Lemoine family assisting in research tracking information on low-birth weight babies

A Natchitoches family is participating in a long-term clinical study that could help researchers better understand outcomes for infants born very prematurely. Grace Lemoine, a third grade student at Northwestern State University Elementary Lab School, is one of hundreds of children whose medical and developmental histories have been documented since premature birth through a collaborative study among several hospitals nationwide. The study tracks extremely low gestational age newborns (ELGANS) to study brain and related disorders in the hopes of identifying factors that contribute to brain damage in children born before 28 weeks gestation.

Grace is the daughter of Dr. Francene Lemoine, associate professor of biological sciences at Northwestern State, and her husband Dean. Grace was born Dec. 6, 2002, at 25 weeks gestation. Dr. Lemoine explained that investigators followed Grace from birth to age two and recently received a grant for a follow-up study of the same cohort of children.

“There haven’t been many babies with birth weight as low as Grace’s, so we thought it was important to participate,” Lemoine said. “This will be an evaluation with child psychologists to find out from an academic and behavioral standpoint how these low birth weight babies are doing in middle childhood.”

In February, the Lemoine family will travel to the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill where Grace was born for the evaluation. Dr. and Mr. Lemoine will participate in a parental evaluation, as researchers examine how preterm babies affect parents and families.

“Preemies are the largest class of abused children because of medical or developmental challenges,” Lemoine said. She previously completed questionnaires that addressed how having a preemie affects daily life, how much work was missed and other ways a family could be affected, as well as how parents manage stress levels. Grace’s teachers at NSU E-
Lab will also receive an evaluation packet.

The Lemoines moved to Chapel Hill in the summer of 2002 where Dr. Lemoine was participating in a post-doctoral fellowship at NC-Chapel Hill. Her due date was in March 2003. That December, Lemoine developed severe pre-eclampsia and was hospitalized for two days before a Caesarean section was performed. Grace was born at UNC-Chapel Hill Women’s and Children’s hospital and remained in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit there for the first 129 days of her life, leaving the hospital April 14, 2003.

“Grace weighed 510 grams or one pound one ounce,” said Lemoine, who specified the weight in grams because the hospital’s policy is to resuscitate infants 500 grams and larger. “She was one third of one ounce larger than the cut-off.” Before Lemoine’s C-section, a fellow from the NICU spoke to her about the study. During Grace’s early care, researchers analyzed antibody levels and chemical levels in her blood and performed a head ultrasound. Researchers documented developmental progress during Grace’s first two years.

“They seem to be looking for a connection between prematurity and autism,” Lemoine said. “We’re fortunate that Grace hasn’t shown any evidence of that.”

Today, Grace is a social, chatty child who is developmentally on track with other children her age. She was the local/regional ambassador for the March of Dimes March for Babies two years in a row.

Participation in the study is important to the Lemoines from the aspect of acquiring knowledge that can help others.

“The important thing is to try to get a better understanding of what can be expected. Knowledge is power. Anything that Grace’s positive outcome can do to increase positive outcomes for others is important. There are not many children born as early and as small as Grace that don’t have issues and we’re fortunate. If they can learn how or what circumstances can help others, we’re happy to be involved.”
Vol. 36 No. 1
February 2012

Northwestern State University’s 25th Annual Research Day will be held Thursday, March 29. Faculty members are invited to submit proposals to present their scholarly projects at Research Day.

For information about previous presentations, please refer to last year’s program at http://researchday.nsula.edu/

To apply to present this year, please complete the online application at http://researchday.nsula.edu/nsu-research-day-201/

Undergraduate and graduate students are also invited to present. Please encourage your students who have completed scholarly projects to apply. Student applications must designate a faculty sponsor. Poster presentations are also welcome.

The priority deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 29.

For more information, contact Dr. Margaret E. Cochran, Research Day Committee chair, by e-mailing Cochran@nsula.edu.

