

Perspective

Albuquerque Public Schools

An employee newsletter

March 29, 2004

'Thor' robot is ready to roar

Resembling a grocery cart with outstretched arms, 'Thor,' the student-built Career Enrichment Center (CEC) robot, is ready to take on all cyber comers this month in Phoenix in the FIRST robotics competition.

FIRST is an acronym: For Inspiration & Recognition of Science and Technology, an international robotics competition launched by Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway. Hundreds of student teams, about 100 of them funded by NASA, will compete in regional competitions this month. Qualifying teams in the Southwest move on to another regional event in Denver. Then, if they qualify, to the final national competition in Atlanta in April, to see which robotic team reigns supreme.

Nearly 1,000 teams from around the world will try to qualify for the final.

Not to worry. Twenty-seven highly brainy students in CEC teacher **Mike**



Student-built robot is ready to take on competition
Students Gabe Chavez, (left,) and Bob Pasekoff are two of 27 students who have been working feverishly to prepare Thor (seen in background) for a robotics competition in Phoenix this month.

Nord's electronic engineering class have been working feverishly since December seven days a week; after school until late at night when the custodian "kicks them out" to be ready in time for the Phoenix event.

"Phoenix is a great place for us to cut our teeth and get an early start on our learning curve," Nord reports.

The students and their team instructors, Nord and Paul Klarer, a Sandia National Labs robotics engineer who serves as consultant, are sleeping-walking-eating the trial-and-error process that grips them in their quest to build the right robot from the ground up.

The end result of their labors will be, they hope, a robot that can get balls into two goals, one stationary and one mobile, for each team. The goals are plastic poles set upright in a circle.

"The robots rebound the balls back to the humans," says **Christopher**

Chavez, a Valley HS senior. "They also have to pick up a 36" diameter ball and cap one of the two goals, plus lift themselves up and suspend from a bar for a period of time. 50 points are awarded if the robot remains suspended after the match ends." Chavez is part of the tow-hook team that worked to design a special hook attached to Thor that pulled a mobile goal to a defined shooting area of the playing field.

Gabe Chavez, a home-schooled senior from Los Lunas, said his biggest technical challenge is the wiring because, "There are a lot of stringent requirements and rules to follow and if you don't, it disqualifies you. The main thing is they don't want it to light on fire."

A robot in the 2000 FIRST competition did catch fire, and "Whammo. Fire extinguishers were required," says Nord. "Thor has not had any problems."

Bob Pasekoff, who graduates from **La Cueva** this year, worked on the robot's large ball gripper assembly that he reports was problematic.

"It broke several times. It's difficult to measure each piece accurately and to sculpt in steel so the chain doesn't bind," Pasekoff says.

"It's a great thing to see 30-odd people work together so well," Pasekoff adds. "You can't expect it to just appear. We realized we needed to get into the physical stage and out of the theoretical."

Thor was born on a computer using **More**. See 'Thor' robot, page 2

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CAD software, but students also built a practice robot, "the mule," to work out kinks.

Because kinks are almost inevitable, Thor has a twin. The team built a second robot Thor B, a clone, so his parts can be instantly harvested if something malfunctions during the competition.

Win or lose, Nord says his classes and the robot project have the full support of **CEC Principal Kathy Sandoval**. "If it wasn't for her, we wouldn't be here. It takes a gutsy boss to take risks on programs like this."

Other supporters include former nuclear submarine captain Jamie Deuel, FIRST mentor to Nord, who helped get the project off the ground at the CEC through fund raising and public relations.

"Jamie urges me to shoot for the stars," Nord says.

A CEC parents club feeds the long-laboring robotics team every night, and

Nord happily reports they provide 'real food.' The parent club also meets every three weeks and has its own web blog, or web journal. The students' web site is located at www.cecrobotics.com.

Klarer, owner of a private engineering company in town and an engineer for Sandia National Labs, has strong ties to the business community. He says CEC's robotics team, "have skills that grads from a four-year engineering school don't have. They know how to build things."

"These students are going to blow their professors away," Klarer adds.

Nord and Klarer say support from the business community has been good, and when the business community sees value, "that's cool." Beyond providing students with good paying summer jobs, Klarer says the business community needs to show students, "they can make a good living doing this."

