

AND THE WINNER IS...
Marie Hunnicutt, MECHS 2010 Teacher of the Year

Once in a while a person comes along that truly makes a difference in others' lives. Such a person is rare and, in most cases, extremely hard to find. However, this is not the case at Mayland Early College High School. The old saying, "Good things come in small packages," definitely exemplifies the Mayland Early College High School teacher of the year, Marie Hunnicutt. Even though she is small and often mistaken for a student herself, Marie Hunnicutt explodes with enthusiasm, excitement and charisma in the classroom.

When you first enter MECHS, the first classroom that you encounter is the English Classroom. However, on any given day, any person that walks through the front door realizes very quickly that Marie Hunnicutt is no ordinary English teacher. Today, for example, Ms. Hunnicutt's freshman English class is completing an assignment spurred by the students' study of Homer's *The Odyssey*.

Hunnicutt decided to have students do something a little non-traditional with the *Odyssey's* main character, Odysseus. "The assignment was to create a new trial or tribulation that Odysseus would face and how he might react to it," says Hunnicutt. "The students were having a little trouble grasping the elements of the story. I thought by having them complete a chapter about Odysseus and how he would react in different circumstances in the form of a children's book may help them understand and comprehend the important elements of this great novel."

Students, working in small, interdependent groups, have finished their projects, complete with illustrations, and will now read them to the children in Phillips-Gwaltney Preschool, who share the building with early college high school students. "Adding the element of presentation only enhanced the students' work," said Hunnicutt. "I am so proud of what they accomplished!"

Hunnicutt began working at Mayland Early College High School last year. "I was enthusiastic about beginning work in a non-traditional high school," says Hunnicutt. "Being part of something different and something new is a wonderful experience!"

Angela Burleson, MECHS Principal, is amazed that Hunnicutt gets so much done in a short amount of time. "Ms. Hunnicutt understands that not all students learn the same. She tailors her classes to include different strategies and modifications to meet the individual needs of her students. To do this requires extra time, supreme patience and God-given talent."

When asked about the best thing about MECHS, Hunnicutt radiates a smile that is blinding, "The kids. I love my students!"

Hunnicutt graduated from UNC-Charlotte in 2007 with a her degree in English, Secondary Education. She is now enrolled in graduate school at Appalachian State University.



Photo cutline left to right: Ethan Huskins, Colton Burse with preschooler Addison Herbert, Marie Hunnicutt, Francesca Duncan, Caitlin Pittman, Mark Cagle, Chrissy Glenn and Ayden Glenn.