Feb. 29 is Research Day priority deadline

The deadline to apply for graduate faculty status for 2012-13 academic years is Thursday, March 1, according to Dr. Steve Horton, vice provost and dean of the Graduate School. Applications and Graduate Faculty Membership Criteria may be obtained on the Graduate School Web page at http://graduateschool.nsula.edu. Please note that the application must be submitted in a binder following the proper format and accompanied by supporting documents as indicated in the instructions or it WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

Please do not separate the application outline by placing the page of each section under the binder tabs in front of the supporting documents. The application itself, which is the cover sheet and the sections by number, should be intact in the front of the binder. You may label your tabs for supporting documents by referring to the numbered sections in the applications but do not separate the pages of the outline.

Graduate faculty whose status expires this academic year must reapply by March 1, 2012. If you are unsure when your graduate faculty status expires, you may call Janine Waters at 357-5851 for this information. Years to report are 2007-February 2012.

If you have any questions, you may contact Janine or the representative from your department who serves on the Graduate Council. Thank you for your assistance.

GRADUATE COUNCIL
Dr. Laura Aaron, Radiological Technology
Dr. Christine Allen, CAPA/Music
Dr. Allen Bauman, Language & Communication
Dr. John Dollar, Health & Human Performance
Dr. Tommy Hailey, CJ/History & Social Sciences
Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Psychology
Dr. Michelle Morris, Education
Dr. Sang Park, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Norann Planchock, Nursing & Allied Health
Michael Yankowski, CAPA/Art

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Dr. Paula Furr, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Kim McAlister, Teaching & Learning

The deadline to apply for graduate faculty status for 2012-13 academic years is Thursday, March 1, according to Dr. Steve Horton, vice provost and dean of the Graduate School. Applications and Graduate Faculty Membership Criteria may be obtained on the Graduate School Web page at http://graduateschool.nsula.edu. Please note that the application must be submitted in a binder following the proper format and accompanied by supporting documents as indicated in the instructions or it WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

Graduate faculty whose status expires this academic year must reapply by March 1, 2012. If you are unsure when your graduate faculty status expires, you may call Janine Waters at 357-5851 for this information. Years to report are 2007-February 2012.

If you have any questions, you may contact Janine or the representative from your department who serves on the Graduate Council. Thank you for your assistance.

GRADUATE COUNCIL
Dr. Laura Aaron, Radiological Technology
Dr. Christine Allen, CAPA/Music
Dr. Allen Bauman, Language & Communication
Dr. John Dollar, Health & Human Performance
Dr. Tommy Hailey, CJ/History & Social Sciences
Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Psychology
Dr. Michelle Morris, Education
Dr. Sang Park, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Norann Planchock, Nursing & Allied Health
Michael Yankowski, CAPA/Art

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Dr. Paula Furr, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Kim McAlister, Teaching & Learning

Feb. 29 is Research Day priority deadline

The deadline to apply for graduate faculty status for 2012-13 academic years is Thursday, March 1, according to Dr. Steve Horton, vice provost and dean of the Graduate School. Applications and Graduate Faculty Membership Criteria may be obtained on the Graduate School Web page at http://graduateschool.nsula.edu. Please note that the application must be submitted in a binder following the proper format and accompanied by supporting documents as indicated in the instructions or it WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

Please do not separate the application outline by placing the page of each section under the binder tabs in front of the supporting documents. The application itself, which is the cover sheet and the sections by number, should be intact in the front of the binder. You may label your tabs for supporting documents by referring to the numbered sections in the applications but do not separate the pages of the outline.

Graduate faculty whose status expires this academic year must reapply by March 1, 2012. If you are unsure when your graduate faculty status expires, you may call Janine Waters at 357-5851 for this information. Years to report are 2007-February 2012.

If you have any questions, you may contact Janine or the representative from your department who serves on the Graduate Council. Thank you for your assistance.

