

★ DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE ★
Dr. Tammy Pawloski

This year, a new theme for Center of Excellence activities has been adopted: **"Important Work."** *The overarching goal of the Center is to support pre-service and in-service teachers as they take on the important work of teaching children of poverty.*

To support this goal, the Center has developed **six standards for teachers of children of poverty** that have been approved by and infused into all programs of study within the School of Education. Embedded in the standards are seven 'Star Strategies for Teachers of Children of Poverty' that have also been adopted by the Center. In-depth professional study opportunities that explore ways to put these strategies into practice are regularly offered.

The very successful *Saturday workshop sessions* available to pre-service and in-service teachers will continue in Summer and Fall; however, **the Spring workshop will be replaced in 2010 by an FMU Teacher Candidate showcase of instructional strategies and research that relates to their work with children from less affluent backgrounds.** The goal of this pilot project is to *develop teacher candidates who are cognizant of the important work they will do as professional educators by supporting them as conference attendees and presenters even before they graduate.*

Additionally, the Center will soon recognize *local teachers who have developed strong strategies for working with children of poverty.* Please respond when nominations are sought for teachers who have met the "Important Work" challenge. You are sure to know a teacher who has developed a **successful strategy.** We intend to publish those excellent strategies and honor the teachers who are using them.

Finally, it will soon be time to plan your *summer professional development activities.* Please contact the Center if you are interested in enrolling in **"Teaching Children of Poverty,"** a one week graduate course tentatively planned for *Summer 2010.*

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!

COE Announces P-12 Professional Development Grants



Do you need professional development funds to support your work on a project that is linked to the needs and abilities of children of poverty?

The COE is now offering ***Professional Development Grants to Public School Educators (P-12)*** in COE Partner Districts on a competitive basis. ***Funding up to \$2000 is available for the 2009-10 academic year ending May 1, 2010.***

Submission Deadline: DECEMBER 1, 2009

For more details on Professional Development Grants go to: <http://www.fmucenterofexcellence.org/fmu>

Teacher of Excellence
Chasity Brown

*Savannah Grove Elementary
Florence School District One*



Chasity is a first grade teacher at Savannah Grove Elementary School in Florence, SC. She earned a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education from FMU in 2007 and a Master's degree in integrating the arts through curriculum from Lesley University in 2009. We asked Chasity to write about her classroom illustrating best practices, her philosophy and what makes her the COE's Teacher of Excellence. Here is what she shared...

"My classroom is much more than a learning environment. It is a home in which every student is made to feel welcome and loved. At the beginning of the year, **I strive to create a sense of family within our classroom.** In order to do so, I not only work on helping the students build relationships with each other, I make every effort to begin creating a special bond with each student as well. **We work together and support each other through good times and bad.** Every morning, I greet my students at our classroom door with a **warm hug and encouraging words.** Before we begin daily instruction, we always gather for a morning meeting. During this time, **students have the opportunity to talk with their classmates and share stories of success and struggle.** If a student has a problem, we encourage them and offer support. On the other hand, if a student wants to celebrate a success, we extend our joy and celebrate as a school family. Before the students leave my classroom at the end of the day, I provide a hug and tell them how much I love them.

I truly believe in the concept of creating a school family, especially when working with children of poverty. By doing so, students feel comfortable, loved, secure, and safe. Successful learning is able to occur when students experience these feelings. **My philosophy for teaching has always been to do what it takes to make a child feel special and loved.** If it means making home visits, providing a snack bag for a child to take home, drying tears when something has gone wrong, or providing a loving and supportive environment, I will become a nurturer, a friend, and a supporter.

Working with children of poverty has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional career. Each day I enter my classroom, I strive to make a positive impact. My students have given me more than I could ever imagine, and I am thankful for the lessons they have taught me. I have observed amazing outcomes throughout my professional career. Fortunately, **I have had the opportunity to experience the positive effects of implementing a sense of family in the classroom when working with children of poverty.** I have observed a shy, withdrawn student who had given up on reading become a leader. I have observed a class of students rally and support each other through tragedy and sadness. These are all memories I will keep in my heart forever. **These are memories that will motivate me to continue making a positive impact in the lives of children!"**

Amazing Articles in the COE Resource Library!

