

JHC REPORT • VOLUME 6

# THE HARLESS REPORT

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY JUNE HARLESS CENTER FOR RURAL EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT







# JUNE HARLESS CENTER

**June Harless Center for Rural  
Educational Research and Development**

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# THE HARLESS REPORT

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## Message from the Director • Innovative Solutions and Support



**Tarabeth Heineman, Ed.D.**  
***Executive Director***

I am proud and honored to introduce the latest edition of the Harless Report which details our Center's work for the past year. The June Harless Center was created over 20 years ago to provide educational opportunities that would level the playing field for all children, regardless of their zip code. Our collective desire is that every child in our state would be prepared for a successful and rewarding life and equipped to face life's challenges with confidence, hope and determination. To this end, our staff is actively supporting teachers and administrators throughout the state to raise expectations for our schools. Our objective is to build teacher capacity for more innovative, engaged and research-based teaching approaches as we support school districts in West Virginia.

The June Harless Center team is made up of highly qualified educators who are passionate about improving the lives of children in West Virginia. Today, the June Harless Center employs 18 full-time staff members and six graduate assistants; operates two Pre-K classrooms; provides P-12 technical assistance in all 55 counties; manages Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in West Virginia; and supports several summer programs in the region. Looking at a snapshot from the past six months, our team hosted 64 professional learning sessions and supported over 1700 educators.

While our mission is rooted in West Virginia, our footprint is found nationally and internationally. This year we traveled to Reggio Emilia, Italy, with 13 educators from various districts to study the world-renowned early childhood programs. The Harless STEAM Team has secured funding to learn from the Harvard Graduate School of Education to provide high-caliber professional learning to local schools so that teachers can better implement data-driven instruction. Finally, the one and only Dolly Parton came to our great state to celebrate the statewide expansion of the Imagination Library in West Virginia.

The past two years have brought challenges that no one could have predicted. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, our students feel more anxious and concerned about health, finances and other issues no child should have to bear. Our team members are diligently working with local school districts to identify challenges and provide solutions that can support the unique needs of our students and the educators that work with them daily. As we reflect on the last year and look ahead, we see opportunities to reimagine our work. We are excited to share with you the programs and projects that are making an extraordinary impact on student learning and achievement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tarabeth B. Heineman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tarabeth Heineman, Executive Director



# PARTNERSHIPS FOR INNOVATION

**“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller**

This report features programs and projects of the June Harless Center. We want to recognize that innovation would not be possible without our dedicated and collaborative partners. West Virginia is fortunate to have many resources that are invaluable to our educational system, our educators, and our students. We are compelled to first acknowledge those partners who do so much to improve the lives of children in West Virginia.

Marshall University's College of Education and Professional Development

West Virginia Board of Education

West Virginia Department of Education

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

West Virginia Public Education Collaborative

WVDE STEAM Technical Assistance Center

Southern Regional Education Board

Higher Education Policy Commission

Robert C. Byrd Institute

Huntington Children's Museum

Worldreader

West Virginia Education Association



JUNE HARLESS CENTER

# Harless History

2000

Establishment of the June Harless Center (JHC) for Rural Educational Research and Development as a result of a gift from Buck Harless in memory of his late wife, June

2001

JHC Demonstration Site opens in Wayne County to focus on best practices for K-1 reading

2002

First Harless Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony honoring Dr. Bernard Queen, Mr. Buck Harless, and Dr. Jane McKee

2006

Science Inquiry for Teachers (SIFT) Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) Project is funded for \$44K to provide professional learning in inquiry-based science to 12 elementary schools in Wayne and Mason Counties (FOSS Science)

2007

New pilot K-5 model wing opened at Kellogg Elementary in Wayne County

2008

Shewey Science Academy established and funded by Fred C. Shewey and his sons, Bill and Robert

2012

Collaborative grant between Cabell County and MU Early Education STEAM Center funds a study abroad experience to Reggio Emilia, Italy

2013

Transforming Transitions grant partnership with Cabell County Schools funded by the Benedum Foundation focusing on pre-k to kindergarten transitions

2014

MU Early Education STEAM Center expands to satellite location at Peyton Elementary

2017

MU Early Education STEAM Center partners with Logan County Schools to create a pilot pre-k classroom at Chapmanville Elementary

