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The Daily News (Greenville, Mi)

October 26, 2006

Program offers opportunity to transitioning workers

Michigan Works and Ferris State partner to offer health care project.

GREENVILLE - The Central Area Michigan Works Consortium and Ferris State University have partnered to offer a training program in the high demand occupation of health care beginning this month.

This new partnership was formed due to the region's large number of dislocated workers and the high demand for training in those areas. The new phlebotomy program will consist of six courses for a total of 12 credit hours.

"During this time of economic transition, it is critical that we provide impacted workers with the education and training they need to transition into new careers," said Gov. Jennifer Granholm. "This program and others like it that partner our outstanding workforce development programs with community colleges and universities around our state are meeting that need.

"With the right training, these workers can fill the jobs that exist in Michigan today" she said.

The phlebotomy program is designed to lead students to certification. Phlebotomists are health care professionals who specialize in extracting blood from patients for analysis and testing. Classes begin this month and will consist of 10 hours per week of class and laboratory studies. Classes will meet Mondays through Fridays in Greenville.

The phlebotomy program requires students to have a high school diploma or general Educational Development (GED) degree and meet minimum reading, writing and math competency.

"We are committed to do what we can to assist Michigan Works and the people of Greenville, said Ferris State University president David Eisler.

Classes are filling quickly and have limited enrollment. Interested individuals are asked to contact their Michigan Works service centers in Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella and Montcalm counties.

Detroit Leal News

October 27, 2006

Video and online game about judicial system receive award

The Michigan Hall of Justice Learning Center has been honored with a Quest for Excellence award from the Michigan Museums Association (MMA) for its engaging, animated video and companion online game "Kid Justice Conquers Chaos:"

The MMA presents its Quest for Excellence awards each year to recognize exceptional programs, graphic projects and professional activities of Michigan museums. The awards were presented at the MMA Conference, which was held at the Flint Institute of Arts from Tuesday through Thursday, October 17 to 19.

The video and online game were created with elementary students in mind as a joint project between the Learning Center and Ferris State University's Digital Animation and Game Design Program. The video and game are aligned with the Michigan Curriculum Framework's social studies standards and were developed with input from educators and legal experts.

Animated characters Lady Justice, Kid Justice, and Kid Liberty play starring roles. In the video, the trio introduces the court system to visitors of the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center, located on the first floor of the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing. In the online game, the characters pursue further adventures, combating Lady Anarchy and other mischief-makers who have created trouble in the Hall of Justice. Before students can solve the case, they must answer important questions about the court system.

"We are honored to receive this award in the institutional achievement category and appreciate the efforts of Ferris State students and professors, as well as the Michigan State Bar Foundation for funding the project." said Rachael L. Drenovsky, Learning Center coordinator, who received the award on behalf of the Learning Center. "Working together in support of students and educators has been a wonderful experience."

Drenovsky added that, while many of the Learning Center's offerings are tailored for later elementary students, everyone enjoys the exhibits. "The adult visitors are just as impressed and engaged as the children." Drenovsky said.

The Hall of Justice Learning Center is a 3,800 square foot interpretive gallery designed to educate the public about the role of the Michigan court system in everyday life. The gallery is filled with activities designed to educate visitors about the history and structure of the court, including the difference between trial and appellate courts. Visitors also learn about the roles and functions of various participants in a trial.

Walk-in visitors are welcome. Docent-led tours are available for groups of eight or more. The Learning Center is located at the corner of Allegan Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, north of the Michigan Historical Center.

For reservations, call (517) 373-7444. For more information, visit <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/plc/KidJustice/index.htm>.

Grand Rapids Press

November 1, 2006

Lost Boys' film in GR

Documentary hits home for area Sudanese

In the documentary "Lost Boys of Sudan," one of the film's subjects imagines his trip from a teeming African refugee camp to America might be "like you are going to heaven." Well, not quite.

As Grand Rapids resident Majier Chol can testify, life in America has its moments of hardship for the Sudanese males who came as refugees of their nation's long civil war.

"You have that culture shock when you come. You have to get used to it," said Chol, 23.

That message of hope tempered with reality permeates the 2004 film, which will be shown Thursday and Friday in Grand Rapids as part of a nationwide tour. As home to several hundred Lost Boys, West Michigan is one of 20 U.S. communities selected for the film tour.

