



## Maine GEAR UP Newsletter Insert

### 6 GEAR UP Schools Received New MELMAC Grants

Congratulations to: Carrabec High School, Old Town High School, Piscataquis Community High School, Shead High School, Southern Aroostook Community School, and Sumner High School.

#### Community Service at Machias Memorial High School with Arlene Porter

##### **How does Machias Memorial High School support students in obtaining these credits?**

Through our advisor/advisee program (HomeBase), we plan two community service projects per year (8 over a 4 year period). All students are required to participate as it is part of their HomeBase grade. Students do have input as to what they want to do as a group, but the final decision is made by advisors and HomeBase coordinator. Students receive ¼ credit per year for HomeBase.

##### **How does MMHS organize students securing community service opportunities?**

The HomeBase coordinator plans fall community service projects with input from advisors & students. HomeBase coordinator or advisors usually contact businesses, schools, town managers, hospitals, nursing homes, or food pantries to see if there is a need for help. Sometimes we are contacted by community members for service projects.

##### **Describe a couple of community service experiences students have engaged in:**

My all time favorite community service project was when we helped the Whiting Food Pantry. Students helped to stock shelves with food. Many of the students knew people who used food pantries on a regular basis and felt like they were really doing something to help people that they knew. They felt they were giving back to their community.

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##### **If you had one or two recommendations for other high schools wanting to implement community service projects - what would you recommend?**

This is my fifth year as an advisor and I have participated in nine community service projects here at MMHS. The number one recommendation that I would suggest to other schools who would like to implement community service into their students' curriculum would be "student input." I have found that the community service projects where students had a voice in choosing were the most rewarding and successful. I have found that students want to participate in activities that are important for them. If students buy into what they are doing, it will be a great experience. My second recommendation would be to have the students participate in community service in the morning only. We always plan something fun in the afternoon for the students to participate in, like a school wide field day and BBQ.

Thank you, Arlene Porter for sharing information about Machias Memorial High School's Community Service Project. Also, the recommendations can help schools move forward in establishing successful community service opportunities in their schools! ❄



Congratulations to  
Shead High School  
& Jonesport-Beals  
High School  
Selected as "Best  
High Schools 2009"  
by US News and  
World Report

## EdGE: Making a Difference in the Lives of Students in Washington County:

Based on a Conversation With Charlie Harrington, Director of EdGE

EdGE (Ed Greaves Education) is an innovative youth development program of the Maine Sea Coast Mission which is based in Bar Harbor. The Sea Coast Mission has had a one hundred year presence in DownEast Maine and was created to work with youth in the Washington County area. Although the Sea Coast Mission is a faith-based organization, the EdGE program is not. EdGE formed in 2002 and originally focused on grades 5 through 8, but is currently expanding their focus to students in grades 4 – 12. The program is free, and the 10 sites are located in Western Washington County and Hancock County, and include the following GEAR UP school districts: Union 103, SAD 37, and Union 96. The program itself focuses on the following areas: academic support, creating a safe space, and enrichment.

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT:** We have tutoring sites after school where we work with students and their teachers. We create programs that include classroom teachers afterschool and we provide a stipend for them to be there with our additional staff.

**CREATING A SAFE PLACE:** EdGE provides students with a fun and safe place to go after school instead of going home alone, and provides parents with free after school daycare.

**ENRICHMENT:** There are no Boys or Girls Clubs in this area, no YMCAs or similar facilities, so EdGE provides students with opportunities they wouldn't normally have.

At the beginning, all schools in Washington County were screened to assess the interest of hosting the EdGE Program. In particular, SAD 37 was selected because of the strong history of work the Sea Coast Mission has had with this community. When Edge first got involved with SAD 37 we worked with two schools, now we work with all five schools. We discovered that having high school mentors really worked well for the students, and now we're planning to expand that model to other schools. We also wanted students to be able to volunteer, so that was added as a program requirement. Once students have completed their volunteer hours, EdGE creates jobs for them. We currently pay 12 to 15 high school students an hourly wage. The Sea Coast Mission also provides college scholarships to students, and a few mentors are now attending college at the University of Maine in Farmington and are studying education. EdGE has 6 full time staff and additional part time staff. We engage students in a lot of different activities, from studying and tutoring to a lot of outdoor activities, like hiking, mountain biking, and sea kayaking. We also use technology with our students, including iMovie video production, digital cameras, and Lego-robotics. Visual and creative arts are a strong focus in their enrichment activities because students in SAD 37 only have art for about 30 minutes a week. Most EdGE programs run from 2:30-5:30 and every child gets a ride home. ❁

### Congratulations to these schools for their partnership with ConnectEdu!

- East Grand
- Hodgdon
- Lubec
- Machias
- Madison
- Mt. Abram
- Narraguagus
- Old Town
- Piscataquis
- Southern Aroostook
- Sumner

For more information, visit [www.connectedu.net](http://www.connectedu.net).



*GEAR UP staff leading a workshop entitled "Celebratory Learning: Keeping Today's Learners Connected through Technology," MEEOA Conference 2008, Oct 29-31 in Portland*

