

## 2010 Runner-Up CEAO Teacher of the Year



Leslie Scheper, English teacher at William K. Willis High School, Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility has been chosen as the Correctional Education Association of Ohio Runner-Up 2010 Teacher of the Year. Leslie received her award and was recognized at the CEAO Conference held in September, 2010 at the Sawmill Creek Resort, Huron, Ohio.

Leslie shared the following biography with CEAO:

Leslie grew up in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She earned a bachelor's degree in Social Welfare from Ohio Wesleyan University. One of her college internships involved working at the United Methodist Children's Home in Worthington. She assisted in both the residential and school settings and began to develop interests in both education and serving and

assisting troubled youth.

She married in college and she and her husband returned to Yellow Springs after graduation. Sadly, they lost their first child to Down Syndrome. Her husband was offered a job transfer to Fort Lauderdale and they seized the opportunity to make a fresh start. They spent 25 years in Florida. During this time, she never lost interest in social work and teaching. Leslie tutored at "The Language Exchange", a private business offering English instruction to foreign business executives and volunteered in various capacities. She served on the city's human rights commission and as an elder in her church. They were blessed with two more sons and she became very involved in their schooling.

Florida offered a "Transition to Teaching" program in an effort to recruit and alternatively certify teachers. She enrolled not only for teaching certification in English, but in a graduate program and earned the Masters of Liberal Studies, concentrating in writing and adolescent literature as well as fulfilling the requirements for certification. Leslie stated, "Well, most of us know that life is what happens when we are busy making other plans. My husband was nearly killed in a car crash. Many months of hospitalization and rehab later, Mike returned home, but his capacity for work was never the same. We sold our business. Mike was free of the pressures of business ownership and the demands of employees and clients and I was free to pursue my real career goal, teaching". She attended an education job fair and was hired by the principal of a middle school located five minutes from home. She jumped into eighth grade English in a multi-cultural environment. She said, "the Haitians didn't like the Dominicans, the Colombians hated the Nicaraguans, the Cubans looked down on the Puerto Ricans, and the Mexicans languished at the bottom of the totem pole. None of this put me off; I had found my true vocation."

One of her children had chosen Ohio State for college, one had yet to start middle school, and her parents in the Midwest weren't getting any younger, so four years ago they decided the best environment for them would be back in Ohio. She felt fortunate to find the teaching job at SCJF which combined her education and love of social work with her training and dedication to the teaching of English. She states, "I continue to find purpose and meaning in my work every day. My primary goal is to assist every student in appreciating both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of education and to develop the desire to become a lifelong learner".