

By Tiffany Benson
Copy Editor

As she sits on her bed with legs folded, a banner of the periodic table of elements flutters in the air of an open window. In the dorm room of Frances Venable, a Kansas City native and senior in chemistry, resides a young woman with a passion for science and a love for helping others think with a chemistry mindset.

"A lot of times people see chemistry as a different way of thinking, but I have never realized it because it's the way I think," Venable says. "Chemistry is the one thing that has always made sense to me."

In her role as chemistry club president, Venable says she encourages members to spread their love for chemistry, especially through the tutoring of middle and high school students in the Kansas City metro area. Mostly the club tutors students near Park University; namely, the Park Hill district. Sometimes they venture to 31st and Troost in Kansas City, Mo. to tutor children at the nonprofit daycare Operation Breakthrough.

Operation Breakthrough is a nationally accredited nonprofit corporation that began in 1971 as a response to requests from parents in the central city for quality child care for children of the working poor. The program began with 50 infants, toddlers and preschoolers at 31st and Paseo in Kansas City. In 1976, it expanded to include before- and after-school care. Good background

The center moved to its current location at 31st and Troost in 1981. Since that time, it has added a broad range of social services to meet the needs of the children and their families. In 2006, Operation Breakthrough completed an expansion and renovation project that doubled the size of the facility and increased its licensed capacity from 353 chil-

dren to over 500.

Venable says volunteering for Operation Breakthrough is where she found leadership and tutoring opportunities. She says assisting second and fourth graders with hands on science experiments aided in her discovery of a career in teaching chemistry.

"I have always been a math and science person and even though I wanted to become a doctor when I first started college," says Venable, "then I realized that I really liked helping people with chemistry."

Venable and chemistry club vice president Sam Hansen are in the process of fundraising for a trip to San Diego where they will accept the student chapter award for their efforts with Operation Breakthrough.

Operation Breakthrough relies on the generosity of this community to continue its work. Volunteers like Venable provide the students with the attention and training they need in a loving environment. Venable says she intends to continue the volunteer project with this organization again next fall.

Venable recently acquired a tutoring position with the Urban League of Greater Kansas City, a community based nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors. The Urban League's empowerment agenda focuses on four program areas: education, employment, race relations and leadership development. The education and leadership development provided by ULKC drives Venable to continue her pursuits in spreading a chemistry mindset.

Venable's chemistry-minded outlook is how she chooses to go about her life. She says a centered focus on where she wants to be in the future is what motivates her to be 100 percent on a daily basis.

Family, Venable says, inspires her and gives her purpose in life. She grew up as

the second youngest of six children. Venable says she loved her position in the family because she saw and learned from the mistakes of others. Now, she says she enjoys being a role model for the younger generation of nieces and nephews and her younger sister.

Venable also attributes some of her success with chemistry to her high school science teacher, who shared her passion and enthusiasm for the subject. Venable says she felt really fortunate to have such a teacher and seeks to impart this same quality of character to her future students.

Ultimately, Venable says she wants to continue her education, obtain a doctorate in chemistry and become a professor in the field. She says some friends and relatives have asked why she aspires to become a professor when there are richer avenues to explore in the field of science. Venable says she has thought this through and ends with the same conclusion every time.

"Obviously I want a career that will make me some money, but I also want to enjoy it," says Venable. "Teaching chemistry is something I know I will truly enjoy."

Venable also says everyone should have a dream aside from a profitable career. She says her dream not only involves becoming a successful professor but includes having a family of her own someday. She says she believes others owe it to themselves to do the hard things and not settle for less than their potential.

"I think people need to find what they are passionate about and then follow that. If you are not going to enjoy what you do, then don't do it," Venable says.