Public radio seeks young musicians

"From the Top," a radio program that showcases top musicianship from the country's best young classical musicians will audition for a program to be recorded July 15 at the Lied Center on the University of Kansas campus.

Classical musicians ages 9 to 18 who have not graduated from high school and solo performers on all instruments and instrumental or vocal ensembles with no more than six performers are welcome to audition.

Application packets are available from Kansas Public Radio's Web site, kpr.ku.edu or by mail or phone at: From the Top, 295 Huntington Ave., Suite 201, Boston, MA 02115 or (617) 437-0707.
Schlagle High librarian receives Champion of Opportunity Award

Shelia Blume, librarian at F.L. Schlagle High School, in Kansas City, Kansas, has received the 2007 Champion of Opportunity Award from the University of Kansas Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP).

The award is presented to individuals whose accomplishments and professional contributions to the KU EOP have been outstanding. Blume was honored on Dec. 7 at a professional development retreat held by the Institute for Educational Research and Public Service at KU.

Blume has directed the KCK INFOKIDS federal program serving 15 schools, as part of the No Child Left Behind act. She also has been instrumental in the success of the GEAR UP program at Schlagle. GEAR UP's goal is to increase the number of students from low-income families who are prepared to enter and succeed at post secondary education. To provide these students with encouragement and support, Blume spent a portion of her library budget on materials such as career exploration manuals and ACT preparation guides to directly assist them. She also dedicated an area of the school’s library to career and college exploration.

Blume was selected for the award by a committee composed of EOP staff members and an external reviewer from the KU School of Education.
JOHN HENRY/STAFF

FRED, 9, left, and Todd Rogers pet a fellow runner’s Beagle, Dewey, on Dec. 13, before the Jingle Bell Run/Walk fundraiser for Ballard Community Center and the Boys & Girls Club behind Kizer-Cummings Jewelers, 833 Mass. St. Frederick and Rogers have been paired up through Big Brothers Big Sisters for two weeks. The fundraiser was the third time they had spent time together.

KRISTI HENDERSON
KHENDERSON@LJWorld.com

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At that time, 167 children in Douglas County needed a Big Brother or Big Sister.

“I didn’t realize the need was as great as the story described,” Rogers said.

The number of unmatched children isn’t as high this year, but there is still a great need. About 100 children are waiting for matches through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Douglas County.

Rogers, an assistant dean at Kansas University’s law school, had been involved in helping children before he became a Big Brother. He had enjoyed coaching youth sports, but with the seasons lasting only a few months, he said there wasn’t much chance to form long-term bonds.

“What was always missing from that was the continuity and I felt like I wanted to make a more lasting impact,” Rogers said.

See MENTORS, Page 6
Mentors spend at least 2 hours a week with each child,
said.

Rogers and his Little Brother, Fred, are both sports fans, which
has become evident in their activities together. One recent
activity was the Jingle Bell Run/Walk fundraiser for Ballard
Community Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters on Dec. 13
downtown. They both put lights on over their running clothes and
donned Santa hats for the event.

Having a Big Brother runs in Fred’s family. His older brother
and younger brother are both matched with couples. The Jour-
nal-World agreed to withhold the last names of children and their
families in the program.

Fred, 9, said he likes having a Big Brother because he it allows
him to have time to himself.

“I just get to have some time with one of my friends and away
from my family... not that I don’t like my family,” Fred said.

He said he also enjoys having a Big Brother because he has fun
with Rogers.

“We’ve gone to his house and we play games and we threw
snowballs,” Fred said.

One of those activities was an electronic football game that
Rogers has had since he was
Fred’s age. Both are football
fans.

“Because we’re pretty like-
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Rogers said. “So, I had to school
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Rogers and Fred have recently
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After taking some time to
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Big Brothers Big Sisters of
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Tutoring makes a difference for students who need help

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Sami Safadi had been getting tutored for two years. Then last year, he quit.

And then his homework wasn’t getting done.

This year, the Lawrence sixth-grader returned to a tutoring program and he’s seen an improvement in his grades, he said.