GRADUATE COUNCIL
Dr. Laura Aaron, Radiological Technology
Dr. Christine Allen, CAPA/Music
Dr. Allen Bauman, Language & Communication
Dr. John Dollar, Health & Human Performance
Dr. Tommy Hailey, CJ/History & Social Sciences
Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Psychology
Dr. Michelle Morris, Education
Dr. Sang Park, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Norann Planchock, Nursing & Allied Health
Michael Yankowski, CAPA/Art

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Dr. Paula Furr, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Kim McAlister, Teaching & Learning

Feb. 29 is Research Day priority deadline

The deadline to apply for graduate faculty status for 2012-13 academic years is Thursday, March 1, according to Dr. Steve Horton, vice provost and dean of the Graduate School. Applications and Graduate Faculty Membership Criteria may be obtained on the Graduate School Web page at http://graduateschool.nsula.edu. Please note that the application must be submitted in a binder following the proper format and accompanied by supporting documents as indicated in the instructions or it WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

Please do not separate the application outline by placing the page of each section under the binder tabs in front of the supporting documents. The application itself, which is the cover sheet and the sections by number, should be intact in the front of the binder. You may label your tabs for supporting documents by referring to the numbered sections in the applications but do not separate the pages of the outline.

Graduate faculty whose status expires this academic year must reapply by March 1, 2012. If you are unsure when your graduate faculty status expires, you may call Janine Waters at 357-5851 for this information. Years to report are 2007-February 2012.

If you have any questions, you may contact Janine or the representative from your department who serves on the GraduateCouncil. Thank you for your assistance.

GRADUATE COUNCIL
Dr. Laura Aaron, Radiological Technology
Dr. Christine Allen, CAPA/Music
Dr. Allen Bauman, Language & Communication
Dr. John Dollar, Health & Human Performance
Dr. Tommy Hailey, CJ/History & Social Sciences
Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Psychology
Dr. Michelle Morris, Education
Dr. Sang Park, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Norann Planchock, Nursing & Allied Health
Michael Yankowski, CAPA/Art

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Dr. Paula Furr, Educational Leadership & Technology
Dr. Kim McAlister, Teaching & Learning

According to Washington-Jones, the plot of the book revolves around a family who visits a “magic” Christmas tree grove in search of a “real” Christmas tree and get more than they bargained for.

Washington-Jones’ son, Josiah, inspired the book when he was in third grade. Josiah is now a ninth grade student at Natchitoches Central High School.

“It sprang from a Christmas writing assignment,” Washington-Jones said. “I thought the idea was cute and full of humor. It made me want to write stories again because I had always loved to write when I was in grade school. It took a while to finish it; I would say three to five years on and off.”

After finishing the book, Washington-Jones sent it to traditional publisher, but it was always returned.

“One of them kept the book for almost a year, 11 whole months to be exact, and then they sent me the dreaded rejection letter. This year, after I had received yet another rejection, I decided to self-publish it,” she said.

Washington-Jones is a writer and educator who has been teaching at Northwestern State for over 20 years. Although “The Runaway Christmas Tree” is a children’s e-book, Washington-Jones explores writing in many genres with a style steeped in humor, discovery and adventure. She has won numerous awards in education and also writes songs, poetry, business plans and seminars.

Joe Parrie, Northwestern State University’s webmaster, illustrated the book. Parrie has been engaged in free-lance web design and illustration for 15 years.

“The inspiration for the tree came from a small plastic toy Christmas tree Dorothy owns. It warbles a few seasonal songs and she passed it to me during our first meeting,” Parrie said. “This was the fastest, most time-intensive contract job I’ve worked on to date. Dorothy contacted me in early October and wanted a late November release, so my evenings and weekends were wholly dedicated to this enterprise.”

“Joe was a delight to work with and the most creative person I know. I was very pleased to work with him on this project,” Washington-Jones said.

