



# GRADS UPDATE

## Graduation, Reality and Dual-Role Skills

*A Family & Consumer Sciences Program serving pregnant and parenting teens*

### News from Tanya Titus

GRADS Coordinator for Hudson, Kent,  
Stow-Munroe Falls



Roosevelt senior Michele Sumej researches a class assignment.

### Technology in the classroom

Technology continues to provide a crucial source of information for GRADS students as they research child development, conduct college searches and search the Ohio Department of Education site to find information for kindergarten requirements and tips for parents to prepare their children for school.

### Focus on college preparation

In addressing the GRADS goal of college preparation, **Dori Harris** from Brown Mackie College and **Kim Avery** from The University of Akron spoke to GRADS classes to share information. Students visited Northcoast Medical Training Academy and National College, then received information from Stark State College to peruse and compare.

Roosevelt senior guidance counselor **Nancy Bubenzner** visited GRADS classes to help students fill out ACT packets to prepare for testing. **Tony Dorskocil**, Career Assessment Evaluator for the Six District Educational Compact, worked with students to help them make decisions for employment after graduation.

### Focus on kindergarten readiness

Helping their children prepare for kindergarten is a focus for GRADS students this semester. Students are learning the importance of working with their children from very early ages to prepare them for school in the future.

**Sue Acker**, a kindergarten teacher at Longcoy Elementary in Kent, visited the class to share some of the expectations for kindergarten students. GRADS students learned that many incoming kindergarten students don't even know their full names, only nicknames.

After discussing kindergarten expectations, GRADS students researched child development for each year until age five. The culmination of the unit will be planning and creating activities to support development at each stage, and creating organizers.

Kindergarten teacher  
**Sue Acker** shares insights with  
Stow-Munroe Falls seniors  
**Maureen Dori** and **Carlissa Milton**.



### The Highlands offers peaceful environment

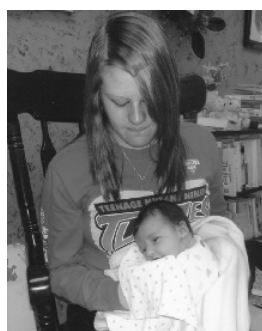
The Highlands Teen Pregnancy Shelter in Tallmadge is now home to three GRADS students and their babies. "Although it would be nice if the house could hold more students, I am thrilled to have the students there," says GRADS instructor **Tanya Titus**. "The house is so beautiful and peaceful and it does my heart good to know these students are in a positive environment."

### GRADS program welcomes support

GRADS received a WalMart grant of \$1,000 to be shared among the Six District Educational Compact schools. The money will be used for incentives for successful behavior, classroom supplies and the upcoming GRADS Evening Seminar.

Riverwood Community Chapel continues to host GRADS meetings every other Thursday for the Mommy-n-Me group. Riverwood also provides financial assistance, gas cards and basic furniture when needed.

**Linda Seeman**, director of Job and Family Services of Portage County, offers support to the Roosevelt GRADS students and personally follows up on difficult situations.



Roosevelt freshman Alex Wiseman gets a real life lesson while helping hold the granddaughter of instructor Tanya Titus who visited the GRADS classroom.



### Six District Educational Compact

Cuyahoga Falls • Hudson • Kent  
Stow-Munroe Falls • Tallmadge • Woodridge

15 Atterbury Blvd. Suite 9, Hudson, Ohio 44236  
Phone: 330-655-2247 • www.sixdistrict.com

## News from Christina Hickman

GRADS Coordinator for Cuyahoga Falls, Tallmadge, Woodridge

### GRADS Advisory Committee members to exhibit at Spring Seminar

GRADS Advisory Committee members will represent their agencies at the GRADS Spring Seminar to be held in May at Schnee Learning Center. Members will provide information to students and parents as part of the seminar. Dinner will be served and graduating seniors will also be recognized.

