

OPTIONS

*A newsletter about alternative education from
the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center*

Student Conference UCO—November 8

- 8:15–9:15 Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 9:30–9:40 Welcome
- 9:40–10:30 Breakout Sessions
- 10:30–10:40 Break
- 10:40–11:30 Breakout Sessions
- 11:30–12:30 Lunch
- 12:30–1:15 Breakout Sessions

This year's Student Conference promises to be the best ever! The luncheon speaker will be the new state Director for Alternative Education, Laura Buxton. Her remarks will be followed by a repeat of the popular "Meal or No Meal" game which was such a hit during last year's conference.

The breakout sessions will provide students with a variety of choices. A Navy recruiter will be on hand as well as an instructor for 'yardstick art'. A stained glass company will tell about the history of the kaleidoscope and provide students with the materials to make their own. Additionally, a graphic demonstration on Shaken Baby Syndrome will be presented. Sessions on drumming, problem-solving, mask making and acting will also be offered.

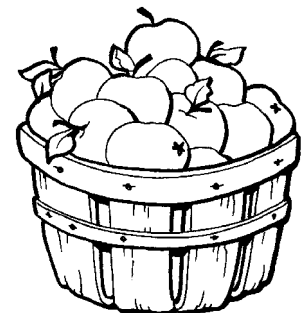
A new session on birds from the Sutton Avian Center will be presented. Students will be able to interact with live birds and learn about their life cycles.



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Points of Interest

SAT and ACT Cost Waiver

If you can't afford the registration fee for the ACT (No Writing) or the ACT Plus Writing, you may be eligible for a fee waiver. Funds are limited, and once they are gone, requests for waivers will be denied. To use a fee waiver, you must register by paper folder; to be eligible you must meet all three of the following requirements:

- You currently attend high school as a junior or senior
- You meet at least one indicator of economic need listed on the ACT fee waiver form. For information about these indicators and how to request fee waiver forms, check with your high school counselor.
- You may register only **once** with an ACT fee waiver, either in your junior or senior year. The waiver has been used once you register, even if you do not test.

Fee waivers cover *only* the basic registration fee for either the ACT (No Writing) or the ACT Plus Writing, including up to *four* valid college choices (listed at the time of registration). Waivers do not cover the late fee, test date changes, test center changes, or any other fees.

For more information, see your high school guidance counselor.

PLEASE NOTE: You can't request a waiver directly from ACT; you have to do it through your high school guidance office. Your registration folder won't be processed without a signed official ACT fee waiver form for the current testing year. Only ACT fee waiver forms will be accepted. For additional information visit <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/actfees.html>.

The SAT basically uses the same process and requirements.

Graduation Requirements for Move-in Students

District boards of education can make exceptions to state high school graduation requirements for students who move to this state from another state after their junior year of high school. After a student from another state enrolls in an accredited Oklahoma high school, the school board can make an exception to the high school graduation requirements of Section 11-103.6 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Individual exceptions can only be made when there are differing graduation requirements between the two states and completing Oklahoma graduation requirements will extend the student's date of graduation beyond the graduation date for the student's class.

Change in Suicide Prevention Hotline Number

As of August 12 of this year, the 1-800-SUICIDE number was scheduled to go out of service. The new number, 1-800-273-TALK, serves as a central switchboard to immediately connect callers 24/7 to a network of certified local crisis centers so callers can receive counseling or emergency services close to home.



*If you can't win...
make the person
ahead of you
break the record.*

Anonymous

An Official Oklahoma Centennial project

It's That Time Again— Hideaway Pizza's Collage Contest!

This project has been a favorite annual activity for many alternative education programs across the state. This will be the final year for competition, so don't miss out on the fun! The theme for this year is "100 Years of Statehood: Plenty of Heart and Plenty of Hope". Just go to <http://www.collage2000.com/index.htm> for details and information.



LifeSmarts Online National Competition

LifeSmarts is a fun program, run by the National Consumers League, that encourages high school students to learn about the consumer issues they face today and the new challenges that are right around the corner!

