College Access and Preparation Programs of Mount Wachusett Community College

Welcome back CAPP families!
I hope everyone is having an exciting and productive semester. I want to update you on some new programs at MWCC and welcome all of our new CAPP families.

CAPP was fortunate last spring to graduate our GEAR UP students from Fitchburg High School in what was the largest graduating class in recent history. Kudos to our GEAR UP students; they worked hard and achieved a great deal. We are also very excited to welcome our Fitchburg GEAR UP 2011 and 2012 students and families. We were awarded a grant to work with these students until graduation.

A big congratulations to our Talent Search (Project GO) students as well! An astounding 88% of them went on to college last year, an increase of 10% over previous years.

Project Excel students can look forward to an exciting year packed with fun trips, enriching workshops and (of course!) many opportunities for tutoring and academic support.

Our MCAS Pathways program is proud to announce that to date we have our largest enrollment and attendance rate thanks to our dedicated staff and the wonderful motivated students who attend the class.

In closing, our CAPP programs are thriving thanks to you, our dedicated students and your families. Your hard work, studying and involvement is paying off and your successes are really showing! We all look forward to working with you this year. Enclosed you will find information on upcoming programs; please take some time with your families to explore these options!

Pati Gregson
Associate Vice President
Access and Transition

Visit the CAPP website at http://capp.mwcc.edu for program information.
Summer Up a Success

By Farrah Rosado

This summer, Mount Wachusett Community College collaborated with the Fitchburg Police & Recreation Departments, Montachusett Opportunity Council, Fitchburg State College, the Latino Coalition and other supporters in order to create a youth initiative. That initiative became Summer Up, a Fitchburg Summer Youth Work Program. The program aimed at increasing job opportunities for youth aged 12 to 20. The main goal of the initiative was to employ neighborhood youth in leadership positions, while encouraging community involvement. The youth worked as summer counselors in collaboration with the Fitchburg Parks Program. Three park sites were provided for several middle school student youth counselors, two high school student team leaders as well as one CAPP staff person. The team leaders led the younger counselors to provide the younger youth with sports, crafts and teambuilding activities during July and August. The parks included Park Hill Park, Green Street Park, and Green Acres.

Every other Friday was reserved for teambuilding and field trips. The Summer Up leaders and youth counselors, along with CAPP staff took a Boston Duck Tour, dined at the Hard Rock Café, climbed Wachusett Mountain and canoed the Nashua River. All students felt they benefited from the program and that they helped their community. Summer Up also encouraged the kids to avoid getting involved in risky behaviors. The participants enjoyed the program and especially the field trips which were offered. In addition to the Parks program, Summer Up offered vouchers for students in the Fitchburg schools to attend summer school classes. By the end of the summer, forty-four students successfully completed the program and an impressive 95% of those students passed their courses! As the CAPP staff person at the Park Hill Park, I enjoyed the summer, getting to know the community and preventing youth from engaging in risky behaviors. It was an excellent experience and a success!
GEAR UP

Congratulations to Mount Wachusett Community College and the College Access and Preparation Programs for the August approval of the GEAR UP 2011 & 2012 Grant! GEAR UP is funded by the US Department of Education at an annual cost of $769,565. All funds are matched dollar for dollar with local resources. Participating partners include the Fitchburg Public Schools, the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center, the Spanish American Center, the Boys & Girls Club of North Central Massachusetts, the Latino Coalition, the Massachusetts Educational Finance Authority, the UMASS Amherst School of Engineering Program, and the Fitchburg Juvenile Probation Department.

The GEAR UP partnership will work together to help students stay in school, study hard and pursue post-secondary education at a college or a job training course. In addition, special emphasis will be placed on professional development for the staff at the Fitchburg Public Schools. All 6th and 7th grade students at Academy, B.F. Brown, and Memorial Middle Schools will be participants of the GEAR UP program and will receive services until they graduate from Fitchburg High School. With over 1008 students, we can assure you that the GEAR UP Academic Counselors sited at each middle school will be busy.

