The Community Education Department at the Vandalia Education Center continues to grow and expand its offerings to the community.

The following numbers reflect actual enrollment for 2007 and 2008 in Community Education classes.

- Total enrollment for 2007 – 166
- Total enrollment for 2008 – 308

Our Fall 2008 classes are still taking registration for classes beginning in late October, November, and December, so we anticipate those numbers will increase even further.

We continue to offer a variety of Computer Understanding classes on Saturdays geared mostly toward senior citizens and novice computer users. These have proven to be very popular, and we are pleased to have a new instructor for these classes with us. Marissa Shoemaker is a high school teacher here in Vandalia, and is very excited about the opportunity to join the Kaskaskia College family in this capacity, and has been doing a wonderful job!

We continue to see an increase of individuals taking part in the Seniors College offered by KC. We are working with Brookstone Estates, an assisted living community, to offer classes at their facility for the residents. This would enable individuals who may not otherwise be able to attend classes to participate. We are in the planning stages for two classes prior to Christmas. I have spoken with Julie Hayes, the director of Brookstone, and she said many of their residents are on fixed incomes, and Christmas can be a difficult time for them financially. We are setting up classes with them where they will be able to make small handmade gifts for friends and family members. We are working with Capitol Pointe Apartments to arrange use of their facilities for classes in their community building. This building has a large conference room, fully equipped kitchenette, and a large open area with couches, chairs, etc. Since the Vandalia Center is often full with our regular classes, this will offer us much greater flexibility regarding the types and times we can offer Community Education classes. We also continue to offer classes in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension office in Vandalia.

Some of our most popular classes in 2008 have been computer classes. We held four sessions of Computer Understanding in both the Spring and Fall semester, Introduction to Email and Internet, and How to Buy and Sell on EBay. Other popular classes have been Quilting, Floral Arranging and Design, Cake Decorating, and Digital Photography. We held a class in conjunction with the University of Illinois Extension on Dining with Diabetes. We are looking forward to offering two new courses this Fall, Beekeeping on November 1 and 8th and “Green Cleaning for a Healthy Holiday” on November 22nd.

In the Spring we are looking forward to offering several new Community Education classes. We will be offering Jewelry Making, Crochet, Pencil Drawing with Kim Shanks, “Clean Green for Spring”, Writing Your Memoirs, and Square Dancing. These are in addition to many of the classes we have offered in the past. Watch the newspaper closely for the dates and times!
The summer KICK program (Kids in College at Kaskaskia) continues to grow. We had eight programs this summer; Baseball Camp, Mad Scientists, Arts & Crafts, two sessions of Kids in the Kitchen, Red Cross Babysitting, It’s a Bug’s Life, and Exploring the Great Outdoors. We had a total of 70 children involved in our program. Thanks to the financial support from the First National Bank and the Scarpaci Foundation, we were again able to reduce the cost of tuition. This allows more families and children in our community to participate in the programs.

The KC Vandalia Center hosted the 7th Annual Kids SafeTEXpo on Saturday, September 20. This event is sponsored by the Fayette County Interagency Council, which both Mary Schulze and Janice Eischen are members. There were representatives from a variety of local agencies available to provide information, activities, games, and treats for families! Free car seat checks were provided, the sheriff’s department provided fingerprinting for children, Dr. Tepperburg provided scoliosis screenings, and nutritional informational and games were done through the U of I Extension Office in Vandalia. Other agencies involved included Kaskaskia College, KC Reading Link, the Children’s Miracle Network, Safe, and the Vandalia Fire Department, Fayette County Hospital, Opportunities for Access, CEFS, and the Vandalia Police Department. The weather was beautiful and we were able to have a jumping house provided by Kim’s Party Jumps in Sandoval that the children thoroughly enjoyed all day! We were proud to be able to host this event and it was a great showcase for our Vandalia Education Center!

As always, we welcome any suggestions you may have for additional topics or interests you would like to see classes designed around that we could offer here at the Vandalia Center. Also, if you are interested in teaching on a specific topic or subject area, please let us know! We had interest in a beekeeping class, and it is now scheduled for November 1st and 8th! We strive to meet the communities’ needs!