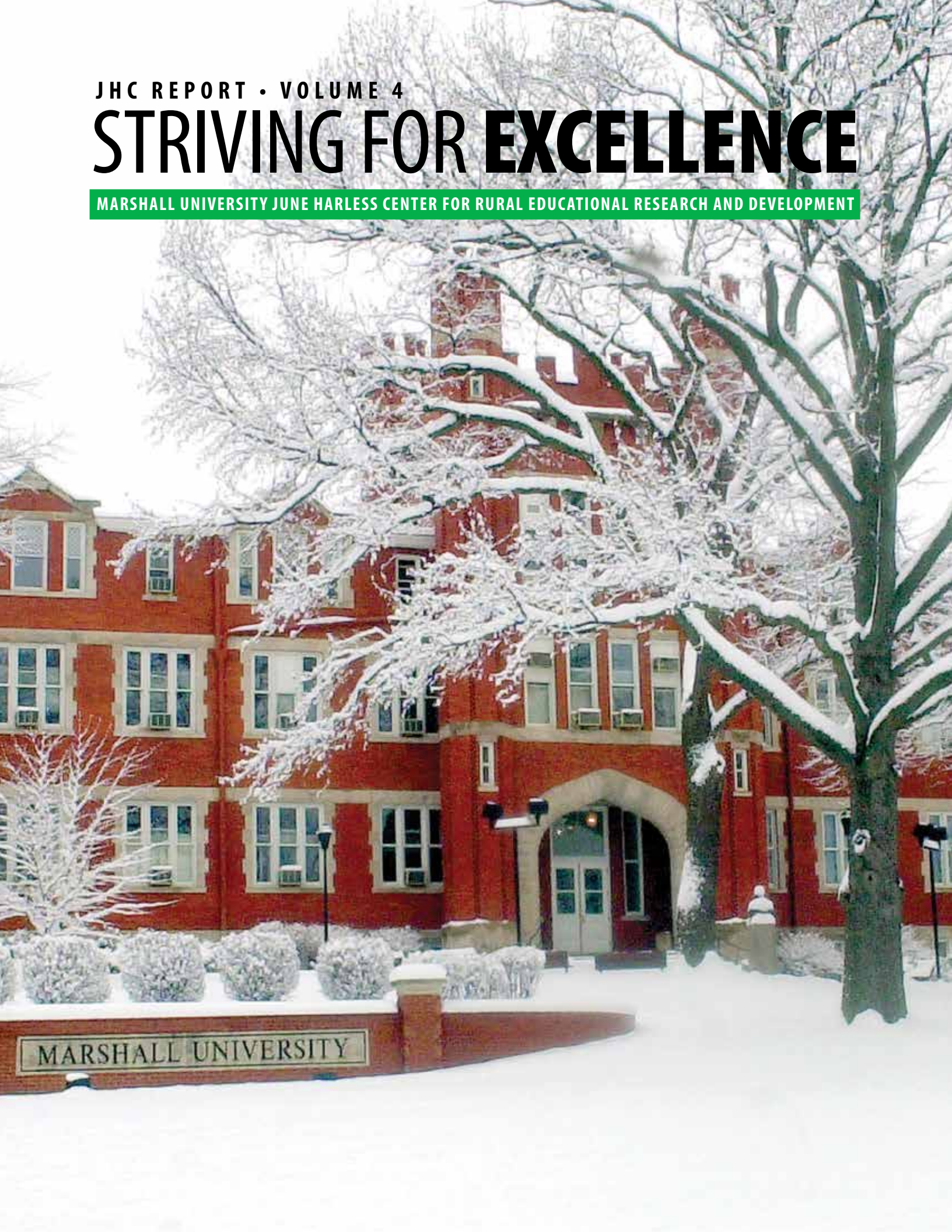


JHC REPORT • VOLUME 4

# STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY JUNE HARLESS CENTER FOR RURAL EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY



# Table of Contents

*The growing impact of the Marshall University June Harless Center has been an exciting journey. The thriving partnerships that have been forged over the years have enabled our staff to grow professionally and in number. The privilege of being an educational outreach for the College of Education and Professional Development is an opportunity that our entire staff is committed to, passionate about and one we sincerely appreciate.*  
~ Dr. Stan Maynard



JUNE HARLESS CENTER

**June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development**  
www.marshall.edu/harless  
One John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, WV 25755  
Tel: (304) 696-2945  
Email: maynard@marshall.edu

**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR** ..... 3  
Dr. Stan Maynard

**EARLY CHILDHOOD** ..... 4-6

MU Early Education STEAM Center:  
Full STEAM Ahead  
Early Education Research Laboratory in Logan County  
WV Educators Inspired by an Italian Approach  
STEAMPOSIUM: A Collaboration of Learning

**STEM** ..... 7-17

Building Mathematical Understanding in Grades 3-5  
Fix the L.E.A.K.S.  
Building Blocks for STEM Education.  
Empowering Students to Achieve in Mathematics  
Building an Algebraic Mindset in Middle School  
Logan County Elementary Educators Engage in Outdoor Learning  
Harless Center uses "Nature-Rich Learning" to Reinforce WV STEM Content Standards  
West Virginia STEM Professional Learning Workshops  
Harless Center provides STEM support to Fayette County Schools  
Virtual Reality coming to the Harless Center  
Harless Center Provides Class on the American Chestnut  
The Shewey Science Academy Inspires Young Scientists  
Shewey Science Academy Expands to Logan County  
Coding with Sphero SPRK+ Robots  
littleBits packs "alotta" bang  
CREATIVE Professional Learning and Collaboration  
Harrison County Technology Training  
2018 CREATE Lab Network Retreat

**HALL OF FAME** ..... 18-19

Harless Hall of Fame Inductees  
Hall of Fame Pictures  
Hallie Harless Distinguished Teacher Award

**EARLY LITERACY** ..... 20-22

WV Campaign for Grade-Level Reading  
Leaders of Literacy Higher Education Symposium  
Connecting to the Campaign  
Annual Statewide Conference/Meeting for County Level Literacy Teams  
West Virginia Summit for Educational Excellence (WVSEE)  
West Virginia's Imagination Library

**OUTREACH** ..... 23-26

West Virginia Makes Festival  
Sky Festival  
S.U.P.E.R. Day  
Remake Learning Days  
Partnering with Marshall University for Professional Learning with Pre-service Teachers  
Project Wet  
National Board Process  
Literacy Specialists in Pre-Service Education Classes  
Sphero and littleBits Technologies in Pre-service Education Classes  
Hodges Science Scholars Explore Nano Chemistry and Neurobiology  
The Hannan Family Foundation  
West Virginia Educational Excellence in Teacher Preparation  
Explorer Academy Update

**TRIBUTE TO JAMES 'BUCK' HARLESS** ..... 27

## Message from the Director • Striving for Excellence



**Dr. Stan Maynard**  
**Executive Director**

The mission of the June Harless Center from its inception has been to provide leadership in educational initiatives for WV educators and students.

The Harless Center's work has been enhanced by county and school partnerships purposefully established to focus on benefits for teachers, administrators and students. The goal of the work is ultimately higher student achievement as a direct result of highly effective teachers and highly motivated and engaged students in relevant and rigorous assignments.

Recent work with preschool and kindergarten teachers in Logan County has resulted in a valuable early educational research center for southern WV specifically, but for all WV in general. The goal of such an educational research center is to establish a network of early education sites that will share their results of innovation and positive academic growth. The project with Logan County is funded through a grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

A partnership among Cabell County, the Harless Center, and the EL Network paved the way for the establishment

of the Explorer Academy. Several WV educators and students have visited the school to review the progress of the implementation of EL.

Several partnerships with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Office of Early and Elementary Learning have led to the enabling of the expansion of the Harless Center Staff to include Early Literacy Specialists. The Specialists serve and support every county in the WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. Their role is to work with educators, as well as county campaign leaders, families and community partners to help transform schools and communities into highly engaging environments focused on high-quality instruction, school readiness, attendance, and extended learning.

