

K-State's Engagement E-News

Connecting K-State to Kansas
and Communities Worldwide

Engagement and the Arts

Engagement with arts and cultural activities is a primary factor in fostering a sense of community and respect and understanding of others. In this newsletter CECD will highlight acts of engagement and the arts going on at Kansas State University.

A Message from Dave Procter, Director of K-State's Center for Engagement and Community Development

"To encourage literature and arts is a duty which every good citizen owes to our country."
– George Washington

"Healthy communities depend on active and involved citizens," said former NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. "The arts play an irreplaceable role in producing both those citizens and those communities."

Research shows that arts participants and readers contribute substantial social capital to their communities through high levels of civic engagement, charity works and participation in local activities. Further, research demonstrates that arts participation is an indicator of civic and community health.

Our communities are at their best when the local public is actively engaged in the issues affecting their daily lives. Yet, as opportunities for civic dialogue in this country have diminished in recent years, the arts and cultural institutions provide a wide spectrum of activity and opportunities to connect citizens to civic life. This is why the Center for Engagement and Community Development actively supports engagement through the arts. We are therefore pleased to offer this newsletter highlighting just a few of the engaged arts projects happening at Kansas State University.



Projects Featured

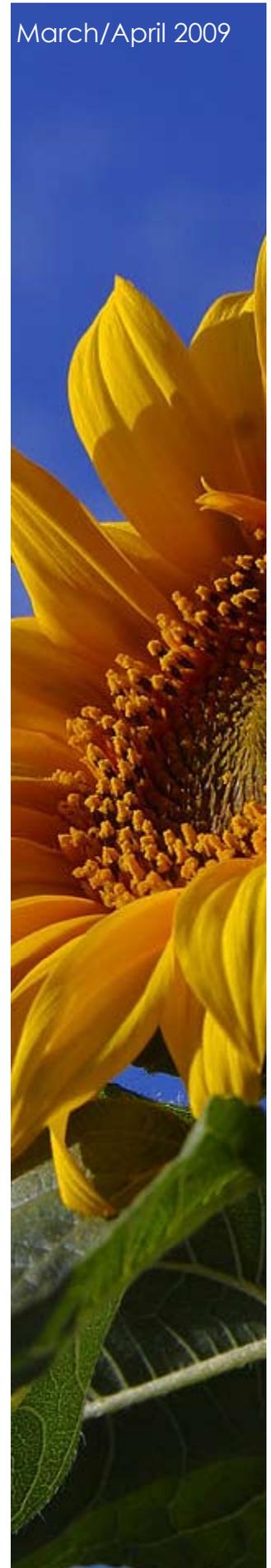
*Military Speaks

*Growing Tree
Theater

*Camp
Shakespeare

*Romeo and
Juliet

*Disability
Awareness Art
Exhibit



Interactive Theatre Offers Opportunity for Children of Military Parents

by Jenny Barnes

With the deployment of thousands of soldiers over the past few years, many families have been left to cope with the stress that follows.

In an attempt to help children cope with the stress and raise awareness, Elaine Johannes, K-State assistant professor of family studies and human services and an Extension specialist in youth development, partnered with K-State faculty, Operation Military Kids, the army and 4-H to develop an interactive theater project.

Johannes said, "This project allows the children to express their emotions in a safe and creative way."

The project is centered on an original play "Serving at Home," written by Alissa Duncan, a K-State master's degree graduate in theater and a registered drama therapist. It is centered around



The ongoing wars have caused many children stress when a parent is deployed overseas.

Chloe, a teenage girl, whose mother is deployed. The story takes the audience through the problems the family faces and the eventual breaking point. "Talk backs" led by Sally Bailey followed the performances of the play.

"Through this process, I've learned that the family side of war isn't something that's really been explored in literature," Bailey, K-State associate professor of communication studies, theater and dance, said. "For thousands of years, only the glory part of a soldier's experience was explored and only recently has the traumatic side of that experience been explored. But, the family has usually been left out."

Bailey and Duncan created a manual for how to safely create a play about life issues and it was published by FSHS Extension. The project will also be presented at several upcoming conferences.

Theater Project Uses Plays to Expose Children to New Experiences

by Jenny Barnes

The Growing Tree theater project exposes children in the Manhattan community to theater as well as interesting new ideas through the performing arts. The project consists of a touring acting troupe that visits elementary schools in Manhattan and performs a one act, 30-45 minute play for children.

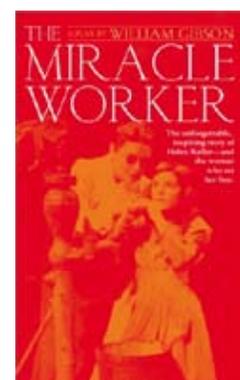
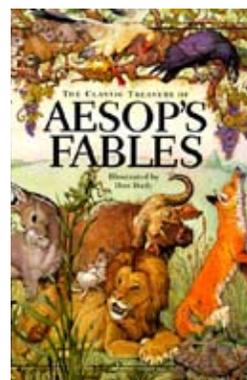
The plays are directed and acted entirely by K-State theater students. They collaborated with the Manhattan Arts Center and the schools to work out a schedule, which typically includes about 11 performances throughout the semester.

Sally Bailey, K-State associate professor of communication studies, theater and dance and advisor/supervisor for the project, said, "This is a great opportunity for theater students to get experience with children's theater and to experience tutoring."