Support has also been strong at UNM,

where professors have visited the CEC robotics classroom and are excited about the CEC programming class.

The robotics class could easily double or triple next year as word gets out about the opportunity to combine theory with hands-on, real world experience.

"There are different levels to it," says one student. "There's robotic interaction, alliances you have to form with other teams that forces us to think dynamically. Nord asks us to accomplish college level challenges."

Student Gabe Chavez concludes that his experience in Nord's classes the past three years have "changed the way I act. Once I came here I knew I was going to be an electrical engineer for the rest of my life."

Further information about the FIRST competition can be found at www.usfirst.org.

Steve Stucker a hit with students

This year, students in the School-to-Careers Office Occupations program heard the life story of Steve Stucker, a popular and well-liked TV personality in the community known for his sunny smile and disposition.

His childhood background, as told to students one day in March during a Student Reflection Session, was surprising. Both of his parents dropped out of high school and they had little money. His father, a sheet metal worker who labored under cold and dirty conditions, had to work a second job to make ends meet.

Both his parents were clear about one thing for their children, however: they were

going to college.

"I always had this thought in my head; that I was going to college," he told them.

Stucker spent an hour with the students, telling them about his 'circle of life' philosophy and belief in destiny. He said, "Be prepared to fail; but don't expect to fail." He also told them to, "Always make an effort to help someone worse off than you." Positive thoughts lead to actions and peoples' actions determine their destinies, he said, so think some positive thoughts and make a life plan.

Students evaluating the session afterward said they'd gained much from listening to his story and his helpful suggestions.

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Local TV anchor inspires students

Steve Stucker, Ch. 4 morning anchor, is no stranger to adversity. His inspiring life story was the focus of a recent Student Reflection Session for Office Occupation students organized by Yolanda Garcia, Job Net coordinator with School-to-Careers.

Algebra for all coming this fall

A **much-anticipated** change in freshmen math course requirements takes effect with the 2004-05 school year, when all high school students, except some special education ones, will take algebra, or Interactive Math Program classes and geometry classes to meet new graduation requirements.

Freshmen needing more content preparation for the new requirement can take an algebra readiness class as an elective, and students needing some tutorial help with Algebra 1 can take a math lab in conjunction with the class, receiving one math credit and one elective credit for the math lab.

Some students may take Algebra Models instead of Algebra 2, depending on teacher recommendation.

Virginia Duran Ginn, director of **Teaching & Learning Systems**, says the math classes, four years in the making, are aligned with the district's commitment to high standards for all students.

"The former system was only working for a select few," says Duran Ginn. "In the era of No Child Left Behind, standards-driven instruction enriches teaching for all students."

Leah Gutierrez Wier, Teaching & Learning Systems coordinator of standards development and high school redesign, plays a key role in assessing content in math curriculum. She believes the tougher classes are needed for all students because, "middle and high school level math classes weren't near the difficulty that the state is now requiring. A student could take basic math, consumer math or integrated math topics, which didn't meet high school standards and were more like 9th grade levels or under."

West Mesa math teacher **Jacqueline Robison** says she's in favor of the changes, "because it will help our students be prepared for more career choices in their future. A high school diploma from APS should be equivalent to anywhere in the country, or internationally. When students rise to the new requirements, they'll be more competitive for jobs locally."

Robison says she'll acquire additional teaching practices to use in the classroom through professional development this summer.

Collaboration at multiple levels was central to successfully creating and implementing a plan for math reform.

A math task force, comprised of middle and high school math department chairs and high school curriculum assistants, devel-

oped a comprehensive strategy to revise algebra and geometry classes to align them with state standards.

Duran Ginn says the change to more challenging math classes means, "Teachers will need to have a larger repertoire of instructional strategies, and professional development opportunities will consist of deepening a teacher's own content knowledge. We want all K-12 teachers to know what students need to be prepared for in the 9th grade."

Through math taskforce and curriculum meetings, middle and high school teachers and principals learned they had to

ratchet up their students for 2004-05. "Teachers will have to challenge themselves, use collaborative learning, small group instruction and individual projects. They will have to do things differently," Gutierrez says.