Co-director Megan Mylan is scheduled to talk about the making of the film, which taught her just how much these young men had to overcome.

"It gave me this intense appreciation for how daunting it is to start life as a newcomer in this country," Mylan said.

"It really makes it hard to sweat the small stuff."

Mylan traveled to Kenya in 2000 to begin her film, which tracks the refugees' long journey.

The documentary follows two young men named Peter and Santino from the Kakuma camp to Houston, as they struggle to adapt to minimum-wage jobs and deal with the cultural gulf between their old and new lives.

While their story unfolds in Texas, it could just as well have been North Dakota - or Grand Rapids.

Majier Chol vividly recalls his arrival in West Michigan in December 2000. He had never seen snow before.

"Everything was white and it was cold," he remembers. "I read about snow but I really didn't come face-to-face with it. Right now I think I get used to it."

Chol credits Bethany Christian Services with easing his transition, just as it helped about 120 other Lost Boys adapt to life here. Lutheran Social Services of Michigan and Catholic Human Development Outreach assisted dozens more.

Though Chol sometimes struggled with the language and with his classes at Rockford High School and Grand Rapids Community College, he persisted. He earned his associate degree from GRCC in 2005 and is now pursuing a radiology program at GRCC and Ferris State University.

Grand Rapids resident Jacob Gai arrived in West Michigan in March of 2001, still bearing the emotional scars one might expect from his ordeal.

"It was horrible," he says of those early childhood memories. Separated from his parents by the war, he was living with his grandparents when soldiers attacked his village.

"I lost my grandpa. I lost two cousins," he said.

Since then, Gai, 26, has learned that his parents survived, and he visited with them last year in Kenya.

A student in computer science and public administration at Grand Valley State University, Gai hopes to take his place one day in the professional work world. But he has another dream.

"I really am interested in helping people back there. There is a lack of education and other problems.

"With God's will, I can go back and help."

Business Review Western Michigan

November 2-8, 2006

Design school eyes China relationship

An overseas visit by a local college president could be the first step in bringing more Chinese students to Grand Rapids to study.

Kendall College of Art and Design President Oliver Evans spent a week in China in late September to tour schools and discuss a possible articulation agreement with the Professional Institute of Art and Design of Beihai, an industrial and resort city on the South China Sea.

"Beihai school is a two-year institution and it is really looking for ways it can complete the entire bachelor degree for its students," Evans said.

"Certainly one of the most striking things is the amount of design education taking place in China right now.

"The field of design is being emphasized. Most schools I visited spoke in terms of 2,000 applications a year and taking 300 or so. So it seems to be design is viewed as a very significant area and an area of considerable growth at the moment."

Kendall, part of Big Rapids-based Ferris State University, has hosted Chinese students and currently maintains an articulation relationship with a college in the Netherlands.

Such a pact with Beihai or other Chinese schools would add to the college's diversity to the benefit of all students, Evans said.

Many Kendall alumni have gone on to work in design for furniture companies or other businesses, he added, and a formal Chinese connection could further benefit them in later years.

'A lot of our graduates are working for companies that have large operations in China, and so they are in China a good deal of the time either to oversee the development of prototypes of products or to oversee the actual manufacture of products," he said.

"There's just a tremendous number of American businesses doing manufacturing in China."

A formal articulation agreement would require agreement by the Ferris board as well as the partner institution, he said.

Evans traveled to Beijing and Beihai with a Chinese Kendall graduate at the invitation of the Beihai school.

While there, he toured two other colleges and a high school.

Muskegon Chronicle

November 11, 2006

Jim Crow Museum in the spotlight at annual dinner

When he was 12 or maybe 13, David Pilgrim had the uncontrollable urge to buy a salt shaker. But not just any salt shaker.

He bought a Mammy salt shaker -- a caricature of a woman slave made into a salt shaker -- from an antiques dealer in his hometown of Mobile, Ala.

It was small, he remembers, and cheap "because I never had much money."

No matter what the price, the minute the money exchanged hands between the young black child and the white businessman, David Pilgrim threw the salt shaker on the ground, breaking it into a million pieces -- as if that action alone could shatter years of racist attitudes and degradation.

