

# Young essayists raise \$1,500

By DEBRA A. GOLDEN  
Wake Weekly Senior Reporter

A combined writing and fund-raising project at Wakefield Middle School raised \$1,547 to split between two charities.

Third- and fourth-period students in Tim Tharrington's sixth-grade language arts classes participated in an evaluative writing project in which they researched various charities.

Students found out whether charities helped people or animals, found out how much money is donated annually to each charity, whether services are local or global and more, Tharrington said.

"Charities chosen varied from the World Wildlife Fund to the

Salvation Army to St. Jude's Children's Hospital," he said.

In addition to writing about their chosen charity, students raised money by donating, asking their parents for funds and wrapping holiday gifts at a bookstore.

In school, "students read these essays to each other in a bracket tournament (like a basketball tournament), ultimately resulting in one winning charity per class," Tharrington explained.

The winning organization in each class received the money donated and collected by those students.

Jena Phillips emerged as the third-period winner. She wrote about InterAct, a Wake County organization which supports victims of domestic violence and provides educational support to students at various schools.

Jena read her winning paper to the class and presented InterAct employees with a \$797.04 check on behalf of the class. She also donated an iPod charger, one of her Christmas gifts, explaining she does not have an iPod and wanted another child to be able to use it.

Tharrington praised his third-period students for collecting nearly \$800, which "beat the next class by more than \$30. You definitely pounded my old record." You beat that by more than \$500," Tharrington oversees the contest and writing competition each year.

Allison Strickland, develop-



Sixth-grader Jena Phillips reads her winning paper to the class. Allison Strickland and Laura Hilton, both of InterAct, are on the right.



Lexi DeFalco reads her winning paper which supports the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

ment officer for InterAct, told class members funds donated to the organization help "keep the lights on" and pay for food and other necessities for clients.

"We want when people come to us they don't have to worry about paying anything," she said. "The money you raised is very significant. You guys get it — it's not just your parents' job to make

sure good things happen."

Tharrington asked Strickland what InterAct would be able to do with the money the class is donating. She said it takes about \$2,500 to support a family of four staying in a shelter situation for eight weeks, "so it covers almost a month of safety for a whole family," she said.

"Here's an opportunity for something you did in school to change someone's life or it

might just save someone else's life," Tharrington said.

Strickland added, "every day eight to 10 victims come through our door."

The organization serves about 30,000 victims of domestic violence a year — roughly equivalent to the student population at N.C. State, she said.

Lexi DeFalco's charity won in Tharrington's fourth-period class. She wrote about the Make-A-Wish Foundation and her class donated \$749.46 to Lindsey Ranck for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Eastern North Carolina.

**"It's not just your parents' job to make sure good things happen."**

Allison Strickland of InterAct

# WHS names leader

Middle school's Tripp Crayton returns as principal.

By DEBRA A. GOLDEN  
Wake Weekly Senior Reporter

Former assistant principal Tripp Crayton returned to Wakefield High last week with a new title — principal.

Word about his promotion from the middle school had barely gotten out before he transferred up the hill from the middle to the high school. The former Wakefield Middle principal took on his leadership role at the high school Jan. 6. He replaces Mark Savage, who left WHS to become the first principal at the Heritage High.

It was a fast transition — so quick, Crayton said, he has to think fast when he identifies himself as principal of Wakefield High.

New moniker aside, Crayton said he is thrilled to be back at the high school. "It's been a personal goal of mine since I was a student teacher in 1996 to be a high school principal," he said.

Crayton is a former high school teacher who began his career at Riverside High in Durham.

He later was promoted to associate principal there, then served in the same capacity at a middle school in Durham.

In 2004 he began working at Wakefield High as assistant principal, then assistant principal of instruction. He moved to the middle school in 2007.

There are more students at the high school now — nearly 3,000 on two campuses — and Crayton will oversee 230 staff members. When he left, there were 175.

"There are about 500 more students," he added. When he left the high school three years ago, administrators were planning to open the ninth-grade center on N.C. 98 in Wake Forest. Now the ninth-grade center is full.

While the high school is even larger than it was then, Crayton said, "the students haven't changed. Many know me through Wakefield Middle."

Crayton placed a high priority on positive behavior and character education at the middle school.

He said he thinks that, coupled with the dedication of the middle school staff, kept suspension rates down.

"There's a positive vibe down there," he said of Wakefield Middle. "I'm glad we were able to maintain that."

In addition, Crayton pointed out the middle school was given the academic honor of School of Distinction each year he was there.

Now that Crayton has reached his professional goal of leading a high school, he said, "I plan to be here for a long while. I don't see myself going anywhere else."

Crayton lives with his wife, Jennifer, in Raleigh. He is a native of Garner.