2018

Marshall University Early Education STEAM Center at Explorer Academy is recognized as the first NAEYC Accredited pre-k site in a public school building in West Virginia

2019

JHC assumes the management of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for the state of West Virginia

2022

The JHC and WVDE hosted singer, songwriter, actress and early childhood literacy advocate, Dolly Parton, to celebrate the successful statewide implementation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library at the Clay Center in Charleston, West Virginia



# Harless History

2003

Verizon gifts \$100,000 to continue the expansion of distance learning education targeted in McDowell and Mingo counties

2005

JHC staff travels to the Dominican Republic to provide rural educational outreach

2006

JHC and WVDE collaborate to host the first Reading Higher Education Symposium

2009

Appalachian Math/Science Partnership funds project with five counties to provide extensive science professional learning to teachers and administrators

2010

JHC takes over the management of the MU Early Education Center on MU's Huntington campus, renaming the pre-k site the "MU Early Education STEAM Center"

2011

Partnership with the CREATE Lab at Carnegie Mellon University establishes the June Harless CREATE Satellite

2014

JHC partners with Cabell County schools to create an incubator school that follows the EL Education model

2015

WVDE and JHC partner to create the West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading

2016

Annual Statewide Campaign for Grade Level Reading Conference is established

2020

JHC is awarded \$250,000 from the Benedum Foundation to assist teachers as they support student learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

2021

Micro-credentialing program launches in Fayette and Summers counties focusing on mathematics instruction for elementary educators

2021

JHC named WVDE Early Learning Technical Assistance Center and expanded from five to six early and elementary learning specialists

# EARLY AND ELEMENTARY LEARNING

## West Virginia Department of Education's Early Learning Technical Assistance Center at Marshall University's June Harless Center

The West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) Early Learning Technical Assistance Center (ELTAC) at Marshall University's June Harless Center is a partnership with the WVDE's Division of Teaching and Learning and aims to provide district-school-and classroom-level staff with the resources and transformative professional learning needed to assist with academic learning gaps for all pre-k through fifth grade children based on the unique needs and challenges of individual districts, schools, educators, and children. The ELTAC works closely with WVDE staff to ensure all efforts are fully aligned to and supportive of current WVDE and West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) Strategic Plan.

Each county has been assigned an Early and Elementary Learning Specialist as a primary contact to assist with direct questions or professional learning requests. Please also note that for overall questions about the state's pre-k through fifth grade scope of work and services, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Sonya White, WVDE Teaching and Learning Officer, at [snjwhite@k12.wv.us](mailto:snjwhite@k12.wv.us) or (304) 558-9994. County-specific Early and Elementary Learning Specialists are listed in the key below.



at Marshall University's  
June Harless Center

### Year at a Glance

The ELTAC promotes effective reading and writing instruction for all students by working with educators and stakeholders in order to elevate their educational practices.



#### Service

The Early and Elementary Learning Specialists have presented over **100 sessions** between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.