"We want all K-12 teachers to know what students need to be prepared for in the 9th grade."

—Virginia Duran Ginn

Madison MS math teacher **Carl Bonilla** says, "As we move to a standards-based curriculum, the concept is that students will be able to meet grade-level standards before moving to the next grade. We offer after-school tutoring now to assist students that are in need of help with content skills. We are considering offering a concurrent math lab, similar to what high schools will offer to students who need extra help with Algebra I."

District math resource teacher, **Casilda Pardo**, helped develop the revised courses for Algebra 1 and continues working with a group of teachers to develop meaningful professional development opportunities. Training sessions for teachers will be available this spring, summer and fall for Algebra 1, algebra math lab and Algebra Readiness class teachers.

"The teacher is key," Pardo says. "Some middle school teachers got involved because they feel it's important that middle and high school teachers work together so math can be taught effectively at the middle and high school levels."

In addition to staff development, Teaching & Learning staff say it's imperative for teachers to have the expectation that all students can learn math and can achieve a high level of math competence.

"There are many poor students who don't feel they can do the math but there are high income areas too where students don't feel they can do the math," Pardo says. "Those students aren't exposed to it."

APS math expert **Franny Dever**, who heads the APS math reform effort, says, "Now all low-achieving students will be exposed to the same math, and there's a sense of equity. I'm proud of APS. It won't be easy and it's going to take time, but

Media literacy train-

The New Mexico Media Literacy Project's Catalyst Institute will offer an inten-

sive four-day training experience in media literacy concepts and skills, ideal for teachers, health professionals and others who want to make a difference through deepening students' understanding of media issues. Media literacy project staff and guest speakers lead par-

Gun violence prevention is focus of APS program

—By Shannon Douma

The APS **Health/Mental Health** Department and **Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools** program are actively working together to raise students' awareness of the dangers of guns and the legal, medical and emotional consequences of gun violence.

The two are partnering with the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Mexico, to present Project Sentry, a youth gun violence prevention program. The program seeks to decrease youth gun violence in and around schools and communities through education and awareness.

Two key components define Project Sentry; providing prevention and safety awareness education to students; and the prosecution of violent youths who violate state and federal firearm laws and the prosecution of adults who supply firearms to youth to commit crimes.

Through communication and partnerships with school principals, teachers and administrators, Health/Mental Health assists with the educational component of the program. The department is currently working with the **Highland, Rio Grande and West Mesa** clusters. Federal and county prosecutors, law enforcement

and medical professionals deliver a two-hour gun violence prevention curriculum, 'Options, Choices and Consequences,' to middle school youth about the dangers of guns and the many lasting consequences of gun violence.

The gun violence prevention curriculum will launch the week of March 29-April 2, National Youth Violence Prevention Week. Other prevention activities associated with this program include: Kids Against Violence Art Project co-sponsored by the Bernalillo County District Attorney's Office; National Safe Schools Week; YWCA Week Without Violence; and National Day of Concern Pledge Against Gun Violence.

The program is in collaboration with the Albuquerque Police Department, the Bernalillo County Sheriff Department, the APS Police, the Weed and Seed Program, the District Attorney's Office, Mathis Media and various community organizations. Please call **Shannon Douma**, Violence Prevention/Intervention coordinator, 342-7218 or email her at douma@aps.edu for more information.

Peddler's cart

2001 Pontiac Grand AM, GT, V-6 ram air, \$8,800 OBO, 897-6865, 304-3189.

Bantam Jeep trailer, 1/2 ton, 15" wheels, CIV hitch, excellent condition, no rust, \$500 OBO, 294-3209.

1983 Buick, all electric, leather interior, sunroof, runs great, nice ride, 266-3286.

1989 Mazda 323, runs well, A/C, great deal, looking to sell fast, \$1,000 OBO, 271-6913.

Camper shell for small pickup truck, S10 or Toyota, \$200 OBO, 842-4532 or 873-0471.

For sale: 1978 Dodge motor home, asking \$1,500 OBO, for more info. call 350-1343.

