

Greenlee nominated for Leadership Award

Sarah Catherine Greenlee, a senior at Kings Mountain High School, has been nominated to compete in the Principal's Leadership Award (PLA) scholarship program, according to KMHS Principal Ronnie Funderburke which places Greenlee in the national competition.

One hundred national winners will be chosen this spring to receive college scholarships.

High school principals across the country were able to nominate one of their student leaders. Nominees were selected on their leadership skills, participation in service activities and clubs, achievements and academic record.

"Every year the nominees for the Principal's Leadership Award are just phenomenal and Sarah Catherine is no different," said Gerald Tirozii, execu-

tive director for NASSP. "She is an excellent example of what a true student leader embodies and deserves to be commended for her excellence in the classroom and community."

In recognizing leadership in co-curricular activities as well as academic performance, the PLA scholarship recognizes the importance of well rounded education. At KMHS, Greenlee is president of the

Student Participation Organization, attended Presidential Classroom, Tar Heel Girls State, Broyhill Leadership Conference and was the Hugh O'Brien Outstanding Leadership award winner. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is captain of the color guard. She also serves as captain of the swim team, where she is a school record breaker as well as all conference, regional and state

qualifier.

Greenlee has over 300 hours in various community based volunteer service.

She is the daughter of Edie Schronce Greenlee of Kings Mountain and Colonel Kurt Greenlee of Murrieta, California and the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Schronce of Kings Mountain.

Sarah Catherine plans on attending a four year university and study medicine.

Moffitt, Fields to attend DC 'classroom'

Bryan Moffitt and Ashton Fields, both juniors at Kings Mountain High School, were chosen among eight local juniors to attend the Presidential Classroom in Washington, D.C. next February.

Others chosen were Stephanie Scism and Caleb Royster of Burns High, Jennifer Pearson and Amy O'Bryan of Crest High and Thompson Wall and Seth Barkley of Shelby High.

A committee of school and community members selected the eight to attend the Feb. 15-21 Presidential Classroom Scholars session. The Cleveland County Board of Education will pay the costs of about \$2,000 each to cover tuition, room, board and travel expenses.

Presidential Classroom provides students an extraordinary week-long academic and leadership development experience in Washington, taking students behind the scenes for seminars and discussions featuring members of Congress, presidential appointees, senior military officials, top business leaders, journalists, economists and historians. Students also observe the Congress in action, tour Washington and debate key issues with their peers.

UW just short of goal

United Way of Cleveland County recently announced a total of \$2,025,024 pledged toward a campaign goal of \$2,160,000 announced in October, a short fall of \$34,876.

These pledged funds will help support the 43 programs of the 25 local participating health and human service organizations during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

In announcing the final campaign results, Eddie Bailes, 2008 United Way Campaign Chairman, said, "As I have stated throughout the campaign, the people of Cleveland County have a strong history of giving. This year with the economic challenge we are very pleased with our outcome. I am ex-

tremely proud of this community and the generosity from so many individuals. Even though we are short of our goal, for a community this size to raise more than \$2 million speaks volumes about the people that live in Cleveland County."

Bailes added, "Being short of our goal makes allocation decisions much harder because the agencies depend on United Way funding. However, our agencies have always done a great job in their fundraising efforts and this year it's even more critical for them to be successful. We want to keep the campaign open until year end in hopes that we might receive additional pledges."



Day Care Santa
Santa Claus made his pre-Christmas Eve rounds last Thursday, visiting children in daycares throughout Kings Mountain. Stetson McDaniel, left, shares his Christmas wishes with Santa at St. Matthew's Lutheran's daycare. St. Nick arrived at each daycare with the aide of his helpers at the Kings Mountain Fire Department. His reindeer were too busy practicing for the big night.

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programs so they're all talking to each other all of the time," said Assistant Supt. Dr. Martha Hill, who heads instruction and curriculum at CCS.

"We still have some special classes at preschool, but the best thing that we can do is to put typical children models with the special education children to (let them) have the verbal (and) the social interaction (they need) so that they can see and grow," Sutherland said.

But not all children with autism - a spectrum disorder - may benefit from a blended class setting. Some are high-functioning, like Trevor, which means that even though they suffer from developmental delays they are able to learn and progress faster than their lower functioning peers, who may remain mostly non-verbal and unengaged without early intervention.

CCS began offering a new autistic class this year at Elizabeth Elementary. But Crisp said that when Wendy Fitch, who heads the autistic children department at CCS, came out to evaluate Trevor she determined he might not do well in that environment. The kids that were in the class at the time were more on the lower functioning side of the autistic spectrum, which Fitch said could possibly make a high-functioning child digress. So Trevor started kindergarten.

CCS Spokeswoman Donna Carpenter said that special services are still offered to EC children who may attend a regular class in their own school. Speech pathologists, therapists, EC teachers and others work with children who have special needs every day. Some students are pulled out for specified EC time with a licensed EC teacher. Others may attend "self-contained" classes, which means they stay in a small class with an EC teacher all day long. And, when the need warrants, sometimes a child is assigned a one-on-one assistant to help them through the day, although Sutherland said those are typically reserved for children with dire needs.