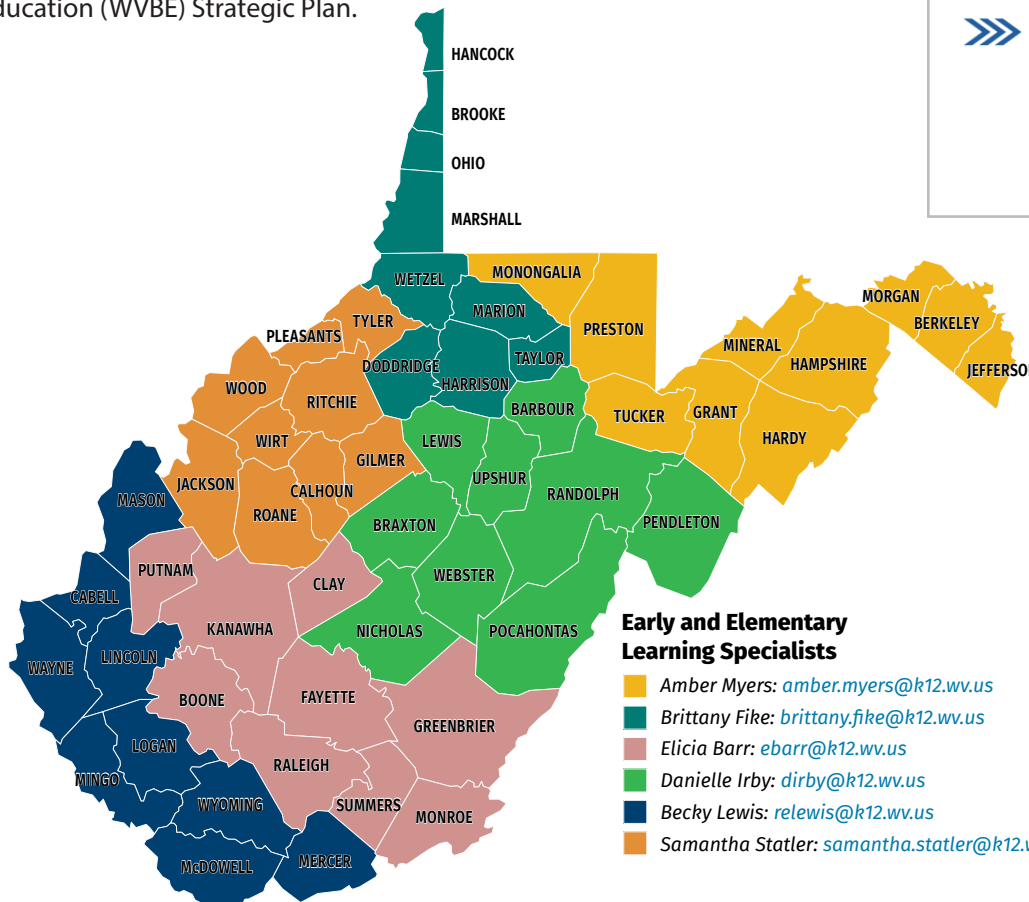
#### Reach

Nearly **4,000 educators** in all 55 counties and the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind have received services from the ELTAC.



#### Professional Learning

Included in these numbers are educators (Pre-K-5), special educators, interventionists, instructional support specialists, assistant principals, principals, curriculum directors, superintendents, teaching assistants, academic coaches, and even parents and families.





# Early and Elementary Learning

## Coaching Academy

For the past four school years, the Early and Elementary Coaching Academy has been available for pre-k through grade five instructional coaches and other instructional leaders throughout West Virginia. In year five of the Coaching Academy, staff from Early and Elementary Learning at the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the WVDE Early Learning Technical Assistance Center at Marshall University's June Harless Center provided a combination of virtual and face-to-face sessions beginning in October 2022. Participants were able to join one of three tracks in the academy: a track for educators who are new to the coaching academy, a leadership track and a track for participants interested in student-centered coaching. One hundred and two participants registered this year, representing 27 of the 55 counties throughout the state.

The academy kicked off with Sharon Thomas from Jim Knight's Instructional Coaching group and a "book tasting" event. During the book tasting event, participants received copies of the same book and "sampled" Chapter 1 for a discussion. Participants said they appreciated the materials they received as well as the opportunity to reflect and discuss the information informally with colleagues. The group met virtually in December to continue the book studies with Chapters 2 and 3. Two more sessions are scheduled for the 2022-2023 school year. Consultant Sharon Thomas will join participants for the culmination of the coaching academy to celebrate their coaching successes for the year and brainstorm how the academy can continue to refine its practices for next school year.

## Leaders of Literacy Podcast

The Early Learning Technical Assistance Center launched the Leaders of Literacy Podcast in January 2020 to protect educators' valuable time. The podcast is an alternative and innovative way for educators to "attend" professional development and gain access to the most current research and resources focused on school-readiness, attendance, extended learning, and high-quality instruction across the content areas, whenever it is convenient for them.

Each episode ranges in length from 15 to 40 minutes and is released at the beginning of each month. The episodes cover current research and high-quality resources, or feature an interview with a professional from the field.

The Leaders of Literacy Podcast can be found on the Early Learning Technical Assistance Center's webpage as well as all major podcast platforms.



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## Instructional Support Specialists

In partnership with the West Virginia Department of Education, the June Harless Center employs and supports Instructional Support Specialists (ISS) in three West Virginia counties: Braxton, Hardy, and Upshur.

