

Retired Teacher Spotlight

Hannah Wood and Pooh Griffin

Donna Hensley taught for 31 years. She taught 7th and 8th grade Math and Science, High School Biology, Kindergarten, First grade, Third grade, and Fourth grade. She also taught a Computer Reading class.

Ms. Hensley retired sometime in June, 2014. She said she loves being retired, but what she misses most was, "You all, the students", she said.

Now that she is retired, in her spare time she shops, travels, cooks new recipes, refurbishes old furniture, and does basically whatever she wants.

In her 31 years of teaching, one of the craziest things that happened to her was when she was getting ready for school one morning. She couldn't turn on a light because her husband worked all night. So, she came to school and one of her students told her that she had one green shoe and one blue shoe on!



Above: Hensley met KY Wildcat's center Josh Harrellson in Maui, HI during a Thanksgiving tournament.

Britton

University of the Cumberlands, and a group of Sudduth's music majors. "This is a wonderful educational opportunity for the elementary school band students to get to hear great collegiate musicians as well as give In the college students a chance to work one on one with students in the public schools," said Britton. "The

students at Wallins Elementary School are extremely excited about getting better at their instruments. There are many opportunities that await these musically gifted students."

With the number of kids interested in band increasing, Britton tapped his resources and called upon the surrounding colleges to help make the Wallins band a quality program. "This is very common and normal for college music students to get experience working with younger students in the public schools," added Britton. "It has been a breath of fresh air for me, but the students get to interact with college music students and see where music can take them. My students learn that when they do go to college, there are students that study medicine, science, math and others, but still play instruments. Not only that, the students get excited to hear other growing musicians at higher levels and learning from them. It is also a chance for me to interact with a college director and get their opinions on things such as rehearsal technique, teaching strategies, classroom management, and it can even help college students with their own individual playing. "

"Music is such a positive tool for engaging students in meaningful and productive skills. By playing an instrument or learning to sing in a group, students learn wonderful attributes such as teamwork, self-discipline, self-worth, creativity, independence, responsibility, just to name a few," said Sudduth. "Our goal is to physically be present in classrooms and rehearsals to assist directors by coaching sectionals, giving one-on-one lessons, helping with music or instrument maintenance and being a second set of eyes and ears for the teacher. Our most important goal is to inspire young musicians by performing for them, helping them learn and improve, and by encouraging them to excel at music and as a person. By setting a great example we hope to inspire them to take pride in what they are learning and to continue to be part of a wonderful activity --band or choir -- that is a positive influence throughout their school years and hopefully on into adulthood."



Left: The University of the Cumberlands Collegiate Chapter of National Association for Music Education (CNAfME) recently visited Wallins Elementary School. They are committed to helping Mr. Britton and to help grow our band program.

Santa

he has visited today are home playing with their toys. Jacee Rouse, Mike Howard's niece, states that "He is doing a great thing. This is not just at Christmas, but year round". Uncle Mikey, as Jacee calls him, also brings cards and ice cream treats to the residents of a local nursing home. Besides that, Jacee says that he raises money for charities such as Ronald McDonald House and Christ's Hands which is a local food bank. Mike Howard knows that it's not about what people give or what they get, but it's all about the heart that people put into it. He hopes to one day pass this tradition on to his son, Jordan, but for now he continues to be The Mountain Santa.

begin to pour in during October and continue throughout the Christmas season. People from all over the area including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church groups, etc. come to Wallins Creek to sort, clean, and wrap all kinds of gifts. Then the gifts are loaded. This is a sight to behold as a long line of trucks are grouped by age and begin an early morning trip that sometimes lasts until midnight as Mike gets ready to be Santa. In his Santa suit, Mike greets every child with a hug and poses for pictures as his helpers gathers gifts and distribute to the children.

Tired but happy, Mike Howard finally finishes his route. He knows that the same children

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