

MULTICULTURAL EVENT

Bringing Stories to Life

Author Mitali Perkins knows how to work an audience. Especially if the audience consists of 110 fourth and fifth graders from Emerson Elementary. Murphy Library, UW-L's School of Education and the La Crosse Public Education Foundation collaborated with teachers from Emerson Elementary School to provide a morning of insights into diverse cultures and the art of storytelling. The morning also provided 33 UW-L education majors an opportunity to observe the power of connecting authors with children. The Multicultural Children's Literature event was held in the Cleary Center on April 8th, but Emerson teachers and students began preparing well in advance. Fourth graders read the award-winning *Rickshaw Girl* and fifth graders read *The Not-So-Star-Spangled Life of Sunita Sen*. Both books were a hit with students, who shared their writings and classroom projects based on their reading at the event.

Mitali Perkins was clearly moved when the children presented her with the gift of a large book they had constructed and filled with their writings and artwork. The children shared family stories similar to the situations of characters in Perkin's books, to the delight of the author, and the family members in the audience. Mitali brought her presentation to life by incorporating all five senses into her presentation. Students mashed traditional spices using a mortar and pestle, listened to Bangladeshi music, and even dressed in native Bangladeshi clothing. Two boys acted out a traditional village scene of bargaining over the price of bananas with enthusiasm. It was hard to tell who was enjoying the experience the most; was it the children, the audience, or the author herself?



Later in the day, Mitali gave two presentations for adults in the Collaborative Learning Studio at Murphy Library focused on writing and publishing. Both were well-received by UW-L students, faculty members, and local teachers. For more information about the author, visit her website at mitaliperkins.com.

Early Childhood Students Meet with State Representatives

Early Childhood Education Assistant Professor Ann Epstein, Ph.D has known for years that helping future teachers learn how to speak to issues regarding the education of young children is an important part of her job. This year, she put out a call for interested students to join the Wisconsin Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (WACTE) statewide meeting during the annual "Day on the Hill" in Madison. It's an opportunity for all Wisconsin Institutes of Higher Learning to speak with elected officials about issues in education. Six students from UW-L's School of Education responded, and journeyed to the state capitol on April first to share their thoughts with 95th District State Representative Jill Billings and



Senator Jennifer Shilling, right, spends time with UW-L students at the State of Wisconsin Capitol.

State Senator Jennifer Shilling. The students exhibited a hint of nervousness, but by the end of the day everyone had positive feelings about the event. Representative Billings stated that she was, "Impressed with the professionalism and the dedication," of the UW-L students.

Undergraduate Amanda Wagner said, "This experience has shown me that representatives will listen." Anne Riebe reflected, "This experience will definitely impact me as a future educator. When I decided to be a teacher, I didn't realize all that goes into it. Not only do we teach our students, but we may be called to do even more for them."

After attending the WACTE meeting, students met with School of Education Director Marcie Wycoff-Horn, Ph.D, and Sheila Wirkus, Director of Field Experience, and proceeded to the capitol building for their meeting with Senator Shilling. Even though the final senate session of the year was Meet the Reps continued on page 4.

HIGH SCHOOL EVENT

Visual Arts Classic

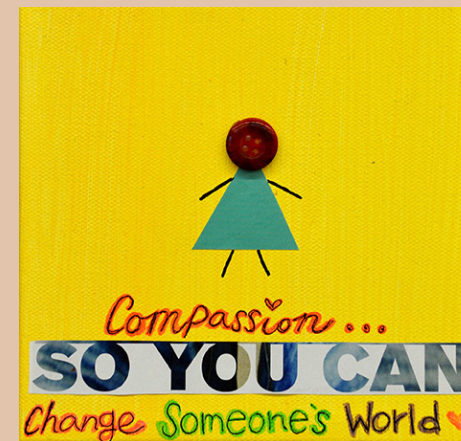
Almost one hundred high school students from seven local school districts invaded the halls and studios of the Art Department on Friday, March 7. It was the Visual Arts Classic, a competition in visual art and design, in which students compete individually in the areas of painting, drawing, photography, graphic design, personal adornment, printmaking and art history for the chance to compete again at the State Visual Arts Classic meet. In addition to individual categories, which are judged and assessed by local artists, art professors, art historians and art education students. The students participate in group competitions in Critical Thinking and a Quiz Bowl about the artists featured for the annual event. The winning teams and all students earning a first place will compete in Madison on April 11.

