

Teacher of the Year ♦ Charlotte Gray



Charlotte Gray's style of teaching, as a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at the Wentzville School District, could be described as a "facilitator of learning."

Topics are explored through projects and hands-on experiences. Facilitating learning requires students to use various resources provided in and outside the classroom. Charlotte's goal is to have students understand the importance of being able to find information and, once found, know how to use it. She is continually encouraging students to build on their strengths and be willing to learn from their mistakes, as their knowledge grows. Students in her classroom are given numerous opportunities to "teach," whether in group work, discussions in class, or sharing knowledge they have gained with her. Charlotte provides an environment where students can share life experiences, as well as feel safe and secure. She encourages her students to have an open mind, be patient and listen to others.

Some examples of "life experiences" projects for her students include: researching careers and colleges; and choosing a health problem, researching how diet affects it, and then coming up with solutions to stay healthy. Students have also presented research on the history and cuisine of a variety of countries to social studies classes. When students are working on a project, they most often work in groups, engage in peer editing, and present information using PowerPoint and the Smart Board.

Charlotte has taught courses at both the high school and middle school level, including: foods, child development, clothing and fashion, housing and interior design, and a comprehensive family and consumer sciences course. The courses are career focused and she continually encourages students to explore a variety of careers in those areas through projects, guest speakers, field trips and spending time in an onsite preschool setting at the district's Early Childhood Special Education Program and elementary schools.

The students taking Child Development II and III are prepared for a variety of careers working with children. Child Development II gives students the opportunity to work with children ages three, four, and five in an onsite preschool. The students prepare developmentally appropriate lessons, teach and spend time in observation preparing to write a research paper on the development of preschoolers. Child Development III students spend a semester aiding in an elementary classroom. Before the students go to the elementary school, they spend time researching a career, writing resumes, practicing interview skills, and then interview for their "aide" position at the elementary school.

Students in the Foods II & III program experience a multitude of real-life experiences. They prepare Friday Meals for the football team. Planning and preparing meals for 60 is quite a challenge. Students spend time planning and analyzing the meal for cost, nutrition and appeal. Students also have to determine how to keep the food safe and serve it quickly. Other projects include: planning and preparing food for numerous wrestling and basketball coaches' hospitality rooms. The classes focus on food preparation skills, nutrition, and wellness. Students analyze their diet for five days to compare and

contrast their eating habits with recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines. During all of these real-life experiences, students continually practice "work skills" which include: working in teams, communicating and listening with team members, managing resources, negotiating, evaluating final products, and reviewing food preparation techniques.



Charlotte also encourages her students to participate in one of the many community service projects offered by the FCCLA chapter. Projects have included: mending and repairing items for the Mary Martha second-hand store and facility, a clothing drive for Mary Martha, and cleaning the FCCLA-sponsored flower beds on the school grounds. Students can also participate in *Relay for Life* which is held at their sister school and sponsored by their FCCLA chapter. Other opportunities include: Make a Difference Day and the Senior vs. Faculty Basketball Game, a fundraiser for student scholarships in memory of a former teacher.

Charlotte is consistently searching for new teaching ideas to improve her lessons. Taking classes, as well as attending seminars, trainings and conferences provides her with updated information, new techniques and useful resources. Her teaching is validated each day as students ask to use resources for other class projects or stop by to ask where they can find information. What a difference a person can make in the life of a student!

Right after graduating with a Bachelors of Science in Education from the University of Missouri - Columbia in 1986, Charlotte jumped into her industry with both feet! Since 1987, Charlotte has been a member of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), Missouri Association for Career and Technical Education (Missouri ACTE), National Association Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (NATFACS), Missouri Educators of Family and Consumer Sciences (MoEFACS), National Education Association (NEA), and Missouri National Education Association (MNEA).

In 1991, she earned her Masters of Science in Education - Vocational Home Economics from Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. Over the last almost 20 years, Charlotte has earned several awards, including the New Professional Award from the Missouri Vocational Association (the current Missouri ACTE), Who's Who Among America's Teacher, Emerson Electric Company Excellence in Teaching Award, Wentzville Holt High School Teacher of the Year, Wentzville District Teacher of the Year, and MoEFACS Teacher of the Year, among others. And, now she is the well-deserved winner of the 2009 Missouri ACTE Teacher of the Year.

As one of her letters of recommendation put it: "...because of Charlotte's inspiration and guidance, many of her former students have gone on to be successful members of society and true leaders of their field."

Congratulations, Charlotte!