Another exciting partnership with WVDE involves a request for assistance with the Imagination Library program. The goal of the June Harless Center leaders is for 100% of eligible birth to 5 year olds to have access to books mailed to their homes on a monthly basis. The Harless Center's role will be to organize a statewide fundraising effort to fund each child's monthly gift of literary excellence.

The June Harless staff takes every opportunity to submit proposals for programmatic funding. Among the successful proposals have been the Improving Teacher Quality grants (ITQ) from the Higher Education Policy Commission. ITQ grant proposals have provided professional development for elementary and middle school teachers in mathematics in Cabell, Lincoln, Mason, and Wayne counties. Additional ITQ grant proposals provided funding for professional development in kit-based science to integrate science, mathematics, and literacy instruction for educators in Mason County; and

professional development in littleBits training for teachers in Lincoln County.

Most recently the Harless Center received mini grants to provide funding to purchase both littleBits and Sphero Robotics to be implemented into classrooms, and for use as part of the Harless Center Lending Library. The Harless Center received funding in the form of mini-grants from the WV Department of Culture and History, as well as 2 STEM mini-grants from the Governor's office to purchase littleBits and littleBits coding kits. An additional mini-grant from the Governor's STEM initiative provided funding for the purchase of Sphero SPRK+ robots. Both technologies have been implemented into public school classrooms, after-school programs, Marshall University College of Education and Professional Development classes, and are available for loan from the Harless Center Lending Library.

Another significant grant from the Benedum Foundation supported an outdoor learning project. The project included professional development for area teachers focused on enhancing their lesson plans with effective strategies, techniques and tools to be used in an outdoor classroom at each school site.

*"The June Harless Center is striving to build a brand of excellence. We do not want to just raise the bar; we want to be the bar."*

*—Dr. Stan Maynard*

# EARLY EDUCATION STEAM CENTER



## FULL STEAM AHEAD

Since its inception in 2010, the Marshall University Early Education STEAM Center has been on quite a journey. Established under the auspices of the June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development, the program began in one classroom housed on Marshall University's Huntington campus. Since that time, the center expanded by adding another classroom at Explorer Academy in Huntington, WV in partnership with Cabell County Schools. In 2018, both locations were affirmed as nationally accredited early childhood centers from NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), making Explorer Academy the first nationally accredited Pre-K program in a public school building. Also in 2018, the STEAM Center partnered with Logan County to create a Pre-K through 1st grade early childhood research laboratory. The STEAM program continues to provide high quality professional learning for in-service and pre-service teachers in West Virginia. Please read more about our most recent work in early childhood education.



## EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH LABORATORY IN LOGAN COUNTY

One of the Harless Center's new projects has been the creation of an early childhood laboratory in Logan County, WV. The project began by establishing one model preschool classroom in West Chapmanville Elementary School. As a result of the support from a grant from the Benedum Foundation, Harless Center staff collaborated with administrators, teachers, and teacher assistants to refine our skills in the Reggio-Inspired approach in early childhood. Throughout the first year, teachers and administrators participated in intensive training on the philosophy, expectations, and components of the STEAM model.

Through a collaborative approach, daily Morning Meetings were implemented

in which children are greeted and given the opportunity to start the day by hearing their names and having a sense of belonging. Learning targets and expectations for the day are shared in order to make learning visible for children by providing attainable and measurable goals. An important component of this project has been the implementation of the "Seven Habits of Happy Kids" by Sean Covey. The children used these habits to guide their interactions, play, and learning. Teachers have supported children in the use of these habits at school, and parents have at home as well in order to ensure consistency.

In order to promote communication between school and home, Message From Me, created by Carnegie Mellon CREATE Lab, proved to be a tool in facilitating open communication.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



# Early Childhood

## EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH LABORATORY IN LOGAN COUNTY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)



Children were encouraged to take pictures of meaningful learning, such as art projects, block structures, dramatic play scenarios, math provocations, science experiments, engineering successes, and reading with friends and share those with family and friends.

In the fall of 2018, the newly consolidated Chapmanville Primary School, which included East and West Chapmanville Elementaries, opened. This school is a unique makeup of preschool through first grade, with five classes per grade level, which will enable the Harless Center staff to bring to full fruition the Applied Research and Teacher Training Center for Southern WV. This primary school will serve as an early childhood model laboratory for other educators across the state. The June Harless Center staff members will provide ongoing professional learning and in-classroom

support. The goal is to create a Reggio-inspired environment that is inviting to all children and stimulates all areas of development. To achieve this goal, support will be provided in the form of modeling and coaching, and assisting teachers with collaborative planning.

### WV EDUCATORS INSPIRED BY AN ITALIAN APPROACH

*"The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences."*

—Loris Malaguzzi

In the fall of 2017, the June Harless Center was awarded a grant that provided the opportunity for the project team to travel to Reggio Emilia, Italy with other colleagues from West Virginia, Maryland, and other parts of the United States

to study the practices of their early childhood programs. Through the grant funded by the Benedum Foundation, administrators and teachers in Logan County were immersed in the Reggio Emilia Approach. This began their journey to transform their educational practices at a primary school (PK-1) and create a new educational laboratory in Logan County that would serve as a model for county school systems in West Virginia.

There are six essential elements of the Reggio Emilia Approach: the image of the child, children's relationships and interactions within their school environment, the role of the families, collegial work of staff to ensure adults and children are partners in learning, collaboration and research of staff and children, and presence of studio. The educators in these settings nurture, educate, and care for the whole child. Through the study abroad experience, educators were able to see firsthand how children are treated as citizens. Children are viewed as naturally curious, capable of constructing and shaping their own learning, and given opportunities to be creative thinkers. Their creativity is formed through exploration of their world, feelings, emotions, and the questions they construct.

The job of educators is to foster this natural curiosity and individuality. After experiencing the culture and being imbedded in the schools of Reggio Emilia, teachers strive to implement what was learned regarding best practices. Educators who are inspired by the Reggio approach to early childhood accept and respect the children's time to explore, mature, reflect or return to an idea or thought. Educators strive to construct a culture with children, adults, and families with the children at

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

## Early Childhood

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

the center of the attention. The goal as educators is to now share our experience and work alongside other educators across the state of West Virginia who share the same values.

The June Harless Center staff continues to work closely with administrators and educators at Chapmanville Primary to ensure the classroom, school, and outdoor environments are considered the third teacher that provide rich, engaging, and thought-provoking experiences and provocations to allow the children to dive deeper into their learning.



### STEAMPOSIUM: A COLLABORATION OF LEARNING

*The STEAMPOSIUM educators engaged in new practices and techniques to utilize in their classrooms.*

In the summer of 2018, the June Harless Center staff hosted the first STEAMPOSIUM early childhood education conference in Huntington, West Virginia, located at Explorer Academy. The Benedum Foundation sponsored the conference for teachers and administrators across the state of West Virginia. Many educators attended the collaborative conference from various regions, which included Logan, Monongalia, Cabell, Lincoln, and Harrison Counties.

Dr. Joy Saab, professor emerita at West Virginia University, served as the keynote for the conference and discussed the influence of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education.

The STEAMPOSIUM educators engaged in new practices and techniques to utilize in their classrooms. Each day the educators participated in a Morning Gathering, engaged in hands-on workshops, and reflected on best practices and philosophy. The conference focused on engaging learning environments, purposeful play, provocations, project work, loose parts, early numeracy, and early literacy. The educators were also introduced to the importance of natural materials and real-world experiences for young children. The Harless team is already planning for the 2nd Annual STEAMPOSIUM in the summer of 2019 with hopes to expand and increase capacity for additional educators in West Virginia!