This three-year pilot project supports selected educators who serve children in Grades 1 and 2. The goal of this project is to utilize the coaching model to improve instructional practices and close the reading gap in the primary grades. The Early and Elementary Learning Specialists at the June Harless Center provide training, support, and mentoring for the ISS. The ISS work with educators to help transform classrooms into highly engaging and effective learning environments focused on high-quality, evidence-

based reading instruction. They also provide professional learning for their educators, schools, and county.

In the 2021-2022 school year, the specialists focused on building relationships with the staff with whom they were working and completing coaching cycles to support student achievement in instructional practices. This included setting student-centered instructional goals with educators and creating a plan for next steps to meet their goals. Through this pilot and action research project, we are thrilled to see growth of educators and students and believe it is a great step towards closing the reading achievement gap with an enhanced, intentionally focused coaching model.

# Early and Elementary Learning

## Imagination Library in West Virginia

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 reading among West Virginia's children. West Virginia is one of 11 states to boast full participation in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. All 55 counties are now fully active to serve the state's youngest learners.

Built on decades of research, Imagination Library is rooted in the belief that having books at home helps children develop literacy skills early in life. By giving children high-quality books starting at birth, the program ensures all children have access to developmentally appropriate reading materials at no cost to the family, regardless of the family's income. In West

Virginia, more than 3 million books have been delivered to children since 2007. As of November 2022, 52% of eligible children are enrolled in the program.

"I am thrilled to share that every child from zero to five in West Virginia is eligible to register for my Imagination Library," said Dolly Parton in a recorded message. "Together, we can inspire children to dream more, care more, learn more and be more." To hear a special message from Dolly Parton about West Virginia's participation, scan the QR code.



Magnolia loves reading! Every night before bed, we read a story. She loves touching the pages and looking at the colorful pictures. Thank you for starting her love of books at such an early age. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a wonderful thing.

*In partnership with*



## Supporting the Program

### How YOU Can Help:

- Connect with your local or state affiliates to let them know you are interested in supporting the program.
- Spread awareness of the program to children and families.
- Sponsor a child. Your donation of \$26 will allow one child to receive a full year's worth of books delivered directly to their home.

### How WE Can Help You:

- Visit our website at <https://www.marshall.edu/juneharless/imaginationlibrary/>
- Provide marketing tools specific to your county or organization.
- Support you in connecting with families through creating and sharing family engagement materials as needed.
- Develop and distribute book activity sheets to go along with every book sent home each month.





# An Evening with Dolly: Celebrating Imagination Library in West Virginia



West Virginia welcomed Dolly Parton to the Clay Center on Aug. 9, 2022, to celebrate the statewide participation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The June Harless Center, in collaboration with the West Virginia Department of Education, has partnered with the Dollywood Foundation to provide every child from birth to age five access to books at no cost to the families through the Imagination Library program in West Virginia. Registered children receive a free, developmentally appropriate book each month until their fifth birthday. Dolly promised to visit once the program became available to children in all 55 counties, and she made good on that promise. More than 3 million books have been provided to West Virginia children since the program's inception in 2007.

Over 1,400 guests attended the private event, which included a performance by the Appalachian Children's Chorus, a proclamation declaring Aug. 9 as Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Day in West Virginia issued by Gov.

Justice, a fireside chat with Marshall University President Brad D. Smith and a musical performance by Dolly. The magic of the evening inspired many to give the gift of reading. While the Imagination Library is free for families, it costs \$2.20 per child per month to mail and distribute the books. Currently, there are approximately 94,000 eligible children in the state. The goal of the Imagination Library in West Virginia is to build awareness so that every family with a child from birth to age five knows that they can participate. Please visit <https://give.marshall.edu/project/32437> to sponsor a child today!