Outstanding Career and Technical Educator ♦ Mark Sponaugle



Mark is in his 28th year of Career and Technical Education. Mark's first job was in Carthage, Missouri as an Ag instructor. Being an "Aggie" in the beginning of his career in education gave Mark a jump-start on being professional. He was a tri-level member from the beginning. Mark knew he had leadership skills and became an involved member of both district and state professional organizations early on. He has been the president of the local teachers' organization more than once and has always maintained a leadership role as an officer or a committee chair. He served as president of the Missouri Association for Career and Technical Education (Missouri ACTE) in 1999 - 2000. He has only recently stepped down from his position as a Regional Representative to the national organization of ACTE. He continues his ACTE involvement as a national committee chair. He is a regular attendee of the National Conventions, having attended every year since 1993. He has been involved as a Missouri ACTE board member for many years, serving as president of his division or representing his division on many different levels. Mark is an icon of professionalism.

One of the most important ways Mark has influenced Career and Technical Education is through student involvement. After working as a classroom teacher for six years, Mark had the opportunity to become a VRE. He jumped at the chance. He realized he had a special ability to help students who had a problem with classroom work and behavior. One of Mark's remarkable tools in working with kids with special needs is his ability to place them in career and technical programs to which they are well suited. And then, Mark connects with these students. He encourages and coaxes them to do well. He gets them involved with student organizations, especially SkillsUSA. Mark has been lead advisor in his school and Southwest District advisor for many years now. He has had several of his special needs students elected to district and state offices.

Mark has worked diligently for SkillsUSA over the years. He has been on the Education Team for National Competition for 17 years. He is contest chair for the state competition of *The Emblem Ceremony*. Mark continues his student involvement in a variety of ways. He attends every game, every concert, and every theatrical performance in which a student of his participates. He models good citizenship by organizing volunteer programs through SkillsUSA, allowing students to become familiar with the good feeling volunteering creates.

Mark is often selected to monitor new teachers because he is very good at it. He doesn't just help them find their way around school. He helps them find their way around the community. He locates their church for them, and the best dry cleaners, and the physician that is still taking new patients, and the place they will go to vote ... all those facts that help one settle into a new place. He encourages them to join the professional organizations by inviting them to meetings and explaining the work of each organization.

In a career and technical setting, it is sometimes difficult to get new teachers to become involved with the professional organizations within career and tech. They may have been involved with professional organizations pertinent to their field in the "real" world. But, Mark continues to explain the importance of being involved at a professional level in this new career on which they are embarking. He has gleaned many new members with his persistence.

Mark completed his Masters degree in 1998. Once again, he modeled professional behavior to his peers. During his course work, he demonstrated his kindness to others by driving the 85-mile round trip, twice weekly, with one of his dear friends who was suffering from terminal cancer, but wanted to achieve her degree. She could not have done it without Mark's help.

It is difficult to separate Mark from his profession, but he is a well-rounded citizen, too. He is an active member of his church; serving on the vestry, in the choir and as a lay reader. He worked many years as a youth mentor. Each year, Mark's church holds a fundraising dinner theater for the youth travel fund and, for the last 10 years, Mark has been one of the favorite actors. He has also spearheaded the growth in the community's Christmas Parade, as well as using his ideas and wealth of experience to assist the city's renewal committee, "Main Street." Although his "Ag" years are behind him, he still helps out with the County fair. You might find Mark judging a hog show, or greasing a pig, or milking a goat ... always volunteering any way he can.

As one of his supporters said: "*... he has certainly made the position of a teacher, dedicated to career and technical education, shine like a sparkling star in the firmament of secondary education in the great state of Missouri.*"



Outstanding New Career and Technical Teacher ♦ Bryce Bunton



Bryce Bunton is currently in his fourth year of teaching and the first at Kirkwood High School. Bryce started at Affton High School in the fall of 2005, after graduating from the University of Missouri - Columbia (UMC) with a Masters Degree in Career and Technical Education and an emphasis in Business and Marketing. While at UMC, Bryce was awarded the Dr. Mary Jane Lang Graduate Scholarship and the High Flyers Award for excellence in teaching as a graduate student.

When asked about his philosophy of Career and Technical Education, he replied:

“As a CTE teacher, I feel it is my job to prepare every student who comes through my classroom for the next stage in their life, whether it is post-secondary education or the workforce. In doing this, I focus on not only my curriculum, but the personal skills that they are not taught anywhere else: professionalism, presentation (verbal and non-verbal), civic responsibility and leadership.”

Bryce began putting his philosophy to work right away. In his first year at Affton, he designed curriculum for Marketing, Marketing Internship, Computer Repair and Networking, and Web Design. Also, in this first year, he started the Marketing and DECA program, with the goal of turning it into a successful, beneficial program for the school and students.

Bryce's first marketing class had nine students, five of whom participated in DECA competition, with one qualifying for state and then internationals. By his third year, Bryce had enrolled 80 students in Marketing and 60 DECA members, with 19 students qualifying for State CDC and five for ICDC.

In Bryce's first year at Kirkwood High School, he has revamped a struggling Marketing program and qualified 11 of the 16 students who competed at Districts for State DECA. These student accomplishments show the continual hard work and dedication Bryce has for his program's and students' futures.