Vacation: rent my 2-bdrm condo at Fairfield Pagosa, Colo., \$150/2 nights, 884-4883, Paula.

House for rent: \$950/mo, 4 bdrm, 1.75 ba, 13307 Cloudview NE, in cul-de-sac, Michaeli Smith, 294-7094.

House for rent: San Mateo/Lomas area, 2 bdrm, 2 ba, large deck, close to park, \$775 + utilities/deposit, 266-0650.

Duplex home: 3 bdrm, laundry/patio, \$800 mo, \$500 damage deposit, 1723 Valley Rd. S.W., 877-5202.

For sale: 12 acres mountain property, Tijeras area, undeveloped, call Arthur, 933-7388.

Smaller home for sale, 3 bdrm, ceramic, oak, clean. Sandia district, \$124,900, 7008 Prairie NE, 837-1179.

Beautiful wedding cakes, great tasting, reasonable prices, free delivery, 899-9374 or 550-7773.

Professional wedding event, and family photography, special rates for APS employees, call 459-7835 or www.goodmansphoto.com.

Cabinets, counter tops, refacing, 341-0640.

Computers, high quality, reconditioned and new systems. All with warranty, we do repairs, upgrades, 266-3507.

Complete satisfaction for your building and remodeling needs, licensed, bonded, 315-2117.

Handy man services, free estimates, call Jerry, 505-294-9763.

House painting, interior/exterior, fast, affordable, work guaranteed, APS references, 899-8565.

House sitter, very responsible individual, summer, winter, spring or fall, even holidays, Call Jo, 897-5788.

Will house sit, please call 275-3419.

Licensed daycare provider, 24 years, references available, 18 months & older, breakfast, lunch & snacks, Lomas/Juan Tabo area, 294-2912.

Shaver Landscaping Quality Maintenance, affordable prices, thatching, aeration thru May, 15 years experience, Dutch Shaver, 890-6959.

Desert Shade window tinting, auto, home, office, free estimates, 681-1036.

To the Penny Bookkeeping, quality tax preparation and accounting services, call 298-2541 for an appointment.

Wanted: leveling of small area, South Valley location, leave message, 877-2159, Melita.

V&V Yard Maintenance, mowing, trimming, landscaping, hauling, painting, free estimates, references, Vince, 688-6296; Victor, 319-7708.

Free composted horse manure mixed with sand, you load and haul, 350-9444, Corrales.

Alfalfa, top quality, \$4.50 per bale, Sudan, \$3.50 per bale, south of Belen, 864-7981.

Wanted: Donated prom dresses, needed for alternative school teen moms, all sizes, call 883-5680 (x38112).

2004 sterling silver charms, \$5, earrings, \$10/pair, necklace, \$10, Valley High DECA, 345-9021 ext 82166.

Boy's clothes, sm/med/lg; women's clothing, 10-14, new/like new, reasonable prices, call 294-5113.

Size 8 spring and summer clothes, name brands, sporty and dressy styles, like new, 332-8420.

Western hats, 7 3/8, new Resistol, \$100 ea, still in box; trailer, 4x6x 4, \$300, call 203-8920, 304-7302.

Women's black leather jacket, \$40; art nouveau armchair, \$50; new Mac Zip drive, \$50, 872-3277.

Z-Coil shoes; Freedom 2000, black, men's size 9, excellent condition, \$65, call 262-0099.

Antique dresser, needs mirror, \$100; Nordic Trac Ski machine, \$75; stationary bike, \$10, 298-2820.

Computer monitor, Viewsonic/Graphic Series G773, 16 inches, \$95, call 266-0655.

Craftsman lawn mower, 6.25hp, \$250; kitchen table/4 chairs, \$75; oak printer stand and more, 323-0547.

Large birdcage (27"Hx19" W) with stand (26" H), plus paraphernalia, \$65, call 296-7053 after 5 p.m.

Maytag washing machine; Amana refrigerator; Avanti refrigerator; office cabinets; antique dresser, must sell, call 203-8919.

Sofa, excellent condition, \$250, ph. 345-2787.

Stereo: Kenwood stack system (everything included), great "going-off-to-college" gift. \$250, Keith at 858-1176.