- A \$26 donation sponsors a child for one year for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
- A \$78 donation sponsors a child for three years for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
- A \$130 donation sponsors a child from birth to age five for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

The event brought in just over \$50,000 in private and corporate donations to support children and families across the state. Special thanks to its top-level sponsors:

Marshall University's College of Education and Professional Development

Dutch Miller Kia

Southern Regional Education Board

West Virginia Education Association

Huntington Bank

Rotary District 7545



# EARLY EDUCATION STEAM CENTER

## MARSHALL



## UNIVERSITY™

### HISTORY AND UPDATES

Originally established as the Marshall University Early Education (MUEE) STEM Center in 2010, the June Harless Center's first West Virginia Universal pre-k classroom was created to serve three-, four-, and five-year-old children in Corbly Hall on Marshall University's Huntington campus. This first classroom still operates today as a Cabell County collaborative pre-k program. In 2014, the center expanded by adding a second classroom in a local public-school building. Today, this classroom continues to operate in Explorer Academy, an elementary school in Huntington, West Virginia.

As the center continued to grow, so did the staff's understanding of the center's mission to provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate education with a significant emphasis on the arts. In 2016, the staff agreed to add an "A" to the STEM acronym, making the new title of the school the Marshall University Early Education STEAM Center. Science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics continue to be pillars of the high-

quality education provided in both classrooms today.

Both classrooms hold National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation. NAEYC Accreditation assists families in recognizing quality early learning programs and in feeling assured that their children are receiving a high-quality, research-based education that will prepare them for future success. The rigorous accreditation process helps educators and other staff develop a shared understanding and commitment to quality programming.

### BECOMING A REGGIO-INSPIRED CENTER

The journey of becoming a Reggio-inspired center began in 2011. The center partnered with the West Virginia Department of Education and Cabell County Schools to engage staff in a study abroad program. As a result of a competitive grant, staff had the opportunity to study in Reggio Emilia, Italy with colleagues from across the world. There are five distinct features of the Reggio Emilia Approach:

participation of families, collegial work of the staff, importance given to school environment, presence of the studio, and a pedagogical-didactic coordinating team who are experts in instruction and content. The educators embrace the Reggio Emilia approach at the MUEE STEAM Center, knowing that the space to explore, dream, construct and deconstruct is essential to learning. Both children and educators view the classroom as a studio learning space. The educators are given the title of studio educator to support the philosophy and facilitate learning for children and other adults. With thought and intention, the educators have designed the classroom to embody this concept. They purposefully organize the space to accommodate large and small group experiences. A welcoming environment encourages the children to engage in experiences and discovery. The year begins with a pre-set room and a blank canvas for the walls. As learning progresses, the walls fill with the children's thoughts, ideas, stories, questions, findings, artwork, and photographs that are documented and displayed.





## Early Childhood

### Gallery of Beautiful, Powerful, Important Work: An Art Showcase from the MUEE STEAM Center



Integrating the arts into daily classroom provocations is a pillar of the Marshall University Early Education STEAM Center (MUEE STEAM Center). The Hundred Languages of Children, a core component of a Reggio-inspired program, encourages children to explore their environment and express their understandings through multiple paths and various symbolic languages. Children share their thoughts, feelings and ideas through spoken language, painting, building, drawing, clay, dramatic play and music, to name a few.

To highlight the children's hundred languages, the MUEE STEAM Center hosted an evening where children, families and community members gathered to celebrate the children's work. At this event, art was on display along with documentation of each child's process. This event was sponsored by a grant from the West Virginia Public

Education Collaborative to participate in Remake Learning Days.

In addition to individual art pieces, the Pre-K classrooms created a collaborative canvas painting of Marshall University's mascot, Marco, and the Memorial Fountain found on Marshall University's Huntington campus. Project work stemming from a study of shadows was also on display at the art showcase. Children were inspired to notice details about different textures, colors, shapes and lighting. Eventually, these inspirations led them to create personal canvas paintings related to their class project.

Overall, it was a wonderful experience for children, families, community members and educators. The children's learning was made visible and concrete through their artwork and documentation. It was truly a celebration of beautiful, powerful, important work.





## Early Childhood

### Family and Community Engagement Experiences at the MUEE STEAM Center

Families of the children served at the MUEE STEAM Center are viewed as critical partners in learning. It is very important that families are valued because they are the “first teacher” in their child’s life. Because of this belief, we involve families in every aspect of the curriculum. We also feel that our community is vital to our program. Our children, educators, families, and the community need to work together to create a special place for learning to occur. Community partners are actively involved in the MUEE STEAM Center program to strengthen the aspect of real-world experiences for children. Below is a description of a variety of events and experiences that were provided this year to encourage family and community interaction.