# JUNE HARLESS STEM CENTER

## HARLESS CENTER CONTINUES TO PROVIDE TRAINING THROUGH IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY GRANTS



### **BUILDING MATHEMATICAL UNDERSTANDING IN MATHEMATICS IN GRADES 3 – 5.**

Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) grants have provided the June Harless Center with the opportunity to offer professional development in mathematics to elementary and middle school teachers. Building Mathematical Understanding in Mathematics in Grades 3 – 5 was an ITQ project supporting sixty elementary teachers from Cabell, Lincoln, and Mason Counties. The project included a five-day summer institute with follow-up support. During the summer institute, staff from the June Harless Center collaborated with Cabell County personnel and Marshall University professors from the College of Science and College of Education and Professional Development to provide training. Additionally teachers received a variety of mathematics manipulatives and instructional materials designed to engage students while learning content. During the following school year, teachers were further supported through classroom observations, follow-up sessions, and additional materials to be used in their classes.



### **FIX THE L.E.A.K.S.**

Included in these projects is the grant award for a project named “Fixing Literacy, Engagement, and Achievement levels through Kit-Based Science” or “Fix the L.E.A.K.S.” This project design supported thirty teachers (kindergarten-5th grade) from schools in Mason County in using hands on science investigations while integrating literacy and mathematics in the classroom. The week-long summer training was designed to allow teachers to experience each of the science kit investigations as students performing the given tasks and then as teachers with their colleagues reflecting on the lessons presented. Continued support and visits to the classrooms of participants throughout the school year provided evidence that teachers were successfully implementing the science kits and students were highly engaged in all aspects of the learning process.



### **BUILDING BLOCKS FOR STEM EDUCATION.**

Another ITQ grant award allowed for the introduction of littleBits electronic building blocks to Lincoln County elementary teachers in a project aptly named “Building Blocks for STEM Education”. Twenty three Lincoln County teachers (3rd – 5th grade) spent a week learning how to build and invent with littleBits modules and how to integrate this exceptionally adaptive STEM tool into every subject of their curriculum. The teachers were able to share this newly acquired knowledge and a classroom set of littleBits provided by the grant with their students.

*For the past several years, the June Harless Center has been awarded a number of Improving Teacher Quality grants by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. The resulting projects have provided training for teachers in math and science initiatives that have impacted hundreds of West Virginia school children.*





## EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE IN MATHEMATICS IN GRADES 3 – 5.

This ITQ project supported forty-eight elementary teachers in Wayne County. The teachers participated in a four day summer institute facilitated by members of the June Harless Center, Wayne County teachers, and Marshall University professors from the College of Education and Professional Development and the College of Science. During the four day summer institute, teachers developed mathematical tasks designed to build conceptual knowledge while engaging students in reasoning, sense making, and problem solving. Throughout the summer institute and follow-up sessions, teachers received manipulatives to use when teaching fractions. Along with the manipulatives, teachers learned strategies for using manipulatives as tools to support student learning as they make sense of concepts. The teachers involved in the program were energized to implement the strategies they learned during the institute and follow-up sessions.



## BUILDING AN ALGEBRAIC MINDSET IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

Based on positive feedback from elementary teachers participating in two previous ITQ projects, Cabell County personnel requested the June Harless Center submit an ITQ proposal for middle school mathematics teachers. As a result, Building an Algebraic Mindset in Middle School was submitted and funded by the ITQ program. This project supported thirty-three middle school mathematics teachers from Cabell and Lincoln counties to participate in a summer institute and follow-up sessions during the next school year. The primary focus for the summer institute was developing instructional strategies to promote engagement and understanding of algebraic content during the middle

grades. Using manipulatives and technology to effectively teach algebraic content was also part of the training. Teachers received algebra tiles, two color counters, a graphing calculator and graphing software to engage students during mathematics lessons. Staff from the June Harless Center and Cabell County collaborated with Marshall University professors in the College of Science and the College of Education and Professional Development to provide instruction. Teacher feedback for the project was overwhelmingly positive as teachers commented on the usefulness and relevance of the training. Instructional coaches for Cabell County also reported increased use of manipulatives during mathematics instruction.



*“Experience is not  
what happens to you;  
it’s what you do with what  
happens to you.”*

~ Robert Brault

Building on the success of the Natural Path to Learning project in Cabell, Lincoln, Mason, Mingo and Wayne Counties, the project was extended to Logan County. Teachers from PreK-5 from each of the eleven Logan County elementary schools received monthly training throughout the school year in Chapmanville, WV. Training focused on curriculum from Project Learning Tree, Project Wet and Project Wild. Resources from Carnegie Mellon’s CREATE Lab, AIMS materials, garden-based learning, and Save Our Streams were also incorporated throughout the training. Each professional development session maintained West Virginia content standards as the central focus of each activity.

The project, funded by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, allowed the June Harless Center to give the participating teachers an in-depth view of ways to bring the classroom out into nature as well as bringing nature inside for the children.

The Natural Path to Learning project in Logan County was culminated with an intensive field study with 25 local teachers. The professional development started in Logan County examining the environmental conditions of the area and how many years of human involvement have shaped the ecosystem. Professionals from WV State Parks and the Division

## Logan County Elementary Educators Engage in Outdoor Learning



of Environmental Protection provided much of the training for the teachers. The training continued to locations across the state including Cranberry Glades where National Park rangers and naturalists walked the teachers through the bog that is unlike anything in the contiguous United States. At a stop along the Blackwater River near Thomas, WV, teachers assessed the quality of the stream affected by nearby historic coke ovens which caused the stream

to be so acid that little could survive. Downstream, however, efforts by environmental groups restored the pH of the stream to a healthy environment. The outing concluded at Cathedral State Park where a State Park ranger led the teachers on a walk through an inspiring virgin forest.

## Harless Center uses “Nature-Rich Learning” to Reinforce WV STEM Content Standards

*Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”*

~ John Muir

Using a grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, staff from the June Harless Center trained local elementary teachers and guides from Heritage Farm Museum & Village in outdoor learning strategies and techniques. Teachers from Cabell, Lincoln, Mason, Mingo and Wayne Counties engaged in intensive professional development in utilizing nature to reinforce West Virginia content standards. Participants used curricula from Project Learning Tree, Project Wet and Project Wild as well as tools from Carnegie Mellon’s CREATE Lab and appropriate FOSS kits to develop and enhance their lessons plans. Studies of weather, water quality, garden-based learning and other grade level appropriate teaching were used over the two year course of the program. A cross disciplinary approach was utilized in which students gained an appreciation for the natural beauty of West Virginia while learning West Virginia’s content standards for science, mathematics, literacy, arts and history.

In the summer of 2016, 21 practicing educators from five Southern West Virginia school systems came to Heritage Farm Museum & Village for a week long professional development in “nature-rich” teaching strategies and content.



Following their training, each team was tasked with developing a series of outdoor learning experiences, focused on state standards, and for students at their grade level. Trainers from the June Harless Center and Heritage Farm facilitated the development of the lessons that were implemented throughout the 2016-17 school year. These lessons engaged students in West Virginia’s content in a cross-disciplinary manner. Grade-level teams

presented their plans in peer review to assure continuity across grades and appropriateness for diverse learners.

During the follow-up meetings through 2017 the grade level teams of teachers edited and revised their education packages and prepared plans for the lessons/unit. The June Harless Center staff visited the classrooms of each participating teacher to provide support during implementation of the lessons.



# STEM

In early 2017 the June Harless Center was charged by the West Virginia Department of Education with providing a system of professional development for twelve secondary schools across West Virginia.

## Schools taking part in the STEM training were:

### Brooke County

- Follansbee Middle School

### Cabell County

- Huntington High School
- Milton Middle School

### Fayette County

- Ansted Middle School
- Collins Middle School
- Midland Trail High School
- Oak Hill High School

### Lincoln County

- Duval PK-8 School

### Mason County

- Hannan Middle/High School

### Marshall County

- John Marshall High School

### Putnam County

- Poca Middle School

### Wayne County

- Crum PK-8 School

## West Virginia STEM Professional Learning Workshops



A team of four teachers and the principal from each participating school engaged in intensive five-day professional development sessions at Huntington High School where educators were provided with a variety of proven STEM opportunities that are available for their schools. At the training, each school team developed a personalized action plan that identified their school's specific STEM needs and a course of action to improve the student experiences in STEM. Following the professional development sessions, each school was given a mini-grant using U. S. Department of Education Math-Science

Partnership funds. Schools could use this funding to continue school based professional development to better implement their schools' action plans.

