

Checklist

Seniors:

- Review your Spring Checklist: www.gearupme.org/students
- Take AP Exams
- Send thank you notes to your recommenders
- If more than one college accepts you, you must make a choice based on individual needs, interests, preferences, and careful comparison of financial aid packages. If possible visit the college campuses again to help make your final decision.
- If you have been accepted to one or more colleges but have not heard from your first choice, contact that college before any non-refundable deposits are due.
- If you were denied admission, see your counselor or GEAR UP Liaison immediately about alternatives.
- As soon as you have decided which offer to accept, notify all colleges to which you have been accepted of your decision.
- Based on your financial aid package from the school you have decided to enroll, see if you qualified for student or parent loans; get the right forms and review lenders to see which one is right for you.

Juniors:

- Continue prepping for SAT or ACT
- Are you taking any AP courses next year? Do you have any tests to take for any AP classes you took this year?
- Start selecting schools you want to visit and attend any welcome/visit days the campuses offer. Check with your guidance counselor -- your high school could be planning a trip.
- Plan your senior year class schedule. Challenge yourself and make sure you have filled all of your college requirements. Note that different colleges may have different requirements, so look up entrance requirements for the schools that you are interested in.
- Think about what would you like to be able to do before you leave high school (volunteering, involvement, internships, etc)

We have complete checklists for all years on our updated website!



Portland Freshman Day

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MAINE STATE GEAR UP staff and the Maine Parent Federation, Portland High School created an interactive and inspirational "Freshman Day '08" that focused on college preparation for the over 200+ diverse students belonging to its 2008 Freshman Class. Stephanie Doyle, Portland High School's GEAR UP Liaison, worked closely with Therese Bernier Burns to develop and organize



sessions that would both inspire and engage the students. Along with Assistant Principal Kimberly Wike, the two gathered ideas from freshman teachers and guidance counselors, which informed the day's activities and shaped its potential outcomes. The intent was to create synergy, teamwork, and community within the classroom that placed students on a path toward postsecondary achievement.

Throughout the day, students received a wealth of knowledge that will prepare them for their futures. The activities made students aware of many important factors in their college pursuits; the differences between high school graduation and college entrance requirements; the meaning of community service—including how to get involved, why it is important, and how to use community service opportunities to help prepare for college and future careers—and ultimately, how to keep family members engaged in planning and preparing for post-secondary education.

Freshman Day '08 ended with each student completing a personal learning plan survey that advisors will use to help Freshmen complete their required personal learning plans. The survey also provides important information to advisors as they work to personalize support for all Portland High School students. It was a fun, crazy, and fabulous day! ✨



Sumner Staff Visit Mt. Abram

By Betsy Emerson

"INFORMATIVE...INSPIRING...WELCOMING..." were the typical responses of a team of seven representatives from Sumner Memorial High School during their December 2nd visit to Mt. Abram High School in Salem. Organized by Sumner GEAR UP liaison Betsy Emerson, the group focused on student-led conferences and came away learning much, much more.

Other members of the Sumner group included principal Michael Eastman, Director of Guidance Linda Penkalski, librarian Chis Sandberg, Title I teacher Roger Woodworth, and teachers Andrea Jones and Todd Emerson.

Principal Jeanne Tucker met with the Sumner visitors and GEAR UP Regional Advisor Wendy Allen to discuss Mt. Abram's history and experience with student-led conferences. Portfolios and senior presentations were key topics of the discussion due to each school requiring both as graduation requirements; career advisory time and personal learning plans were also crucial areas discussed. Through the discussions, Woodworth recognized the affinity of the two schools, "Mt. Abram and Sumner share a great deal in common. Our schools are similar in size, demographics, and mission."

Following a lunch meeting with the lead advisors from grades 9 through 12, the Sumner visitors observed several students presenting their student-led conferences in their homerooms. "I was impressed with the confidence and thoroughness of the student presenters," commented Penkalski. Betsy Emerson added enthusiastically, "...We gained so much from this trip: affirmation, information, and several new perspectives. The three hour drive was well worth it." ✨

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Maine GEAR UP Newsletter

Winter 2008-09

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Mind Meld ~ Bringing Great Minds Together to Share Best Practices



THE STATE OF MAINE CURRENTLY HAS two federally-funded GEAR UP projects: the Maine State GEAR UP Project and the GEAR UP *Partnerships for Success*, which is located at the University of Maine in Farmington. The *Partnerships for Success* project staff focuses on 3 school districts, and the State of Maine GU Project works with 18 school districts. Although these two projects are unique, the ultimate outcome for both programs is to support students who are economically disadvantaged in preparing for, accessing, and succeeding in college.