#### HOMECOMING TAILGATE

During Marshall University’s Homecoming, children and families were invited to a family “tailgate” to celebrate the Herd. Children and families participated in games, enjoyed some food and fun, and watched the HERD homecoming parade.



#### HERD HOLIDAY

The MUEE STEAM children were invited to perform at the University’s annual “Herd Holiday” event. The children sang songs for the community to enjoy at the Tree Lighting Ceremony in front of the Memorial Student Center. After the tree lighting, MUEE STEAM Center educators offered STEAM activities for children of all ages to enjoy with their families.



#### MYSTERY READER

The children at the MUEE STEAM Center had an interest in reading, learning about new books and retelling favorite stories. To foster this love of reading, educators introduced “Mystery Reader” as an opportunity for families and community members. Anyone could sign up to come to the classroom for a read-aloud. The guest would provide clues for the children to guess the “mystery” of who would be coming to share a new story that week. The children were filled with so much anticipation and were excited to discover who would join them for the mystery read aloud. Volunteers included parents, caregivers, siblings, Marco, grandparents, firefighters and the Marshall University dance team.



#### COMMUNITY CIRCLE

At Explorer Academy’s Community Circle, students showcase what they’ve learned about the design principle from that month. The purpose of Community Circle is to create a positive school culture that values voice and makes learning visible to all. This experience also encourages students to grow not only academically, but socially. It helps build confidence and sets high expectations for all the students. By participating in this monthly event, students learn how to be a part of a team, make decisions and act on important matters.



### Sustaining a Reggio-inspired Early Childhood Center: Studying Abroad in Reggio Emilia, Italy

Five June Harless staff members participated in a study abroad tour to study best practices in early childhood education in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The West Virginia study group, which included eight other West Virginia educators, collaborated with teachers from all over the world to engage in in-depth professional learning that included school visits and expert lectures.

During this study group at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center, participants focused on six essential elements of the Reggio Emilia Approach:

1. the image of the child;
2. children's relationships and interactions within their school environment;
3. the role of the families;
4. collegial work of staff to ensure adults and children are partners in learning;
5. collaboration and research of staff and children; and
6. presence of the studio.

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 their own learning, and given opportunities to be creative thinkers. Their creativity is formed through the exploration of their world, feelings, emotions and the questions they construct. The job of educators in a Reggio-inspired environment is to foster this natural curiosity and be a facilitator of learning.



After experiencing the culture and being embedded in the schools of Reggio Emilia, it's evident that educators at these world-renowned schools strive to implement best practices, create real-world scenarios and plan learning experiences based on children's interests. Upon returning from the study abroad experience, our staff's goal is to share the experience and work with other educators who share the same values to strengthen early childhood education for the children of West Virginia.

The MUEE STEAM Center staff implemented new practices learned in Reggio Emilia immediately upon returning. Several changes were made to the classroom learning environment and improving best practices. One change was removing some defined spaces to make the classroom layout seamless and home-like, allowing for more creativity. This provides children with the opportunity to allow their ideas and project work to ebb and flow throughout the classroom. For example, now that the blocks are in an area where

children have more room to build, they created their own large boat and showed interest in learning about boats.

Another implementation to enhance the children's learning experience and incorporate families was to provide a space for families to add their expertise and ideas about current project work. A project web is posted outside the classroom so families can contribute during arrival or dismissal. Families have been enjoying adding their thoughts and extending their children's interests.

Making learning visible through documentation is also a focus after the study experience. It's important to include children when creating documentation and focus on the process of learning rather than the end goal. This documentation serves as a reflection tool and a way to share the learning with families and the community. Visitors are welcome to come to observe the rich Reggio-inspired learning environments put in place at Explorer Academy and at Marshall University.



### Using Worldreader to Enhance Literacy Experiences at Home and School

The Worldreader program focuses on easy access to literature through an app, providing a wide variety of books and related activities, continuous engagement, and data to measure and drive impact. These four components are essential to helping children realize better learning outcomes, greater opportunities, and healthier, more prosperous lives.

Worldreader is a nonprofit championing digital reading in underserved communities to help readers build a better world. Experts take a careful look at the online library to make sure the right books are available to ensure growth and learning outcomes for the reader. They also look at data to understand the books readers are engaging with most and continue to refine and grow the library with a network of local and international publishers.