"It was not a political act," Pilgrim writes. "I simply hated it."

That was the last time he destroyed what he describes as a "racist object ... racist garbage." Instead, he started collecting them.

Today Pilgrim, who is a sociology professor at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, has more than 4,000 items that he has donated to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia which he founded at the university.

Pilgrim will talk about the museum -- and its mission -- at the Institute for Healing Racism's Annual Celebration Dinner Friday at First Baptist Church in Muskegon.

"Our mission is to promote racial tolerance by helping people understand the historical and contemporary expressions of intolerance," Pilgrim writes on the museum's Web site.

Among the items Pilgrim has collected:

* A parlor game from the 1930s called "72 Pictured Party Stunts" that instructs players to "Go through the motions of a colored boy eating watermelon." The game's card shows a dark black boy with bulging eyes and blood red lips eating a watermelon as large as he is.

* A 1916 magazine advertisement that shows a little black boy, again in caricature, drinking from an ink bottle. The caption reads: "Nigger Milk." Pilgrim bought the print in 1988 from an antique store in LaPorte, Ind., for \$20.

Gordon Rinard, executive director of the Institute for Healing Racism, invited Pilgrim to speak at the Institute's annual dinner because he was impressed by Pilgrim's "passion."

"You can feel his passion even in his writing ... and it's hard to write passion into writing," Rinard said.

Pilgrim, who joined Ferris State's faculty in 1990, founded the museum in 1998. Until then, he had kept the objects in his home. He named it the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia to remind people what it was like to live "under Jim Crow segregation ... in a land where every black person was considered inferior to every white one."

"Jim Crow was more than a series of 'Whites Only' signs. It was a way of life that approximated a racial caste system," Pilgrim wrote.

Jim Crow laws were state and local laws enacted between 1876 and 1964 in Southern and border states that required racial segregation in all public facilities. The U.S. Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional in 1954 in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 annulled all Jim Crow laws, according to Wikipedia -- but Pilgrim said: "This hastened the end of legal segregation, but it did not end it, as evidenced by the need for the Civil Rights Movement."

The work of Pilgrim's museum fosters the kind of conversation encouraged by the Institute for Healing Racism since it was founded in 1998. The Institute's mission statement is "to build a just community in which racism, prejudice, hate and their effects are eliminated."

"It's a message we can't stop telling," Rinard said.

More than 2,000 Muskegon-area people have gone through the Institute's sessions. In the past year, the Institute has set aside its traditional courses offered over a 10-week period and introduced an intensive two-day program "that is more business-friendly," Rinard said.

"Our world has changed. We listened, and we adjusted," Rinard said.

"Host groups" can still schedule the 10-week sessions, he said. More than 400 people have attended the Institute in 2006.

Pilgrim will address "alumni and friends" at the annual dinner, using a power point presentation to guide them through the museum he calls a "teaching laboratory." The museum also includes items created after the Jim Crow period ended.

"Too many students were dismissing racism as a 'thing of the past,' " Pilgrim said.

In 2006, Pilgrim was a consultant to actor Will Smith in his directorial debut in an episode of the UPN television show, "All of Us." The episode is titled "The N-Word."

Pilgrim recently worked with Carrie Weis-Taylor, the art director at Ferris State, to build a traveling exhibition that focuses on the oppression of women, Mexicans, Jews, Asians and poor whites. Called "Them: Images of Separation," the exhibit opened April 2006 and already is booked for 2007. He also is a consultant to the Public Museum of Grand Rapids' Ethnic History Exhibit.

Pilgrim earned his bachelor's degree from Jarvis Christian College, a historically black college in Hawkins, Texas. He received his master's and doctoral degrees from Ohio State University.

What: The Institute for Healing Racism's Fourth Annual Celebration Dinner.

When: 6 p.m. Friday.

Where: First Baptist Family Center, 1070 S. Quarterline

Cost: \$30 per person (\$20 is tax deductible). Reservation deadline Nov. 15. Send checks to the Institute, 571 Apple, Suite 206, Muskegon, MI 49442.

Guest speaker: Dr. David Pilgrim, sociology professor, founder and curator of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University.