LifeSmarts ~ the ultimate consumer challenge is an educational opportunity that develops the consumer and marketplace knowledge and skills of teenagers in a fun way and rewards them for this knowledge. The program complements the curriculum already in place in high schools and can be used as an activity for classes, groups, clubs, and community organizations. LifeSmarts, runs a game-show style competition, is open to all teens in the U.S. in the 9th through 12th grades. Teams of four to five teens compete in district and state matches with the state winners going to the national competition to vie for the national LifeSmarts title. LifeSmarts is a program of the National Consumers League. For additional information about this exciting program, go to www.lifesmarts.org.

Second Chance to Make a First Impression

(Submitted by Elizabeth Ketchum, Principal, Chickasha Quality Academy)

The Chickasha Quality Academy, CQA, is a second chance for many students. Life can be viewed as frequent turns and bumps on a road, and the Chickasha Quality Academy allows high-school-aged students to have an alternative route to the successes that everyone deserves. At the Academy, students can get back on track with the educational process and find value in not only their education, but life.

Through the Academy's program, students can take the core course work and the electives. More importantly, the students are encouraged to give back to their community. Each school year the students of the Academy are required to fulfill two service learning projects. The service learning projects are designed to teach values, to teach goal setting and to teach students how to reflect back on their efforts. In the month of September, Chickasha Quality Academy students learned the value of hard work through a garage sale, a car wash, and an art project designed for the residents of a nursing home. The students are allowed to choose which service learning project they wish to fulfill. This past Grandparent's Day, students could choose to just decorate the gifts and let other students deliver them, or they could decorate and deliver their individual works of art. This year's Grandparent's Day was celebrated with the residents of Shanoan Springs Nursing Home. CQA senior Toni Christian stated, "It was a great experience for me and the rest of the students. I really enjoyed it."

(Continued on page 7)

*Grant Opportunities***SHOW ME THE MONEY!**

The National Gardening Association (NGA) has teamed with Home Depot to support youth gardening programs. Each winning program will receive educational materials from NGA and a \$250 gift card from Home Depot.

<http://assoc.garden.org/grants>

The Herbalife Family Foundation provides financial assistance to non-profit organizations for projects that improve the lives of children. Among the foundation's funding interests are improving nutrition and promoting physical and emotional health. The first step is submission of a letter containing information about both the organization as a whole and the specific project for which a grant is being requested.

http://www.herbalifefamily.org/our_guidelines.html

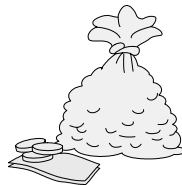
The Donald W. Reynolds Foundation focuses much of its funding in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Nevada. Among the Foundation's regional funding initiatives are a Capital Grants Program and a Community Centers Initiative Planning Grant. The Capital Grants Program provides funds for project planning, facilities, furniture, and equipment that meet local human services, health, arts/cultural, or public needs. Although the Foundation does not provide grants to schools, it will consider capital projects that benefit elementary and secondary students that are based outside the school system. The first step is submission of a letter of inquiry. The foundation has also invited five Oklahoma communities to apply for grants under its Community Centers Program to test the feasibility and viability of building multi-purpose community centers. The communities are the cities of Durant, Pauls Valley, Poteau, Seminole, and Woodward.

Contact: Steven Anderson, President

Phone: (702) 804-6000

E-mail: GeneralQuestions@dwrf.org

Web site: <http://www.dwreynolds.org>



The Inasmuch Foundation provides funding and support to Oklahoma organizations addressing educational, health and human service, cultural, artistic, historical, and environmental concerns. The Foundation encourages requests that enhance existing programs or develop new programs that meet emerging needs of the community. Projects that involve collaborative community efforts to avoid duplication of services are also encouraged. Letter of inquiry deadlines are January 15th and July 15th, with application deadlines a month later.