“I like it because it gives you a better understanding of it and you can actually get it done with help,” Sami said.

Sami is one of many students in area districts who benefit from various tutoring programs.

One of the largest resources for tutoring programs in the area is universities, such as Kansas University and Baker University. But districts that don’t have the benefit of a nearby university still have several resources available for students who need assistance.

In a smaller district such as Perry-Lecompton, where finding manpower to staff tutoring programs is difficult, software has been useful, said Superintendent Denis Yoder. The software, which is used at all grade levels, can assess a student’s strengths and needs, and then create individualized lessons, Yoder said. Students get time during the school day to use the software, Yoder said.

Another resource is students. In the De Soto and Eudora school districts, students help either their peers or younger students.

In De Soto, for instance, accelerated math students take time during the week to help students whose scores are lower, said Alvie Cater district spokesman.

“The students are able to explain it in a way that maybe an adult can’t explain it,” Cater said. “We use whatever we think can work.”

Eudora students tutor

In Eudora, high school students go to Nottingham Elementary during the day to provide tutoring assistance, said Don Grosdidier, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

Both districts also rely on teachers to provide assistance to students. In Eudora, teachers are paid an extra stipend to staff an afterschool tutoring program for at-risk middle school students, Grosdidier said.

The De Soto district is also able to offer a 21st Century Community Learning Center, funded by a state grant, at Starside Elementary, Cater said. The program offers academic assistance as well as recreation activities.

Universities provide assistance

Many of the resources used in those districts are also used in Lawrence and Baldwin City. But the two districts also benefit from programs staffed by university students.

One such program is Youth Educational Services, or YES, which benefited Sami Safadi. The program, run by the University Career Center at KU, pays students to work as tutors in Lawrence public schools. For the fall semester, there were 28 tutors working in 18 schools, including Quail Run, where Sami attends classes, said Christina Kuhn, YES coordinator.

See TUTORING, Page 3

KU SENIOR Carly Tomlins, of Salina, Kan., right, tutors Quail Run Elementary sixth-grader Sami Safadi on Dec. 7 at the school. "The tutoring helps a lot," Sami said.
Tutoring helps at-risk students make the grade

FROM PAGE 2

school district. Like YES, Boys and Girls Club gets a helping hand from KU students. There are about 350 to 500 people helping out with the Boys and Girls Club each year, and a majority of those involved are KU students, said Janet Murphy, executive director.

Murphy said Boys and Girls Club’s programming, which includes homework assistance along with recreation, leadership and other activities, reaches about 1200 students on any given day.

On the WIN team

In Baldwin City, Baker University students play an important part in tutoring programming.

Students who are in the school of education’s classroom management class are given the task each fall of coordinating, planning and running Wednesday Instructional Night, or WIN. The program participants work on homework, read and take part in activities such as visiting the Baldwin City Public Library.

Michelle Swain, a Baker graduate whose fifth-grade son, Dylan, has gone to WIN for several years, says the program helps her son focus on schoolwork.

“He’s more likely to do his homework on nights that he has WIN because it’s an academic setting,” Swain said. “The problem with homework is that it’s hard to get them into that school frame of mind when it’s at home. It has helped him a great deal.”

Her son has enjoyed the program so much, she said, that he’s disappointed he can’t come back next year. The program, which is offered only in the fall semester, just serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Real-life experience

Young students aren’t the only ones who benefit from tutoring programs such WIN and YES. University students gain valuable experience, too.

Karla Wiscombe, a Baker education professor who created the WIN program, said the classroom experience is beneficial to her students.

“It’s the first time to really take charge and be in control,” Wiscombe said. “They just actually get to see what it’s like to work with students.”

KU students working with YES say they also benefit from working with children. Many of the YES tutors are education majors or they have plans to pursue careers in a school setting.

Even teachers whose students are tutored benefit. Quail Run sixth-grade teacher Nancy Dietze said her students are more prepared and more confident than before they were tutored.

