

## Students design Wounded Warrior barracks

Interior design students at East Carolina University are designing “barracks of the future” that can accommodate the needs of wounded, injured and ill Marines in the U.S. Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Battalion.

The barracks – or bachelor enlisted quarters – are to provide assisted living for Marines as they rehabilitate. Ideas generated by this class project are being used in a new facility at Camp Lejeune or in future Wounded Warrior projects.

“This is a way for students to use their skills and realize that social engagement is part of being a designer,” said Hunt McKinnon, professor of interior design. “They realize that this project can make a difference in somebody’s life, and that has made a huge difference in how they approach it.”

Students have complemented their academic research with accounts of Marine life from wounded Marines and battalion representatives.

Their plans incorporate such elements as public areas for Marines who do not like to be alone, furniture specially crafted for wheelchair users and storage space designed to hold military gear. ■

## FoodMASTER integrates food with math, science

Food. It’s something we interact with every day. We prepare it. We eat it. We know we’re not supposed to play with it. But can we learn from it?

Developers of East Carolina University’s FoodMASTER program think so. Without realizing it, they said, people are exposed to math and science concepts each time they use food, making it a very good teaching tool.

“For children, we’re finding, it serves as a bridge between something very common and something that can be overwhelming, like math and science concepts,” said Virginia Carraway-Stage, registered dietician and coordinator of the FoodMASTER project at ECU. “When you throw food in the mix, learning these concepts no longer seems like a difficult thing to accomplish.”

The food-based curriculum is designed for students in kindergarten through college. The program uses hands-on, inquiry-based learning activities to help students learn science, math and nutrition concepts.

“Children love anything to do with food and food preparation,” said Melani Duffrin, faculty member in ECU’s Department of Nutrition and Dietetics. “We’ve been watching enthusiastic young students engage in scientific processes such as measurement, data collection, critical thinking and comparative analysis in very natural, self-

directed ways, and it’s exciting.”

Duffrin developed the FoodMASTER program at Ohio University in 2005 with elementary school teacher Sharon Phillips.

Last fall, the National Center for Research Resources, a part of the National Institutes of Health, awarded the project a 2008 Science Education Partnership Award worth \$504,000. The grant will fund researching the effects of the multimedia materials and investigating the best ways to disseminate the curriculum.

The project received a second grant in November. The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded a \$150,000 Higher Education Challenge Grant to support a college-level component of the FoodMASTER program. With the USDA grant, researchers in ECU’s Department of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Department of Child Development and Family Relations will develop college courses that use food to engage students.

An on-campus gateway foods course will be offered to nutrition students and family and consumer sciences education students. An online course will be open to all. Seniors in nutrition and family and consumer sciences will complete a capstone, service-learning course to gain practical experience working in the community. ■



## Science at Starlight

Dr. Joseph Chalovich, professor of biochemistry at the Brody School of Medicine, was a featured speaker in February at Science at Starlight. The East Carolina University Division of Research and Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the N.C. Biotechnology Center and the ECU Chapter of Sigma Xi, sponsors this research seminar series to showcase faculty research. Its goal is to promote scientific communication and collaboration among ECU scientists and those from local industries. Seminars are held at the Starlight Café in downtown Greenville. ■