The regional competition in our area is hosted by the UW-L Art Department and is coordinated by the Art Education instructors and students.



COMMUNITY EVENT

Compassion Project



During the 2013-14 school year, students, staff and faculty members at UW-La Crosse have been involved in an investigation of the visual interpretation of the word "compassion." The Compassion Project is a city wide initiative, coordinated by the La Crosse Public Education Foundation. The inspiration behind the project came from Richard Davidson, Ph.D. – a University of Wisconsin-Madison psychology and psychiatry professor and brain researcher who has scientifically found that those who practice compassion have measurably healthier brains, and generally, a happier outlook on life." (lacrosseeducationfoundation.org/lacrossecompassionproject)

On the UW-L campus, individuals from across the university have been challenged to present their ideas about compassion on a 6"x6" canvas. Students majoring in Art Education have assisted with on-campus

workshops with groups of adults and students from various campus departments. These students have also worked with students in the School District of La Crosse, alongside mentor teachers in field and student teaching experiences. One Art Education student has even implemented the Compassion Project with students in grades 1-12 at a private, alternative school.

An exhibit of the canvases created on the UW-L campus was initiated at a reception in Port 'O Call in the Cartwright Center on the University campus from on Friday, May 2. The panels then travelled to a variety of sites around the University campus. This project has been sponsored on campus by the School of Education, the School of Arts and Communications and the Art Department and has been spear-headed by Marcia Thompson and Lisa Lenarz, Art Education instructors.

Music Education Updates

Music Education-Choral Emphasis

Choral Music Education students as well as other UW-L singers will have the chance to be members of the UW-La Crosse Concert Choir's performance at the "Disney Concert Hall" in Los Angeles, CA in June 2015. The University's premier choral group was invited, to audition to perform at the Los Angeles International Music Festival. An international orchestra and an American university wind ensemble was also be chosen for this performance. Concert Choir members will perform in either San Francisco or San Diego and spend a day at Disneyland as a part of this tour. They will sing two other concerts during this week-long experience.

Music Education-Instrumental Emphasis

Instrumental Music Education students will benefit from Dr. Tammy Fisher's research project in collaboration with the University of North Carolina-Greensboro Music Research Institute. The purpose of the project is to show that noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is an increasingly prevalent disorder in band students that results from exposure to high-intensity sound, especially over a long period of time. Students in the marching band wore doseBadges which measured, stored and calculated the decibel levels students experienced over the span of 6 rehearsals. As a result, many students are wearing special music earplugs. One goal of the study is to better educate the students about "healthy hearing" practices.



Music Education Major-General Music Emphasis

Every other year, Music Education Major-General Music Emphasis students see first-hand how music captivates pre-school children during weekly "Music Play" sessions at the Campus Child Center at UW-La Crosse. The attraction and participation observed in these young enthusiasts is quite remarkable. Young children epitomize our very best students; eager and unabashed. Their willingness to participate is complete, taking place on many different levels at once.

Children not only desire to participate and be part of music, they also learn at an astonishing rate. These children are not instructed to learn or memorize songs, but they do. Children also begin to mimic tones and pitches, often following rhythms of a song they may have only sung once or twice. Music has the ability to teach, augment and enhance the learning process with astonishing ease. Children also display creative musical input for improvisational songs during the course of "Music Play."