GEAR UP students will have access to the following services:

Career Information and Planning
Academic Support
Academic Counseling
Studying and Learning Strategies
College Awareness Activities
Campus Tours
Cultural Events

We have all heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." The GEAR UP Program is dedicated to being a member of each 6th and 7th grader's community and offering positive role models. Dreams and goals start at home and thus the GEAR UP staff look forward to working with the families of GEAR UP students, working together to provide support and resources to assist each student in reaching their potential.

For more information about GEAR UP please contact Victor Rojas, Lead Counselor for GEAR UP at (978) 630-9248.
Who Wants to Be a Cyber Kid?

Thirty-four students did just that this summer during the Talent Search (Project GO) Second Annual Cyber Camp. The one-week sessions were held at both the Gardner and Leominster campuses, where students from Clinton, Leominster, Fitchburg, Gardner, and Winchendon experienced full day curriculums of computer whiz stuff and fun stuff, too!

The typical Cyber Camp day, led by the Illustrious Cyber-Instructor Extraordinaire Shannon Poole (affectionately called "Mom" by the Gardner-based campers), started off at 10 a.m. with instruction in Microsoft Office Applications including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Publisher. Student leaders and CAPP counselors were on hand to help the campers through the variety of games and activities created using these applications. Students enjoyed lunch at various locations, including the Mount's very own Chartwells Café. Following the post-lunch afternoon session of computer applications and activities, students spent the last hour of the day doing fun things like swimming at the college pool, playing Frisbee golf, designing their own T-shirts with fabric paint, and launching postcards attached to helium balloons to see how far the wind would carry them.

During the last day of each camp, the weather cooperated and students were treated to a swimming party and cookout. The theme of the week: Getting practical experience for school projects while making new friends!

The Great Balloon Race results are as follows:

Of the 34 balloons launched, the following "survivors" have been found:

Cassey's balloon was launched at 2:30 p.m. on 8/18 and found on 8/20 in Arlington, MA. (near Boston)

Stephanie's balloon was launched at 2:30 p.m. on 8/25 and found 6:30 p.m. on 8/25 in Harwich, MA (Cape Cod)...that was a fast wind current!

Isaac's balloon was launched at 2:30 p.m. on 8/25 and found at 7:00 a.m. on 8/26 in Buzzards Bay, MA (Cape Cod Canal)...both balloons caught the same favorable winds, which were "wicked fast" that day.

Special thanks go to the Student Helpers who volunteered their free time to help the campers with their projects:

- Katie DeNuette, Gardner High School
- Bekah Casey, Murdock High School
- Gimena Suarez, Mount Wachusett Community College
- Andrea Suarez, Mount Wachusett Community College
Fee Waiver Facts

Did you know that income-eligible members of TRiO programs like Talent Search could qualify to take the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, and ACT for free, and that when they take the SAT, they could also apply to selected colleges without paying the application fee?

PSAT/NMSQT: If you're a junior and plan on taking the PSAT at your school, see your guidance counselor about applying for a fee waiver. Fee waivers are available on a limited basis.

SAT: See your Talent Search or guidance counselor if you are taking the SAT Reasoning and Subject tests. Waivers are available to income-eligible students. Don't delay! You cannot get reimbursed for testing and application fees that you've already paid for.

Here's what the College Board says about SAT fee waivers:
(http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees/feewaivers.html)

The SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service is designed to help students for whom test fees represent obstacles on the road to college.

High school juniors and seniors in the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories who cannot afford to pay the test fees can request fee waivers through their school counselors. The waivers cover the basic test fees for SAT or Subject Tests, as well as either the Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) or the Student Answer Service (SAS). A fee waiver may qualify you for application fee waivers at many colleges. If you are eligible, your counselor will give you a fee waiver card to mail in with your completed Registration Form (or to use as instructed to register online).

Note: Fee waivers cannot be used for late registration.

ACT: See your Talent Search or guidance counselor for the application. These are available on a limited basis. The application form must be submitted with your ACT registration folder.

