

PEOPLE

West Teacher of Year McGill believes in hands-on learning

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

West Elementary Teacher of the Year Laura McGill calls numbers for bunny bingo. Excited first graders use jelly beans as blotters. One shouts out, "I've got bunny bingo." Chicks peep in the background.

It's a typical day in McGill's classroom. The 12-year teaching veteran believes in hands on learning.

"If the kids can touch it and see it, they learn it," she said.

Prior to students watching chicks hatch, the eggs sat in an incubator for three weeks as the class read about the animals. Then they watched those words come to life as the chicks pecked their way out of the shells. Some parents have agreed to adopt the chicks. Once grown, they'll go to a farm.

Tadpoles swim in a tank. It's another life cycle lesson, this one about frogs.

The bingo game teaches number recognition.

Between lessons, students stand up for a stretch break.

"Get your wiggles out. Touch the ceiling. Now be a rag doll," McGill tells the class.

Later in the day, they'll sing and dance.

"We get up and move a lot. It's just my style, the way I teach," she said.

McGill, a UNC-Charlotte graduate, aspired to a career in education since childhood.

"I always loved to play school. I wanted to be the teacher," she said. "I loved the stuff that went with it, stickers, markers."

Teachers like Reolla Hovis and Jerry Hoyle were early inspirations to McGill. Hovis was her third grade teacher and was also a neighbor. Hoyle taught seventh grade social studies. McGill admits she found Hoyle, her first male teacher, intimidating but the class caused her to "toughen up," she said.

While a Kings Mountain High School student, she volunteered as a peer tutor, however, small children have always been her first love.



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
West Elementary Teacher of the Year Laura McGill calls numbers during Bunny Bingo last week.

"They're eager to learn. They love you to death," McGill said. "You're mama, nurse, counselor, friend all rolled into one."

She tries to make her classroom a place of stability and consistency, qualities some students do not find at home.

"I try to be that for them," McGill said.

The teacher is the first to acknowledge she cannot do it alone. Early in each school year, she recruits volunteers.

"The more people I have working with them the better off they're going to be," she said. "They look forward to reading with their buddies."

Each student spends time with an adult reading one-

on-one every week. Some get two sessions.

Assistant Kim Navy also helps McGill's classroom run smoothly.

Through trial and error McGill discovered positive reinforcement is the best discipline. Misbehaving students see others earn rewards for their more appropriate actions.

Students are issued classroom money. Infractions mean losing the dollars and the opportunity to participate in "fun Friday" events like movies and extra long recess.

"If you reward the good behavior, the negative takes care of itself," she said.

Today's teachers compete with fast paced television

shows and action oriented toys, McGill said. That means the classroom has to be equally exciting.

"If I lose their attention, they're not going to learn," she said.

Principal Gary Blake describes McGill as a dedicated, hard working team player with good communication skills.

"We're very honored to have her on staff at West Elementary," he said.

When McGill isn't at school, she and husband Chip McGill are at ball fields with daughter Hannah, an eighth grader and soccer player, or son Logan, a third grade soccer and baseball enthusiast.

Shank to compete in teen pageant

Kimberly Lavon Shank of Kings Mountain was recently selected to participate in the Nationals' 2004 Miss Teen Charlotte Pageant competition that will take place on April 18.



Kimberly will be competing for a share of over \$20,000 in scholarships, prizes, and specialty gifts that will be distributed to contestants. She will be competing in the

Miss Teen division, one of three divisions that will have young ladies between the ages of 10-19 competing in modeling routines which include casual and formal wear. Kimberly will display her personality and interviewing skills while interviewing with a panel of judges.

The winner will represent Charlotte in the Cities of America National Competition in Orlando, FL, where contestants will compete for over \$60,000 in prizes and awards and enjoy an expense paid trip of five nights and six days in Orlando.

Stephen Crego on duty in Seoul, South Korea

Army Pvt. Stephen D. Crego has arrived for duty at the 41st Signal Battalion, Yongsan, Seoul, South Korea.

The private is a cable

system installer/maintainer with four years of military service.

He is the nephew of Ron Crego of Tierra Drive, Kings Mountain.

FOOD INSPECTIONS

Cleveland County Health Department inspected the following food-handling facilities during the week ending April 9. **Denotes 2 extra points when an employee attended a food handling course.

Mall, 97.
Uptown Bagel & Deli, E. Warren St., 100**
Waffle House, E. Dixon Blvd., 92.

Food stands

Curve View Express, W. Warren St., 96.
Little Caesar, E. King St., Kings Mountain, 92.5.
Pizza Hut Delivery, E. Marion St., 99**
Southern Convenience, Kings Mountain, 95.
Stoney Point Handy Mart, 96.

School cafeterias

Jefferson School, Wyke Rd., 98**
Township Three, Davis Rd., 98**

Elderly nutrition sites
Patrick Senior Center, Kings Mountain, 95.5.

Restaurants

Bojangles, E. Dixon Blvd., 96**
China Royal, W. Marion St., 93.5.
Chong Wah Express, Cleveland Mall, 91.5.
Country Store Grill, Kings Mountain, 94.
D&N Mini Mart, Fallston Rd., 96.5.
Fatz Cafe, E. Dixon Blvd., 94.5**
Ingles Deli, S. Post Rd., 87.
Ingles Salad Bar, S. Post Rd., 93.5.
Pinegrove Grill, Costner Rd., 100**
Roma Italian, Cleveland

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Kristi Hickson Anthony, RN
Executive Director
Summit Place
Assisted Living

When to Intervene?

One of the most difficult issues for families is estimating how to allow for maximum autonomy, yet maintain safety and comfort for people with dementias.

Q What are the critical behaviors that indicate living alone is a risk?

A Weight loss of greater than 6 lbs. in 6 months; falls with injuries; repeated calls to families asking what to do next; poor grooming or wearing same clothing all the time; socially isolated behavior; neighbors or others complain of unwanted or unrealistic dependence on them.

Q What are the early losses seen in any type of dementia?

A Ability to plan things and carry them through in the right sequence; loss of ability to structure day (what to do next); loss of sense of time, risk, safety; loss of reading comprehension; chronic worry; unsafe driving.

Kristi Anthony spent 14 years in the Nursing Home setting, both as a Director of Nursing Services and a Nursing Home Administrator prior to entering the Assisted Living arena in 2000.



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