Past plays have included, "The Miracle Worker," a play about Helen Keller that was followed by a discussion about disabilities, "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," a short play about a concentration camp during WWII where there were many children, and "A Short Trip Around the World," an original play that shared folk tales, songs and dances from all five continents.

This fall, Anna Beck will be doing an original play featuring stories of "Aesop's Fables" to teach children about making choices.

If you would like more information about this project contact Sally Bailey at sdbailey@ksu.edu.



Camp Shakespeare to Create New Teaching Techniques

by Jenny Barnes

Donald Hedrick, K-State professor of English, will lead ten to twelve English and drama teachers from high schools across the state in a week-long workshop taking the works of Shakespeare from page to stage.

The workshop will combine literary interpretation and performance to make Shakespeare “more exciting than ever.” It will emphasize how to get the most out of Shakespeare with the kinds of limited resources of original performance practice.

Hedrick hopes participants will bring back skills, ideas and enthusiasm into their schools and communities.

Also collaborating on the project are Charlotte MacFarland, K-State professor of theater, Mary-Kris Roberson, Manhattan High School English teacher, and Linda Uthoff, Manhattan High School theater teacher.

The workshop will take place July 6-10, 2009. For more information visit <http://www.k-state.edu/english/>



Project Uses Romeo and Juliet to Educate Young Adults

by Jenny Barnes

Every high school in Kansas uses Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet* as part of their curriculum at some point. Although the play was written years ago, problems faced by the characters are still relative to the youth of today.

Michael Gros, K-State professor of theatre, and Sally Bailey, K-State associate professor of communication studies, theater and dance, have been working together for the last three years to put together a DVD and curriculum guide that uses the popular drama *Romeo and Juliet* to educate adolescents and young adults on some of those problems. The materials have three overarching areas: conflict resolution, family violence and teenage suicide.

Gros said, “We wanted to have a healthy and entertaining way to get young people to discuss these topics.”

Each section on the DVD includes a scene acted out from the original play, commentary by an expert in the field and then a modern day reenactment of the same scene to make the issue being discussed more relatable to young people and to provide students with healthier solutions.

“It’s really all about the choices,” Gros said. “We want this to demonstrate what alternative ways a situation might have been handled.”

The project engaged the community as well as the K-State campus. All of the acting was done by students and faculty, and the set design was also constructed by K-State students. Along with Bailey, the project also enlisted the help of Genie Barton and Karen Myers-Bowman. Gros also worked with the theater departments at Topeka and Manhattan High Schools.

When the package of materials is complete, Gros plans to make them available to every high school campus in Kansas for free.



Students from Topeka High School watch a scene from Romeo and Juliet.

Union Program Council Promotes Disability Awareness with Art Exhibit

by Jenny Barnes

“K-State for All” week is an event that takes place on campus every spring. It is designed to engage members of the community with developmental disabilities.

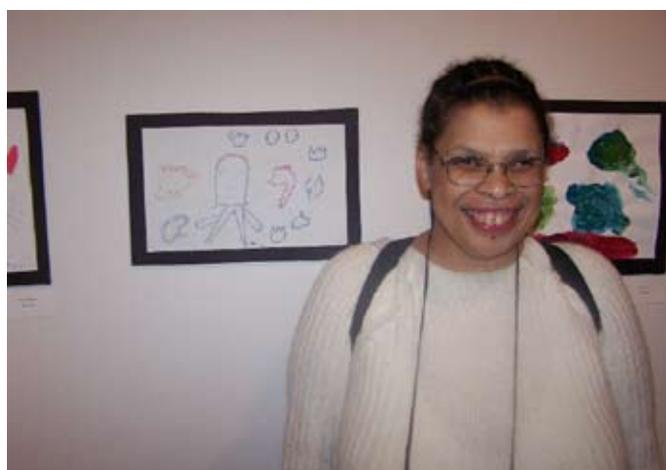
There were many events that took place during this semester’s celebration. One event was the art exhibit featured in the William T. Kemper Art Gallery in the K-State Student Union. It featured original artwork by K-State Professor Emeritus Vernon Bode and Lawrence Kansas Parks and Recreation Special Populations art class.

Georgia Campbell, one of the co-chairs for the Union Program Council arts committee, the group responsible for organizing the gallery, said “I think it is important that we showcase an exhibit of something different like this in the gallery.”

The exhibit featured water colors, pencil drawings and acrylics. Professor Emeritus Vernon Bode suffered from a stroke and had to relearn all of his motor skills with his non-dominant hand. The artists from Lawrence who had work featured in the gallery had various disabilities.

UPC also hosted a reception at the end of “K-State for All” week to allow the artists to meet with people in the community who had viewed their work.

“It was neat that we could have all the artists there and have the community come in and see the work these artists had created,” Campbell said. “It was a very proud moment for most of them.”



Artists from the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Special Populations class showcased original artwork in the Union Art Gallery.

CECD Mission & Vision

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To promote engagement across the breadth of Kansas State University - in teaching, research, and outreach - and to connect the vast resources of KSU to the significant issues of public need facing Kansas and communities worldwide.

Engagement occurs when collaborative partners — both on and off-campus stakeholders — work together to address a public need in a way that is both reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Through engagement, K-State endeavors to fulfill its historic land grant mission.

– David E. Procter, CECD director