Throughout the following school-year, the June Harless Center held follow-up professional development sessions in which each school's progress on their action plan was presented. In addition, follow-up professional development was provided by the NASA Educator Resource Center, Heritage Farm Museum & Village, West Virginia Department of Education, Friends of Canaan, Trout Unlimited and other partners.



# STEM

## Harless Center provides STEM support to Fayette County Schools

Building on the West Virginia STEM Professional Development Workshops, the June Harless Center has partnered with Fayette County to develop a Pre-K through 12 system with New River Elementary, Collins Middle School, Oak Hill High School and the Fayette County Technical Center. This collaboration will focus on building college and career readiness in STEM fields in a continuous system from Pre-kindergarten through graduation. Professional development sessions will use vertical and horizontal teaming strategies to build STEM content competencies as well as workplace skills in students throughout their educational experiences.

A goal of this project is to build a Pre-K through 12 model within a school system that can serve as a template for other districts around the state wishing to initiate STEM schools.

*This collaboration will focus on building college and career readiness in STEM fields in a continuous system from Prekindergarten through graduation.*



SCIENCE



TECHNOLOGY



ENGINEERING



MATHEMATICS



## Virtual Reality coming to the Harless Center



Virtual Reality, or VR, provides a way to gain an experience through a virtual world. Commonly available VR allows students to visit and learn about exotic places by using a common smartphone and available software. VR software is being used in high schools and colleges to dissect a human body or to walk with dinosaurs. Working with the West Virginia Department of Education's Office of Technology Integration and Support, the June Harless Center is developing virtual reality field trips to locations in West Virginia.

The first VR field trip is to Cranberry Glades, a unique subalpine bog that is

most common in Alaska and Northern Canada. Carnivorous plants like pitcher plants and sundew are common at Cranberry Glades. The floating mass of sphagnum moss, ferns and cranberry vines provides a very specialized set of growing conditions that support an ecosystem that is unlike anything in the lower 48 states.

Through the VR tools being developed by WVDE and the June Harless Center, teachers and students can visit and walk through Cranberry Glades without ever leaving their classrooms. The vision of this project is that VR experiences of other unique locations in the state can be produced and made available to students.

## Harless Center Provides Class on the American Chestnut

Although the American Chestnut tree became extirpated from the forests of North America nearly 100 years ago there is still a lot to learn about the trees. The chestnut blight wiped chestnut trees out in a massive wave in the first decade of the 20th century. In a similar manner, ash trees are being killed today by the emerald ash borer insect. In addition, other invasive insects, plants and microbes are affecting native plants and animals in our area.

Staff from the June Harless Center met with technology integration specialists (TISs) from around the state at Cooper's Rock State Forest to design lessons using the American Chestnut and other threatened species to teach WV content standards. Teachers developed lessons using mathematics to determine the height, diameter, lumber capacity and value of many of the trees in the area. They assessed soil, water, topographic



and light conditions where different tree species thrive. Lessons focused on mathematics, literacy and science standards but included creativity and a social/economic context.

Lessons that were created by the TISs were collected by the West Virginia Department of Education and made available to all schools.

## The Shewey Science Academy Inspires Young Scientists for Eleven Years in Mingo County

Since June 2008, the Shewey Science Academy has provided an engaging summer STEM experience for middle school students in Mingo County. Through the generosity of the late Fred and Christine Shewey, any student in grades 5 through 9 can participate in the Shewey Science Academy at no cost.

Throughout the school year, twenty Mingo County educators are trained in science content and teaching strategies. Staff from the June Harless Center and the Marshall University College of Science conduct the professional development

on site in Mingo County Schools. Following extensive training, the Mingo County teachers plan and prepare for a week-long summer academy to be held at three schools across the county. The most recent summer academy was held at Gilbert Middle School, Lenore Pre-K-8 and Matewan Pre-K-8. The instruction is always linked to West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives in mathematics and science as well as Global 21 strategies in real-world situations.

The staff members for the Shewey Science Academy are primarily Mingo

County middle school science and math teachers. Each year, the activities of the Shewey Science Academy require students to combine teamwork and problem-solving skills to collect, analyze and evaluate a variety of evidence types to resolve a real world problem. Students must apply basic principles of mathematics and science when preparing their responses to the given challenge. The week always culminates with an event in which the students present the findings from their research to teachers, parents and community members.



In addition to the Mingo County teachers and June Harless Center personnel, the Shewey Science Academy utilizes Mingo County high school students who are alumni of previous years' academies. Alumni assist the teachers and students giving a more meaningful learning experience during the projects. Pre-service educators (student teachers) from the Marshall University College of Education and Professional Development engage in the lessons with the teachers and students. These future science educators gain valuable experience as they use the innovative and interactive teaching strategies that are a crucial element of the Shewey Science Academy.

According to Dr. Stan Maynard, director of the Shewey Learning and Research Center, "We are so grateful to the Shewey family for their generous gift that is bringing so much excitement for learning to the students of Mingo County. By bringing these bright young people to science careers, the impact of their generosity will be felt for generations by the people of southern West Virginia."



## Shewey Science Academy Expands to Logan County



Building on the success of the Shewey Science Academy in Mingo County, the program has expanded to nearby Logan County. The eleven years of experiences in Mingo County helped Logan County launch a similar program for their fourth through eighth graders to engage them in focused math and science lessons.

Teachers from middle schools across Logan County met with Harless Center staff to plan and train for the summer science academy which was jointly conducted for the Logan and Mingo educators. During multiple training sessions, teachers completed every aspect of the student investigation allowing them to develop an implementation plan for the week with students. Communication between the Mingo and Logan County teachers helped both groups design a meaningful student experience.

The first Logan Science Academy included an electronic NASA mission in collaboration with the Challenger Learning Center in Wheeling, West Virginia. The Logan County students conducted a number of hands-on investigations to explore real-time remote monitoring from an Earth orbiting satellite. Students worked in collaborative teams to map, model and communicate their findings.

The director of the Shewey Learning and Research Center, Dr. Stan Maynard,

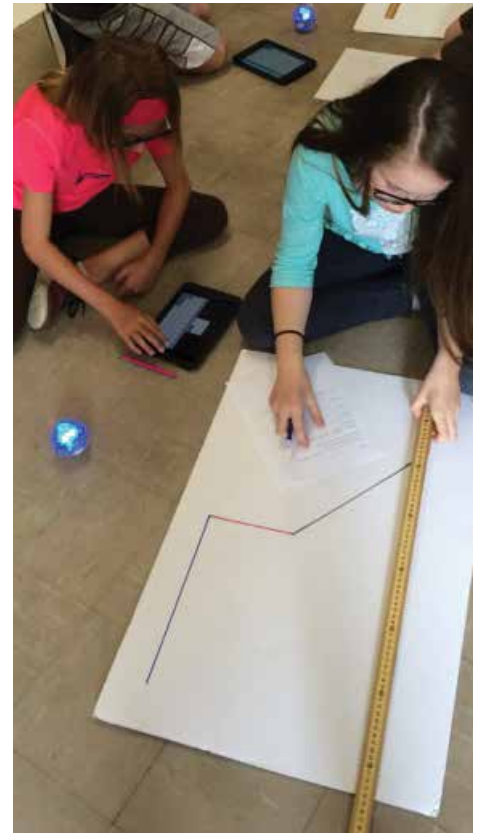
reported that the Logan County middle school students utilized the 21st Century skills that are needed in today's workplace. Maynard continued, "the students' problem solving will prepare them for challenges in their future."

