

CELEBRATE LITERACY HAPPENS IN OCTOBER

The second annual Celebrate Literacy Conference, presented by the School of Education at GVSU, is scheduled for October 22 and 23, 1999. The conference includes authors, illustrators and literacy experts who will present sessions in a series of workshops. More than a dozen of the nation's top authors and illustrators are scheduled to appear. Teachers and everyone else interested in children's literature and literacy are encouraged to attend. The full conference fee is \$75, which includes a box lunch Friday and an Author Luncheon Saturday. A student rate has been set at \$35. Additional registration information may be obtained by telephoning faculty member Liz Storey in the School of Education at (616) 895.2091.

ESL GRADUATE PROGRAM NOW OFFERED AT GVSU

The School of Education is offering a new master's degree emphasis and endorsement for English as a Second Language following approval from the Michigan Department of Education. Laura Vander Broek of GVSU's English Department provided faculty leadership for the program. Dr. Antonio Herrera will advise for the School of Education.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS TOWARD ACCREDITATION

The National Association for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is requesting public testimony or comments about the School of Education at Grand Valley State University prior to its bid for continuing accreditation. The School of Education has been accredited by NCATE since 1987. Graduates, parents, schools, community organizations and other parties who have valuable knowledge of the School of Education are encouraged to respond. Comments addressing substantive matters related to quality must be signed and may be addressed to Board of Examiners, 2010 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C., 20036-1023. NCATE will forward copies of all correspondence to the School of Education for comment prior to the accreditation visit.

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

Grand Valley State University graduates are making positive contributions in the classroom every day. Many go unnoticed, except by the young people whose lives they are shaping. *Colleagues* would like to hear from our colleagues in order to share ideas, classroom breakthroughs and teaching philosophies. Comments and suggestions are encouraged and may be forwarded by e-mail to Cynthia Mader, assistant dean at maderc@gvsu.edu.

Academy Deals With Inclusion Issues

In an attempt to help general education teachers deal with inclusion issues, GVSU professor Joseph Fisher developed the Michigan Academy on Strategic Instruction. The academy, in conjunction with the Michigan Association of Learning Disability Education, works with a group of Michigan K-12 general education and special education teachers to focus on areas where they can better serve special needs children.

"There are a number of kids with mild disabilities that are being included in general education classes," Fisher said. "They are often under prepared to be successful in general education classes, and general education teachers are often unsure of how to help the kids with disabilities in their classrooms."

The academy works with educators on how to respond to academic diversity in their schools. They, in turn, take the knowledge they have gained and disseminate it to the staffs at their individual schools.

The program — which provides one-on-one expertise to prepare for training in their own district — is primarily geared for secondary schools and dealing with middle and high school students.

"It's about teaching students how to be prepared for general education and to teach general education teachers how to respond to students with disabilities in their classrooms," Fisher said. "We are preparing those teachers so they are prepared to work with those students. We're also training them to be their in-district experts on a topic in order to provide training and support to teachers in their districts."

The project is currently into its third year with 10 different school districts represented. Two teachers from each district are represented. Participants have begun mentoring colleagues in their own districts.

"The teachers from the participating districts are now beginning to provide teaching to teachers within their own districts," Fisher said.



GVSU student teacher Melissa Zarzecki reaches out during a John Ball Park Zoo box turtle demonstration by Eric Ungermann.

CBOT Has Special Ties To Eberhard

GVSU Education student Melissa Zarzecki never dreamed student teaching would be like this. She is actually doing her student teaching outside the classroom.

"I wanted to be in a setting with younger kids, but now that I've been into functional curriculum and community-based instruction, I found it to be the best fit for me," Zarzecki said. "I never envisioned teaching a functional curriculum until a class with Dr. Miller (Sandra Miller, GVSU Special Education faculty)."

Zarzecki works with Eric Ungermann, one of the students between the ages of 18 and 26 who are taking part in the Community Based Occupational Training (CBOT) program that encompasses individuals who are physically or mentally impaired. Several of those students work at the Eberhard Center program under the direction of Rich VanPortfliet.

"Most of these students have tried programming at other levels, but for whatever reason lacked the social skills or intelligence to succeed there," VanPortfliet said. "We attempt to put

these folks in a different surrounding and put them in a position to learn through a series of training to enable them to have a normal life in the community."

CBOT, which has been hosted at the Eberhard Center since it opened in 1988, is operated in conjunction with Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Ungermann has a paying job at a local pizza parlor and volunteers his time at John Ball Park Zoo in Grand Rapids. He has recently moved into independent living quarters, another component of the community based training.

"Eric has really grown through the program and has accomplished a lot," Zarzecki said. "But he still needs to work on life skills such as time management, doing his own laundry, shopping for the right sized clothes and other skills that most people take for granted."

"Grand Valley prepared me well to work with these individuals and I really enjoy being part of this program."