Music: Muskegon Heights High School Jazz Band directed by Robert Moore.

Caterers: The Culinary Arts Program at Baker College.

Information: (231) 720-2105. www.healracism.org. www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/collect/

Who was Jim Crow?

In the 1830s, Thomas "Daddy" Rice, a white entertainer, created the minstrel character Jim Crow. This character, performed by Rice in blackface, belittled and helped popularize negative stereotypes of black Americans. The name "Jim Crow" became synonymous with the racial caste system -- often called "Jim Crow laws" -- enacted in Southern and border states from 1877 into the mid-1960s.

Sources: Wikipedia; Jim Crow of Racist Memorabilia

Institute for Racial Healing

Address: 571 Apple, Suite 206, in the M Tech Building.

Phone: 720-2105

Sturgis Journal

November 16, 2006

Military retirees head back to school - as teachers

After a fulfilling military career, members of the armed forces can retire to life as an educator through the Troops to Teachers program.

Lt. Cmdr. Larry Etter, a retired naval flight officer, has been teaching eighth-grade science at Delton-Kellogg Middle School in Delton, northeast of Kalamazoo, since 1995.

He'd been stationed from Florida to California, and from Germany to the Pacific and Indian oceans between 1978 and 1994.

He's now one of 82 public school teachers in Michigan who has found a post-military career as a teacher through the federally sponsored program.

"I love it. It's different than what I originally thought it'd be like," Etter said. "It changed my educational perspective. It's more positive."

The program has given retirees from the Air Force, Army, Marines and Navy a chance to take the role of teacher or administrator since 1994 nationally, and since 2001 in Michigan. All 50 states now participate.

It's funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind Act. The program is managed by the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support branch in Pensacola, Fla.

The program trains and mentors recently retired and career-switching veterans through a partnership with Ferris State University and certifies participants to teach in secondary schools, said Martin Ackley, director of communications for the Michigan Department of Education.

"The teacher preparation program features on-line learning opportunities, a paid internship, mentoring and on-going professional development," Ackley said.

The program focuses on high-need, low-income schools and on math, science and special education curriculums.

Seventy-five percent of retirees in the program remain for years, according to the state Education Department.

Participants are eligible for a \$5,000 stipend during the certification process and a \$10,000 bonus if they teach at least three years in a high needs school.

Etter said that his military experiences complemented his skills over his 12 years in the classroom.

"I loved the military. I saw the world. I got to do things at a young age, but it's fun to come back and work with kids," he said. "Kids say 'this is hard,' but yeah, so is life."

Etter said he's well respected within the school district, partially as a result of his involvement with the students and his willingness to go beyond standard classroom measures to get lessons across.

"I'm a lot more willing to take risks than some of my counterparts," he said. "Why not take risks, as long as it's not hurting anyone?"

The students "come back a few years later, in high school, and give me a pat on the back," Etter said.

Grand Rapids Press

November 19, 2006

I'm Bored

Young adults say they can handle a lot, want more

With their vast arsenals of electronic gear, they are the most entertained generation ever. Yet the YouTubing, MySpacing, multi-tasking teens and young adults widely seen as Hollywood's most wanted audience are feeling - can it be? - a bit bored with it all.

A Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll finds a large majority of the 12- to 24-year-olds surveyed are bored with their entertainment choices some or most of the time, and a substantial minority think, even in a kajillion channel universe, they don't have enough options.

"I feel bored like all the time, 'cause there is like nothing to do," said Shannon Carlson, 13, of Warren, Ohio, a respondent who has an array of gadgets, equipment and entertainment options at her disposal but can't ward off ennui.

They do seem to be passionate about their electronic devices, though, especially their computers, which ranked even above cell phones when respondents were offered a "desert island" choice of one item. Still, the poll suggests the revolution in entertainment, media and technology many in Hollywood are developing strategies for has not yet taken hold.

For example, respondents say traditional sources such as television advertising and radio airplay still tend to drive their decisions about movies and music more than online networking sites. Those interested in keeping up with current events report a surprising interest in conventional news sources, especially local TV news. And although many see their computers as a perfectly good place to watch a TV show or a movie, there does not appear to be widespread desire to take in, say, "Spider-Man 3" on their video iPods.

