

CIS Site Coordinator for Madison Middle School Named



Kim Hopson at the Middle School helps a student with a social studies project.

Staff Reports

The students of Madison Middle School are seeing a new face around their campus lately. Kim Hopson is the site coordinator at the middle school for Communities In Schools (CIS). The CIS site coordinator tutors students and links volunteers with students in need of special instruction, but the job can be so much more.

Many of us have no idea what many of today's students go through on a daily basis. Many students get on a bus long before most people are up - 6 a.m. will find the earliest buses on the roads with nearly all of them on the roads by 6:30 a.m. That means many kids have no breakfast. "I try to bring in some food each day, nothing big just some crackers or something, because the eighth graders don't eat until 12:30 p.m. and they're hungry," Hopson said.

Hopson comes from a history of many years working with middle school aged children, or young adults as they would prefer to be called. "I came out of college with an art degree and then got a masters in agricultural education, but one of my first jobs was at a camp as the aquatics director and swimming instructor and the environment of children just got to me," she said. Hopson received her degrees from UNC-A and NCA&T and has worked as a bank teller, but found work without kids was not fulfilling.

With the help of volunteers and staff, Hopson works with 17 MMS students that have been referred by their teachers, usually in math and language arts. "Right now, I only have three volunteers for as little as three

hours per week and one who is here every other day. On a typical day I see nine or ten students and although I prefer to work one-on-one with them, I often must go with two at a time," she said. "I've worked in Yancey and Mitchell Counties in their afterschool and 4-H programs for many years and this aged child, 11 to 14 years old, is just my joy. I have two teenage boys and my mother was a social worker, so I guess I inherited some of her traits."

When one becomes a volunteer, often these kids need mentoring or a friend instead of a tutor. "I give them trust and respect, just like relating with an adult, and I get it back. These kids are fun to be around and when a light goes on, it's a great feeling," Hopson added. "I've learned that I can't be fake or phony around middle schoolers, and I like that about them. I can carry on a conversation with them, unlike younger students." Hopson is a perfect fit for Madison Middle School as she has grant writing skills (which CIS relies on each year for funding), many years of experience with this age group, and the passion to improve the lives of young people.

If you are retired or have a few extra hours each week, you may want to consider becoming a volunteer at Madison Middle School or Madison High, Brush Creek, and Mars Hill Elementary schools where CIS serves students. As a volunteer you can make a difference by helping elementary, middle, or high school students reach their potential.

Community In Schools of Madison County performs its important work through the generosity of communi-

ty members who support Madison County children through donations of time and funds. For more information about CISM, how to volunteer, or to donate to its programs for Madison County students, contact Executive Director Bruce Murray at 649-9276 extension 248 or online at: bmurray@madisonk12.net. Visit the CISM website: <http://madison.communitiesinschools.org>