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New Grant Promotes Children's Literature "About Us"

Dr. Jonda C. McNair, an assistant professor of reading education, was recently awarded a grant by the Research Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of English to conduct a study, "I Never Knew There Were So Many Books About Us: Parents and Children Reading African American Children's Literature Together." This study will examine what occurs when African American parents and children (in grades K-3) are exposed to an abundance of children's books that are written by and about African Americans. Dr. McNair, with the assistance of the Kappa Zeta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., will conduct a series of five monthly workshops at a church in Anderson in which she will read aloud and model ways to respond to African American children's literature through art, discussion and writing.

African American parents and children who participate in the study will receive approximately 40 to 50 African American children's books that will keep. In addition, each child will receive a literacy backpack with a journal, people-color crayons and markers, along with an African American rag doll. The study will culminate with a presentation by James E. Ransome, a well-known illustrator whose books have earned him a number of accolades such as a Coretta Scott King Award, an NAACP Image Award and a declaration by the Children's Book Council as "one of 75 authors and illustrators everyone should know." Several of Ransome's books, such as *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* and *Visiting Day*, have been featured on the award-winning television series "Reading Rainbow." After his presentation, Ransome will conduct a book-signing to autograph the children's books, and the children will be able to share their responses to his books. As a doctoral student, Dr. McNair studied with one of the premier scholars in African American children's literature, Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, at The Ohio State University. Dr. McNair may be contacted at jmcnair@clemsun.edu or (864) 656-1577.



Dr. Jonda C. McNair, assistant professor of reading education

Project ACUMEN Fosters Minority Enrollment in Nursing

Project ACUMEN (Academic Collaboration for Underrepresented Minority Enrollment in Nursing) is a three-year program funded by the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professions. The program fosters enrollment of individuals from underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and economically/educationally disadvantaged backgrounds into Clemson's baccalaureate nursing program.

The program primarily targets male and female high school students as well as college enrollees who wish to transfer into nursing. Recruiting activities include presentations to high school health sciences classes and Saturday College workshops. During these activities, students get an overview of career options in nursing and other health-care areas. At the Saturday College workshops, students engage in "real-life" nursing activities and receive information that gives them insight into the nursing profession. Project ACUMEN also seeks to establish pipelines with local elementary and middle schools to foster early interest in a nursing career.

Student success and graduation rates are enhanced by targeted retention activities once the students enroll in the School of Nursing. These activities include tutoring, peer and professional mentoring, and guidance in using Clemson's academic resources.

Project ACUMEN's acceptance in school districts throughout the state is certainly welcome, as evidenced by the successful, strategic partnerships that have been formed to reach as many potential medical professionals as possible. The project works with a number of Clemson programs, including Academic Outreach, Biology Merit Exam and Emerging Scholars. Other collaborative partners include the S.C. Area Health Education Consortium and selected colleges and universities. By increasing the number of racial/ethnic minority nursing graduates, Project ACUMEN is improving the future delivery of health care for the people of South Carolina, particularly those in medically underserved rural communities.



Linda Gilbert, program coordinator for ACUMEN



Project ACUMEN at Work

At left: Colleton Medical Center nurse Kate Matzinger works with high school students during a Saturday College workshop in Walterboro, S.C. Project ACUMEN provides insight and instruction so high school students get a small taste of what it's like to be a nurse. *Above:* Linda Gilbert, ACUMEN program coordinator (center), sits with students at Brown Elementary School in Walhalla, S.C. At this age, the children learn about the different fields of nursing, discuss their personal experiences with industry professionals and receive materials that promote nursing as a career.

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