But there's little comfort here for movie-theater owners. The multiplex isn't very popular either.

Even though 2006's box-office grosses are running 7 percent ahead of last year's, the poll found waning interest in seeing movies in theaters. Although the youngest teens say they're hitting the multiplex as often as ever, many young adults report they're seeing fewer films in theaters. The main complaints are pricey tickets and concessions, but rude moviegoers and "bad movies" are factors, too.

"It doesn't seem like there's any thing good," says Emma Standring-Trueblood, a 16-year-old junior at Oak Park High School near Agoura Hills, Calif. "I'd say a good episode of 'The West Wing' is better than most of the stuff that gets out there."

Multi-taskers

A signature trait of those surveyed is a predilection for doing several things at the same time, with the majority of females in every age group and males from 15 to 17 and 21 to 24 saying they prefer to multi-task rather than to do one thing at a time.

Nathaniel Johnson, a 17-year-old senior at Claremont High School who took part in the survey, spoke for the 62 percent of boys in his age group who like to multi-task.

He is a big fan of what the computer allows him to do: "You can open five or six programs simultaneously: work on a project, type a report, watch YouTube, check e-mail and watch a movie."

Unlike some of his peers, who report doing as many as four or five things simultaneously - such as homework, instant messaging, surfing the Net, talking on the phone and listening to music - Nathaniel discovered through trial and error that he can do only three things well at a time.

"Generally," he said, "you feel overwhelmed at some point if you are trying to do too many things at once."

Like many others surveyed, Nathaniel rarely does his homework in a quiet environment. For him, homework and hard rock are inseparable.

"Most people think it's horribly distracting," he said, "but I did get a 4.0 GPA."

The poll, under the supervision of Los Angeles Times Poll Director Susan Pinkus, interviewed 839 teenagers (ages 12 to 17) and 811 young adults (18 to 24) from June 23 to July 3 using the Knowledge Networks' Web panel, which provides a representative sample of U.S. households. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for both age group samples.

They know few limits

Maybe it is part of the human condition that the young are bored, but some think this generation - children of baby boomers, sometimes called millennials - has been spoiled by the volume of entertainment and technology choices available.

"I think there is more media gratification that younger people feel entitled to," said Jordan Levin, a former chief executive of The WB network.

Levin is now a partner in Generate, an entertainment company whose programs, thanks to an exclusive deal with MTV Networks, will be seen on television, cell phones and the Internet. Kids, Levin said, "have grown up in an environment where they expect to get what they want, where they want it, when they want it."

When it comes to the content of their entertainment, those surveyed tended to be quite tolerant of depictions of violence, gross-out humor and swearing in movies.

Yet a surprisingly high number of teenage boys (58 percent) and even more teenage girls (74 percent) said they were offended by material they felt disrespected women and girls. (How they reconcile that with their preference for the often-sexist aesthetic of rap music, the top music choice among respondents who specified a genre, is a topic for another poll.)

Respondents who considered themselves religious were much more likely to be offended by gay and lesbian content. Young men ages 18 to 24 aren't offended by much; even material that disrespects women bothers only about 40 percent of this group.

Twelve-year-old Melina Erkan, a seventh-grader in Monroe, Conn., said she used to watch a lot of music videos on MTV and VHI but has become increasingly turned off by the prevalent images of scantily dressed women.

"Sometimes in the music videos these days, the women they have dancing in the background, they dress really cheap, and women don't really look like that and act like that," she said. "When I see that, I change the channel to something I like."

Hannah Montee, a 21-year-old college student in Liberal, Mo., said she had practically stopped watching TV because of all the vulgarity she saw.

"I get tired of hearing all the cussing and the sexual innuendoes," she said.

Younger teens report their parents keep a tight rein on their entertainment and technology habits. Nearly 3 out of 5 in this group say their parents restrict what they download, whether it's music or movies or other content.

Only 4 percent of the 12- to 17-year-olds reported their parents didn't know much about their entertainment and communication choices. About a quarter of young teenage boys said they fought with their parents about video games or the music they listened to, whereas girls tended to fight with their parents about cell-phone usage.

(Girls play video games, but fewer than 1 percent of female poll respondents of all ages said they would choose a video game console if they could have only one item on a desert island from a list that also included a computer, a cell phone, a television, an iPod or an MP3 player.)