Here's what ACT (http://www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html) says about ACT fee waivers. You are eligible for an ACT fee waiver if:

1. You currently attend high school as a junior or senior.
2. You meet at least one indicator of economic need listed on the ACT fee waiver form. Information about these indicators and how to request fee waiver forms is mailed each fall to every high school. Ask your counselor for the information.

You may register only once with an ACT fee waiver, either in your junior or senior year. The waiver has been used once you register, even if you do not test.

Fee waivers cover only the basic registration fee for either the ACT (No Writing) or the ACT Plus Writing, including up to four valid college choices (listed at the time of registration). Waivers do not cover test date changes, test center changes, or any other fees.
How I Spent My Summer

One of MURDOCK's SENIORS had much more than a "nice Summer"!
By Fawn Frazer

School’s starting now, and this is the time when everybody looks back on their summer and quickly relives it before the leaves fall and the snow piles up! What do you have to look over this summer?

I bet it was nothing like Sara Frazer’s summer!!! Last June Sara Frazer, a Talent Search student from Winchendon, left for Army boot camp and spent the summer learning hand-to-hand combat, marksmanship with rifles and HAND GRENADES, setting land mines, crawling under LIVE FIRE, physical fitness tests in weather over 120 degrees, marching all night only to march all day, gas-mask training with time spent in a real gas-chamber, conquering the "warrior's tower" obstacle course, plus hundreds and hundreds of other tasks! Sara spent her summer at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri...you think the weather was warm here!!! The day she had to complete her physical fitness test was over 120 degrees...IN FULL UNIFORM AND GEAR! And we’re all back here whining about having to carry groceries from the car to the house!!!

Sara arrived home on her 18th birthday, August 19th, and her family threw her a huge "Welcome Home/Birthday Party" which was an all-day event on Sunday, August 21st! She’s glad to be home and glad that boot camp is over, and while it was very tough, she knows she’s benefited from this summer MUCH more than her friends have! She can’t wait to start school at Murdock as an incoming senior, and looks forward to seeing the few people that she didn’t touch base with so far!!! Sara’s been in the Massachusetts National Guard for over a year, and will still have monthly drills to attend, but those drills, and senior year, seem a lot less challenging to Sara now. Fawn Frazer is the mother of Sara Frazer.

My Summer in Washington, DC
by Eugene Mundowa

This past summer I went to Washington D.C. I was nominated by my teacher to attend a ten-day conference where we learned and studied about leadership. We also learned about leadership traits and about people who have displayed those traits. It was really fun and a wonderful experience.

Other than the conference, it was fun getting to travel all over Washington D.C. We got to see the White House, the Capitol Building, all the memorials and much more. I had a lot of fun learning about leadership, seeing all of the sites, and meeting and making friends from all over the United States! Washington D.C. is a very nice place to visit. If you ever have the chance to go there, you should go!
Trip to Boston University

Talent Search/Project GO and Project Excel middle school students began the 2005-2006 school year in a travel-and-learn-mode! Nearly 100 students from BF Brown, Academy, Murdock, Gardner, Clinton, Southeast and Samoset Middle Schools toured the beautiful campus of Boston University on two Friday afternoons in September.

Our group walking tours began at the admissions reception building on Bay State Road, where BU student guides cheerfully shared their knowledge about the university, college life, and the city of Boston with our eager middle school students. The following is just a portion of what we learned:

Boston University is over 157 years old and is situated along the Charles River on 132 acres in the Beacon Hill area of the city. The university is actually comprised of seventeen separate schools and colleges which offer 250 majors- and minors- programs to its over 20,000 undergraduate students. Students from all 50 states and 135 countries attend the school. Seventy percent of BU students rank in the top 10% in their high school class. While Boston University places importance on high school transcripts and SAT test scores, an applicant’s record of community service, extracurricular activities (jobs, clubs, teams, or activities the student chooses to focus on), teacher and counselor recommendations, and personal history have a part in the acceptance/admissions process. We visited the Mugar Library, one of the university’s twenty-three libraries, where we saw documents by TS Elliot, Robert Frost and Martin Luther King, Jr. (who graduated from Boston University) on display. There are over 400 clubs and organizations for university students to become involved in, or a group of people sharing a similar interest can organize their own club, and then be eligible to receive funding from the school. Boston University was the first university to open all of its programs to women.