## Coding with Sphero SPRK+ Robots

**Sphero education "goes beyond code by incorporating robotics and technology with collaborative STEAM activities, nurturing students' imaginations in ways no other education program can."**

~ Sphero website

The June Harless Center staff members continually pursue funding to provide STEM projects for children in West Virginia. Coding with Sphero Robotics was a June Harless Center STEM project funded through a mini grant from the Governor's STEM initiative. Through this project, the Harless center obtained Sphero SPRK+ robots to instruct children in coding and problem solving. Sphero is far more than a robot. This robotics system is "designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and invention through connected play and coding." Sphero is an app-enabled, self-contained robotics system working through a coding platform with a sophisticated set of sensors used for measuring forces and gathering data. Members of the Harless staff worked with children in grades three through six both in classrooms and as part of after school programs. Children at Ashton Elementary (Mason County) and Spring Hill Elementary (Cabell County) learned the basic fundamentals of block coding and applied their knowledge to enable SPRK+ robot to navigate a maze and other activities. The project extended training to teachers in Wayne, Cabell, and Fayette Counties with the objective of incorporating coding



and STEM challenges as a part of their instructional day. The positive feedback from teachers as well as the excitement from children have proven the value of Sphero robotics in the classroom. The Sphero SPRK+ power packs are available through the June Harless Center lending library.

## littleBits packs “alotta” bang



While attending a conference focusing on technology in education, a new STEM/STEAM programming opportunity was brought to the attention of the June Harless Center staff. This opportunity was in the form of littleBits electronic building blocks. The littleBits platform consists of an innovative hands-on system composed of individually color-coded modules that connect magnetically and can be engineered to form electric circuits that can perform an endless number of tasks. The adaptability of littleBits to work across the curriculum as a way to engage learners and trigger growth in critical thinking and problem solving was immediately recognized by the

staff of the June Harless Center. Almost immediately steps were taken to procure littleBits for the Harless Lending Library and begin to share this discovery with West Virginia teachers and students. A STEM mini-grant from the Governor's office funded the project “Building Blocks for STEM Education” and furnished the first littleBits to the Harless Center. This allowed the center staff to begin taking this new technology into schools as well as provide training to elementary and middle school teachers, maker space leaders at Heritage Farm Museum and Village, and even technology specialists from the West Virginia Department of Education.

A second project called “Full STEAM Ahead with littleBits” funded by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History allowed the Harless Center to take littleBits into several elementary afterschool programs. Coding was added to the littleBits equation and the Harless Center staff saw this evolution as another great opportunity for West Virginia students. Another Governor's STEM mini-grant was awarded to the Harless Center to fund the project “A littleBit of Coding for a Lot of Learning”.



*“We want to encourage a world of creators, of inventors, of contributors. Because this world that we live in, this interactive world, is ours.”*

~ Ayah Bdier, founder and CEO of littleBits



The Harless Center could now offer training in coding using littleBits and 4 classes of 5th and 6th graders at Ashton Elementary in Mason County were the first to benefit from this experience.

Outreach from the June Harless Center and littleBits continues with the latest efforts impacting Lincoln County as a result of an Improving Teacher Quality grant that trained teachers and placed classroom sets of littleBits in 23 elementary classrooms. Still other avenues of outreach include taking littleBits into local schools and participating in STEM and providing engineering challenges for local middle school students in Career and Literacy classes. The Harless Center staff members continue to seek out funding opportunities to expand its littleBits footprint into all parts of West Virginia and reach as many students as possible with this STEM experience



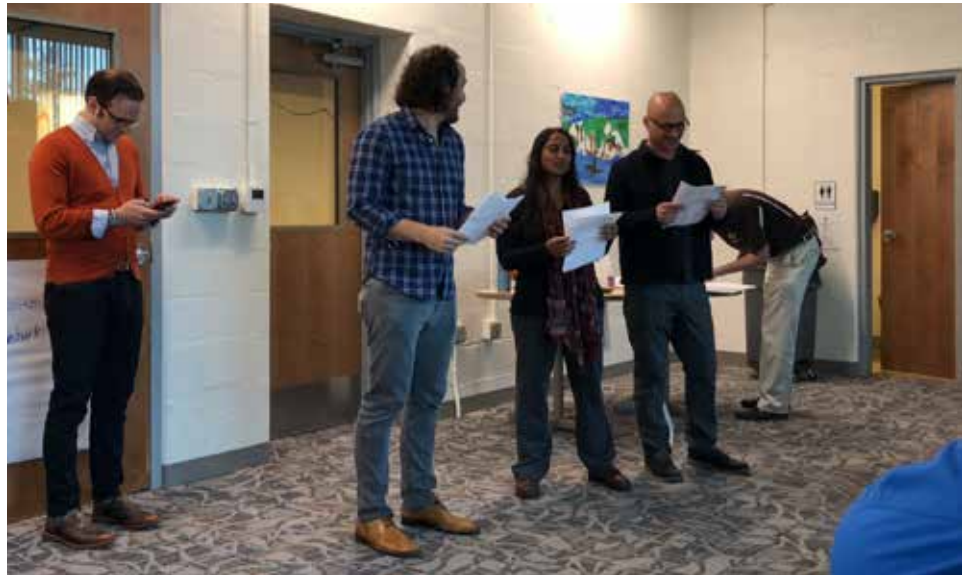
## CREATIVE Professional Learning and Collaboration

The Harless CREATE Satellite was established in 2011 through a partnership with Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE Lab and is located at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. The CREATE team is made up of educators with a range of background and experience Pre-K through 12th grade. The satellite team collaborates to ensure educators and students have the best overall experience, resources and support in technology integration. As a part of the satellite network, the Harless team members work with other universities throughout the United States to share best practices and techniques for teacher and student support. Our satellite provides teacher training as well as a lending library of technology tools which include robotics and circuitry kits, SPECK air quality monitors, Gigapan technology, and other outdoor learning resources. Read more to learn about the Harless CREATE Satellite work.

### Harrison County Technology Training



June Harless Center staff members collaborated with 1st through 5th grade teachers from Harrison County to learn more about CREATE Lab programming and tools. As a part of



the training, staff members worked with over 120 educators from various schools by providing an overview of the hummingbird robotics kit and circuitry kit (Arts and Bots and Children's Innovation Project). The teachers engaged in hands-on experiences and discussed how the technology could be integrated into daily classroom activities. Stemming from the original session, another professional learning opportunity took place at Lumberport Elementary School in Harrison County. Primary teachers participated in activities to learn how to implement Children's Innovation project, while intermediate teachers built and programmed robots with the Arts and Bots robotics kits. The Harless CREATE Satellite team also worked with children in the after school program to introduce components of Arts and Bots and modeled strategies for teachers to use as they implement the technology.

### 2018 CREATE Lab Network Retreat

In the spring of 2018, the Marshall University CREATE Satellite hosted six satellites and several partners of the CREATE Lab, including ABC Create, ASSET STEM Education, CEISMC, BirdBrain Technologies, Carlow University, Utah Valley University, Southern Utah University, West Virginia University, Penn State New Kensington, and West Liberty University for the annual CREATE retreat. This time provided networking opportunities, time for rich discussion about messaging and values, sharing of research interests, promising practices, and consideration of the importance of technology fluency.