About one-third of boys and girls ages 12 to 14 said their parents didn't let them go on social networking sites such as MySpace.

About 15 percent of the kids ages 15 to 17 said their parents restricted access, but by 18, parental control had melted away.

Driven to distraction

Another concern for adults is multi-tasking. For the most part, experts have not looked closely at how teens' and young adults' thinking skills, especially when it comes to homework, may be affected by what one software executive has dubbed "constant partial attention."

"It's like being in a candy store," said Gloria Mark, a University of California, Irvine, professor who studies interactions between people and computers. "You aren't going to ignore the candy; you are going to try it all."

Mark, who has studied multi-tasking by 25- to 35-yearold high-tech workers, believes the group is not much different from 12- to 24-year-olds, since the two groups grew up with similar technology.

She frets that "a pattern of constant interruption" is creating a generation that will not know how to lose itself in thought.

"You know the concept of `flow'?" asked Mark, referring to an idea popularized by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi about the benefits of complete absorption and focus. "You have to focus and concentrate, and this state of flow only comes when you do that.... Maybe it's an old-fogy notion, but it's an eternal one: Anyone with great ideas is going to have to spend some time deep in thought."

Grand Rapids Press

November 27, 2006

Dorm Geeks Rule-Student Computer Fixers Reveal In Popularity

Bradley Osborne conquers all of the high-tech challenges you might expect: viruses, faulty network connections, the occasional software bug.

But once in a while, a monkey wrench is thrown into the works. Or a fork is lodged in a printer.

It's enough, to slow the Aquinas College junior and resident technology assistant on his appointed rounds ... but not for long.

"Their printer wasn't working, and I couldn't figure out why," he said. "After some investigating, I looked inside and saw some sort of object that looked foreign.

"I don't really know how it got there. And she didn't know how it got there, either."

Osborne has no formal training in eating-utensil retrieval, but he solved the crisis nonetheless. He and the schools two other student resident technology assistants stay limber, which is part of what makes them so invaluable.

The unsung heroes of modern academia, these youths are hired by universities to respond to the proliferation - and diversity - of electronic emergencies.

At Stanford, Santa Clara University, the University of California-Berkeley, and local colleges such as Aquinas, Calvin College and Kendall College of Art and Design, they are the first-line responders to tech trouble.

Neither Aquinas nor Kendall charges for computer services available to students.

Calvin employs two types of tech assistants: a group of five part-time students, and four full-time techs who aren't students.

The student techs help with software installation and network connectivity for free; the full-time employees will troubleshoot problems for a fee. It's \$35 to rid student computers of viruses or spyware, or, for a hardware problem, there is a \$15 fee for diagnosis and referral.

Those pesky printers

Most emergencies at Kendall are printer-related, said Robin Getz, director of information, systems and information technology.

Computer lab printers heat up to a scorching 500 degrees, so if a student loads the wrong kind of paper, such as ink jet, the result can be a gunked up, gooey mess.

Getz's four tech assistants - stationed nearby on computers loaded with software - so as not to neglect their studies - fix that problem before it becomes a problem. They also help install new software.

Joyce LaFleur, director of information technology and services at Aquinas, advises her RTAs to make appointments with struggling students at times that fit their schedules. They are paid by the hour, and make around minimum wage, but the experience they gain is invaluable, she said.

"It's very good for the RTA to get experience and have a paying position that is flexible like that," she said. "And it is also a great resource for us to be able to handle a wide variety of needs students have at any time of the day or night."

Each incoming class of college students is more "wired" than the last, with higher expectations of speed, access and convenience. Gone are batik bedspreads and Che posters; instead, many rooms resemble the showroom at an electronics store.

Aquinas senior and RTA Tim Wawrzynczak is happy to help when a gadget goes awry. But one thing really bugs him.

"There are people, who try to help you out as you're trying to help them, and that's a big pain in the butt," he said.

More to go wrong

A recent Stanford survey shows 99 percent of students have at least one computer; 9 percent have two or more. More than half of Stanford's undergraduates use a computer more than four hours a day. But many of these digitally dependent students are users - not fixers.