For sale: 2 stereo speakers, \$20; 13" color TV, \$30; Panasonic VCR, \$30; all work, call 345-4460.

Six-inch tipple wall pipe, kerosene heater, range hood, washer, dryer, Kirby vacuum, electronic stuff, 299-6870.

Tippmann '98 custom paintball marker package, complete, adjustable stock, flat line barrel, hopper, goggles, upgrades, \$250, 440-5468.

Want to buy Monster books and tapes in English and/or Spanish by Bowmar, Ann, 345-4147.

Editor's note: submissions to Peddler's Cart are published at the discretion of the editor. APS employees may advertise services like Mow for Dough, Window Pane Reliever or Tax Relief Cheap, and also place ads for goods to sell. Ads must be no longer than 15 words and may be sent to Carol Sawyer, Community Relations, via email: sawyer_c@aps.edu, fax: 872-8860, or by school mail to CRO, City Centre. Please reference your home phone on the ad and write your employee number of the back of every submission.

Barcelona students discover Islamic culture through book, speaker

Students in teacher **Robyn Darling's** classes have learned things about the Islamic religion that many Americans have not.

They're learning, for example, that Islam is a peaceful religion that believes in equality of the sexes and places high regard for the family. They're learning about cultural differences that distinguish their culture from ours.

The extreme beliefs of radical Muslim fundamentalists often shape Americans' view of the Muslim religion, and Darling wanted to help change that for her 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who participate in the Barcelona Academy. Barcelona is one of three K-8 schools in the district.

She introduced her students (who read above the 9th grade level) to *Seven Daughters, Seven Sons*, a book about a young woman's yearnings for self-realization in a traditional Islamic family that incorporates material from an ancient Iraqi folktale. She also brought a Muslim speaker from the Islamic Cultural Center, Abdul-Ras Campos, to the class twice, to talk to students about the truths and the misperceptions about the religion.

Darling, who has lived and worked in Turkey and Namibia, wanted her students to gain a better understanding of the nature of the Muslim world, separate from media portrayals that often focus on a tiny fraction of the Muslim world, the fundamentalists.

Prior to working in Albuquerque, she was a Peace Corps volunteer in Namibia, taught English to American students at the American Collegiate Institution in Turkey and loved being in that part of the world.

"Living in an Islamic country, I have a different experience and perspective of the Muslim religion," Darling says. "It was such a peaceful experience and these students' world view is very small. As a teacher my job is to broaden their world view."

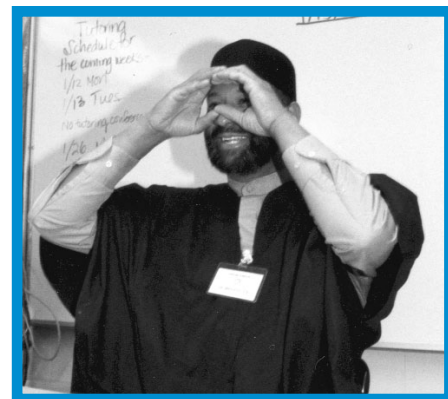
Campos is a scientist who volunteers his time giving community talks in an effort to increase understanding about Islam.

"He takes time from his regular job to talk to students about Islam to dispel misunderstandings about Islam," Darling reports. "He was joyful, and the students really enjoyed him."

Campos, an American-raised Catholic, converted to Islam after a near-death experience many years ago during his college years.

He talked to Darling's students about the Muslim emphasis on family, closeness and modesty, and their respect for other world religions, including Christianity. Afterward, he answered a range of questions from students keen to know about life for teens in Muslim countries.

Darling believes the net effect of learning about different cultures and reli-



Barcelona, one of three K-8 schools in the district, opens its doors to world cultures and perspectives through books and speakers. Abdul-Ras Campos (pictured above) recently visited students in teacher Robyn Darling's class to talk about the Muslim religion and culture to help dispel misunderstandings.

gions will increase students' tolerance of differences. "Increased tolerance probably benefits every one in my class."

Barcelona Principal **Cecilia Martinez-Sanchez** says she's heard a few concerns from parents outside her school community, but virtually none from her own school community. In any case, she and Darling believe the benefits of such an exercise far outweigh any negatives.