The book is available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble and is compatible with Kindle, Nook, PC or Mac. A free Kindle app allows purchase for the iPad, iPod, iPhone, BlackBerry, Android and other devices.
Pichon will serve on AABHE board

Dr. Henrietta Pichon, assistant professor at Northwestern State University, has been elected to the board of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. The American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE), formerly the Black Caucus of the American Association of Higher Education, is committed to pursuing the educational and professional needs of Blacks in higher education.

“As a board member of AABHE, I will work specifically with the Leadership and Mentoring Institute which provides a week-long training for midlevel administrators and early-career faculty interested in upward mobility in higher education,” Pichon said. “My other duties will include planning the annual conference, pursuing funding resources, and attending board meetings as needed.”

Pichon is coordinator of the Student Personnel Services Program at Northwestern State, a graduate program administered through the University’s College of Education and Human Development.

Black History celebrations to recognize achievements

Northwestern State University’s Office of Cultural Diversity and the College of Education and Human Development will present the fourth annual Black History Month Exhibit in the lobby of the Sylvan Friedman Student Union Feb. 1-2. Hours are 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

The public is invited to view the exhibit, which highlights milestones in black education, great inventors, activists, Clementine Hunter, famous writers, black achievers, the Little Rock Nine, Michael Jackson, Alex Haley and Pearl Bailey.

The exhibit will also address the Underground Railroad, Martin Luther King Jr., the Obama election, legal and political issues, the Tuskegee Airmen, the Buffalo Soldiers, sports and famous performing artists.

For more information on the exhibit, contact Diane Jones, associate director of Student Activities and Cultural Diversity, at (318) 357-5475.

Also in commemoration of Black History Month, Helping Hands will host the 11th annual Black History Program at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 29 in Magale Recital Hall. This year’s theme is “Helping Hands Presents…Black Achievement Awards: A Night of Honor,” according to Jamie Flanagan, Helping Hands advisor. For more information, contact Flanagan at (318) 357-5901.

Spring Scholars’ Day will include Organizational Browse

The Louisiana Scholars’ College Spring Scholars’ Day will be held Saturday, Feb. 11. All academic departments and campus-wide organizations are encouraged to participate in the Organizational Browse that will take place in the Student Union Lobby from 10:20-11:30 a.m. on Feb. 11. Set-up will be from 10-10:20 a.m.

“This is a great chance to meet potential incoming freshman and tell them about the many opportunities that NSU and your organization have to offer,” said Lynda Hammett, assistant director of recruiting for the Louisiana Scholars’ College. “We only need one to four representatives from each organization and the display board/information about your organization.”

To participate, send an RSVP to Hammett at hammettl@nsula.edu or call extension 4578 no later than Feb. 7 if you would like your department or organization to be represented at the browse.
Gruesbeck’s ‘Green’ interest extends beyond campus

Steven Gruesbeck, director of Service-Learning at Northwestern State University, has been named to the board of directors for Keep Louisiana Beautiful, the state’s premier non-profit organization dedicated to litter prevention and waste reduction.

“Several of Louisiana’s great universities and colleges are actively engaged in beautification projects, litter prevention, recycling, and other ‘green’ activities,” Gruesbeck said. “During my two-year term, I look forward to exploring new and creative ways to encourage even more of our best and brightest students to take part in Keeping Louisiana Beautiful.”

Since being named director of Service-Learning in 2008, Gruesbeck has been instrumental in engaging Northwestern State students, faculty and staff in projects to improve the quality of life at Northwestern State and in the Natchitoches community, promote environmental responsibility and develop partnerships with area schools and community organizations.

“April is Keep Louisiana Beautiful Month. For the last few years, each spring, Northwestern State and the City of Natchitoches have partnered together on campus and community clean-up projects. This past September, Northwestern State joined the city, the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training to participate in the Cane River Waterway Patrol’s Cane River Lake Clean-up Day. Close to 100 volunteers donned rubber gloves and boots and helped clean up the dry riverbed. This is the sort of collaborative effort that I’d like to encourage all around our state. I think that we have a lot to offer and projects like this help keep institutions of higher education connected to their respective communities,” Gruesbeck said.

