

Discovery Education opening new doors at Patrician

■ PA is first rural school in state to use program

By Dee Ann Campbell
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BUTLER – “The possibility of opening our students’ eyes to adventures beyond Choctaw County ... should be nothing but a positive experience for all of Patrician Academy.”

Local parent Nena Beth Morris gives a glowing report about a new program now being used at her child’s school. The program, she says, gives students opportunities for learning that might not be possible without it.

For the students at Patrician who are using the program, the possibilities are endless.

Earlier this school year, Patrician became the first rural school in the state to implement an exciting new internet learning program that makes thousands of visual instructional materials available in the classroom. Made possible through a partnership between The Discovery Channel and Alabama Public Television, the Discovery Education United Streaming program is opening new avenues of learning for Patrician students.

From virtual field trips to video instructional tools, the program offers unlimited access to information that can be integrated into the regular classroom curriculum – all in a visual way that draws the attention of young people. Whether it is slides of human tissue and videos of exotic plant or animal



These seniors in Mrs. Brett Evans’ class at Patrician have been taking advantage of the new Discovery Education United Streaming program which give them access to thousands of videos and informational tools to supplement what they learn in the classroom.

life for biology class or video depictions of a Shakespearean play for literature class, the program helps teachers make lessons come alive for a visually-oriented generation of students.

“The best thing about this is that it’s so visual, so alive,” says Patrician counselor Lolaine Lewis. “Students relate to it and learn so much more because it’s visual.”

The technology allows teachers to access information and videos through such sources as Alabama Public Television (APT), the Alabama Reading Initiative, the McWane Science Center, National Geographic Online, and NOVA

Online, to name a few. “There is so much available to the teachers through this,” adds Lewis. “50,000 sources and more.”

At the beginning of the school year, Star Discovery Educator Sharon Sizemore, of Vestavia Hills City Schools in Birmingham, visited Patrician to instruct teachers on how to integrate the Discovery program in their classrooms.

“We were fortunate to have Sharon Sizemore to come and do an in-service for us,” says science teacher Brett Evans. Although other classrooms will be implementing the program at Patrician, Evans’ middle

and high school science classes have been the first to utilize the program this year.

“Mrs. Evans has been using it already,” says Lewis, “and has seen big results. We’re already seeing instant success.”

In particular, Evans says that she often chooses to use APT Plus Online to supplement her teaching materials. In addition to video teaching supplements, she also cites other resources available through the program, such as lesson plans that incorporate the videos, quizzes to go along with the lesson plans, and even professional development opportunities for teachers

– all geared to the Alabama Course of Study.

“For any particular subject that I may be teaching, I can find so many things to add to it,” says Evans. “There are so many ways to use this. You can choose it by grade, by subject, or by topic.”

Classroom equipment and technology needed to implement Discovery program in each classroom include video projectors and screens, as well as high-speed internet capabilities. Once that technology becomes available in other classrooms, the program will be used for all grade levels, even for students as young as Kindergarten.

“Brandy Weed, our K5 teacher, is very excited about it,” says Lewis. “She has been involved in the training for this and will be using it with her students.”

Getting in on the beginnings of the Discovery program has allowed Patrician the opportunity to provide the highest level of instruction without some of the high costs that typically go along with such programs.

“We got in on this at a time when it was being offered at no cost,” explains Lewis. “They wanted to get the program into rural schools, and we were able to get it. In the near future, schools who want to sign up for this will have to pay about \$1500. We were so excited to be able to get in on this in the beginning. The only expense we’ve had is the equipment.”

The program is allowing the school to gain instructional tools that may not have been possible in such a rural area – an opportunity that is already stirring the excitement of teachers, students, and parents alike.

“These students can go on virtual field trips to see the pyramids in Egypt, or anywhere else in the world,” says Lewis, “places that they would never get to see without it.”

According to Morris, the opportunities that the program opens for her own child – and for the rest of the Patrician student body – are endless.

“The teachers will be able to present material in a new way to our students,” says Morris. “And the students will have the opportunity not to just listen to the teacher discuss the material, but to experience the topics visually.”



SCHS says ‘Happy Valentines Day, Willow Trace!’

GILBERTOWN -- Citizens at the Willow Trace Nursing Center received beautiful hand-made cards and heart-filled messages from students at Southern Choctaw High School on Valentine’s Day. The project was sponsored by the Student Government Association with help from National Beta Club, Art class, and members of the student body from grades 7-12. Students used creative design patterns and color schemes to complete their individual card. The students really put a lot of time and thought in to each card design. The Student Government Association would like to thank the Beta Club and the student body for their help to make others have a brighter day. We hope that the senior citizens enjoy the cards that were created with them in mind bearing messages of kindness and love. (information by Patricia Miller)

Photo by Clint Lee



Choctaw Sun photo by Dee Ann Campbell

SCA awards science fair winners in 9-12

TOXEY – Students in grades 9-12 at South Choctaw Academy competed in the annual science fair on Tuesday, with the following students winning top positions: (pictured in no particular order) Ashley Blue, Lauren Jackson, Megan Carney, Austin Butler, Laura Abston, and Jessie Chadwick. These students will compete in the District Science Fair to take place next week. Honorable Mention winners were: Jordan Mosley, Brent Donald, Joshua Manley, Matt Phillips, Matt Etheridge, Jacob Sullivan, and Arielle Campbell.