Martinez-Sanchez says staff are proud of the school's emphasis on small learning communities, block scheduling with 1.5 hours for reading and one hour for language arts daily, and its desire to learn about different peoples and cultures.

Input sought on names for new elementary schools

Principals at three new APS elementaries that will open this fall are seeking input on what the schools should be named.

New elementary schools will open in August at 801 Elizabeth Southeast, 6801 Ventana Village Northwest, and 500 90th Street Southwest.

Community members who would like to provide suggestions for naming these schools should call **Donna Little-Kaumo**, principal of the Southeast-area school, at 881-0838; **Michael Carrillo**, principal at the new Southwest-area school, also at 881-0838; or **Lynne McMahan**, principal at the new Northwest-area school, at 881-0839. McMahan will be in her new office April 1.

According to the APS Board of Education policy, names for new facilities will be selected by the Board after public input has been solicited through a committee that includes representa-

tion from board members, administrators, as well as staff, students and the community the school will serve.

A procedural directive on naming new schools suggests that elementary schools be named for people "who have provided positive role models" for APS students. "This leaves the naming of elementary schools pretty much open. There was a trend in the '40s and '50s to name elementary schools after American authors—Longfellow, Mark Twain and Emerson are examples of some of these," said **Rigo Chavez**, director of **APS Community Relations**.

"More recently elementary schools have been named after geographic areas or visual elements—Seven Bar Elementary and Painted Sky are examples of these sorts of names," Chavez added.

Tobacco prevention training available

Cibola and Albuquerque high school students have formed student groups at their schools to work proactively with the anti-tobacco movement.

At Cibola, students created a tobacco awareness group, the Cougars Against Tobacco Substances (CATS) Club and the Albuquerque HS students' group, known as Teens into Prevention (TIP) were trained in prevention strategies in fall 2003.

Both student groups are offering peer training available to APS to elementary and middle school students. APS Tobacco Use and Prevention and Control coordinator **Chenoa Stilwell Jensen** works specifically with the Albuquerque and Cibola clusters. The scope of work includes tobacco policy, teacher training, prevention/cessation curricula and family/community involvement. TUPAC will fund teachers to be trained in tobacco prevention and cessation curricula (TNT for

grades 5-9, Project Alert for middle schools, and TAP/TEG for high schools).

Students are excited about peer education, youth advocacy trainings, and upcoming "Kick Butts" day activities in April. Each group meets two or three times monthly and welcomes new members.

Both student groups are supported by the APS TUPAC Program, a grant-funded program through the NM Department of Health. TUPAC provides trainers to show students how to facilitate group building, build leadership, learn advocacy, and other important skills relating to tobacco use prevention.

The curriculum is enhanced with American Indian perspectives on the traditional and ceremonial uses of tobacco in the form of a sacred healing plant. For more information, contact: Chenoa Stilwell Jensen, 342-7274, Jensen_c@aps.edu.



Worthy news

Explora is looking for recyclables to stock the arts and crafts workshop at the museum. This is a good chance to get rid of those egg cartons, cardboard tubes, small boxes and plastic containers that have been saved. Call Tara Zollinger at 224-8394 for more information.

Field trip opportunity for K-8th grade: **'Beauty and the Beast,'** performed by Let's Pretend Players, local children actors at the KiMo theater. Dates: Monday, May 3 through Saturday, May 8. Shows daily Monday-Friday at 10:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m., Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. Show time length is about one hour and 10 minutes. Ticket price is \$6 after April 1; \$7 ticket price for Saturday matinee. For reservations call 822-8791.

The winners of a \$15 gift certificate for the **Bound to be Read Character Counts Book Club** for January-February are: **Christina Tafoya**, 5th grade student at **Zia**; **Christian Ortiz**, 1st grade student at **Dennis Chavez**; **Rebecca Miller**, 5th grade student at **Mark Twain**; and Zoe Scott, 3rd grade student at Turquoise Trail in Santa Fe. The grand prize winner of a Hinkle Family Center birthday party is **Adam Carrasco**, 4th grade student at **John Baker**. The CC book club was launched in January using a book list of Character Counts books that was distributed to each elementary school library, and also in the newspaper. Students had to read the book(s) and write a short narrative about what they learned from the book.