Keep Louisiana Beautiful is affiliated with Keep America Beautiful. The non-profit group’s mission is to promote personal, corporate and community responsibility for a clean and beautiful Louisiana. KLB provides informational material, grants and clean-up materials for affiliates and interested groups in a variety of areas that include litter clean-up, litter awareness, enforcement, beautification and sustainable education or litter abatement activities.

Service-learning journal seeks submissions

The University of Louisiana’s Journal of Service-Learning in Higher Education issued a call for manuscripts for the Spring 2012 publication of the inaugural issue. Submissions are due March 15.

The Journal of Service-Learning in Higher Education is an online, international, peer-reviewed journal for the dissemination of original research regarding effective institutional-community partnerships. JSLHE is a subscription-free journal with a review board made up of various academic disciplines of nationally and internationally accredited colleges and universities and affiliated organizations.
Northwestern State University Theatre and Dance will begin the second half of its season in February presenting two dramas along with a new ballet this semester.

The season’s theme is “Life is a Journey,” and each work focuses on the struggles that characters face as they go through life.

Tickets are $15 and $12 for senior citizens and non-Northwestern State students. NSU and Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts are admitted free with a current student I.D.

“Northwestern Theatre and Dance is excited about its spring season productions,” said Scott Burrell, coordinator of theatre and dance. “Whether an audience member is looking for serious drama, something amusing, something inspirational, or something fantastical, they are sure to find it on the Northwestern Theatre/Dance stage this semester.”

One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest will be performed on Feb. 8-11, and 15-17, at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 12, at 2 p.m. in Theatre West. Pia Wyatt is the director. Set in the world of a mental hospital, this place of rebellion is inhabited by an energetic, flamboyant, wise guy.

This anti-hero is against the establishment, institutional authority, and status-quo attitudes. His story explores basic human rights and impulses as he protests against heavy-handed rules about watching the World Series. He illegally stages both a fishing trip and a drinking party in the ward, which leads to his own paralyzing lobotomy.

As it is in Heaven is a moving portrayal of upheaval caused when the utopian existence of an 1830s Shaker community in Kentucky is threatened by the arrival of “newcomers” claiming to see angels. Critics have called the play “powerful and insightful…a thought-provoking piece, the message being that often we need not look as far as heaven to see angels here on earth.” As it is in Heaven will be performed on March 14-17 at 7:30 p.m. in the A.A. Fredericks Auditorium.

Dr. Vicki Parrish is the director.

Alice in Wonderland, a new ballet by Kirstin Riehl and Barry Stoneking will tell the popular story through dance. Alice in Wonderland will be on April 20-21 at 7:30 p.m. and April 22 at 2 p.m. in the A.A. Fredericks Auditorium.

For more information on Northwestern Theatre and Dance’s 2011-12 season, call (318) 357-4483 or go to theatre.nsula.edu.

Tickets can be purchased on-line

Northwestern State Theatre and Dance is now using an advanced ticketing system from a company named Vendini. Vendini Ticketing gives all guests the opportunity to buy their tickets online as well as by phone safely and securely. The system allows administrators to send e-tickets to guests that they can print out and bring with them for entry, or thermal tickets can be printed quickly at the door.

Not all of Theatre and Dance shows require reservations, but guests may now choose to reserve tickets in advance for any show they wish. This system will also help to speed up at-door ticket sales process and entry procedures for a more convenient overall experience for all guests.

Patron Members and Northwestern State students and LSMSA students cannot reserve tickets online. Those individuals must call the box office at (318) 357-4483.
Dr. Hiram “Pete” Gregory received a specially cast ring in recognition of his 50-year career at Northwestern State University. Gregory, a professor of anthropology who has instructed generations of students, was honored during morning commencement exercises in December.