“It makes a huge impact,” Dietze said. “They’re so much more involved because they’re not trying to hide.”
Graduation: both journey, destination

The KU Alumni Association produces a calendar each year; each month with a photograph of the KU campus. This year’s calendar has as the front piece, a stone wall, on top of which is a green grid work fence like structure made of iron, inside of which are shapes-oval, square, and c shaped, intersected with four crosses. It is a complex design, difficult to describe, yet simple at first glance.

The back cover is of the Campanile — the tower’s 53-bell carillon familiar to those who have been students there; poignant to those who have walked the hill at graduation — an ending and a beginning. The Campanile is silhouetted in shadows, graced by a sun, white ember, low on the horizon, orange background.

January’s photograph is of a student, face obscured, dressed in brown corduroy pants, walking across a stone bridge. The student’s hands are crammed inside the pockets of a green, hooded jacket; a loaded backpack seems to have attached to it, two medal rods-

photography equipment; perhaps surveying equipment.

The stone bridge is square built, supported underneath by a stone arch; all covered with a dusting of snow. The bridge is framed on either side by tall, young trees; some leaves still hanging in spite of the winter.

The student, like the trees, is young and lithe; though snow encrusted, alive and warm with the flowing of sap, the yearning of youth. Underneath, the ground is solid; the bridge, like learning, is old and strong.

Learning, like the calendar’s front piece, is both well defined and abstract; having form and being formless at the same time; framed by iron principles, supported by age old structures, giving rise to that which we admire, but cannot name or describe.

The student walks across the bridge from right to left; just as learning moves us from the old to the new; from the strictures of the past, to the thinking and creativity of the future.

Toward a much-sought-after destination; end of one journey, the beginning of another. Like the last photograph on the back cover, the tower of learning appears to mark a final destination in shadows; the shadows are an illusion, and the horizon holds both sunset and sunrise. From abstract beginning, the mind emerges with form, structure and purpose; the yearning of youth burning brightly, the thirst for learning unquenchable. The bells of hope ring in halls of learning and echo in the chambers of a learned heart, a searching mind, and a spirit which finds in each end, a new beginning.
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Brothers, Sisters stand in for namesakes

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The world is becoming ever smaller, which is why it is welcomed news that Kansas University is forging important new relationships with higher education in China.

KU recently announced that it had signed an agreement to develop a direct exchange with the prestigious Peking University.

Leaders at the Chinese university reportedly are particularly interested in sending more graduate students to KU and in fostering strong exchange programs for faculty and scholars from the two schools.

Although KU has direct exchange programs with three other Chinese universities, the partnership with Peking University is significant because of the school’s international reputation. The university has about 30,000 students, more than 200 research institutes and 42 colleges and departments, according to a KU press release. 

At about the same time the Peking University pact was being signed, KU’s Confucius Institute was being honored as a Confucius Institute of the Year by the international organization that covers about 210 institutes around the world. It was one of only four institutes in the United States and 20 in the world to receive the designation.

This is quite an accomplishment for an institute that was only dedicated in May 2006.

Both because of its huge size and its focus on building its economy, China is perhaps the most important developing nation in the world.

Forming ties with China and its top universities gives KU an important connection to that country’s economic and educational growth.

Much emphasis has been placed on giving university students in Kansas broader experience with international cultures and education.

The Confucius Institute honors and the new partnership with Peking University are important steps in KU’s efforts to accomplish that goal.

— Lawrence Journal-World
The Madison and Lila Self Engineering Leadership Fellows (SELF) Program for engineering and computer science students at the University of Kansas offers an outstanding 4-year financial package paired with an enrichment program designed to build talented students into talented professionals who will make a difference in business and industry.

Only 20 incoming freshmen with a passion for technology and a desire to make a difference will be selected. Deadline to apply is January 14.

If you are a senior and have an aptitude for math and science, a vision of success and the passion and leadership skills to get there, go to www.engr.ku.edu to learn about the program and application process, or contact Program Coordinator Lucy McGilley, Ism@ku.edu, 785-864-2945.