A retirement celebration for **Cecelia Gutierrez** from **Taft Middle School** has been planned. It will be held on Tuesday, April 13, 3-7 p.m., at the Knights of Columbus Hall at 609 14th St. SW.

The **Southwest Regional Music Therapy** conference will be held April 1-3 at the Doubletree Convention Center, 201 Marquette Ave NW. The Green Chili Jam Band opens the conference at 7 p.m., April 1. Additional information is available at www.SWAMTA.org. The conference would benefit educators, PTs, OTs, SLPs and administrators. CEUs could possibly be

available for various disciplines.

"Words and Images," an **exhibit of illustrated poetry by APS students**, K-12, will be displayed in the hallways of Montgomery Complex during the month of April. There will be a reception and poetry reading at Montgomery Complex on April 7, 4-7 p.m. For additional information, call the ARTS Center at 880-8297, or Library Services at 848-8895.

Tour de Cure on Saturday, June 12, East Mountain High School, is a challenging cycling event that lets you have fun while raising money for diabetes research. The American Diabetes Association's Tour de Cure event is the biggest cycling event for diabetes in the country. Join them for a 25-, 50- or 100-mile ride through gentle rolling hills east of Albuquerque. The event will benefit 18 million Americans with diabetes. Be a team captain, challenge competitors, bring friends or ride alone—everyone has a great time! For further information and registration contact www.diabetes.org, call 1-800-diabetes, or contact Beth Warner at bwarn@diabetes.org, or (505) 266-5716, ext. 7132.

Vladi Stanojevic, the head boys' soccer coach at **Eldorado High School**, and the staff of Stanojevic Soccer School will hold three soccer camps this summer: June 7-11, July 26-30, and August 2-6. For more information about the camps please go to <http://www.stanojevic.com>.

Jackson MS students learned about careers in safety and health last month from Dave Anglen, a former Dept. of Energy industrial hygienist, as part of the department's after-school program.

Anglen talked about the most hazardous occupations, methods for controlling hazards, types of personal safety equipment and the kind of education required for students interested in pursuing a career as an industrial hygienist, safety engineer, or health physicist.

Academy experience enhances expertise

Some of the nation's top experts in professional development - Dennis Sparks, Tom Guskey, Peter Senge and Michael Fullin - met with Virginia Duran Ginn and other participants in the National Staff Development Council Academy 13 over a two-year period to talk about best practices in professional development, including systems change, and leadership in a culture of change.

The academy offers participants intensive exchanges with colleagues and education experts to help them innovate, enrich and refine instructional strategies offered to teachers and administrators through professional development.

As part of that experience, Duran Ginn began traveling in 2001 to different cities every six months, meeting with other colleagues and developing an invaluable professional development network that helped guide and support her efforts to affect necessary systems change to benefit instruction and student achievement within the district.

Through her experience with the academy, she supported site-based, job-



Virginia Duran Ginn, director of Teaching & Learning Systems, recently qualified to become a academy fellow with the National Staff Development Council Academy. She was awarded her diploma in December at a ceremony in New Orleans.

embedded professional development with the addition of instructional coaches vs. menu-driven events. The use of data, such as schools' Educational Plan for Student Success, to design staff

development and focus on teacher leadership, was also supported by her learning.

Being a member of the academy helped her affirm that, "We're doing the right thing, even though it has been hard. I always knew we were on the right track even when there were doubts."

She's hopeful that a proposal on the APS instructional coach model she and several others just submitted to the academy to present this year is accepted because, "We're ahead of the game as far as instructional coaches go, thanks in large part to Janet Dunham, instructional coordinator, whose experience in cognitive coaching has gone hand in hand with my training."

Her presentation will include the results of a survey taken by RDA at Duran Ginn's request to measure the effectiveness of instructional coaches.

"It's a formative evaluation," she says. "Preliminary data says there is great evidence of instructional improvement in having a site-based instructional developer."