Retiring employees Bill Rathburn, left, and Charles Shivers, right, were honored with a gumbo lunch prepared by Chuck Bourg and staff at the Physical Plant. Northwestern State thanks Bill and Charles for their years of dedicated service and wishes them an enjoyable retirement.

Congratulations to Dr. Susan Barnett and Roni Biscoe on completing the 40th annual Houston Marathon on Jan. 15. They were among about 13,000 runners who participated in the event.
Louisiana Poet Laureate Dr. Julie Kane will make two stops in Leesville Feb. 13 to offer presentations on humor in poetry and sign copies of her poetry volumes. Kane, a professor of English at Northwestern State University, makes public appearances and gives readings to promote poetry throughout the state.

Kane will first visit the Northwestern State University Leesville-Fort Polk campus library to talk with students and faculty and sign copies of her published books, which she is donating to the library.

Kane will appear at Vernon Parish Library from 3:15-5 p.m. where she will offer guidelines for humor in poetry, a base for a poet’s beginnings and show how those elements guide her work in her books Rhythm and Booze and Jazz Funeral. She will answer questions following the lecture as well as sign copies of her books. The program, open to the public, is made possible through a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and Vernon Parish Library.

Kane is serving a two-year term as Louisiana’s Poet Laureate. A native of Massachusetts, she holds degrees from Cornell University, Boston University and Louisiana State University. Kane won the Donald Justice Poetry Prize for Jazz Funeral. A former Fulbright Scholar, Kane was a winner of the National Poetry Series Open Competition for Rhythm & Booze. She was a finalist for one of the major prizes in American poetry, The Poets’ Prize for the Best Collection of American Poetry, and a judge for the 2005 National Book Award in Poetry. Her poems “Particle Physics” and “Used Book” were featured on National Public Radio’s The Writer’s Almanac.

For more information on Kane’s appearance in Leesville, contact the Vernon Parish Library at (337) 239-2027 or (800) 737-2231.

ADVANCE program offers challenging curriculum to broaden the horizons of young scholars

Northwestern State will host the 24th session of the ADVANCE Program for Young Scholars June 4-23. ADVANCE is the only residential program for gifted youth in the state of Louisiana that is affiliated with Duke University’s Talent Identification Program (TIP).

ADVANCE is a three-week residential program that offers a challenging and rewarding curriculum for gifted and talented students entering grades 8 through 12.

ADVANCE provides a unique learning environment designed to motivate and challenge academically gifted students and set them on a path toward a lifetime of high academic achievement. Students enroll in a single course for three weeks of in-depth study. They attend 105 hours of class during the program and cover an entire year’s worth of high school material or a semester of college level material in that three-week period.

Minimum ACT or SAT scores must be met for the various courses, which include the humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and computer science. Alternate admission status may be met, and admission into the program is based on the student’s qualifications and the application arrival date.

The residential life portion of ADVANCE is vital to the program, offering balanced leisure and cultural activities to complement the intensive academic curriculum. ADVANCE has built up a host of traditions and a strong community of staff and students that keep students returning year after year. The truly motivated student will enjoy a stimulating environment and a community of peers unlike any she or he has ever experienced, according to Dr. David Wood, director of ADVANCE.

“The ADVANCE Program offers a challenging and rewarding curriculum designed to broaden the horizons of the best students in the state and region,” said Wood. “We combine the need to improve academically with the desire to spend summer break in the traditional way---having fun.”

Applications are now being accepted for qualified students. For further information visit our website, http://advance.nsula.edu, or call (318) 357-4500.
CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Michelle Morris, Department of Teaching and Learning, College of Education and Human Development, received notification of a $1,000 award from Youth Service America for “Portion Distortion.” Dr. Terrie Poehl is collaborator.

Mr. Joseph D. Biscoe, Department of Psychology, College of Arts, Letters, Graduate Studies and Research, received notification of a $30,000 continuation award from the University of Texas-Austin for “Continuing the Efforts of LATTC at NSU.”

