

# The Learning Curve

This page was written and designed by Education First in cooperation with the Bibb County Board of Education, the Peyton Anderson Foundation, and The Telegraph.



Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

## High Schools Challenge Each Other to Blood Drive

### Winner Announced at Central-Westside Football Game

The challenge has been made; the glove has been thrown down. Before they meet on the football field, Central and Westside High Schools will go head-to-head by sitting down in their own schools. Refereed by the able local chapter of the Red Cross, the two schools are participating in their first Battle of the Blood Drives.

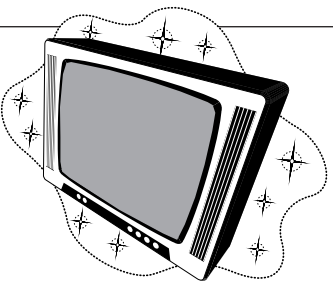
Reading an article recently about a lack of blood being collected Principals Laura Perkins (Westside) and Dr. Erin Weaver (Central) decided this would be a great way for their students to give back to the community as well as develop school spirit through friendly competition.

"Everyone will be winners in a contest such as this," says Dr. Weaver. "The blood drive is such a great way for our students to give back to the entire Middle Georgia community. The competition between Westside and Central is a positive way to show unity in spirit and competition for the good of society."

"Students need to be involved in giving back to the community and what better way than to give the gift of life," says Perkins.

Blood will be collected at both schools on August 21 from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and family members, friends, and the local community are encouraged to support their favorite team by visiting either site. To donate, you need to be at least 16 years old (with a signed parent consent form) or 18 with a picture ID.

The school that collects the most will be honored with a Spirit Award at the September 2 football game being played at Henderson Stadium.



For up-to-date information and events concerning Bibb County Public Schools, tune in to Cox Cable Channel 17!

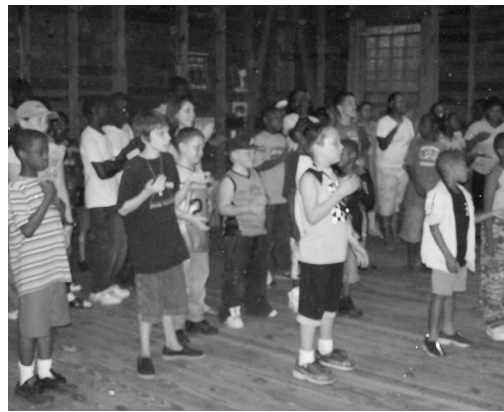
# Maheta Luputke

## Elam Alexander Academy Summer Camp offers Students Chance to Grow as an Individual and as a Group

"They're crying; it's an emotional night," says Brooke Akin lightly, half smiling at the children and parents nearby. "They really don't want to go home."

It's the last night of Elam Alexander Academy's yearly summer camp, and as Co-Director, Akin looks back on the week and reflects on how wonderfully it went. Students ages seven to 7<sup>th</sup> grade apply to attend the camp, many returning year after year for the experience.

"It's a great experience for these kids," says Akin. "Sometimes these kids don't get a chance to get out like this."



Students performed for family and members of the Kiwanis Club.

Staying at the local Girl Scout Camp for 5 days, the kids stay in the cabins (separated by gender and age), go canoeing, fish, swim, hiking, team building, build birdhouses, make panes of stained glass, and learn about the nature surrounding them. On Thursday, the whole group takes a field trip to High Falls. "They love to swim all day," says Kim Nolton, a Support Therapist for the school.

According to Akin, it's a therapeutic camp, allowing the students to bond with each other and their teachers. When one causes a problem, the group he/she is with at the time will sit down together and talk through the issue. They'll decide as a group what the punishment will be and then everyone will say something nice about that student.

This is the second year at the Girl Scout Camp because "we wanted to make it

more primitive," says Akin. "We've been lucky to have such great weather; it's been so cool in the evenings, no one's complained." Though it was held in the first part of June, the oppressive heat had not moved through the area yet, making the week very pleasant.

"We wanted a camp we could stay at," says Co-Director Bruce Fussell. "It allowed the kids to be more involved in more activities."

For 32 years, the school has taken students into the woods for an experience outside of their everyday lives. In the past, the school hosted three separate weeks of the camps: one for the girls, one for the young boys, and one for the older boys. With rising costs, however, they recently had to condense everyone into one week. Now they make sure to keep the groups separate, have more staff on hand, and make sure to use teachers and specialists who work with the kids on a regular basis and who already have that relationship with them.

"It's been really great that the Kiwanis Club of Macon has funded this for more than 30 years," says Elam Alexander Director Mimi Gudenrath. Their sponsorship is the only way these kids have had the opportunity, and they are thanked by the students each year by inviting them to dinner and a showing of their talents at the end of the week.

Sitting near the back of the room, watching the show, are Treatment Coordinator Mary Haney and Assistant Treatment Coordinator Janette Anderson, the Directors of the camp for 25 years; each are more than happy to relate the history and share the wonderful stories of each child as they get up to perform. "That one there," says Haney, "when he first came to us, wouldn't stop covering his face with his hands, and now he's dancing in front of a group of people!"

The camp began with a former director of the Academy, Elizabeth LeClair, who wanted to provide an activity that was therapeutic and

fun for her students. "She wanted our students who were severely emotionally disabled to experience a summer camp like any other child at that age," says Haney.

"It's so new and different for them; they don't normally get the opportunity to be in the woods," adds Anderson. "Some of them fish for the very first time at this camp."

With the many opportunities and activities offered to the students, it was named Maheta Luputke, which is Creek Indian for "To Grow in the Woods," and in its first year, local Creek Indians came to the camp to bless it in a ceremony.

"Part of the therapy is they're leaving home for the first time and experiencing camp as a group," says Anderson, pointing out another student who has opened up in their time here. "Because they unit as a group functions together, they make some of their own rules." The teachers even see an effect on the students when they return to school: the lessons learned about dealing with issues immediately and calmly translate well into the classroom setting.

Having worked with the camp for many years, the two are almost beaming as the students keep performing. "Because of the Kiwanis Club of Macon and Elizabeth LeClair, they brought the camp into existence. They made it happen," says Haney.



Students had the opportunity to stay in cabins for the week, giving them the true summer camp experience.

As the parents and Kiwanis cheer, awards are passed out to for best behaved, most improved, etc. A few students leave that night with a parent, but the majority is led back to the cabins, not ready to leave quite yet. According to Akin and Fussell, the next morning – when the bus will take them all home – is the worst part as the students realize it's finally over.

But thanks to the staff at Elam Alexander and the Kiwanis Club of Macon, they'll be back next summer, ready to fish and swim.



Bus drivers were on the road even before the sun rose to pick up Bibb County's students.

## First Day of School



Students register and check class assignments in Applying Middle School's renovated front office.



By the time the bell rung, students were seated and learning about the upcoming year.