Middle school students share joy of books with Emerson Elementary



James Monroe student Chad Schrimpf, a student in Juanita Flores' after-school Geography Club, helps move books from a bus into Emerson ES. He and other James Monroe students collected about 1,600 books and made 400 tote bags for students at Emerson ES. About 30 of Flores' students delivered the books and then read to students as part of the special event. The Geography Club students received help from James Monroe home economics classes; teachers and students supplied materials for the tote bags, with James Monroe contributing straps for the bags.



SAFETEEN New Mexico

Car Crash Scene Delivers Safety Message

SAFETEEN is a youth-driven, community-based organization that implements programs in schools to prevent injury, death, and disability related to traffic fatalities. The SAFETEEN program consists of a mock car crash scene near the school, an audio-visual presentation that illustrates the consequences of reckless driving; live testimonials by victims, crash survivors and people who have caused crashes.

SAFETEEN staff will work with schools to present a free, customized program during the 2004-05 school year. Rio Grande HS is a SAFETEEN site this year. Call SAFETEEN director Roberta Rael, 841-1869, for information on how to bring the program to individual schools.

Literacy leader enjoys support at Jimmy Carter



*Diana Heimer
Jimmy Carter
literacy leader*

Diana Heimer is a reading specialist who can't resist a good challenge or a special opportunity like the one that became available

at **Jimmy Carter MS** four years ago when a literacy leader position opened.

Heimer was keen to apply, realizing her job at the school would provide her with a unique opportunity to launch a research-based reading initiative from the start. The position was also an excellent fit for the doctorate in literacy she's working on at the University of Texas in Austin.

"I really wanted to do it," she says of the literacy leader job. "I couldn't pass up an opportunity to do vertical and horizontal alignment of a reading initiative. This is a match made in heaven."

All 65 teachers, including ESL and bilingual, teach Balanced Literacy during first period. From there, Heimer builds creativity into teacher professional development, stimulating camaraderie

and mutual support in their efforts to improve student literacy.

One popular event she developed in partnership with **Casey Chavez**, the school's instructional coach, is 'Lunch & Learning,' held every other Tuesday, which provides teachers with peer learning in a pleasant, social environment. Serious issues are covered like test-taking strategies, working on main ideas, and reading comprehension, in an informal environment that teachers seem to enjoy.

Teacher **Brenda Benavidez** says she's attended all of the lunches and, "They've been invaluable because materials are available, wonderful lesson plan ideas are shared and Diana always has samples to share with extension strategies as well.

"Diana also comes into my class and role-models specific techniques and lessons. What impressed me most is that she has shared many lessons which were successful and easy to replicate," Benavidez says.

Principal **Orlando Rodriguez** says her responsiveness and strong rapport with teachers, "exhibits the professionalism of a quality teacher whose primary focus is student achievement and success. She synchronized current theories, research and philosophies into the development of literacy."

A Heimer idea popular with teachers and students is the Accelerated Reading initiative and its school-based store packed with books, sports equipment, art kits and other items students want to earn by reading books. After passing a quiz on each book read, students earn points toward a store purchase until they acquire enough to buy a prize from the store.

Heimer strongly believes in using frequent testing to gather data, finding Strengthening Quality in Schools the best way to drive decisions about instructional strategies. She also tests every student at the beginning of school and every nine weeks using Gates-MacGinitie, the Informal Reading Inventory, and teacher recommendations to ensure accurate placement for reading.

Another Heimer innovation is a literacy handbook she helped develop with teachers in the school's literacy study group. Teachers now use a main idea across three grade levels to improve TerraNova scores, as well as participating in peer coaching and observation.

Teacher **Kathleen Gilliland** says, "Diana's presence has helped build more confidence within each teacher, opening more doors to creativity while becoming more well-rounded. To sum it all up—wow! I'm very fortunate to know Diana."

Susie Marmon lab meets new state standards



Christopher Tasiar, a Susie Rayos Marmon 5th grader, works on a health module at the Living with Life Science station dealing with bones and joints in the school's new

ScanTech X-Cal science lab.

Loretta Shiver, the school's technology coordinator, says the new lab, "will provide our students with the real life experiences that they need for true concept development. The X-Cal curriculum is matched to the new science standards that have been adopted this year and includes management software to help us track achievement and progress."