## Hall of Fame



# Harless Hall of Fame Inductees

## 2016

Mr. W. Clayton Burch  
NASA Independent Verification (IV&V)  
Educator Resource Center  
Mr. Brad and Mrs. Alys Smith

## 2015

Dr. Robert Hayes  
Robert C Byrd Institute  
Mr. Gary White

## 2014

Mr. Ron Berger  
First Lady Joanne Jaeger Tomblin  
West Virginia Women's Education Forum

## 2013

Dr. Kathy D'Antoni  
Mr. Michael J. Farrell, Esquire  
Southern Regional Education Board

## 2012

Governor Gaston Caperton  
Dr. Illah Nourbakhsh  
Mr. A. Michael and Mrs. Henriella Perry

## 2011

General Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong  
Senator Lloyd G. Jackson II  
U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller

## 2010

Governor Bob Wise  
Cabell County School System  
Frontier Communications

## 2009

Dr. Lowell E. Johnson  
Governor Earl Ray Tomblin  
Mr. Ralph Baxter

## 2008

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III  
Dr. Jack McClanahan  
Dr. Rosalyn Templeton

## 2007

Representative Mary M. Poling  
Mr. C. Fred Shewey  
Wayne County School System

## 2006

Dr. Ruby Payne  
Dr. Steven Paine  
Pendleton County School System

## 2005

First Lady Gayle Manchin  
Dr. Keith Smith  
Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

## 2004

Mrs. Lydia McCue  
Mr. David Ice  
Senator Robert Plymale

## 2003

Mrs. Beverly Kingery  
Mr. Jimmy D. Hale  
Verizon

## 2002

Dr. Jane McKee  
Dr. Bernard Queen  
Mr. James "Buck" Harless

*Each year outstanding educators and agencies are recognized for their commitment to improving WV education during the annual Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony. During the ceremony, educators and agencies are inducted into the Harless Center Hall of Fame as a way to show appreciation and give recognition to educators contributing to the West Virginia education system, particularly in Southern West Virginia. Inductees typically include one educator, one administrator, and one business/educational partner or organization that has provided exemplary leadership to ensure the success of the education of all students in West Virginia.*



## Hall of Fame

*Individuals selected for induction into the Harless Hall of Fame have spent a lifetime providing creative leadership for educators and business and community organizations. This creative way of thinking about life and work is celebrated annually for individuals who have committed to improving the possibilities for West Virginia educators, families, and children.”*

~ Dr. Stan Maynard



**The Hallie Harless Distinguished Teacher Award** was made possible by the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. James Harless (“Buck” and Hallie). The award represents not only their generosity, but also their passion for exemplary classroom instruction for all students of West Virginia and especially Southern West Virginia. The monetary award is presented annually to an outstanding teacher from Boone, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Wayne or Wyoming counties for his or her effectiveness in the classroom, diligence to the craft, and obvious love and commitment to young people.

**2006**

Ms. Tonya Hatcher  
Mingo County

**2009**

Mr. Jonathan Escue  
Lincoln County

**2011**

Mr. Dan Gottron  
McDowell County

**2014**

Mrs. Amanda Lester  
McDowell County

**2007**

Mr. Doug Martin  
Mingo County

Ms. Kristy East  
McDowell County

**2012**

Mrs. Joni Shortridge  
Lincoln County

**2015**

Mrs. Kelly Bryant  
Logan County

**2008**

Ms. April Adams  
Wayne County

**2010**

Ms. Heather Woods Lockhart  
McDowell County

**2013**

Mrs. Amanda Sowards  
Lincoln County

**2016**

Ms. Whitney Preston  
Logan County

Ms. Robin Ellis  
Mingo County

# EARLY LITERACY

## WV Campaign for Grade Level Reading

The June Harless Center partnered with the West Virginia Department of Education to tackle one of West Virginia's most challenging problems – the literacy achievement gap. The goal of this initiative is that all West Virginia children would be reading on level by the end of third grade. The West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading serves as the organizing body to help achieve this goal. To yield long-term gains in student achievement, partnerships between stakeholders at the national, state, and local levels will help ensure all young children in West Virginia are provided ample

opportunities to establish positive dispositions toward literacy learning.

To support the statewide literacy initiative, the June Harless Center employs five early literacy specialists who work collaboratively with all 55 counties. In this work, the specialists support the development and implementation of county literacy plans, host technical assistance meetings for county administration, and provide high quality professional learning sessions for educators and administrators throughout West Virginia. Read more to learn about the literacy experiences that are occurring in the campaign.

*“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or duty. It should be offered to them as a precious gift.”*

—Kate DiCamillo



### Leaders of Literacy Higher Education Symposium

The June Harless Center hosted a Higher Education Symposium at Stonewall Jackson Resort. Representatives from universities throughout West Virginia were invited to engage in collaborative conversations regarding how to ensure children in WV have the best advantage for becoming literate and productive citizens. The team of early literacy specialists shared some of the best practices that are messaged across the state as specialists work with counties to improve literacy achievement. The rich conversations and the collaboration among the universities made for an exciting day! The goal is to hold these meetings biannually in order to continue expansion of the work to help prepare the future teachers of West Virginia.



### Connecting to the Campaign

The Office of Early and Elementary Learning at the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) publishes a monthly teacher listserv of resources that are closely aligned to the WV College- and Career-Readiness Standards and the WV Next Generation Science Standards. The listserv provides a variety of lessons, articles, strategies, and websites for math, ELA, science, and

social studies, as well as technology tools and professional learning opportunities. June Harless staff members assist with contributing, vetting, and compiling the resources as well as revising and editing the final publication. To start receiving this listserv each month, please email Charlotte Webb, Coordinator for the Office of Early and Elementary Learning at [ctwebb@k12.wv.us](mailto:ctwebb@k12.wv.us).



### Annual Statewide Meeting for County Level Literacy Teams

The second annual Statewide County Team Meeting was held at the Flatwoods Conference Center and attended by nearly 200 county team members, vendors, and community partners. The meeting was organized to provide county teams with practical, hands-on experiences so that they would return home with relevant, actionable ideas to improve county action plans and strengthen community partnerships. Speakers presented on topics with real-world application for educators and the challenges counties face in providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to grow into successful adults.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a state-wide collaborative effort to ensure that more children succeed

in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The campaign focuses on grade-level reading by the end of third grade, which is an important predictor of school success and high school graduation. Although schools must be accountable for helping all children achieve, providing effective teaching for all children in every classroom every day, the campaign is based on the belief that schools cannot do it alone. Engaged communities that are mobilized to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and assist parents in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to serve as full partners in the success of their children are needed to assure student success. The work of the campaign is about supporting communities and families in



the four focus areas of school readiness, attendance, high quality instruction, and extended learning.

Many counties participated not only by attending the team meeting, but also by sharing their own experiences and expertise through presentations at many of the sessions. Conference sessions were offered in all four focus areas of the campaign as well as in community building and engagement.

[wvcampaignmeeting.weebly.com/](http://wvcampaignmeeting.weebly.com/)

### West Virginia Summit for Educational Excellence (WVSEE)

As part of the West Virginia Network for Educational Excellence, June Harless Center staff members partnered with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) to plan and implement Early Literacy Academies for grades Pre-K through 5 at the West Virginia Summit for Educational Excellence (WVSEE) held in Morgantown and Charleston. The mission of the WVSEE was to provide data-driven professional learning and support to enhance standards-focused teaching and learning. The summit was intended to serve as a catalyst for sustained, yearlong professional learning opportunities for all participants.

The summit was an integral part of the West Virginia Network for Educational Excellence (WVNEE), which consists of

four components; data-driven decision making, yearlong standards-focused professional learning experiences, the WVSEE, and the West Virginia Teacher Resources for Educational Excellence (WV TREE). The mission of the WVNEE is to increase student achievement and ensure college and career readiness for all learners through the promotion of standards-focused teaching and learning. This mission builds on the shared goals of the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBOE) and the WVDE which aim to provide a high-quality learning system that: encourages lifelong pursuit of knowledge and skills; responds to workforce and economic demands; and promotes a culture of community engagement and personal well-being.

June Harless staff members planned and presented information to over 200 participants on a variety of topics, including the Balanced Reading Diet Components of fluency, word study, comprehension, and writing as well as concepts of print, concept of word, alphabet, and phonological awareness. Additionally, they led hands-on small group activities designed to help teachers learn how to integrate student choice and content-area knowledge and vocabulary into their literacy instruction.



