

## Playing an ACE

*Teachers honored, money raised at education banquet*

**By FOSS FARRAR**

*Traveler Staff Writer*

Carlos Lopez, a new teacher here from Spain, celebrated the successful end of his first six weeks at Arkansas City High School by attending Monday night's banquet for new teachers.

He was one of 100 people at an "Education Fiesta" put on by the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce and the ACE Fund.

As Lopez got acquainted with the night's keynote speaker, many others at the banquet were bidding on more than 80 items in a silent auction.

At the end of the night, more than \$4,000 had been raised for ACE -- or Arkansas City Public Schools Enhancement Fund -- to be used for student scholarships, teacher grants and educational programs.

The \$4,027 will be matched by 50 percent by the Kansas Health Foundation, bringing the total amount raised to \$6,040.

The Legacy Foundation also presented a check for \$1,000 to ACE.

"We are thrilled with the community both through the donations of items (for the auction) and with the results of the auction," said Iva Lea Bryant, ACE Fund chairperson.

The only disappointment of the night was the attendance, event leaders said. Only nine new teachers, including Lopez, showed up. And no one showed up from the USD 470 Board of Education, although many school administrators and teachers were present.

About the same number of people -- 100 -- attended ACE's first silent auction fund-raiser last year, also held at the new teachers banquet. About \$1,700 was raised at the silent auction last year.

Keynote speaker Andy Tompkins, dean of education for Pittsburg State University, commended the Ark City school district for its achievements in the No Child Left Behind program.

State mandates under the program put extra pressure on teachers and school administrators to help ensure that every child in the school system develops to his or her full potential, Tompkins said.

As the American school system developed since the 1950s, more and more kids were allowed in the classroom. Brown v. Topeka Board of Education resulted in the abolishing of segregation in schools. And a law in 1974 allowed kids with disabilities to enter the system.

"We have developed a belief in every person seeing their potential in school," he said. "We are in the midst of trying to get this done, and we need the support of everyone in the community."

Tompkins said that America competes "on the high end" with every nation in the world. Although the U.S. may not be in first place, in the long run its system will serve it well, he said.

"We cannot be tied up with being the best, but ultimately on trying our best," he said.

Lopez, the new high school Spanish teacher, said he has been welcomed by about everyone he has met since he came to Ark City at the start of the school year.



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*Photo by Donita Clausen*  
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He is a participant in an exchange program for teachers from Spain sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education, he said.

"I taught in Germany for three years," Lopez said. "My first, second language is German and English is my second."

The auction item that got the highest bid was a painting of downtown Arkansas City. The artist was Caryl Morgan, a retired teacher who taught art at Ark City High School. It sold for \$365.

Above: People look over items for the silent auction during the Education Fiesta banquet held at the Brown Center on Monday.

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