



Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Volume I, Issue I

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Director's Corner

Thank you to everyone from GEAR UP and our partners! I've had a wonderful welcome into my new position. I'm looking forward to a productive year and many student success stories.

This is the final year of this GEAR UP grant. We will continue to work toward the goal of assisting students to get the educational background they need to be successful in college and careers. More specifically, GEAR UP:

- educates parents and students about the many resources available to them regarding financial aid, scholarships, and various educational opportunities; and

- works with the schools to decrease drop-out rates and increase student success by working to increase student interest through enrichment activities and by taking challenging courses.

Please take a look at the newsletter to get a sense of some of the specific activities we include in these categories.



Suzanne Vincent, GEAR UP Director

Cherokee Middle School Studies Nature

Cherokee Middle School 7th graders visited Great Smoky Mountains National Park to learn the importance of water quality by collecting and counting macro-invertebrates. Students donned waders



Left to right: Jacob Long, Michael George, and Isiah Davis empty macro-invertebrates from D-Net; Ethan Swearingin and Daniel Griffin put critters in Petri dishes.

and used D-nets and seine nets to gather and inventory critters in the creek. Students then used hand lenses and critter boxes to further examine the water bugs. Student Kale-Nud Ledford said, "I learned the river has a lot of bugs I didn't know about before." Brionna Jumper commented, "We learned to take care of our water."

The students thanked Science Teacher Carol West and the SCC GEAR UP Program for making this trip possible.

Smoky Mountain High School Students Attend HOSA Leadership Conference

The Smoky Mountain High School chapter of HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) participated in the 33rd Annual National HOSA Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida from June 23-26, 2010. Sponsored by SCC GEAR UP and Jackson County Schools, three SMHS students attended and participated in the HOSA Educational Symposium and National Competitive Events.

Students Crystal Shuler and Christina Carter competed in the Kaiser Permanente Healthcare Issues Exam. Kelcei Francis, a North Carolina state finalist in Veterinary Assisting, competed in the Veterinary Assisting event and placed among the top twenty-two in the nation. Additionally, students gained leadership and under-

Summer Learning with GEAR UP Jackson County

Students from Smoky Mountain High School and the Jackson County School of Alternatives participated in a two-week summer credit recovery program. Students earned necessary credits through classroom instruction, field trips, and hands-on activities. The program was the result of a collaboration between Jackson County Public Schools and GEAR UP at Southwestern Community College.

standing of health careers on such issues as nursing, health career opportunities, and post-secondary options.



Left to right: Sara Francis, parent; Edith Callahan, HOSA instructor/advisor; Kelcei Francis, Crystal Shuler, Christina Carter, Angela Dills, CTE Instructional Management Coordinator; Evelyn Shuler, parent.

College Planning Timeline

12th Grade

Use elective credits to take academically challenging courses

11th Grade

Use CFNC's College Search to explore potential colleges right for you.

10th Grade

Talk with your guidance counselor about college plans to be sure you are taking the right classes.

9th Grade

Don't neglect good study habits, and start thinking about colleges you want to attend.

8th Grade

Talk to counselors, teachers, parents and friends about college.

7th Grade

Explore interesting jobs.

6th Grade

Maintain good grades.

THEME WEEKS

Sep 27—Oct 1

GEAR UP for College

Oct 11—15

Testing Awareness

Nov 8—12

Career Exploration

Macon Students Get Into Science!

SCC GEAR UP hosted its annual *Gear Up for College Summer Academy* for middle school youth on the Macon Center Early College campus.

Fifteen students participated in activities aimed at stimulating critical thinking skills through hands-on learning. Activities included environmental science, soil nutrient and water quality testing, stream physics, plot sampling for plant biodiversity, Lego robotics, handmade books and art from recycled materials. Field trips included Highlands Nature Center, Purchase Knob Research Center in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Pacesetters Outdoor Education Center.

"The academy introduced students to

current issues confronting today's scientists and encouraged them to be creative in our problem solving discussions," said Mary Bennett, Gear Up College Readiness Coach.



Students visit Sunset Rock in Highlands, North Carolina. Left to right: (Front) Alison Douglas, Rosie Young, Sarah Walker, Bailey Adams, Sarah Hussey, Rion Kussow, Carrie Enloe, Devin Doty; (Middle) Madelyn Gibson, Matthew Wright, Cameron Ledford, Scott Walker, Danny Reategui, Camille Tuttrup; (Back) Susan Steiner, Charles Yonce, Nicholas Darden, Trevor Justice.

Swain Middle School Students "Teach" About Careers



Left to right: Alicia Green, Bryar Buchanan (background: Zachery Holt-McGaha and Grant Shuler)

With the guidance of SCC GEAR UP staff, students in the Swain Middle School 6th grade study skills elective are exploring careers on the College Foundation of North Carolina website. Currently, the students are learning how to navigate the website to find careers of interest. In the coming weeks the 6th grade students will develop

lesson plans, which they will use to assist 2nd graders at Swain West Elementary with a little career exploration of their own. They want to work with 2nd graders because "they are sweet and smaller than us." The 6th graders are taking their responsibility to "teach" quite seriously and can't wait to go to West.

Summer Learning with GEAR UP Swain County

GEAR UP and 21st Century Learning Center at Swain Middle School offered *Summer Adventures*, a program designed to encourage students' interest in science and math. The six-week camp offered fifty-eight participants in various classes (*Engineering 101*, *Astronomy*) and overnight trips to Atlanta and Chattanooga. *Summer Adventures* ended with a family barbecue dinner and award presentation.

For more information about GEAR UP, please visit

<http://southwesterncc.edu/collegeaccess/gearup/index.htm>

or contact the GEAR UP Administrative Office

828.631.2537

GEAR UP is a discretionary grant program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and is designed to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. Students in Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties and the Qualla Boundary are served through the Southwestern Community College GEAR UP grant.