## West Virginia's Imagination Library

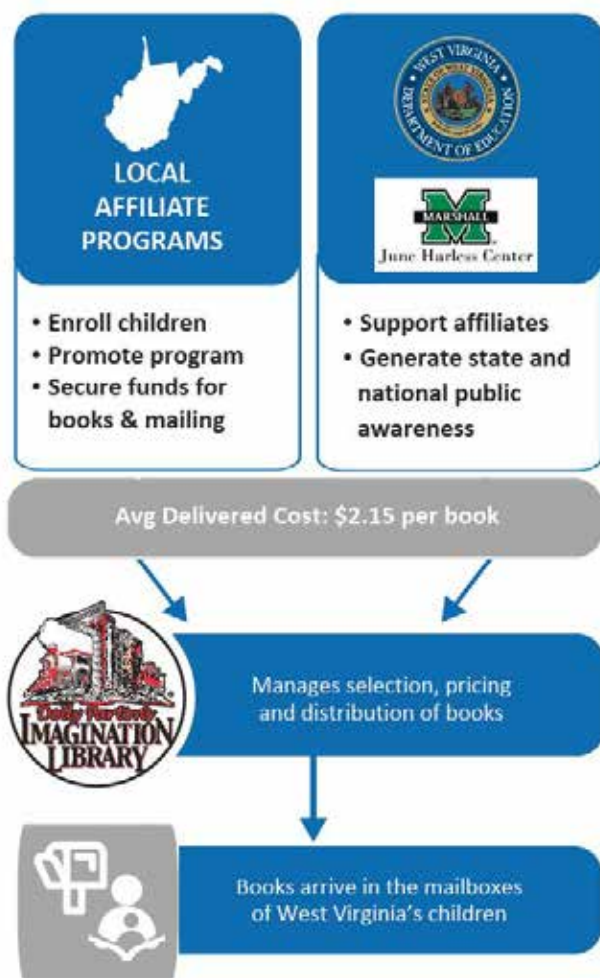
*Promoting early childhood literacy in West Virginia's birth to age five population*

The June Harless Center is honored to partner with the West Virginia Department of Education and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to foster a love of books among West Virginia's children. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free books to children from birth to age five in participating communities. Books are delivered to the home on a monthly basis at no cost to families. The long-term goal of this partnership is to ensure that every child in West Virginia has access to age-appropriate books prior to entering school. The June Harless Center will act as a fundraising arm for the Imagination Library program to help it grow.

*A child needs to have their own private space when they feel the world growing darker all around them, but we need to help them realize they only need a candle to see new worlds unfold on the pages of their book.*

*Adapted from "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society"*

### West Virginia's Model



### How YOU Can Help

**Get Connected!** Connect with local or state affiliates to let them know you are interested in supporting the program.

**Spread the Word!** Utilize your position as a community leader to communicate the value of the program for children and families in your community.

**Sponsor a Child!** Your donation of \$25 will sponsor a child to receive a full year's worth of books delivered directly to their home.

### State Contacts

West Virginia Department of Education  
and Marshall University's  
June Harless Center

Charlotte Webb  
Program Coordinator  
Email: [ctwebb@k12.wv.us](mailto:ctwebb@k12.wv.us)

Brandie Turner  
Funding Coordinator  
Email: [brandie.turner@k12.wv.us](mailto:brandie.turner@k12.wv.us)

Brooke Green  
Registration Coordinator  
Email: [brooke.green@k12.wv.us](mailto:brooke.green@k12.wv.us)





# JUNE HARLESS OUTREACH

## Partnering with Marshall University to Reach the Surrounding Community

*Forming and maintaining dynamic partnerships is one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of the June Harless Center journey. The network of educators that has been established has grown exponentially over the years and those relationships have only deepened with every project collaboration.*



**REMAKE LEARNING DAYS.** The Harless Center participated in the recent initiative called “Remake Learning Days” sponsored by the Education Alliance. “Remake Learning Days” was a nine-day celebration showcasing activities and events that have made West Virginia a recognized leader in innovative teaching and learning. The June Harless Center submitted an application and was awarded grant funding to create a STEM event to be presented during this time period. As a result, the 7th grade students at Milton Middle School in Cabell County were able to participate in a series of investigations analyzing rocket design principles affecting launch distance.

### **WEST VIRGINIA MAKES FESTIVAL.**

The June Harless Center staff members have had the pleasure of sharing STEM exhibits for the past three years at the West Virginia Makes Festival provided by the Robert C. Byrd Institute at Marshall University. RCBI does an incredible job creating an opportunity for the June Harless Center and other makers and STEM educators to interact with the public and share some of the latest STEM programs that are available. Projects shared during the West Virginia Makes Festival include littleBits, Makedo cardboard construction, and Sphero Robotics.

**SKY FESTIVAL.** Another opportunity for supportive collaboration was the Marshall University sponsored 3rd annual Sky Festival. During the Sky Festival,

which took place on the Huntington campus, members of the June Harless staff worked with classrooms of students from Cabell and Putnam counties. The students participated in activities that permitted them to experience hands on learning with a focus on astronomy and meteorology.

**S.U.P.E.R. DAY.** Each year members of the Harless Center staff collaborate with the College of Education and Professional Development to assist in S.U.P.E.R. Day on the campus of Marshall University. S.U.P.E.R. Day stands for Students Using their Powers to Engage in Reading Day. Students from kindergarten to high school are invited to participate in activities designed to show the importance of reading.



## Outreach

### **PARTNERING WITH MARSHALL UNIVERSITY FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WITH PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS**

Supporting the Marshall University pre-service teachers in the College of Education and Professional Development at Marshall University continues to be a priority for the June Harless Center. Each of the following collaborative efforts is a partnering of colleagues working for the shared mission of providing the best opportunities for the pre-service teachers, who are the future of the West Virginia education system.

#### **PROJECT WET.**

Staff members of the Harless Center regularly present Project WET workshops to pre-service teachers as a part of the required science methods class in the education program. Project WET is a specialized curriculum developed by the Department of Environmental Protection that focuses on the importance of water in our world.

#### **NATIONAL BOARD PROCESS.**

Several courses use Harless staff, who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, to discuss the process of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher and to encourage pre-service teachers to consider applying when eligible as a certified teacher.

### **LITERACY SPECIALISTS IN PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION CLASSES.**

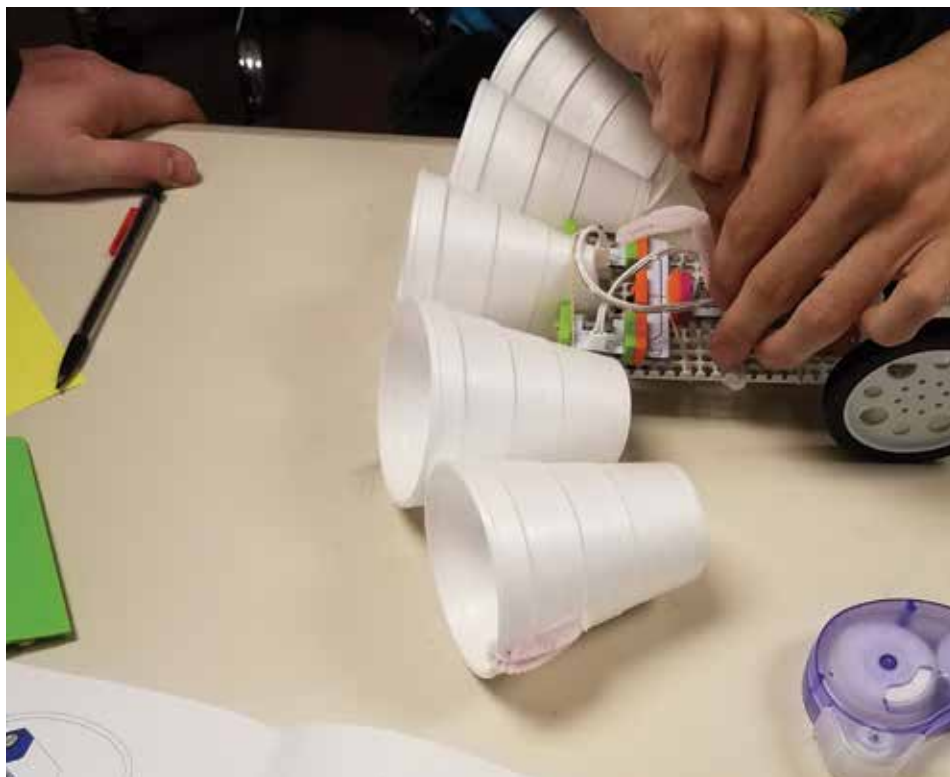
The June Harless Center Early Literacy Specialists, who work in partnership with the West Virginia Department of Education, deliver professional learning sessions in the College of Education literacy classes in order to share some of the state-wide messaging regarding best practices for closing the third-grade reading gap.