One unique aspect of Worldreader is that books are accessible via cell phones, tablets, or e-readers. Worldreader works with schools and partners to help parents, teachers, librarians, and local communities to acquire the knowledge and comfort needed to integrate digital technology. For teachers and librarians, this means training on using the devices, integrating stories into lesson plans, managing, and monitoring projects, and collecting data on reading activities. For parents, this includes training on continuing the learning at home with effective storytelling techniques and app usage sessions ([www.worldreader.org](http://www.worldreader.org)).

Educators at the MUEE STEAM Center use Worldreader as a supplemental resource for the classrooms' weekly literature focus. These stories are read to children during whole group meeting times, as well as available to revisit in smaller groups on classroom iPads. Utilizing books from Worldreader allows families to continue learning at home and have access to the stories children read while at school.

Families are encouraged to access the books curated by teachers through the app. One parent stated, "We have really enjoyed it in our house. We have read several stories and enjoyed the text-to-speech and some of the extra activities."



**Worldreader**

There are a variety of extensions that go along with the stories, such as pre- and post-reading activities. Another parent said, "It's nice to be able to easily pull up a story that my child refers to learning about at school." For more information about Worldreader, visit <https://www.worldreader.org/>.



# K-12 STEAM OUTREACH

## AN INTRO TO OUTDOOR LEARNING

Members of the STEAM team provided Dr. Tina Cartwright's preservice teachers with an opportunity to explore outdoor learning opportunities through Project Wet. This introduction allowed future teachers to begin to see the curricular options they have available to expose their students to the wonders and importance of the natural world that surrounds them. Project Wet's interdisciplinary offerings combine reading, math, science and social studies to help students understand the resources around them and the protections they require.



## PLANETARIUM

In collaboration with the Marshall University physics department and the College of Education and Professional Development, the STEAM team has been utilizing the inflatable planetarium to take local students on a journey to the center of the Milky Way. The planetarium has been used during summer camps at the Rec Center; in after-school programs; at Thrilling Thursday at Explorer Academy in Huntington, West Virginia; and numerous other local schools. The reviews are always out of this world.



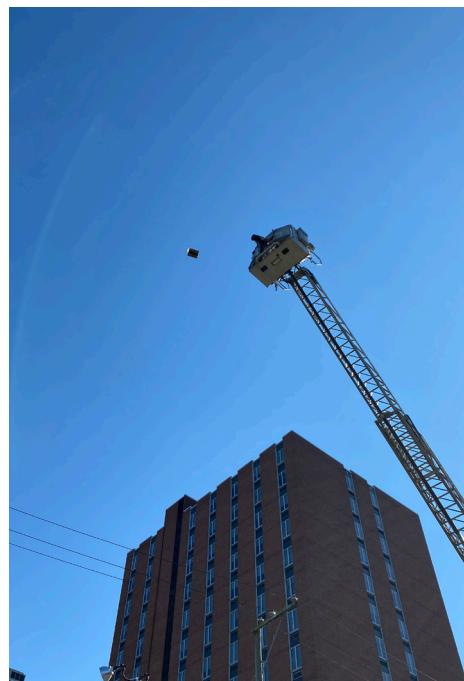
## JUNE HARLESS CENTER AT RCBI'S WV MAKES FESTIVAL

After a two-year hiatus, the Robert C. Byrd Institute's WV Makes Festival returned to the campus of Marshall University in November. The June Harless team offered numerous events to the nearly 800 participants throughout the day-long event. Participants could work with Sphero and littleBits robots, experience the planetarium, and engage with the Children's Innovation Project.

Participants were also able to enjoy the first annual Pumpkin Drop. Huntington



Fire Department members from University Fire Station used their tower ladder to drop the pumpkin protection devices from nearly 10 stories up. Several student teams from Barboursville Middle and Wayne High were successful in protecting their pumpkins. Overall, the day was a smashing success.





## A S.T.E.A.M.y Summer Event



The June Harless Center hosted the inaugural Cardboard Boat Regatta during Huntington Children's Museum's KidsFest. This event gave students in grades 3-6 an opportunity to keep physically and mentally active during the summer as they learned and applied the engineering design process.

