



News Release

Missouri Western State College • 4525 Downs Drive • St. Joseph, MO 64507 • (816) 271-5649

Contact: Kristy Hill

Phone: (816)-271-5649

Title: Public Relations/Marketing Director

Email: hillk@mwsc.edu

WESTERN HOLDS SECOND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL SCHOOL TRACK MEET

St. Joseph, Mo. — May 21, 2004—Fourteen students from Missouri Western State College recently organized a track meet on campus for over 300 elementary school students. The college students were members of the elementary school physical education course taught by Dr. Nannette Wolford, associate professor of physical education, and they were responsible for organizing, setting up and running all events.

For two hours, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders from six private schools in St. Joseph participated in the five events: 100-meter dash, 50-meter dash, 400-meter open, 400-meter relay and 800-meter relay. This year's participating schools were Cathedral of St. Joseph, Children First, Prescott Seventh Day Adventist, St. Joseph Christian, St. Francis Xavier and St. Patrick.

Dr. Wolford said one of the goals of the meet is to build organizational and planning skills among the college students, and she believed this was accomplished. "It was awesome. The Western students were involved in the real thing—they worked with children at an athletic event that they set up and organized."

Senior Jenny Pawlowski from St. Joseph, a member of the class, said she gained a lot of experience by helping to plan the event and running it that day. She liked having the hands-on experience with the children, and interacting with the area schools.

"I loved it. I thought it was a lot of fun, and it went smoothly," she said. But she credited the success of the event to Dr. Wolford, who did a lot of advance work, also.

Reis Wright, a junior from Platte City, Mo., said that besides being the starter for the events, his favorite part of helping with the meet was just "hanging out with the kids and becoming friends." He said it was helpful that he'd met some of the same elementary students while serving as a teacher assistant in the schools this past semester.

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Another goal of the track meet is to promote physical activity, teamwork and confidence among the elementary-aged children, Dr. Wolford said. “The students get an opportunity to try their best and compete against other schools on the Western track, which is a thrill for them. It makes them feel so important.”

“I thought they were awesome,” she said of the elementary students. “No one complained to me, and they had smiling faces when they came across the finish line, no matter where they finished. They also cheered on a student who was way behind to help him finish the race. It gave me goose bumps and a lump in my throat.”

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.