Contact: Nancy Hodgkinson, Program Officer

Phone: (405) 604.5292

E-mail: nancy.hodgkinson@inasmuchfoundation.org

Web site: <http://www.inasmuchfoundation.org>



The Sarkeys Foundation provides funds primarily in Oklahoma and supports projects addressing education, health care/medical research, and cultural/humanitarian needs. Proposals are accepted from December 15th through February 1st for consideration at the foundation board of director's meeting and from June 1st through August 1st for inclusion on the board's October agenda. An application form and instructions can be found on the foundation's web site.

Contact: Cheri D. Cartwright, Executive Director

Phone: (405) 364-3703

E-mail: cheri@sarkeys.org

Web site: <http://www.sarkeys.org>



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The Merrick Foundation provides grants to organizations and institutions primarily in Oklahoma, with an emphasis on South Central Oklahoma. Grants support projects that improve the quality of life in communities and address the following issues: arts and humanities, education, economic development, health/medical, social services, and youth services. A letter of request is the first step in requesting a grant. The deadline on submission of letters of request is July 1st.

Contact: Frank W. Merrick, Vice President

Phone: (405) 755-5571

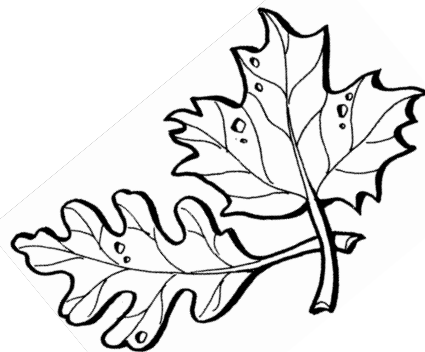
E-mail: fwmerrick@foundationmanagementinc.com

Web site: http://www.foundationmanagementinc.com/default.asp?active_page_id=15

Algebra I PASS Reorganized

For the latest information on the Algebra I updates, follow these steps:

1. Go to www.sde.state.ok.us
2. Click on Site Index (left side of screen in yellow box)
3. Click on the letter 'M'
4. Click on Mathematical Resources



Update on Rhonda and Emmus

You may remember the cover story we ran on the Gore students who helped a local business-woman, Rhonda, qualify for a new seeing-eye dog. Rhonda is now going to school in Oklahoma City, but she is keeping in touch with her friends at the alternative school. In a recent e-mail she wrote, "Emmus [the dog] and I are growing as a team. He is a very intelligent dog and is fun to work. He still has quite a personality and I have to keep a firm hand on him. But the more I learn how to handle him, the more interesting he is getting. He makes me have to think and not just to respond. I can never repay the help and service that your class has given me....you will always be in my thoughts and prayers....."

The Truth About Homework

Needless assignments persist because of widespread misconceptions about learning.

By Alfie Kohn

(Copyright 2006 by Alfie Kohn. Excerpted from the September 6, 2006 issue of *Education Week* with the author's permission. The article in its entirety, as well as information about Kohn's book *The Homework Myth*, on which that article is based, can be found at www.aflielkohn.org.)

"...I discovered that decades of investigation have failed to turn up any evidence that homework is beneficial for students in elementary school. Even if you regard standardized test results as a useful measure, homework (some vs. none, or more vs. less) isn't even correlated with higher scores at these ages. The only effect that does show up is more-negative attitudes on the part of students who get more assignments.

"The results of national and international exams raise further doubts. One of many examples is an analysis of 1994 and 1999 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, or TIMSS, data from 50 countries. Researchers David P. Baker and Gerald K. LeTendre were scarcely able to conceal their surprise when they published their results last year: 'Not only did we fail to find any positive relationships,' they wrote, but 'the overall correlations between national average student achievement and national averages in [amount of homework assigned] are all *negative*.'"

