

## Education-Related Programs

***Tennessee Foreign Language Institute: Janice Snow Rodriguez, Executive Director***—

The Tennessee Foreign Language Institute (TFLI) was established in 1986 by the General Assembly to promote, encourage, enhance and facilitate the learning and teaching of foreign languages and cultures for the economic, professional and educational enrichment of the state government and its employees, the business community, foreign language educators and the citizens of Tennessee. Since its inception, TFLI has provided and participated in dozens of teachers' programs, has been awarded federal and state grants for innovative programs, and has funded several research projects. Presently, TFLI serves more than 4,000 people per year and offers classes and self-study programs in more than 140 languages. TFLI also offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, which focus on proficiency in conversation, reading, writing and accent reduction, and a certification program for teachers of ESL. Other professional development programs TFLI offers include Legal and Medical Interpreter Training as well as a seminar in Translation Technique. Additionally, TFLI provides legal, medical, commercial and technical interpretation, translation, and voice-over services in over 50 languages.



**Janice Snow  
Rodriguez**  
*Executive Director*

***Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation: Richard G. Rhoda, Interim Executive Director***— The Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) was chartered by the General Assembly in 1974 to administer state-supported programs of student financial aid. Every year, TSAC helps nearly 175,000 students attend college by providing almost \$750 million in loan guarantees and \$285 million in merit and need-based grants and scholarships. Current programs, supported by state, lottery and federal funds, include the Federal Stafford Loan Program, Federal PLUS Loan Programs, Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Programs (including the HOPE Scholarship Program), Tennessee Student Assistance Award Program, Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program, Ned McWherter Scholars Program, Dependent Children Scholarship Program, Christa McAuliffe Scholarship Program, Minority Teaching Fellows Loan Forgiveness Program, Tennessee Teaching Scholars Loan Forgiveness Program, Tennessee Math and Science Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program, and the Graduate Nursing Loan Forgiveness Program. Two new financial aid programs include the Helping Heroes Grant and the Rural Health Loan Forgiveness Program.

## Past and Future

From her earliest beginnings to the present, Tennessee has been at the forefront of education.

Washington College Academy in East Tennessee can trace its origins to 1780–16 years before Tennessee was admitted to the union.

The first school in Tennessee is located between Johnson City and Greeneville on a 155-acre campus overlooking the Great Smoky Mountains.

This traditional school concentrates on a classical education while emphasizing traditional values. Founded by Samuel Doak, a Presbyterian minister, the school is a nondenominational, coeducational, boarding and day school for grades 6-12.

The school has graduated 22 college presidents, 28 members of Congress, three governors, 63 physicians, 16 missionaries, and 162 ministers. The principles laid forth by its founding fathers are today very much a part of the educational experience of Washington College Academy.

Parents in the Volunteer State have always relied on a variety of educational options for their children. In recent years, homeschooling has become an increasingly popular alternative to the traditional scholastic settings of public and private schools.

Homeschooling provides the opportunity for parents to tailor an education unique to their child's interest and learning style through a wide range of curriculum options, while also interacting with a broad spectrum of individuals in a variety of social settings outside of the home.

Tennessee codified homeschooling in 1985 with the passage of Public Chapter 398, and there are many support systems in place at the state and federal level to assist parents with the various aspects of educating their child at home.

The Renaissance Center in Dickson is an example of the how modern technology is being utilized to promote a variety of educational programs and initiatives. Developed by the Jackson Foundation, the Renaissance Center is a place where the young and old alike can experience a “renaissance” of learning and self-awareness in an environment that encourages excellence and rewards creativity.

Each semester brings new art, music, dance and theatre arts classes as well as educational and entertaining field trips. The center's music and theatre programs present concerts, theatrical productions and entertainment, and the Visual Arts Department presents a variety of gallery exhibits featuring established and new artists.

Since its installation in spring 2007, Digistar 3 has opened a brand new world of planetarium shows in the CyberSphere. The Renaissance Center offers full-dome video programs for viewers of all ages. New shows in the CyberSphere range from



**Harris Hall at Washington College Academy in Johnson City.**

journeys through space in a cardboard rocket to close-up looks at the surface of the sun. Additionally there are shows depicting the inside of a Category 5 hurricane, inside the tombs of ancient pharaohs, the inside of the human body, life forms on other planets, and wildlife millions of years in the future, among others.

The Gaslight Dinner Theatre, Renaissance Players, Mind Enriching Theatre series and Young Entertainers on Stage series produce theatrical productions for the entertainment of visitors. Offerings range from the classics to musicals, and from comedies to heart-warming dramas.



**Renaissance Center in Dickson.**