COE ARTICLE SPOTLIGHT

Childhood Poverty, Chronic Stress, and Adult Working Memory

http://www.fmucenterofexcellence.org/fmu/pdfs/childhood_poverty.pdf

In this article, Gary Evans and Michelle Shamberg draw attention to the large societal problem of the *income-achievement gap*. Evans and Shamberg demonstrate the pervasive **income-achievement gap** by showing that **poverty during childhood** has an *inverse relationship to the working memory and essentially, achievement, of young adults*. Family income has consistently shown to be a *strong predictor of several indices of achievement* such as standardized test scores, grades and educational attainment. This inverse relationship is also shown to be affected by **high levels of chronic stress** during the childhood years. The longer the child is exposed to *poverty during childhood*, the higher their stressors become. *Poverty and stress* combined during childhood results in **lower working memory abilities** in young adults and *in turn, lowers their achievement levels*.

For more interesting articles and other resources, visit the Francis Marion University Center of Excellence's Online Resource Library at <http://www.fmucenterofexcellence.org/fmu/resources.asp>

Abstract written by: Krista Roscoe, FMU Graduate Student



CONGRATULATIONS!

SEVEN Partner District Schools Join NNPS



NNPS New Member Team Training was held on September 16, 2009. Seven COE Partner District Schools participated in the new member training where their *Action Team for Partnerships (ATPs)* worked together to identify and evaluate **present partnership activities**. This information was then used by each school to write a *One-Year Action Plan linked to their school's goals*.

The 7 COE partner districts schools that participated in the *New Member Team Training* were:

Florence One

Carver Elementary
Moore Intermediate
Henry Timrod Elementary
Williams Middle
North Vista Elementary

Dillon Two

South Elementary

Florence Three

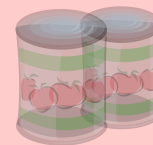
J.C. Lynch Elementary

Thanks to **Briggs, Delmae & Dewey Carter Elementary** for sharing their knowledge and expertise with new members!

For more details on the **National Network of Partnership Schools** visit: http://www.fmucenterofexcellence.org/fmu/goals_activities_p22-1.asp

YOU DID MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Over 700 Cans Collected for Hungry Children



The Francis Marion University Center of Excellence **Service Committee** is an organization whose **purpose** is to **provide a community of support for teachers and children of poverty**.

The service committee is further divided into the **three sub-committees** listed below:

- *Service Projects*
- *Tutoring*
- *Volunteer*

For their *Fall Service Project*, the Service Committee sponsored a phenomenally **successful canned food drive**. **1866** cans were donated to be sent to Harvest Hope Food Bank and Kids Café. *It is estimated that 1866 cans would be equal to 5,598 servings of food for children of poverty*. For the second year, **Teacher Cadets** have also contributed to our *canned food drive* and will bring their donations to the COE on November 4. *Marion High School Teacher Cadets have collected over 950 cans alone!* The need to feed hungry children in our region is great and the Service Committee would like to *thank all donors: participants who attended the COE Fall Workshop, Teacher Cadets and Francis Marion University faculty, staff, and students. Thank you all for your generous donations!*

Currently, a *Tutoring Directory and Program* is in the early stages of planning and development. Names of teachers who are interested in **tutoring children of poverty in his/her district or learning more about the program** are being collected as we progress.

Finally, the COE **Service Committee** recruited more than **30 volunteers** to assist at the COE Fall Workshop. There is **always a need for more volunteers to work at COE events and to assist with our service projects. Thank you to all our volunteers!**

If you would like to sign-up to volunteer contact **Janis McWayne**, 843.661.1467 or jmcwayne@fmarion.edu

ENTER NOW! CASH PRIZES!



COE Essay Contest



Open to ALL FMU Graduate and Undergraduate Students, Teacher Cadets, and P-12 Teachers in COE Partner Districts!

Topic: "Why Would I Want To Work With Children of Poverty?"

First Place Prize for Each Group -- \$200

Second Place Prize for Each Group -- \$150

Entry Deadline: March 23, 2009

For Official Essay **Contest Details** visit the COE website at: <http://www.fmucenterofexcellence.org/fmu>