In each of Bryce's first two years of teaching, he wrote Vocational Enhancement Grants and received funds in excess of \$100,000. These funds have been used to provide his students with the most up-to-date technology and materials, allowing them to create realistic projects on a regular basis.

Over the past three years, Bryce has served as one of the two Missouri DECA State Officer Advisors. This opportunity has allowed him to train three state action teams and plan the last three State Development Conferences, each of which has been a huge success. This past year, Bryce worked very closely with Isaac Robinson as Isaac prepared his campaign for Central Region Vice President. This was, without a doubt, one of the most daunting tasks of Bryce's career, but served as one of the most rewarding, once Isaac was elected to office for the 2008-09 school year.

Bryce has worked very hard and made many strides in improving his Marketing program, his schools, and career and technical education. For these reasons, Bryce is well qualified to be honored as the Missouri ACTE New Career and Technical Teacher.

Keep up the great work, Bryce!

More Award Winners on the next page!



Diversity Action Committee Award Winner ♦ Dr. Dennis Harden



Dr. Dennis Harden earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg; his Master of Education and Educational Specialist degrees in Practical Arts and Vocational Technical Education and his Doctorate of Education at the University of Missouri - Columbia.

Dennis began his career with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as Supervisor of Industrial Training in 1986. In 1994, he became the Director of Industrial

Education and, from 1998 to present, he has served as Coordinator, Career Education.

As confirmed by those nominating Dennis for this award, he has always been very supportive of Missouri's equity program. Missouri is one of only a few states which was allowed to keep the program alive and functioning.

Missouri's equity program, known as the *Breaking Traditions Program*, promotes and supports career development. The program has flourished under the leadership of Dr. Harden.

Dennis was instrumental in Missouri's participation in the five-year STEM "equity pipeline" project which encourages

females to enroll in science, technology engineering and math. The project is sponsored by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Education Foundation, a consortium of businesses and organizations focused on bringing special populations into high-skill, high-wage and non-traditional careers.

Because of Dennis' commitment to the project, Missouri's businesses and students, alike, will benefit.

Congratulations, Dr. Harden!

Outstanding Missouri Legislator



Rep. Mike Thompson

Missouri State Representative Mike Thompson (R-4) was born in St. Joseph, Missouri and is a graduate of Northwest Missouri State University (NWMSU), with a Bachelor of Science in Education.

Representative Thompson is a former teacher, counselor and coach, as well as a NWMSU instructor and recruiter. He is a member of the Missouri State Teachers Association, Missouri

Retired Teachers Association, Missouri School Counselor Association, Optimist Club of Maryville; and American Legislative Exchange Council. Since joining the Missouri

legislature, he has received many awards, including: 2007 The Voice of Missouri Business Award, Associated Industries of Missouri; 2008 Friend of Corn Growers Award; 2008 Friend of Agriculture Award, Missouri Farm Bureau; 2008 Ed Ailor Memorial Award, Missouri School Counselor Association; and 2008-2009 Friend of Education Award, Missouri K-8 Schools Association.

Rep. Thomson has devoted his whole professional life to public education. He has carried that devotion with him to the legislature where his focus is on education. As chair of the Appropriations Committee for Education, he refused to recommend any reductions in state funding for public education and sought support from his colleagues to do the same - a worthy recipient of Missouri ACTE's Outstanding Legislator Award.

Another Award Winner on the next page!



Recognition Award Winner ♦ Joe DeWeese

Joe DeWeese puts his time, talent, ideas, and expertise where his heart is ... in the welding industry. He is an active member of the American Welding Society (AWS), as well as a member of the Lebanon Technology and Career Center's (LTCC) Advisory and Director's Advisory Boards.

Joe demonstrates his devotion to his industry through his place of employment, as well as the classroom. At Detroit Tool in Lebanon, he encourages co-workers to further their training and become more involved in the welding trade by joining professional organizations.

In the classroom, he will volunteer as a guest speaker, introducing students to the many careers available to them in the welding field. In the shop, Joe volunteers his expertise in welding, showing the students different techniques he has learned throughout his years of welding, preparing the students for their certifications. He is also involved with

LTCC's SkillsUSA where he volunteers his time, working with district instructors to make the district's contest fair, rigorous, and relevant for all students.

Joe nominated LTCC for a contest in *Practical Welding Today*, a national publication. After winning this contest, LTCC students were able to visit with a young race car driver who uses welding and stressed the importance of welding in his job. Furthermore, LTCC was featured in the Welding Profiles section of the magazine, promoting welding at the local, state and national levels.

Those who endorsed his nomination for the Missouri ACTE Recognition Award said it best:

"Joe is admired and respected for his selfless dedication to the school and community. [He] is well known in the welding community for the time and effort he contributes to the profession. He has high integrity and ethical standards."

Congratulations, Joe!