As soon as they arrived, students dove into the challenge of designing and building a boat that would ferry their team across the Marshall University Rec Center pool. Participants had to supply creativity and collaboration, as they were given only duct tape and cardboard with which to work. After designing their boats, they built and tested models to determine what revisions their boats needed. Students spent the remainder of the morning building their life-size boats before grabbing their life jackets and oars and parading their vessels to the Rec Center.

After heated races, several boats emerged victorious. Regardless of the

fate of their boats, participants left with a new skill set for approaching problems critically and creatively.

Scan the QR code to watch the video:





## Strengthening Partnerships to Propel STEAM Learning in West Virginia

Representatives from the West Virginia Department of Education, the STEAM Technical Assistance Center (TAC) at West Virginia University and members of the STEAM team at the June Harless Center met in the fall of 2022 to explore potential collaborations that will advance STEAM experiences and capacities for K-12 students and teachers alike. During the session, team members from the Harless Center shared current and future professional learning projects as well as recent outreach activities. STEAM TAC members presented their middle-school immersions and introduced their new high school immersions that are set to begin early in 2023.

The group spent the afternoon identifying ways to develop a mutually reinforcing partnership with each group's work complementing the other. The team also explored opportunities to combine talent and resources to offer an expanded conference opportunity for PK-12 educators. Previously, the June Harless Center hosted a STEAMposium conference for Pre-K educators to engage in hands-on early childhood practices related to STEAM education. Because of the partnership with the STEAM TAC at WVU, the conference will reach far more educators. The team is excited to see how this partnership grows in the upcoming year.

## Elementary Math Credentialing has Continued Success

The initial cohort of Elementary Mathematics Credentialing has concluded, and the results are in. The students of teachers in the initial group from Fayette County improved by ten percent on the West Virginia General Summative Assessment. The results were so significant that a second Fayette County cohort has started the program, and Mingo County has also recently adopted the program.

Elementary Mathematics Credentialing was designed to increase the capabilities of teachers and students. Enhancing students' mathematical learning at the earliest levels leads to stronger math students at the upper levels. Teachers

enrolled in this program will participate in over 70 hours of in-person, practice-based professional learning focused on the elementary portion of the West Virginia College and Career Readiness for Mathematics standards and the Mathematical Habits of Mind. These standards are divided into five clusters requiring 12 days of interactive and collaborative workshops. These sessions provide sustained opportunities to learn, experience and practice the evidence-based strategies modeled by elementary educators. Participants will be enveloped in a network of collaboration and support as they implement and reflect upon these practices.

*“The elementary math credentialing program from the June Harless Center is producing fellows who are embracing mathematics in the K-5 setting. The self-reflection component is producing strong and confident teachers who are rediscovering their passion for education.”*

- Dawn Dooley  
Director of Elementary Schools and  
Assessment, Fayette County

## Hall of Fame

# Harless Hall of Fame Inductees

### Seventeenth Annual – 2022

Mr. Dan Mollette  
Ms. Dolly Parton  
First Lady Cathy Justice  
Drs. Stan and Barbara Maynard

### Sixteenth Annual – 2019

Mr. Robert, Jr. and Mrs. Lena Shell  
Drs. Joseph and Omayma Touma  
Mrs. Katherine Johnson

### Fifteenth Annual – 2018

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

### Fourteenth Annual – 2016

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

### Thirteenth Annual - 2015

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

### Twelfth Annual – 2014

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

### Eleventh Annual – 2013

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

### Tenth Annual – 2012

Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong  
Sen. Lloyd G. Jackson II  
U.S. Sen. Jay Rockefeller

### Ninth Annual – 2011

Gov. Bob Wise  
Cabell County School System  
Frontier Communications

### Eighth Annual – 2010

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

### Seventh Annual – 2009

U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, III  
Dr. Jack McClanahan  
Dr. Rosalyn Templeton

### Sixth Annual – 2008

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

### Fifth Annual – 2006

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

### Fourth Annual – 2005

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

### Third Annual - 2004

Mrs. Lydia McCue  
Mr. David Ice  
Sen. Robert Plymale

### Second Annual - 2003

Mrs. Beverly Kingery  
Mr. Jimmy D. Hale  
Verizon

### First Annual - 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.*

## 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.*







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