"Carole Ames of Michigan State University points out that it isn't 'quantitative changes in behavior' - such as requiring students to spend more hours in front of books or worksheets—that help children learn better. Rather, it's 'qualitative changes in the ways students view themselves in relation to the task, engage in the process of learning, and then respond to the learning activities and situation.' In turn, these attitudes and responses emerge from the way teachers think about learning and, as a result, how they organize their classrooms. Assigning homework is unlikely to have a positive effect on any of these variables. We might say that education is less about how much the teacher covers than about what students can be helped to *discover*—and more time won't help to bring about that shift."

"...any theoretical benefit of practice homework must be weighed against the effect it has on students' interest in learning. If slogging through worksheets dampens one's desire to read or think, surely that wouldn't be worth an incremental improvement in skills. And when an activity feels like drudgery, the quality of learning tends to suffer, too. That so many children regard homework as something to finish as quickly as possible—or even as a significant source of stress—helps explain why it appears not to offer any academic advantage even for those who obediently sit down and complete the tasks they've been assigned. All that research showing little value to homework may not be so surprising after all."

"Supporters of homework rarely look at things from the student's point of view, though. Instead, kids are regarded as inert objects to be acted on: make them practice and they'll get better. My argument isn't just that this viewpoint is disrespectful, or that it's a residue of an outdated stimulus-response psychology. I'm suggesting it's counterproductive. Children cannot be made to acquire skills. They aren't vending machines, such that we put in more homework and get out more learning."



Home computers are being called upon to perform many new functions, including the consumption of homework formerly eaten by the dog.

Doug Larson

(Continued from page 3)



Chickasha Quality Academy senior Toni Christian helps Shanoan Springs Nursing Center resident Cora Cook celebrate Grandparent's Day.

Every month a service learning project is offered to the students. For the month of October, the students will be helping the Festival of Lights with decoration of the park and taking a day to read to Kindergarten and Preschool aged children. "These two service learning projects have always been a tradition at the Academy and students in years past have always enjoyed helping out at both locations. We at the Academy appreciate both places for giving our students the opportunity to work with them" stated Sandy Ford, CQA history teacher.

During the month of November, the Academy students will shift their services to the Academy's campus. Since the first day of school, stu-

dents have been submitting artwork to be voted on for murals along our campus halls. The staff of the Academy believes it is important for our students to have some ownership in their campus and take pride in their school. Not only are the students going to create hall murals but will participate in painting a basketball court in our back courtyard. December is typically known as a month of giving; therefore, the students and staff will be collecting food items for local charities and various organizations. Next semester will also offer many additional opportunities for our students including a penny drive for cancer research.

The Chickasha Quality Academy is designed and regulated by the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center (OTAC) which provides standards for evaluation in multiple areas. Chickasha's program must meet the standards set by OTAC in order to continue its services to our local youth. Chickasha Quality Academy must maintain a fifteen-to-one ratio in the classroom, provide an intake meeting followed by a committee decision for a student to attend, incorporate ongoing collaborative resources and services to meet a broad range of student needs, provide a broad range of instructional options, provide group and individualized counseling, incorporate career tech organizations, teach life skills, and art as well as provide pre and post data that our students are succeeding.

The Chickasha Quality Academy makes a difference in the lives of our youth today. Our staff enjoys coming to work daily and looks forward to the challenges set before them.. CQA's staff has a mission to make the journey of education a memorable one.



Anything goes....

This came to me in an e-mail; I thought it was worth passing along.

Here's a quiz for you. You don't need pencil or paper.

Name the five wealthiest people in the world.

Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.

Name the last five winners of the Miss America pageant.

Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize.

Name the last five Academy Award winners for Best Actor and Actress.

Name the last three World Series winning teams.

No one remembers yesterday's headliners. The applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten.

Here's another quiz for you.

List a few teachers who helped you get through school.

Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.

Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.

Think of a few people you enjoy spending time with.

Name three heroes whose stories have inspired you.

The people who make a difference in your life aren't the ones with the most credentials, the most money or the most awards. They're the ones who care enough to spend personal time and effort for your benefit. Just because you don't have a teaching trophy doesn't mean you aren't the most influential person in some student's life.



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