Crisp says that Trevor needs a one-one-one. He is very smart. One of the toys in his kindergarten class is a little frog, which pops out the letters of the alphabet when its belly is squeezed. The letters come out one at a time. After they were done playing with it one day, Trevor put each letter in order from z to a back into the frog so that when

played with again, the alphabet would come out correctly.

He is doing very well in academics, but Crisp said it's the behavior part that worries her. When Trevor feels over stimulated, he takes off for the fire exit or the closet, desperate to get out.

"He took off and hid in (his teacher's) closet one day and they couldn't find him. They were in the lunchroom and he was back in the classroom, in the closet, climbing the shelves and they didn't know where he was," Crisp said.

When Trevor gets excited, he becomes disruptive, humming loudly and moving erratically. After talking with his teacher about the issue, Crisp knew that a one-on-one would help him learn alternative behaviors so that he wouldn't run for a fire exit when upset. His teacher's assistant was already spending 80% of her day with him, according to Crisp.

Speaking for Trevor

At the most recent IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meeting, Crisp addressed the need for Trevor to have the aid of an assistant. The need was corroborated by the voiced opinion of the teacher, who sees him every day. But Crisp said the minute those concerns came out of their mouths, the answer from the rest of the IEP team of administrators and school staff was "no."

She said that they offered the possibility of more EC time in another class-

room, but that would add another change to his environment.

"The law says they have to put them in the least restrictive environment to teach them," Crisp said, adding that more change may be "restrictive" for Trevor.

After the meeting, the teacher who spoke up was sternly reprimanded for doing so, Crisp said. The teacher was instructed later on what she could or could not say during future IEP meetings, according to Crisp, who spoke with her afterwards.

"The reason for an IEP meeting is for everybody to come together and give their opinion and reach a decision. If a teacher that is with them all day long can't speak her mind and tell her opinion of what would happen then there's no sense in having an IEP meeting," she said.

Although administration at West Elementary and CCS, bound by privacy issues, could not discuss what went on in the IEP meetings or personnel matters, Dr. Hill recalled a similar story from an IEP meeting in another district she worked at. In an IEP pre-meeting, it was already discussed how the team (excluding the parent) would handle the meeting and decisions to be made. But in the meeting a teacher spoke up and "threw a wrench in the works." She was fussed at, according to Hill, not necessarily because they were trying to control her, but because they hadn't discussed her comments.

Crisp has requested a

state facilitator to attend the next IEP meeting.

Money is tight, but not quite

Even though the number of autistic children in CCS and across the nation has risen over recent years, the total number of EC children has decreased this year. But the state funding for each child in the EC program has increased, according to CCS Finance Director David Lee.

The current budget, as amended, shows the total funds for EC children at \$7,522,852, which could change as more children move into the program, according to Lee. Last year's final funding for EC rested at \$7,505,832. Carpenter, who spoke with Principal Brian Hunnell, at West, said that she was told no needs addressed in an IEP meeting would be denied by the team because of a lack of funds.

But with the total enrollment of students in the district declining and the recent mandated return of \$658,000 to the state, tightening the purse strings of this year's budget may be inevitable. Dr. Hill said that they did some reshuffling of staff to go where the numbers and needs require in order to make sure no jobs were lost. Teacher Assistant positions were not cut, she said, but their hours were restructured to be more "uniform."

When the districts were

separate, some TA's were working full-time and drawing extra paychecks for driving a bus. Now all TA's are working six hour days. Some teachers have described this move, however, as feeling "under-staffed." "We have so many needs and it's hard for me to actually be able to teach because we're dealing with so many needs," said one teacher, who works with special needs children.

The less time a TA has to spend in a class the more work it may create for a teacher. Although the current budget shows a slight decrease in funding for TAs, it reflects increases in both instructional departments and student services, which deals with More-at-Four, Smart Start and other programs.

The department of Deputy Superintendent - Instruction shows an increase of \$58,224 (23%) from last year's ending balance of \$1,301,837. The Director of Student Services department shows an increase of \$284,694 (9%) from last year's \$2,393,544.

In spite of all of these increases the needs are still great for autistic and challenged kids. Early intervention is often key. Crisp's autistic son Alec Barrett has made remarkable progress, thanks to the caring, compassionate teachers he has had, beginning with SKATES. He was a Time Warners Hero award winner in 2005.

15th case of rabies in Kings Mountain

A raccoon on the property at 608 Mica St. tested positive for rabies Dec. 4, according to the Cleveland County Health Department. This is the 15th rabies case in 2008 in Cleveland County.

During the next six months, anyone living in the vicinity of 608 Mica St. should observe his or her animals for any unusual behavior. Additionally, residents need to make sure that all cats, dogs, and ferrets have a current rabies vaccination. State Law requires all cats and dogs to have rabies shots at four months of age and require a booster every three years.

Health officials point out that animals that are allowed to run loose are at risk of coming into contact with a rabid animal. If your animals are exposed to a rabid animal and not vaccinated, your animals will have to be euthanized or quarantined for six months.

Anyone who sees an animal demonstrating unusual behavior needs to call the Cleveland County Animal Control Department at 704-481-9884.

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