Awards/Recognition

KU Staff at Parsons Recognized by State Early Childhood Organization

Two staff members of the University of Kansas Life Span Institute at Parsons were recognized this past week, March 6 & 7, at the Kansas Division for Early Childhood Conference in Wichita, Kansas. This organization is composed of professionals providing early intervention and early childhood special education services in the state.

Misty Goosen received the Award of Excellence. Ms. Goosen is the Project Coordinator with the Kansas Inservice Training Project and provides training and technical assistance to early childhood teachers across the state of Kansas. This award honors an individual who has made significant contributions in the following areas of early intervention: publications, research, development of new concepts, approaches or programs, new techniques for diagnosis or rehabilitation, improved psychological or education evaluation procedures, improved administrative procedures, practical application of improved teaching devices, and dynamic leadership.

Peggy Miksch received the Service to the Organization Award. Ms. Miksch is a Technical Assistance provider for early intervention programs serving children with disabilities, birth-to-three years of age, across the state. She also works for the Kansas Inservice Training System. This Award is given to a KDEC member who has made a significant contribution to the Division in areas of leadership, service, research, advocacy, or publications. This was the first year this award has been given by KDEC.

Joan Wald Baken Award
Division of Physical and Health Disabilities
Council for Exceptional Children
Boston, April, 2008

The Joan Wald Baken award is made to those whose accomplishments represent exemplary advocacy and educational practice in direct delivery of services to individuals with physical and health disabilities in schools, hospitals, clinics, homes, or in the community. Muriel Drew Saunders, the 2008 award recipient, has been involved with students and adults with physical and health disabilities since 1966, when she graduated from the University of North Carolina. Since then, she has over 20 years experience as a special education teacher. In the classroom, she innovated ways to reduce self-injury and aggression in her students with severe, multiple handicaps. She also developed individualized supports to address physical and sensory
disabilities. Those and other educational activities led to a Kansas’ Special Education Teacher of the Year award in 1990 and a CEC Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year award in 1991. In 1995, she completed work for a Ph.D. in Developmental and Child Psychology at the University of Kansas. In early work outside the classroom, she co-authored a novel plan to combine HUD and Medicaid funding to enable more adults with severe intellectual and physical disabilities to live in integrated, community settings in Kansas. In 1996-1997, she worked with colleagues to refine a program in a skilled nursing facility to enable adults with the most profound impairments to gain independent control of sensory stimulation. That program continues today and serves as a core site for her current research on enabling communication in this population. That research is funded by the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development. Recently, she also participated in an oral health project, assessing adults with developmental disabilities in Northeast Kansas. She then dispensed funds from an emergency treatment account to pay for highly needed dental services. Currently, she has funding from the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities to encourage overweight and obese adults with developmental disabilities to embrace an effective method for weight loss. She hopes to discover how to assist these individuals to avoid the secondary physical and health conditions related to excess weight. She is also working with Special Olympics International to examine the impact of Healthy Athlete® screenings—screening for oral health, vision, and hearing—on the health and behavior of athletes who attend them. Muriel has been fortunate to have many opportunities to share her knowledge and experiences with others. She has presented at conferences and led workshops across the US and in other countries, such as Australia, Brazil, and Peru. Dr. Saunders is currently appointed as an Assistant Research Professor in the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies at the University of Kansas.

**Professional Service and Other Activities**

Congratulations to the following persons for their dedication to their jobs. They were recognized for their years of service at the Annual Recognition Ceremony on May 7th at 1:30 p.m. at the Kansas Union Ballroom by the office of the Human Resources and Equal Opportunity.

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**Publications**

Staff News

Unfortunately in the last Insider we failed to include a note that Cynthia Huebner’s mother and Alan Engels’ stepfather had passed away. Sorry for this oversight.

Pamela Cress officially retired from her position with the Life Span Institute at Parsons on April 18, 2008. Pam has dedicated her career to helping people and she will be missed, but she will still be coming in occasionally to clean out her office.