

S.O.E. SETS JUNE 18 TEE TIME

The School of Education's annual golf outing is scheduled for 9 a.m., Friday, June 18, at Grand Valley State University's Meadows Golf Course. The event is an 18-hole scramble filled with fun and prizes and followed by lunch, laughs and lies (about how well everybody played). The fee is \$60 per person or \$220 for a foursome, which includes practice range, 18 holes of golf, cart and lunch. Proceeds from the event benefit S.O.E. scholarship funds. For reservations, contact Liz Storey at the School of Education.

A REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

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.

WANTED: GRAD ASSISTANTS

M.Ed. graduate assistant positions are available to assist School of Education faculty and administrators with research, writing, data analysis, computer projects, grant proposals and student services for the 1999-2000 academic year. Requirements include admission to a degree program, outstanding academic achievement and enrollment in at least six graduate credits. Further information and applications are available from the graduate office of the School of Education. Awards carry a stipend and tuition reimbursement.

GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM OFFERED IN KENT COUNTY

In association with Education professor Dr. Dorothy Armstrong, a summer learning experience will be offered for gifted and talented public and private school students at Kent Career/Technical Center. To be known as "Future Focus," the experience will be modeled after Armstrong's popular "Focus on Ability" program which was held for several summers on Grand Valley State University's Allendale campus. Future Focus is sponsored by the Kent Intermediate School District's Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee with support from the district's Career Preparation program. Application deadline is April 30. Contact Becki Zwiers at (616) 454.9034 for information.

Partnership Raises The Bar At Buchanan

There was a time in the not-so-distant past when Buchanan Elementary School might have been considered a "problem child" of the Grand Rapids Public Schools system. An energetic leader, a partnership with Grand Valley State University and a renewed enthusiasm among the staff helped change that image.

"What we had to do in that building was reinvent the wheel," said GVSU's Barbara Reinken, who helped write a Goals 2000 grant and coordinated the partnership.

With 65 percent of its students labeled special education and truancy rates almost as high, there was an apathy toward learning at the school. A change of direction was needed. Principal Jesus Hernandez was brought in from another elementary school in the district to lead the charge.

"Teachers want to change but need a leader with a vision," said Hernandez, who is currently principal at Gladiola Elementary in Wyoming. "You have to have a leader who is going to get actively involved instead of getting on to ride the wave, but you also need a staff that wants to be part of that vision. There has to be a commitment."

The program at Buchanan included a process of teaming to best utilize the knowledge base available to students. A single-tier — or push-in — model was used, with bilingual specialists and other specialists brought in. Student teachers provided additional tutoring, focusing extensively in areas of reading and writing.

"Instead of just one teacher, we were using the best resources available," Hernandez said.

A planning session among teachers and GVSU advisors — and another that includes student teachers — is held every week. It allows



Jesus Hernandez, center, and Barbara Reinken, left, share ideas about the partnership between GVSU and Buchanan.

teachers to share ideas, pinpoint problem areas and work together toward solutions.

"There is a common understanding that we're there for the kids and we want to see the kids become successful by making these partnerships work," Hernandez said. "There are a lot of rewards, from student achievement, to a better climate throughout the school, to the staff becoming more aware of the students' needs."

The Goals 2000 program at Buchanan began in 1997. It was not limited to GVSU education students but also involved the School of Nursing and School of Social Work as well as those going into recreation and counseling. It was so successful that GVSU president Arend D. Lubbers committed an additional year of funding after the grant concluded.

"It is helping those staff members not only become learners but educators of their own learning," Reinken said.

As a result of the partnership, the number of children labeled with special needs was reduced.

Improved MEAP scores were a direct result of reduced truancy and absenteeism, "because people were paying attention to them," Reinken said. "Teachers liked it too, because there were other people in the building helping them give attention to kids."

Service Learning Serves Dual Purpose

A service learning program, recently implemented as part of the School of Education's pre-teacher training, is serving two purposes with invigorating success. Professor David Bair's Diversity in Education (ED 225) class has incorporated a service learning element that works as both a community service and a teacher training tool.

"Service learning is certainly about people developing community service and linking it with some of our own learning goals and objectives," Bair said. "We want them to connect theories, concepts and what we want them to learn with a service project."

Each student is assigned to work with a teacher in the Grand Rapids Public School district for two hours per week in a classroom by assisting teachers, working with students and observing behavioral patterns.

The project responds to the needs of the schools, while training a future generation of teachers.

"It provides a service for those providing the service," Bair said. "They will learn more being in

the actual classroom working with students than sitting in a college classroom for three hours a week."

Service learning is different from pre-teaching because it involves only a couple of volunteer hours per week. But it allows an early opportunity for GVSU students to provide one-on-one interactions with students, either by tutoring, helping teach or providing other means of support.

GVSU students participating are required to keep a journal of their experiences.

The inaugural service learning program was launched in the fall of 1998. Sixty students participated in 20 separate school buildings during the spring semester.

"It has provided a needed service to the schools they are in with support of human hours and human resources, and is not something extraneous for those schools," Bair said.

Bair has been named a Presidential Service Learning Scholar as part of a university initiative to provide support and resources for this form of learning.