

# Foster Care Exceptions, Cont’d.

*Continued from A1*

“What allowed me to move forward,” says Williams, “was this quote that I live by: The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams by [former First Lady] Eleanor Roosevelt.”

Phillip Wheelington, age 18, has been in the foster care system since he was 6. He has lived in 8 foster homes and attended 24 different schools. “I learned how to integrate

myself [into homes] and meet new people of all ethnic backgrounds, and getting to know all kinds of environments,” states Wheelington. “I had to learn about [St. Louis] county and the city life.”

However, all the moves took a toll on Wheelington. “I was split up from all my siblings, but after awhile I got used to being lonely and without them, then I stopped being sad.” He also got into fights.

His schoolwork suffered. “Since I was in court so much and moving to so many different schools, I was not able to catch up on all my work and credits.” Eventually, he was held back in school. Despite all that he has faced, Wheelington says, “I am just like any other teenager.” Teens like him have to work harder, he states, “and quit downing ourselves because we are in foster care; we have to keep our heads up and understand that we can do it.”



**Philip Wheelington**

*Photo Credit Desire’e Redus*

## Electric Cars, continued

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Tesla has two fully electric models that rely on no gas at all. Hybrids carry gas but use electricity when idling. The last type is represented by the Chevy Volt, which runs on electricity and has a backup gasoline generator to recharge the car’s batteries.

Tesla's loan will help them manufacture the Model S sedan, which runs completely on electricity and goes over 250 miles on a full charge. The car can hold seven people, and looks like a Maserati, according to Tesla. It is said to go from 0 to 60 mph in 5.6 seconds. They will start releasing the Model S in 2011 at the price of \$50,000.

Tesla’s other model, the Roadster, is all electric too but costs \$101,500. The Tesla Roadster is a two-door sports car that can accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in 3.9 seconds. Car experts say that the development of the Model S shows that Tesla is working on making their cars cheaper.

According to Tesla Motors, an electric car is mechanically less complex than a normal internal combustion car. Software and electronics take the place of the machinery. Typically, the fewer auto parts, the more reliable something is.

The disadvantage of an electric car is the battery. It is heavy and expensive to make, and offers limited power and range. But cars using batteries are environmentally friendly because they do not release CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. The battery is made of lithium ion, which can be recycled for money. According to Tesla the battery can power a car for 100,000 miles before it starts decreasing in performance. The transmission runs only on one gear so it as easy to drive as an automatic.

The other electric car in development is the Chevy Volt, which will launch in 2010. According to GM, the Volt has a 40-mile range and then a gasoline generator kicks in and produces energy for the battery.



**Tesla Model S, an all-electric sedan.**

*Photo credit Tesla Motors*

## Summertime Science, Continued

*Continued from A1*

"If you want a good experience to work with people, go for it," says second-year Youth Exploring Science (YES) teen Alex Walters. He adds that the Summertime program is important because it provides a chance to learn about science and the environment. And first-year YES teen Leslie Williams states, “[It’s a] good program that you can learn life skills at, and have a good time with staff and people here.”

These teens come and work together to develop lessons around the theme “Learning to Respect Our Planet”. These lessons help teens and their groups learn about the harmful effects of greenhouse gases and pollution. To help understand these concepts, the teens work very hard on the Science Corner to plant food and flowers. “We are so excited for our Science Corner harvest and promoting the concept of green cooking to showcase the teens hard work this summer,” adds YES Supervisor Betsy King.



**Terris Grimes, world famous mystery author.**

*Photo credit Jerricka Cotton*

very different dialect than the other kids because she was from the south. It was difficult for everyone to understand her.

Terris’s father, Terris McDuffie, also was famous. He was a major league baseball player when baseball was segregated. He played with the Newark Eagles in the Negro Leagues.

Grimes joined the YES program because she enjoys working with teens and helping them grow and develop. “I think the YES Program is the best program I've ever seen,” states Grimes. “These teens have such a sense of humor and, if you let them, they will have you laughing all day.”

She is in the process of writing another mystery book, called *Smelling Herself*, with the setting in Oakland, California. (And if you want one of her published books, they are available from amazon.com.)

Her advice to YES teens? “To become a writer is to read! The more you read, the better you will be!”

## Murderer, Cont’d

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Her first book, *Somebody Else’s Child*, was written at the age of 40. That book earned Grimes an Anthony Award in 1996 for best first novel and best paperback. A year later, the same novel earned Grimes a Chester Himes Award for the best African-American mystery book.

“In order to write a mystery you have to use a lot of scientific knowledge,” Grimes says.

