

GEAR UP

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs



Swain County middle school students at WCU: Allison Skidmore, Lexi McDowell, Chelsea Stiles, Joseph Heilger, Emily Hardin, Nicole Kilby, Megan Ball, Dylan Morgan, Maddie Lancaster, Kendra Kirkland, Maggie Sutton, Lauren Shell, Elizabeth Bible, Sadie Donovan, and Julie Richards, GEAR UP college readiness coach.



GEAR UP Students Attend Reaching to Teach Conference

Middle school students from Cherokee/Qualla Boundary, Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties recently attended the Western Carolina University *Teachers of Tomorrow Reaching to Teach* Conference. GEAR UP sponsored the students' trip to the conference, which is held for students interested in exploring teaching as a career.

Professional educators led breakout sessions presenting information on topics related to college access, scholarships and financial aid, diversity issues, admissions processes, and how to choose a college or university. Robin Hall, GEAR UP coordinator for Jackson County, and Julie Richards, GEAR UP college readiness coach, led a session on using the College Foundation of North Carolina website (cfnc.org), which helped students to learn more about preparing for college and careers in teaching. Students also took a tour of WCU's campus and ate lunch at the new campus dining hall. Richards said, "A great time was had by all!"

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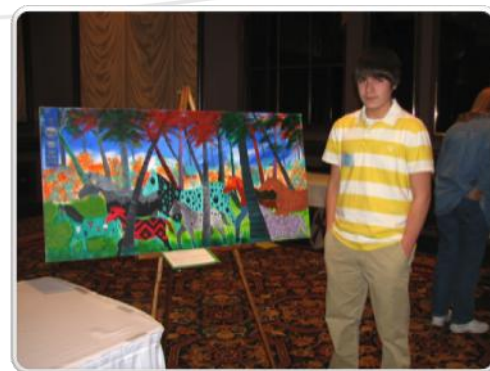
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Serving Cherokee/Qualla Boundary, Jackson County, Macon County, and Swain County

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Cherokee 8th Graders Attend State BETA Convention

Recently, the Cherokee Middle School 8th Grade Junior BETA Club attended the 2010 BETA Convention in Greensboro. Students participated in a variety of competitions and came away with trophies and ribbons. Tagan Crowe won a 1st Place ribbon for his painting titled "Painted Herd." Dylan Thompson, Justin Buchanan, Chicoah Ledford and Joi Owle created a banner that took 1st Place in the state in the Banner Category and a 2nd Place ribbon for the Art Awards Category. BraDe Brady earned a 3rd Place ribbon for her embroidery and Jeremy Saunooke won a 1st Place ribbon for his woodworking. Chebon Post Oak, Russell Bigmeat, Darius Thompson, and Dylan Thompson performed a traditional Native American Grass Dance, complete with traditional costumes and music.



Tagan Crowe with his painting, "Painted Herd."

GEAR UP helped provide students intensive, individualized support to prepare for programs and events. GEAR UP Coordinator Susan Lanier said, "We had a lot of support from the community and parents were very involved. Everyone was so proud."

GEAR UP Helps Establish School Library



Sixth graders Dylan Thomas & Kalynn Bostic check out the new library at the School of Alternatives.

GEAR UP recently purchased over 600 books from Scholastic, providing a foundation for the first middle school library at the Jackson County School of Alternatives since the school moved to its current location in 2001. Prior to this time, the school lacked space for a general library, requiring teachers to organize separate classroom book collections.

"It is so great to see a library coming together here! I will definitely make use of the new materials," art teacher

Jada Hansen said. Jackson County School System staff built the bookshelves. Middle school teacher Laura Price, with assistance from her daughter Katelen Price, a student at WCU, and teaching assistant Shawn Forsythe, organized the books and a simple check-out system.

According to Ms. Price, students show interest in the library and use it on a regular basis. Sixth grader Kalynn Bostic was quick to share that his favorite reads include the Amulet series by Kazu Kibuishi and the Bone series by Jeff Smith and that he hoped that more books in both series would be soon included in the library's offerings.

Macon County GEAR UP Study Skills

Blitz: a Student Article by 8th Grader Rachel Kelly

The Study Skills Group was an awesome experience. I learned how to study better and also how to manage my time, which is one of the things I've always had a hard time with. In the first class, we talked about how we need special time for ourselves away from everyone else and all distractions to really study. We also learned that some students need "white noise" and some need quiet. My mom was totally against me listening to my iPod while I studied, but once I explained to her that I needed the background noise, she was all for it.



In our second class we learned how everyone is a different learner and the different learning patterns: visual, kinesthetic, reading and writing, and auditory or hearing. We took a small test to figure out what our learning pattern is. I learned that I am a reading and writing person, and it has helped me to write my vocab words three times a night and by the time I have a test I know the vocab perfectly. The study skills group helped me bring up my grades and balance my fun time and study time. I would recommend this class to all kids that have trouble studying or just to get tips on how to make your study time better.

The Study Skills Blitz is an after-school program offered by GEAR UP to Macon Middle School students.

Swain High Student in Top 5 in State Poetry Out Loud Contest



Hayden Lindquist (third from right) at the NC Museum of History

Recently, Swain High junior Hayden Lindquist ranked in the top 5 at the state Poetry Out Loud competition in Raleigh. He was the winner of the Swain High Poetry Out Loud competition, which was sponsored by GEAR UP and organized by College Readiness Coach Erin McCully. Lindquist competed against 27 other students from across the state at the Museum of History and progressed to the final round. He recited "At the Vietnam Memorial" by George Bilgere, "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen, and "Concord Hymn" by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Poetry Out Loud is designed to encourage youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. "Hayden did an exceptional job at the competition, and he represented Western North Carolina and Swain County High School with pride. GEAR UP is proud to be a part of this project." McCully said.

Lindquist plans to attend the U.S. Naval Academy and become an officer in the Marines.

What *is* GEAR UP?

GEAR UP is a discretionary grant program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. It is designed to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. GEAR UP provides six-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services in schools that have at least 50% or more students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program.

Southwestern Community College's GEAR UP grant began in the fall of 2005 and serves a cohort of students beginning in sixth grade. The grant follows the cohort through twelfth grade, each year adding a sixth grade cohort. At present, SCC GEAR UP serves over 3500 students in grades 6 through 11 in Cherokee Central Schools, Jackson County Public Schools, Macon County Schools, and Swain County Schools.



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