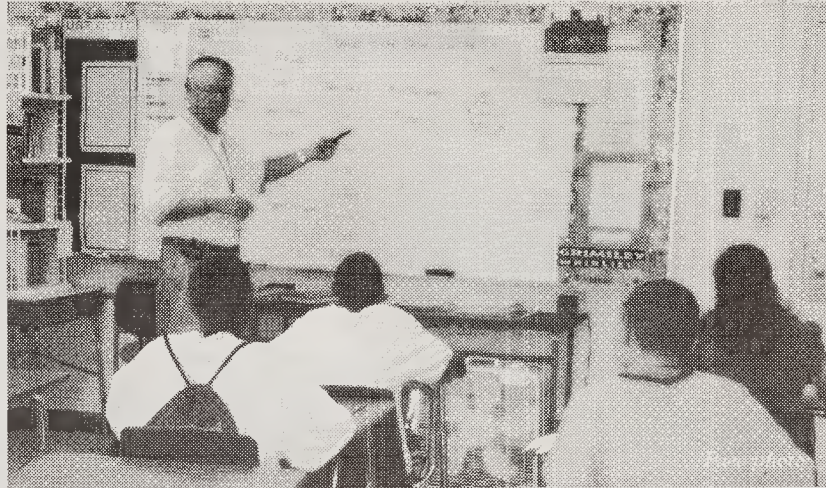
Students may wonder how each week the football team's uniforms appear clean as new, regardless of the previous game, or how all the trash in the recycling bin has "magically" disappeared. Teachers from the Exceptional Children (EC) Department oversee their students who complete these tasks and more, yet other students know little about these peers.

Students with severe physical and/or learning disabilities comprise the population in EC. Once specialists determine each student's strengths and weaknesses, they formulate IEPs, or individualized educational plans.

"Our mission is to help students achieve successful learning in spite of their disabilities and become productive members of society," said EC teacher Debbie Lennon.

In modern day society, it has become increasingly difficult for a person with a disability to acquire a competitive wage job; therefore, teachers find employment for their students to deflect this problem.

Loyalton, Big Lots, Libby Hill Restaurant, and other local businesses provide paying jobs for some students, while others volunteer at local businesses, nursing homes, or



After returning from their job sites, students pay close attention to David Kessler's mathematics lesson in which he charts salary scales.

the Natural Science Center.

Volunteering on campus also occurs in the cafeteria since a group of students clean the tables every day.

Striving to give EC students as normal a high school career as possible, the EC teachers realize some aspects need to be changed.

For instance, to aid visual learners the class initially views picture representation of the daily plan. Schedules of events include activities including off-campus work, speech therapy, or journal writing. Classes review their daily schedule at the end of the school day to reflect upon what they learned or mastered.

Homework assignments are based

upon individual skill and ability. Since a number of students are not capable of doing homework, the teachers instruct as many learning activities into the school day as possible.

"By learning in their classes how to relate with peers and adults in a more positive way, these students become more capable of being independent, good citizens," said EC teacher David Kessler.

Even though students with disabilities can not always work at the same level as their peers, there are specific expectations depending upon their abilities. Students must follow the same guidelines and rules

as other high school students. They receive praise for good behavior and punishments for disruptive behavior. Teachers expect their students to maintain neat classrooms; each student is required to do his or her part.

"The students are reminded that they do not have maids to do things for them just because they have a disability," said Lennon.

Aside from their disabilities, students of the EC program are somewhat similar to the average student. They like watching the same television shows, enjoy the same types of music, and feel the same pride for their school.

"I like going to school here," said Chris, a student who follows the curriculum.

Teachers occasionally must remind members of the student body to be friendly with students in the EC program, for just because someone is disabled does not mean he or she doesn't have much to offer others.

"Conflict occurs when peers tease our students," said Kessler.

Anyone wishing to excel in a career with Exceptional Children must undergo post-high school training. Lead instructors must graduate with an education degree from a four-year college or university and earn special certification. Educational assistants only need to complete at least two years of college.

Dancers express their cultural pride

BY RACHEL WEINSTOCK
Executive Copy Editor

Foreign language teachers often struggle to find authentic cultural experiences for their students, yet on Sept. 20, many Spanish students enjoyed the treat of a Hispanic dance performance by a group called "Contra-Tiempo." The troupe was appearing in Greensboro to perform at the Carolina Theater, so they contacted Principal Kevin Fleming to ask if the foreign language teachers were interested in hosting a performance as well.

Contra-Tiempo is a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles, described on its website as an "activist

dance company." Its founder and artistic director is Ana Maria Alvarez, a 1995 graduate. The group features 12 dancers and one member who manages the technical aspects of the performances—music, photograph displays, and lights. The group and its work evolved from Alvarez's graduate thesis while attending UCLA.

Contra-Tiempo strives to promote awareness of Hispanic and Latino issues. According to their brochure, the group "use[s] salsa to intertwine words, movements, video, and music to express the complexity of resistance and struggle for Latinos and communi-



Contra-Tiempo performs for an audience of students from Spanish classes. The dance troupe utilized a photographic display with metaphorical dances to represent the struggles of Hispanics in the U.S.

ties of color in the U.S."

Several students enrolled in Spanish attended, including those in Requel Howard's second period Level IIB and Tiffany Hamilton's Advanced Placement

classes. Teacher Amy Todd also invited her Level IV students to attend, and several did, two of whom were seniors Juliana Melton and Mary Nash.

Teachers who

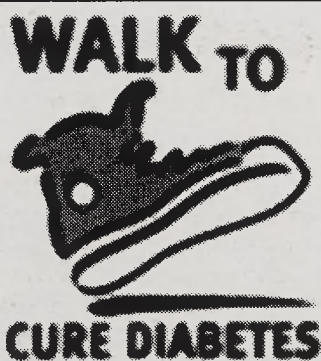
attended the performance believed it helped students experience a taste of Latino culture, something quite difficult to achieve in the typical classroom setting. For

instance, the group used a rope to symbolize the border between the U.S. and Mexico as part of the performance.

"This was an opportunity to experience firsthand Hispanic culture through dance. They also saw, through visual images and symbolic dancing, some of the struggles Latinos have faced living in our country," said Howard.

Although currently no plans exist for a return visit of Contra-Tiempo, teachers agree they want it to happen.

"I would definitely take other classes to see this performance. I feel it is entertaining while still educational, which is the main objective when teaching culture," said Todd.



The Juvenile Walk for Diabetes focuses on raising awareness among teenagers all over the U.S.

Students pursue cure for ailing funds

BY MANDY HIATT

Reporter

Friends and family joined together on Sat., Sept. 29, for the Walk for Diabetes. Their goals were to bring greater awareness to this devastating disease and to raise funds for finding a cure by walking a few miles.

Junior Emily Williams, a diabetic, called her close friends and relatives to participate on the walk in her

name. Money is still arriving from Emily's group, but presently, she has raised almost 10,000 dollars.

Each diabetic involved chose a name for his or her group. Participants then created their own T-shirts. Prizes were awarded for the most creative design and team name.

Emily's group named itself "Emily's Army," and her shirt theme was "Stepping Up to the Challenge." Her group earned the title of Most Outstanding Team.

To walk for Emily, one had to raise 50 dollars. Donors did not necessarily have to participate in the walk itself; instead, they could choose to bring money to her team.

Groups who raised the most money will be recognized at an assembly in November.

Even though the Walk for Diabetes has already taken place, anyone can still collect and/or donate money to the American Diabetes Association.