She got her knowledge of how to “kill people” by talking to experts. For her first book she met with a scientist at University of California at Davis, who educated her about “DNA and genomes” and how to use this knowledge to identify missing relatives. For another book, *Other Duties as Required*, she talked to a doctor about burn victims and how to treat them.

The main character of her mystery books, Theresa Galloway or T.G., has a lifestyle that is similar to Grimes in many ways. They both have two kids and were married. They also both worked for state governments.

Even her victims were familiar. “I picked certain people that I didn’t like as the murder victims,” she explains. “If the real life person asked me why they got killed in the books, I told them that I didn’t know that I had.”

Fame didn’t come easily to Grimes. “I was so scared [when I attended the Anthony Award ceremony] that I didn’t want to come downstairs to the banquet,” she recalls. When her name was announced as the winner, “it was one of my dreams come true,” states Grimes.

Her shyness may have started as a teen. She recalls that when she moved to California she spoke with a



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WORLD EXCLUSIVES

## “EXCEPTIONS” TO THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM



**Bennie Williams, 2007 graduate and Class President of Vashon High School.**

*Photo provided by Bennie Williams*

### Desire'e Redus

Less than 50% of youth in foster care in the United States graduate high school, according to statistics found on the Orphan Foundation of America website. That compares to a 2008 high school graduation rate of 85% for all Missouri teens, reported on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. Worse yet, only about 10% of teens coming from foster care enroll in college, and less than 2% complete their work and earn a bachelor's degree, according to Connect for Kids.

In Missouri, there are around 26,000 children under the age of 18 in foster care, according to the Orphan Foundation. What do these statistics mean to the teens that live in foster care?

Bennie Williams, age 19, has been in

foster care since the age of 3, living in 5 different foster homes over those 16 years. Williams did graduate from high school on time and now attends college, but it was a challenge.

For example, when he was he was placed in a home in northern St. Louis County. “My school was located in the city of St. Louis. My placement wanted to send me to a school district in the county. I stood up in court and asked the judge to allow me to stay at my current high school because I was on track of graduating,” he recalls.

Williams is currently a member of Missouri's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Aging Out. He also represents youth in foster care on the 2009–2010 State Youth Advisory Board.

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## A MURDERER AMONGST US

### Who could it be?

**Jerricka Cotton**

There is a murderer amongst us! And she might be coming for you. She's 5' 3", her hair color is known as blonde, but she calls it “lioness tawny”. She's also a Youth Exploring Science (YES) Supervisor!

(If you've seen this lady or have an idea of where she is, please call the St. Louis Science Center immediately.)

“I've always wanted to be a writer,” says Terris Grimes. Grimes is the award winning writer of three popular mystery novels and the St. Louis Science Center's new Senior

Director of Operations, Schools, and Community Partnerships.

Grimes began her writing career by producing short stories. “I moved to writing mysteries because my favorite authors weren't writing novels fast enough to keep up with my reading,” states Grimes.

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## Government Helping Motor Companies Produce Electric Cars

**Ariel Stavri**

On June 23, The Obama Administration announced \$8 billion in loans to encourage car companies to continue the development of fuel-efficient vehicles. A lot of this money is going toward the development of electric cars.

Ford will receive \$5.9 billion until 2011 for advancing engineering toward engine combustions and electric cars. Nissan will get \$1.6 billion for producing battery packs and electric cars in Smyrna, Tennessee. Tesla Motor Company will receive \$465 million. Tesla is a company headquartered in San Carlos, California, that makes electric cars.

“These investments will come back to our country many times over—by creating new jobs, reducing our dependence on oil, and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions,” said Energy Secretary Steven Chu.

There are three different types of electric cars: hybrid, fully electric and electric with backup.

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## SUMMER PLUS SCIENCE EQUALS FUN.....REALLY?

**KiOntey Turner**

Picture your summer filled with nothing but experiments, formulas, and science. What kid really wants to spend the summer doing science, and, if they do, is it fun?

Summertime Science—an eleven-year program incorporated with the Saint Louis Science Center (SLSC)—offers children of community groups from all over the St. Louis area the chance to explore basic science concepts of physical science, biology, chemistry and technology. Children and their adult leaders come from groups such as Gateway IT's Gateway Michael Students, Annie Malone Early Childhood, and George W. Carver House. “This program teaches over hundreds of children and adults,” according to Diane Miller, SLSC Senior Vice President of School and Community Partnerships.



**YES teen Bryan Owens working with younger students from a local community group.**

*Photo credit KiOntey Turner*

The local teenagers form four different teaching groups in this component. Currently, Summertime Science includes 58

teens and 8 supervisors, which is a big jump from where it started in 1997 with 7 teens.

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