

making CHANGE

"When obstacles fall in your way, step over them." Those are the words and wisdom of seventeen-year-old Alisha Brewer, who along with her cousin Heather Murphy opened J.C.'s Café in 1999. The two spent a life-changing week at The Center for Rural Development as part of the inaugural group of Rogers Scholars, forty-eight juniors from Southern and Eastern Kentucky who spend an intensive one-week session each summer taking classes in leadership, engineering,

computer networking, video production and web page development.

Both girls are from McCreary County, where, as Heather says, "the only thing to do was ride around, cruise the Arby's." Both had a dream — a place young people could meet, hang out, be kids.

As part of The Center's Rogers Scholars, Alisha and Heather were required to take a community project home with them — effect a change in the place they lived. To aid

in this, they were taught leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

The result for Alisha and Heather is J.C.'s Café, a combination restaurant and teen club that serves up great food and employs twenty-three people. With a "no adults" policy after 7:00 p.m., the Café offers bands, a live radio broadcast, games and karaoke. But more importantly, it's a place to just "be."

"Rogers Scholars taught me that no matter how small

or how big the place you come from, you can make a difference," says seventeen-year-old Heather.

Both Heather and Alisha readily agree the week at The Center for Rural Development as Rogers Scholars changed their lives. "I would sit in the classes and hear businessmen talk and think, 'I can't do that,'" says Heather. "Now I look around at this café and think, 'this is as good as what any of those businessmen did. Don't ever say can't.'"

to date 95 rogers scholars' graduates, like mcreary county's heather murphy and alisha brewer, have returned home from their week at THE CENTER to make a positive difference in their communities' futures