Walking through the campus along the Charles River, a couple of our middle school students even got to play a bit of Frisbee on the ‘beach’, or quad, as we made our way back to the admissions building. The assistant director of admissions generously shared her time at our tour-concluding information session, happily answering our questions on topics such as financial aid, high school class requirements, professor-student ratios and study abroad programs, to name but a few!

We learned a lot on our trip to Boston University: about what the school expects of and has to offer students, and we were able to meet Talent Search/Project GO and Project Excel students from other schools. As TS/PG and PE student Martha Rivera put it, “BU was great! I can picture myself going to school there!” We thank the admissions staff at BU for our tours and the CAPP staff for making this trip possible!
By: Aurea Rodriguez

The MCAS Pathways to Success Program at Mount Wachusett Community College is a free opportunity for students from the classes of 2003-2006 who have not yet passed the MCAS exam to prepare for college admissions while exploring other options available. The MCAS Pathways Program offers the chance to enroll in a seven-week program to prepare for MCAS retesting, college entrance and career paths. Four instructors from MWCC provide tutorial sessions to students in both English and math. We have 25 students who are enrolled in the evening classes three nights a week. As the MCAS Coordinator, my main goal is to provide individual support, counseling and instruction to each student to assist them in being successful on the MCAS exam. In addition, I want to help guide them on a path to graduate from their high school and to be able to help them to prepare for their future educational and career goals.

Complete the Crossword Challenge!!

Across
3. These change into bright colors and fall off trees.
5. An academic subject chosen by a student as their field of specialization in college.
6. Jack-O-Lanterns are carved out of these.
8. The teacher of a college course is called this.

Down
1. These are picked off trees and baked into pies.
2. Home of the Red Sox!
4. This office is in charge of admitting students into their school.
7. You will receive this once completing a college or university program.
10. A large University in Boston popular for its Work Study programs.
Welcome to our new and returning staff members!!!

Pati Gregson, Associate Vice President of Access and Transition
Kristin Sweeney-Moore, CAPP Executive Director
Victor Rojas, GEAR UP Lead Academic Counselor
Nampeera Kayondo, Data Coordinator
Melanie Holloway, CAPP Program Assistant
Anthony Semidey, GEAR UP Academic Liaison

Deb Bibeau, Talent Search Assistant Director
Aurea Rodriguez, MCAS Coordinator
Tammy Tebo, GEAR UP Director
Marlaine Jean-Philippe, CAPP Clerk

Academy Middle School: Natalie Mercier, Talent Search & Project Excel Academic Counselor
Cheryl Jobe, GEAR UP Academic Counselor
Farrah Rosado, GEAR UP Academic Liaison

BF Brown Middle School: Natalie Mercier, Talent Search & Project Excel Academic Counselor
Andrew Goodwin, GEAR UP Academic Counselor

Fitchburg & Leominster High Schools: Anne Cariglia, Talent Search Academic Counselor

Gardner High School: Veronica Guay, Talent Search Academic Counselor
Gardner Middle School: Andrea Campanale, Talent Search Academic Counselor

Memorial Middle School: Victor Rojas, GEAR UP Lead Academic Counselor
Shaunti Snowden, GEAR UP Academic Liaison
Peggy Williamson, GEAR UP Academic Liaison Coordinator

Murdock Middle/High School: Andrea Campanale, Talent Search Academic Counselor

Samoset Middle School: Kate Watkevich, Talent Search & Project Excel Academic Counselor

Southeast Middle School: Kate Watkevich, Talent Search & Project Excel Academic Counselor

College Access and Preparation Programs would like to thank all of our staff, faculty and supporters!!!
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