### **SPHERO AND LITTLEBITS TECHNOLOGIES IN PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION CLASSES.**

In an effort to provide leadership in educational initiatives for West Virginia educators, the June Harless Center staff supports the Marshall University College of Education and Professional Development by modeling teaching strategies to classes for pre-service educators.

The demands of the 21st century are more rigorous and technologically focused than in the past. According to the Carnegie Science Center students are better equipped with STEM skills when they are engaging in collaborative, hands-on, problem-based projects. As pre-service teachers prepare to enter the classroom to educate students in this technology rich environment, they are required to take a class in Instructional Technology and Computing. The June Harless Staff partners with this

class to provide pre-service teachers an introduction to littleBits and Sphero Robotics as a viable pathway to incorporate collaborative, hands on projects as part of the technology training. During the class, pre-service teachers build circuits using littleBits as well as basic coding principles for integrating Sphero Robotics into lessons. LittleBits are color coded electronic bits that snap together magnetically to form a circuit. This technology allows students to generate multiple solutions for everyday problems in their world. The Sphero SPRK + robot is an app-enabled, self-contained robotics system working through a coding platform to inspire students' curiosity and creativity through purposeful challenges. These challenges are designed to empower teachers to create lessons that encourage students to use higher level thinking skills to create innovative solutions to the problems in the world around them.





## Outreach

### **HODGES SCIENCE SCHOLARS EXPLORE NANO CHEMISTRY AND NEUROBIOLOGY**

Through a gift by Mary and the late Churchill Hodges the first experience of some students on Marshall University's campus is conducting primary research. The Hodges Science Scholars program identifies a small group of graduating seniors from Cabell County high schools who enroll in Marshall University and work alongside practicing researchers in cutting-edge fields.

Recently two students from Cabell Midland High School were selected to work with Dr. Mike Norton and Dr. Nadja Spitzer. During the summer they were able to design, generate, and manipulate nano-sized structures as well as explore brain stem cells with the potential to regenerate damaged neurons. The students also tested the effects of environmental contaminants on the formation, development and longevity of these central nervous system stem cells.

The Hodges family believes that students involved in meaningful scientific research can begin a pathway leading to careers in medical, engineering or other fields. Getting an early start in research enables the students to find a field where they have a passion and to lay the groundwork for their education. In addition, through the connections made as Hodges Science Scholars, students locate internships, scholarships and other opportunities in scientific research. According the executive director of the June Harless Center, Dr. Stan Maynard, "the Hodges family has expressed their generosity to Marshall University in so many ways. However, the Hodges Science Scholars program has a life- changing impact on the students who come to our campus to do research in the summer. Most of the Hodges Science Scholars go on to enter research fields of study at Marshall University."



### **THE HANNAN FAMILY FOUNDATION PROVIDES ON-LINE COURSES FOR HANNAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The late Raymond and Peggy Hannan of Mason County, West Virginia, wanted to assure enhanced learning opportunities were available to students of Hannan High School. Being a very small school in a remote agricultural area of Mason County, students at Hannan High School were unable to complete many of the advanced courses that would better prepare them for post-secondary education.

Raymond and Peggy Hannan established a fund that provides tuition support for Hannan High School students who enroll in advanced core courses through Marshall University's on-line college credit program. Through the Hannan Family Foundation, many students every semester complete challenging college level courses that not only prepare them for college but allow them to complete some of the required core courses while they are in high school.

The June Harless Center is pleased to administer the Hannan Family Foundation's Hannan High School Online Course Fund which enables students in rural Mason County to have access to advanced college level coursework.

### **WEST VIRGINIA EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHER PREPARATION**

The June Harless Center is partnering with the Marshall University College of Education and Professional Development and the West Virginia Department of Education to create a Teacher Education Fellows Program. Funding for the planning grant to establish the program is from the Benedum Foundation. This program addresses the shortage of highly qualified middle and high school teachers in STEM content areas. The goal of the planning grant is to develop an innovative teacher certification program that fully funds the education for four preservice teachers to pursue a teacher certification in a STEM related content area. Students in the program would receive high level content instruction infused with integrated educational pedagogy, teaching apprenticeships with National Board certified teachers, and an international field-based residency experience.

### Explorer Academy Update

*"I believe that work  
of excellence is  
transformational.  
Once a student sees that he or  
she is capable of excellence,  
that student is  
never quite the same."  
—Ron Berger*

The journey to establish the Explorer Academy in Cabell County, West Virginia, evolved from discussions between Dr. Stan Maynard, executive director of the June Harless Center and Mr. Bill Smith, former superintendent of Cabell County Schools, regarding the educational beliefs touted by Ron Berger in his book, *An Ethic of Excellence*. From his perspective as a teacher, Mr. Berger conveys in his book the high standards he holds for both his students and himself. He writes of teaching as a craft and his requirement that his students produce beautiful, powerful, important work. He argues for a paradigm shift- a school-wide embrace of an "ethic of excellence."

These discussions led to observations of Expeditionary Learning schools by Cabell County and Harless Center educators and consequently led to the decision to adopt Expeditionary Learning's philosophy and methodology as the framework for the Explorer Academy, the first Expeditionary Learning School in WV. Based on the design principles and core practices of Expeditionary Learning, the curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture, and shared leadership at Explorer Academy blend to produce hands-on, relevant learning



experiences that lead to high quality student work.

An important part of the learning process at the Explorer Academy is each student's journey or expedition in learning. The June Harless Center staff assists the school in providing area experts to work with the children in local history, archeology, fish biology, city government and other topics that are part of each grade's curriculum. In addition, when students do a field study as part of an expedition, staff from the Harless Center support the

classroom teachers by assisting with the organization and implementation of the field study. Harless Center assistance through study before and after the field experience enhances alignment of the experience to the state standards.

The June Harless staff members are involved in a variety of educational endeavors with Explorer Academy. One of those endeavors is meeting with small groups of students in order to provide mathematical tasks designed to challenge students and supplement what they have learned during their regular class.



## James “Buck” Harless (1919-2014)



James “Buck” Harless always supported and encouraged the initiatives of the June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development. The June Harless Center was named in honor of ‘Buck’s’ late wife, June Montgomery Harless. June and Buck built Gilbert Hardwoods, located in the heart of the West Virginia coal fields, into a successful international company. This resulted in countless individuals and organizations benefiting from their philanthropic efforts. ‘Buck’ and June were both instrumental in the development and construction of a unique \$8.8 million center, the Larry Joe

Harless Community Center, named for their late son. The center, located in Gilbert WV, is believed by many to have changed the very face and culture of southern West Virginia.

“Buck” always believed in the importance of education and was a generous benefactor of educational initiatives including the June Harless Center. The mission of the June Harless Center, which reflects the philosophy of both “Buck” and the late June Harless, is to provide leadership in education initiatives for West Virginia educators and students. The Harless Center provides educators and families of rural West Virginia with a support system that addresses educational problems, initiates and sustains school improvement, and provides innovative and creative programming for Pre-K through grade 12 students, teachers, and administrators. The Harless Center staff members have developed exemplary programs in professional development in every curricular area and in numerous delivery methods as well as instructional programs for students that provide for exciting, engaging, and productive classrooms. These programs and many others represent a salute to ‘Buck’ for his unwavering support of the June Harless Center and its outreach to students, teachers, administrators and families across West Virginia.

*‘Buck’ has always believed in the importance of education and has been a generous benefactor of educational initiatives including the June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development.*





June Harless Center for Rural Educational  
Research and Development  
One John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, West Virginia 25755

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 206  
Huntington, WV