Ms. Claudia Triche, Department of Social Work, College of Arts, Letters, Graduate Studies and Research, received notification of a $150,000 award from the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services for “Title IV-E Child Welfare Training.”

Ms. Claudia Triche, Department of Social Work, College of Arts, Letters, Graduate Studies and Research, received notification a $15,500 continuation award from Louisiana State University Agricultural Center for “Louisiana Child Welfare Comprehensive Workforce Project – Year 4.”

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Dr. Jody Burks, Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science, Technology, and Business, submitted a proposal to the Louisiana Board of Regents for “In silico Modeling of RNA Structures.”

For more information regarding funding opportunities, visit ORSP’s website at www.nsula.edu/orsp.

Get Moving at the WRAC

The WRAC’s Saturday morning Zumba class has become so popular, it is held in the WRAC gym. Zumba is a Latin dance-inspired fitness program often referred to as a workout in disguise that appeals to a wide range of ages and fitness levels. The class begins at 10 a.m. on Saturdays and is open to students, faculty and staff who are members of the WRAC. For more information, call WRAC Wellness Coordinator Carmel Bourg at ext. 5269 or e-mail bourgca@nsula.edu.
Students at Northwestern State University Middle Lab School learned about the positive impact trees have on the environmental, as well as techniques for proper planting and care of trees as they joined the Northwestern State grounds crew in planting a live oak tree in front of the school. The tree is one of dozens recently planted along Tarleton Drive that will eventually form a scenic allée. January is Louisiana Arbor Month and Northwestern State is a designated Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation.

“These trees are strategically placed and will grow as wide as 100 feet,” explained Grounds horticulturist Gary Nolley, “The live oak tree is a legacy tree, which means we plant them today for future generations to enjoy.”

Nolley told students that trees affect their immediate surroundings by reducing noise and wind, lowering temperatures and increasing beautification. He encouraged students to envision how the trees would look in 25, 50 and 100 years.

The message was well received.

“The simple planting of a tree can affect the lives of our children,” said sixth grader Aaron Foster.

“Since it’s going to be here for so long, it’s a sort of a family tree,” said eighth grader Kylee Brundige. “Since it takes so long to grow, our kids and grandkids may walk by here some day and think, ‘Somebody did this to help us.’”

The sixth, seventh and eighth grade students selected to participate were those who received Principal Ben Lagrone’s Round Table Award for the first nine weeks of school.

Northwestern State Middle Lab students helped the NSU grounds crew plant a live oak tree in front of their school while learning about the positive effects trees have on the environments. The selected students were those who received Principal Ben Lagrone’s Round Table Award. On the front row from left are seventh graders Taylor Hudson, Troy Cannon and Mariah Jones; eighth graders Omari Irchirl, Evana Parker and Kylee Brundige and sixth graders Aaron Foster, Britney Turner and Elizabeth deVargas. On the back row are Lagrone, Gary Nolley, grounds horticulturist; Steve Gruesbeck, director of Service-Learning; Dr. Michelle Morris, assistant professor in the College of Education and Human Development; and Steve Roberts, Natchitoches Parish extension agent with the LSU AgCenter.
Northwestern State University partnered with the City of Natchitoches and the LSU AgCenter to plant fruit trees at L.P. Vaughn Elementary in celebration of Louisiana Arbor Month. The City donated two pear trees as a gift to enhance an on-going school gardening initiative coordinated through Northwestern State’s College of Education and Human Development. L.P. Vaughn is Northwestern State’s professional development school.

“The fruit trees are a great addition to our school garden program and lessons about nutrition awareness,” said Dr. Michelle Morris, an assistant professor and a Master Gardener. “The Master Gardeners in Natchitoches are looking forward to teaching the children how to care for the trees. We hope the children can enjoy fresh fruit from the trees for years to come.”