"Most students don't understand how unreliable these things are," said Ethan Rikleen, Stanford's network and systems administrator for student computing.

The hired students help handle the growing workload. Stanford recognizes that its student techs - RCCs - supported by a staff of professional technicians and administrators offer a practical solution to a growing problem. Smart and empathetic, the students offer peace of mind.

The ideal candidate isn't necessarily a technological wizard, said Jennifer Ly, manager of Stanford's Residential Computing. While plenty of RCCs study computer science and engineering, others study such subjects as biology or philosophy.

"We look for attitude," Ly said. "We seek someone with an appetite for problem solving who can provide excellent customer service and who is willing to learn."

Each RCC gets a four-day training course. Then, back in the dorms, the techs educate their fellow students. The problems they encounter run from the mundane to the disastrous.

During one recent lunch break, RCC Dana Nguyen, 21, got an urgent call: A student couldn't get her e-mail.

"They consider it their right to be connected," Nguyen said, bemused: She rushed, through lunch, and in 10 minutes, was back in the dorm, helping.

The worst of the worst

Some problems are more complicated. One of the biggest problems is created by computers that have been overseas and not protected from malicious viruses and worms, said Stanford's Diana Gentry, 23. A worm can flood a network with so much traffic it slows, even stops, a dorm's Internet access.

"People often don't realize they have a problem until I tell them," she said. "They say, 'Oh, that comes up all the time. I just click it and it goes away.'"

Aquinas' Osborne said he runs into lots of viruses and spyware problems with large suppliers such as Dell or HP.

One task was like something out of "Mission: Impossible." Osborne encountered a nasty virus that would shut down one computer 30 seconds after it was fired up. He was forced to race the clock and enter a command before it shut down.

A lost file is the most common catastrophe for the average Stanford student. Many RCCs tell tales of hearing frantic late-night knocks on their door.

"Once I was awakened at 2 a.m., because someone's hard drive failed - then again, at 6:30 a.m., because someone else had a PowerPoint presentation to give that morning and she couldn't find it anymore," Xuan Smith said.

But students say there are payoffs far beyond their modest \$170- to \$190-a-week salaries. For one thing, they acquire instant popularity. There are gifts of brownies - or beer.

"One of the perks is that people are always really happy to see you," Steve Nguyen said.

Pioneer

December 1, 2006

FSU holiday concert is Sunday

The West Central Concert Band will perform holiday music starting at 4 p.m.

The Ferris State University West Central Concert Band will present its annual Annual Holiday Band Concert Sunday at 4 p.m. in Ferris' G. Mennen Williams Auditorium.

The concert will feature the talents of narrator Bruce Dilg and vocalist Rachel Schumann.

Many holiday favorites, including music from "The Nutcracker" ballet, will be performed to help get everyone into the December holiday mood.

This concert is free and open to the public.

The program will include the following works: "The Bells of Christmas" by Robert Longfield featuring Bruce Dilg, "A Christmas Carol Fantasy" by Takashi Hoshide, "The Hanukah Gift" by Leroy Osmon, "King of Kings" by Robert W. Smith, "Sounds of Christmas" by John Wasson featuring Rachel Schumann, "Stille Nacht" by Chip Davis and Robert Longfield and "Suite" from "The Nutcracker" by Tchaikovsky.

The FSU West Central Concert Band (WCCB) is currently celebrating its 15th concert season.

It is comprised of musicians from the area, including Ferris students, adult community members from throughout west-central Michigan and students from area high school music programs.

WCCB is sponsored by Ferris as part of its "Music for Life!" program and presents a series of varied and diverse concerts throughout the concert season.

Music performance opportunities at Ferris are designed to supplement and enrich the lives of students by assisting them in making the transition from the high school musical setting to the world of adult amateur musical ensembles.

FSU students can continue to develop their musical skills and be prepared for a rewarding musical "life after college" by participating in Ferris' musical ensembles that include both university students and members of the community – the format of the majority of community ensembles throughout the country.

For more information, contact the FSU Music Center at (231) 591-2501.

Pioneer

December 20, 2006

Ferris, MOARC team up

FSU Dining Services hosts annual Christmas party for MOARC employees.