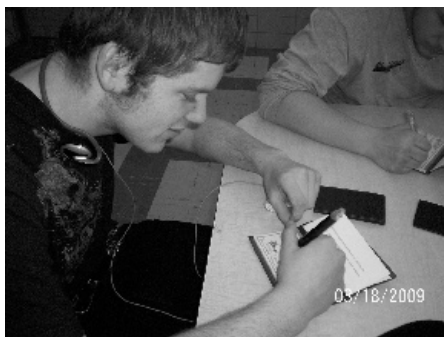
- **Sheneeka Adams, April Brewer** – Greenleaf Family Center
- **Sherry Blair, Sandy Waino** – Summit County Health Department
- **Susan DelGrosso** – Born Learning Program, United Way
- **Lydia Gamble** – Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library
- **Crissy Kolarik** – A Child's Waiting Adoption Program
- **Diana Lucia** – Christ Child Society of Akron
- **Beth Magelaner** – Stow Municipal Court
- **Suzanne Moskowitz** – Babies R Us
- **Kelly Paton** – Family and Community Services
- **Dawn Rouse** – ASCA Head Start
- **Annette Stevens** – KSU student, former GRADS student

### Community service help moms in need

The GRADS Community Project this year is to collect baby items for layettes, the signature program for Christ Child Society of Akron. These sets of newborn items are provided to mothers in need at hospitals and social service agencies throughout the Akron area.

Advisory Committee member **Diana Lucia** represents Christ Child Society, which has operated for over 125 years. The local chapter serves area children through a variety of programs which provide clothing for school children, bookbags containing clothing and other items for children residing in emergency shelters, and meals at the Ronald McDonald House.

Schnee Learning Center/Cuyahoga Falls student **James Leap** writes a check during a budget activity.



### Financial literacy project

GRADS instructor **Christina Hickman** attended the Teacher's Academy for Personal Finances workshop. As a class project, Hickman developed a budget simulation specific to a teen parent's experience, with a series of financial activities based on future career goals. The simulation helps students realize the importance of completing high school and recognize the potential financial gains of lifelong learning. Through the activity, students learned to manage family income and expenses as they experienced fluctuations in a budget due to unexpected life events.

### First Book grant awarded

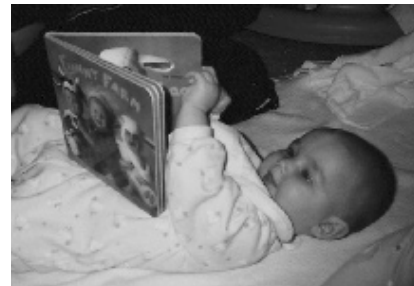
The GRADS program will benefit from a First Book grant which provides 600 children's books for GRADS students and their children.

First Book is a nonprofit organization that works with local literacy programs to distribute new books to children who have little access to books. First Book of Greater Akron depends on local volunteers to run the organization and donations to purchase new books.

The grant will complement the GRADS intellectual development unit, which includes curriculum focusing on stimulating language development, developing multiple intelligences and setting goals to support family literacy. During the unit, students learn that the majority of brain development occurs in early childhood.

For more information on First Book, visit [www.firstbook.org/greaterakron](http://www.firstbook.org/greaterakron).

Six month old **Joey Alison** shows it's never too early to enjoy books.



### GRADS students form Book Club, practice Reader's Theater

As members of a newly formed Book Club, GRADS students read *The First Part Last* by **Angela Johnson**. Students were introduced to the story with pre-reading activities to activate prior knowledge and made predictions throughout the story to facilitate comprehension. They learned how to find personal meaning by "coding the text" with Post-its.

Students also enjoyed practicing a short Reader's Theater skit as part of the Relationship Unit. *The Boy Who Cried Genie* is about a boy who gets three wishes for the girl of his dreams. The activity develops fluency, word recognition and comprehension while emphasizing expressive reading.

GRADS instructor **Christina Hickman**, who recently earned a reading endorsement from Kent State University, also developed a website ([www.teachteenparents.com](http://www.teachteenparents.com)) for educators who work directly with pregnant and parenting adolescents. The site contains resources which revolve around reading comprehension strategies, literacy, grant writing and multi-media resources.



Schnee Learning Center/Cuyahoga Falls students **Matt Bender** and **Savanna Sparks** practice their Reader's Theater skit.