Multicultural Children's Literature event

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Compassion Project

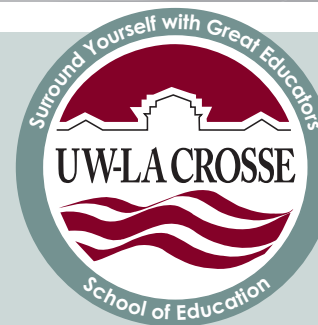
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Eagle Edge

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COLLABORATE. INNOVATE.



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Honoring Our Partners in Education, Regional Teachers Make a Difference

According to New York Times columnist, Nicholas Kristof, "Having a good fourth grade teacher makes a student 1.25 percent more likely to go to college, the research suggests, and 1.25 percent less likely to get pregnant as a teenager. Each of the students will go on as an adult to earn, on average, \$25,000 more over a lifetime — or about \$700,000 in gains for an average size class — all attributable to that ace teacher back in the fourth grade. That's right: A great teacher is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to each year's students, just in the extra income they will earn."

While the value of a good teacher is unquestioned, it takes a unique partnership between UW-La Crosse School of Education and our region's schools to provide our teacher candidates with the opportunities to merge their strong content and pedagogical study with practical classroom practice — to become those good teachers for our community and our nation.

UW-L, in conjunction with other member Wisconsin institutions of higher education, and the Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education honored three area cooperating teachers for their pre-service educator mentoring of UW-L teacher candidates.

Joseph Anglehart from La Crosse Central High School, La Crosse Hintgen Elementary School's Shanon Bills, and Janelle Laufenberg from Logan Middle School were honored for their work with UW-L's education field experience students as well as student teachers. All three area teachers have mentored many UW-L teacher

candidates, and have contributed to the professional development of our graduates by providing in-depth teaching experiences in their classrooms.

Awards also went to five UW-L graduates and beginning teachers — Early Career Educator Awards — for their instructional success in their first years of teaching. These five awards went to Heidi Wysocki who teaches at both Logan Middle School and North Woods International School, and to Kyle Emmert who is teaching at Prairie Elementary School in Waunakee, Wis. Amanda Johnson, currently teaching at Milwaukee Roosevelt Creative Arts Middle School, Sarah Higley from Baraboo Elementary School and Sarah Lieder, who is teaching at Coulee Christian School in West Salem, rounded out this group of Early Career Educator Awardees.



From left, Barb Gander, Early Childhood Education senior lecturer, Kyle Emmert, 2014 award recipient of the Early Career Educator Award and Marcie Wycoff-Horn, Director of School of Education.

MEET THE REPS

continued from page 2.

to begin in the Senate Chamber at 11 a.m., the senator carved out 25 minutes to listen and respond to students' joys and concerns. Representative Billings was able to find about 40 minutes for her listening session later in the day.

Students kept the focus on Early Childhood Education and the ways in which developmental research informs best practices for teaching and learning. Of particular concern was the quality of time young children

are spending on testing, and test preparation, and the negative impacts this can have. The Early Childhood Education majors spoke with conviction on behalf of protecting developmentally appropriate practices for young children, and shared their experiences in kindergarten and preschool classrooms. The discussions centered on the importance of play-based learning and experiential learning, and the effects of too much time spent on drill, practice, and test. The School of Education students also cited the positive impact and importance of social learning in

the early grades. Students Amanda Wagner, Emily Davis, and Sarah Archer gave first-hand examples of the stress related behaviors they have observed during their field experiences in classrooms. Representative Billings agreed that this is a concern deserves attention and gave some pointers on how to advocate effectively for meaningful change. Senator Shilling commented that as a parent she has observed the effects of test pressure in schools first-hand, and has heard from other families that it is a growing problem.

Teacher quality matters, and through partnerships with our regional school districts and outstanding veteran educators, UW-L School of Education experiences high quality teacher education.

Thank you, Outstanding Educators in the Coulee Region for making the difference!