To say thank you, the Ferris State University Dining Services staff once again dug into their pockets to host a Christmas party Tuesday for workers from the Mecosta Osceola Area Rehabilitation Center.

The MOARC workers help keep dining services running smoothly at Ferris. The party has become an annual celebration sponsored by Ferris Dining Services staff, said Bryan Marquardt, assistant director of board operations and ancillary services.

"Our staff wanted to do something special for the MOARC team," Marquardt said. "They got together and funded a Christmas party out of their own pockets. Everyone donated money for food and gifts. It was beautiful - it put everyone in the holiday spirit and everyone really enjoyed it."

And so, the Ferris-MOARC Christmas party became a tradition.

"It reminds everybody of the true meaning of Christmas," said Stan Vallier, manager. "If you're around when Santa comes, you'll see. It's unbelievable - it gives you such a good feeling."

Pioneer

December 21, 3006

Cadets pioneer program at Ferris

Dressed in crisp blue uniforms and carrying shiny new shields, Derrick D. Turner and Anthony D. Dickson are making history at Ferris State University simply by showing up to work.

Turner and Dickson are the first police cadets to work at the Ferris State University Department of Public Safety.

"We are the first to mold and shape the program with the assistant director and director," Turner said. "The way we perform sets up the way future cadets will perform."

The two took a symbolic oath and received badges during an informal ceremony Tuesday morning. Cadets are uniformed members of the department, but they do not carry weapons or perform all of the duties of a police officer because they are not licensed by the state and are not graduates of a police academy. Still, the experience they will acquire will be invaluable to their overall careers.

"This is a unique privilege and honor to be chosen for this position," Dickson said. "It's an excellent opportunity to take along some useful skills. The more education and training I can get in the field, the better I am in the future."

The cadets will assist FSU officers by helping them with paperwork, taking minor incident reports, providing preliminary breath test services to persons on probation and other duties.

Police cadets have been utilized in departments across the nation for decades, said FSU DPS Director Marty Bledsoe, who began his law enforcement career as a cadet.

"It was a wonderful experience for me, being a police cadet in 1977," he said. "Having been in police leadership for many years, I know the value of these excellent young leaders to the community and I know how important this is to their futures."

Bledsoe said a police cadet position leads to natural mentoring opportunities with experienced officers as cadets earn their respect.

The fact they're making history in the department is not lost on the two young men.

"I hope I come back in 20 years and somebody says, 'Oh look, that's Tony Dickson, one of the first two police cadets (at Ferris) ever.'"

Turner, who will be able to become a licensed police officer in about six months, would like to pass on his cadet badge to another deserving young person.

"It would be my hope and pleasure to be in this position until I graduate and go on to a full-time position," he said. "It would be a privilege and honor to be able to pin on the badge of (the next cadet)."

Turner, a Flint native, is majoring in criminal justice at Ferris and is a recruit in the FSU Law Enforcement Academy anticipating a May 2007 graduation. He plans to pursue a career as a police officer upon graduation, perhaps with the very department where he is now a cadet. Turner has applied for one of the two open officer positions at Ferris DPS. His background includes membership with the police explorers unit of the Genesee County Sheriffs Department and work with the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety and the Mecosta County Sheriffs Office.

Dickson, of St. Johns, began to hone his leadership skills in high school when he was selected to attend Boy's State and National Young Leaders Conference in Washington D.C., as well as other youth leadership awards. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Ferris this month and will be pursuing a master's degree in criminal justice administration next semester. In addition to his work with the Ferris DPS, his law enforcement background includes serving as an undercover decoy in field operations for the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, as a Senior Marine Officer for the Mecosta County Sheriff's Office and as a reserve police officer for Reed City,

Bledsoe said department leaders had been watching and evaluating the cadets' performance for a long time without Turner and Dickson being aware of the scrutiny.

"They've done on their own, self-starting, made contributions to the department that were not asked of them," he said. "Their contact with the community is absolutely wonderful. We've watched them talk with students in particular and they're very caring, very professional ... they really are the epitome of excellent young leadership."

Turner and Dickson said they are interested in raising the bar for all student employees. They are working with department leadership to revise policies for student employees with the goal of overall improvement.

The goal is "for a better student employee, on work and off, that the whole community can look up to and respect." Turner said.