Crayton

# Singers take Dear Edwina to Atlanta stage

By DEBRA A. GOLDEN  
Wake Weekly Senior Reporter

High school freshmen Jordan Henderson, John-Michael Salyer and Lexi Uva, along with seventh-grader Adam

Pritts, may be competing in the world's largest musical theater events this weekend, but they participate for the fun of it.

All four are students at Durant Road Musical Theatre, and are headed to Atlanta,

Ga., to compete in the Festival. They, along with 12 of their peers, will present scenes from *Dear Edwina Junior*.

The musical takes a comical look at a young girl trying to figure out her own special place in the world. Edwina, jealous of her brother and sister's successes, decides she can find her niche by giving advice, and puts on a show for the neighbors each Sunday in her garage.

Jordan, who plays Myra, Edwina's older sister, has studied musical theater for about a year. Prior to that, she sang with her family at sing-along events such as Christmasine. She also plays piano.

The Franklin Academy freshman said she tried musical theater and "just kept going."

John-Michael, a freshman at Wake Forest-Rolesville High School, said he was invited by Durant Road Musical Theater director Debbie Rollins to participate in a show. "I found out I could sing at the audition," he said.

He's studied musical theater for about a year and a half. John-Michael said he likes the experience of "being someone not yourself and singing and dancing while doing it."

Wakefield High freshman Lexi Uva has taken musical theatre classes since the fourth



Christopher Rollins (left) and Adam Pritts rehearse during Frankingfest, a selection from *Dear Edwina Junior*.

grade. Being on stage, she said, "lets you give out emotions you can't give out in real life. It's an outlet for me."

Wakefield Middle School seventh-grader Adam Pritts, who plays an obnoxious neighborhood boy named Frank in *Dear Edwina Junior*, discovered the stage at age 8 when his mother spotted Rollins' studio while driving around Raleigh.

"My mom told me that she thought it would be good for me," Adam said. "(She) thought I was really dramatic all the time."

The three-day Junior Theater Festival is presented by Music

Theatre International and includes workshops and tickets to a professional production of *Annie* at the Fox Theatre.

Students picked *Dear Edwina Junior* to perform because they felt it best fit the personality of the group.

This is the second year singers from Durant Road Musical Theatre have participated in the invitation-only festival.

Additional students in the cast include homeschool sophomore and Wake Forest resident Rachel Pottern and Wakefield High freshmen Christopher Rollins, Daniel Burnell and Olivia Arakelian.



The Wake Weekly/Debra A. Golden

Jordan Henderson (front) plays Myra in *Dear Edwina Junior*. Behind her are Grace Gibbons, Kendall McCarthy and Kelsie Jacobs.

# BUS STOP



## W-F-R coach to be honored at MLK Jr. celebration

Wake Forest residents are invited to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday by honoring Wake Forest-Rolesville at Heritage High head football coach Reggie Lucas who led his team

to a fourth straight conference championship last season.

The coach and his team will be recognized during the town's annual MLK Jr. celebration Thursday, Jan. 21, at Friendship Chapel Baptist Church on Friendship Chapel Road.

Dinner is at 6 p.m.; no RSVP is necessary. The program begins at 7 p.m. and includes recognition of students who won contests for art, writing and creative performance.

Dr. Tom Jackson, pastor emeritus at Wake Forest Baptist Church, is the guest speaker. The public is invited to attend the free event, now in its 16th year.

## Magnet elementary offers drama, dance performances

Drama students at Powell GT Magnet Elementary perform the musical *Dear Edwina Junior* tonight (Thursday) at 7 p.m. Dance, orchestra and band students will

perform Thursday, Jan. 21, at 7 p.m. in the school's multipurpose room.

Admission to both shows is free.

## Franklinton Business Alliance discusses projects

Franklinton Business Alliance members meet at the high school today (Thursday), from 3:15-4:45 p.m. to discuss upcoming projects.

## Magnet school tour dates set

Magnet school tours are available for Wake County parents, starting this month.

Parents can tour middle school magnets at 9 a.m. or noon, Tuesday, Jan. 19.

Magnet elementary school tours open at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 21. Parents are invited to apply to magnet schools online Feb. 1-21.

The WCPSS Magnet Resource Center offers

parent information sessions every first and third Tuesday at 10 a.m.

For a list of Wake County magnet school options, or more information, log onto [www.wcpss.net](http://www.wcpss.net) or [www.wcpss.net/magnet](http://www.wcpss.net/magnet).

## Year-round middle school questions addressed

Parents who'd like to know more about year-round middle schools are invited to a meeting at Heritage Middle Monday, Jan. 25, from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

The Q&A session is designed to allow parents to ask general questions about year-round schools.

Principal Dhedra Lassiter wants to give parents familiar with traditional calendar schools a chance to find out about year-round schools.

Parents of rising sixth-graders will have a chance in March and April to learn about Heritage Middle specifically, Lassiter said.