



Principal Shares AAC Experience

The following is an excerpt from a letter from Kimberly Mack, the Principal at John P. Parker School. Ms. Mack speaks to the power of the relationship between a struggling student and a caring Adopter.

Bill,

"I Just wanted to share a little story with you as a testimony of what AAC has done for one of our students.

We have a student at our school who has been diagnosed as having Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. He's an odd child and does not make friends very easily. Through AAC Adopters, his class was connected with a company, who in turn linked him with a specific mentor/ Adopter. In his letter to the Adopter, he mentioned his inability to make friends. Shortly thereafter, the company spon-

sored a breakfast in which some of the Adopters attended and met students. This young man's Adopter could not attend, and he was visibly disappointed and refused to talk with the any of the Adopters who had come.

Because the student's Adopter could not attend the breakfast, another arrangement was made in which the Adopter took time to meet with the student during school lunchtime on a different day, which made that student feel so special.

He got to sit down and eat with an adult to have a conversation. He felt special. He was so happy. He actually smiled... (If you knew this young man, you'd understand that seeing him smile is a joy in itself, because he often seems unhappy.) His happiness carried over to the next day.

Sometimes, we look at the gifts of

AAC and other like programs in terms of monetary value, but the connections our students make with AAC Adopters are priceless. Seeing this student smile is one of the priceless gifts that AAC has brought to students at my school."

Kimberly R. Mack, Principal
John P. Parker School

Welcome New Adopters!

**Catholic Health Partners
Cincinnati City Council
Michaelman
Northside Bank
Robbins, Inc.**

For more information visit www.aacfoundation.com or contact Bill Burwinkel at (513) 244-8075 or bill.b@aacfoundation.com

Career Fair—Students Learn for Life



A special thank to Linda Basler of Turner Construction for her help with this article.

Are you looking for a way to make an enormous impact in your school? Why not plan a Career Fair? A Career Fair is a great way for students to gain exposure to the vast number careers available to them upon graduation from high school or college. Last year, Turner Construction, with the assistance of the Boy

Scouts Learning for Life Program, organized a career fair at Roberts Paideia Academy for over 150 6th - 8th grade students. Ten companies participated, including several AAC businesses. Linda Basler of Turner Construction, gives some advice for AAC

partners who may be interested in planning a career fair: "First, allow enough planning time before the event. Organization and communication are keys to success. Have something for students to take away. For our Turner booth, we had a list of construction industry careers that showed suggested high school courses and other recommended education and training. We also included

information on average salaries. We gave every student a copy."

It is a good idea to find a way to help shape students' discussions with the participating businesses. Providing a list of questions for students to ask each company will ensure that every student comes away with a wealth of information. This information can help students set academic and career goals and get them headed down a path towards a bright future.

Most importantly, have one person be the contact for all companies involved.

Kelly McIntosh-Crow of Boy Scouts Learning For Life has offered to personally assist you in organizing and executing your Career Fair. Kelly can be reached at (513) 961-2336 x256 or kmcintosh@danbeard.org



Five Questions for Andrea Tortora

Each newsletter will feature an outstanding person or organization who is going above and beyond to make a difference in the Foundation and in the lives of students. This month's interview is with Andrea Tortora, who is the Adopt A Class Business Coordinator for Ms. Endres' 7th - 8th grade class at Rockdale Academy and the Managing Editor for the Cincinnati Business Courier. Andrea is pictured below with her Adopted student, DeShuanta.



1. Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I am the managing editor at the Business Courier, where I help direct the paper's coverage of business news in our weekly paper, special publications and on our Web site. I am 36, married and the mother of a

nearly 3-year-old, with another boy on the way. I like to volunteer in ways that help make an impact in the community and also serve on the boards of the Duke Energy, Children's Museum, Dress for Success and the Jewish Early Learning Cooperative.

2. How did you get involved in Adopt A Class?

A coworker suggested I meet with Bill Burwinkel to learn more about the program. Bill is a great salesman! Everyone at the Courier thought it would be a great way for us to get more involved in making a difference in our community. We liked the format, because it is an easy way for people to participate at levels that work best for their schedules.

News From Portland

In December, Portland experienced quite a snowstorm! Due to the weather, Portland schools were closed nearly the entire month of December, which put some snags in the holiday cheer. Only a few classes were able to hold their Adopt A Class holiday parties as scheduled. Janice and Wayne would like to thank the AAC School Coordinators and the Business/Community Team Leaders for their tremendous efforts despite the weather challenges!

Janice and Wayne would also like to highlight the efforts of the Roosevelt High School's Aspiring Educators class. The Aspiring Educators was started for high school students who have an interest in going into the field of education. The Aspiring Educators adopted Shirley Lewton's 2nd grade class at James John Elementary. In January, their little buddies plan to visit them at the high school. Afterwards, they will enjoy activities that include going to a local book store. Sounds like fun!

Janice Leonetti, Director of Adopt A Class Portland, can be reached at (503) 730-6048 or adoptaclass@comcast.net

3. What does your role as Adopt A Class Business Coordinator entail?

I help coordinate our visits to Ms. Endres' class at Rockdale, and encourage all of my colleagues to write to their student and come to the school on visits with us as often as possible. Several of my colleagues have wanted to expand their relationship with their mentor student, the teacher or the entire class, and I've worked to help make the right connections so those things can happen. For example, a few Courier staffers have volunteered to help Ms. Endres with special projects; others are going to be mentors to the student they were corresponding with and all of us are working to make sure the students have healthy snacks readily available.

4. What positive changes do you see the AAC program making?

The students are so excited when we visit and they really respond to their time with us. It is very clear that they love having other adults to talk to and to listen to their dreams, hopes, concerns and fears. Ms. Endres' class took no time at all in opening up to us. Some of them even performed cheerleading and dance routines for us at the Christmas party. I think the AAC program also does an excellent job of opening the eyes of adults who participate in the program to the challenges that our city schools face; and to the fact that it doesn't take much to help make a positive difference. And it's nice to see a program that in turn also provides support to the classroom teacher.

5. Is there anything you would like to say to other adopters or teachers?

Thank you for participating. It's amazing how important even 5 minutes of our time is to these students, and hopefully we can help the program grow.

Thoughts for a New Year

By Michael L. Cervay, Director of the Cincinnati Department of Community Development

The Department of Community Development family just got a little bigger. This school year, DCD decided to take part in a program called Adopt A Class and "adopted" Mr. Stephen Duwell's 4th grade class at Rockdale Academy in Avondale.

Last Friday, we held our Christmas party for the class. DCD staff volunteered to buy gifts for the 23 students and donated more to pay for lunch for the group. In these tough financial times, the generosity was especially poignant.

As I sat in Mr. Duwell's class, finishing some pizza and waiting (almost as eagerly as the students) to start passing out the gifts, I was struck by the connection between us—The Community Developers—and the students. Through our programs and projects, we help to build homes, fund shelters, clean up pollution, beautify neighborhoods, and start businesses. Yet, it's so easy to put our heads down and move paper around that it's easy to lose sight of who you are working for and why. Happy Holidays!