Morris began the school garden project more than a year ago as a way to connect university students and faculty with at-risk youngsters in an endeavor that combines elements of teaching, learning and volunteerism. Creating a school garden lends itself to hands-on instruction in several academic disciplines, as well as nutrition and healthy eating habits, she said. The initiatives align with Northwestern State’s commitment to service-learning and community volunteerism.

“Last year, the Louisiana Learn and Serve Commission provided start-up funds for a school garden and campus beautification activities,” Morris said. “This spring, Youth Serve America and United-Health worked together to provide funding to expand the service-learning activities.”

Morris and Dr. Terrie Poehl, assistant professor, are leading a project called Portion Distortion, which focuses on nutrition awareness and exercise. First grade students in Martha Fontcuberta and Alexandra Antwine’s classes at L.P. Vaughn are learning how to eat well-balanced meals with correct portion sizes. For the service activity, students will teach other classes in their school about healthy foods and will continue working in the garden and improving the school grounds for exercise. They are currently growing cabbage plants as part of a cabbage patch trail in schools across the state, a gardening program coordinated by the LSU AgCenter, Morris said.

“In the yearly CalorieLab obesity study Louisiana ranked fifth in the Fattest State Ranking,” Poehl said. “Doctors have linked obesity to increased risks of a variety of conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, arthritis and heart disease. Children need to know the amount and type of foods to eat to remain healthy. This begins with students in this class learning about the types of food to eat and the difference between a serving and a portion.”

Poehl said Portion Distortion helps children learn the best foods to eat and proper quantities.

“The goal is to help all develop good, lifelong eating habits,” Poehl said. “The nutrition knowledge could influence the children’s decision of the items to plant in their garden.”

Steve Roberts, Natchitoches Parish extension agent with the LSU AgCenter, distributed printed materials about trees to the classes and brought along Taylor Roberts, a Green Ambassador, to help plant the pear trees.

“They love the garden proj-
ect,” Antwine said. “In the last two years, we have touched on every single concept we’re supposed to teach – science, social studies and English/language arts -- with hands-on learning.”

“The service aspect teaches them that they can make a difference in their community,” Fontcuberta added.

Earlier this month, in preparation for the tree planting, the elementary students learned about different types of trees, bark, leaves and seeds and how to read the growth rings of a tree to determine its age. Planting fruit trees donated by the City enhances their service project by helping the environment and improving their school grounds, Morris said.

“The City of Natchitoches and Keep Natchitoches Beautiful are proud to partner with Northwestern State University, L.P. Vaughn Elementary, the LSU Ag Center and other local groups to celebrate Arbor Month in Natchitoches,” said Courtney Hornsby, Natchitoches director of Programming and Promotions. “The City has been recognized for more than a decade as a Tree City USA and we take great pride in the care of our trees. Planting trees at L.P. Vaughn helps compliment ongoing efforts to educate our young people about the importance of protecting the environment.”

Sympathy

Doris Reeves, mother of Mary Reeves, Department of Mathematics, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at Grace Home in Shreveport. Funeral services were Saturday, Dec. 10 at Hillcrest Memorial Funeral Home in Bossier City. A plant was sent to services from the NSU Floral Fund.

Mary Ann Burke, mother of Greg Burke, Athletic Director, passed away Sunday Dec. 18 in Akron, Ohio, after a brief illness. Funeral services were held Thursday, Dec. 22 at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church followed by burial at St. Joseph’s Cemetery in Alliance, Ohio. The NSU Floral Fund sent a plant to the services.

Edward R. Chandler of Montgomery, father of Carrie Smith, administrative assistant in the Graduate School, passed away Sunday, Dec. 25. He was buried in Mars Hill Cemetery with full military honors on Dec. 28.

The Floral Fund also sent plants to services for Louise “Jo” Carroll, a retired university executive secretary, and Dr. Charles “Red” Thomas, retired vice president for Academic Affairs.