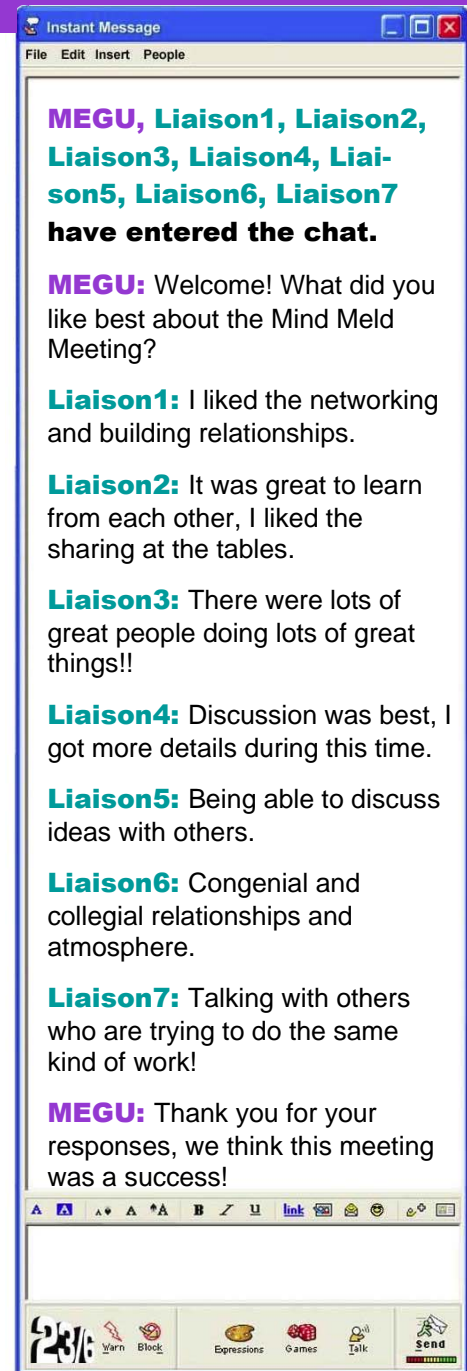
One of the recommendations at the federal level is for State GEAR UP projects to connect with and support GEAR UP partnership projects within the state. To facilitate this effort, staff from the Maine State GEAR UP project and *Partnerships for Success* have been meeting for three years to share their combined ideas. This year, the two directors—Kathryn Markovchick and Dorrea Fellman—decided to bring together all of their staff members to share resources and ideas about the best practices that ensure college access

for our students. Staff from both projects worked together to plan an interactive, fun, and engaging day.

On September 19, 2008 both project staffs met at the Eastern Maine Community College campus. Emily Liebling and Dorrea Fellman co-facilitated the day and began with an interactive questioning activity made possible by a donation of clickers from eInstruction (see *Technology Corner*). The outcomes of the day included: establishing a clear idea of how each program works in schools; sharing/showcasing the best practices and ideas of truly successful programs; and generating a list of best practices that can be added to the 100 College Going Strategies flip-book which is available at www.gearupme.org. ✨

Scrub Club THIS SUMMER IN THE MOUNTAINS of Western Maine more than 30 8th -10th graders from MSAD 21, MSAD 43, and the Jay school system experienced a weeklong summer camp that they will never forget. Scrub Club was a collaboration between UMF GEAR UP *Partnerships for Success* and Franklin Memorial Hospital it occurred the week of August 4, 2008 at Franklin Memorial Hospital and the purpose of the camp was to explore the numerous occupations within the healthcare field. Students learned how to suture by practicing on pigs' feet, how to cast each other's arms and legs, and how to discover their blood types. Campers were also certified in first aid, and earned their stripes by saving Luigi after a hiking injury in a mock accident. During the week, students also practiced giving injections on oranges, and were taught the importance of nutrition.

More than 20 professionals volunteered their time to explain the many avenues of the healthcare profession. Dr. Jewel Jones, from the University of Maine at Farmington, demonstrated a variety of adaptive devices, and she had each camper spend time in a wheelchair to have him/her experience living with a disability. Amanda, from the education department within the Hospital, gave campers a crash course in sign language. (cont. on next page)



MEGU, Liaison1, Liaison2, Liaison3, Liaison4, Liaison5, Liaison6, Liaison7 have entered the chat.

MEGU: Welcome! What did you like best about the Mind Meld Meeting?

Liaison1: I liked the networking and building relationships.

Liaison2: It was great to learn from each other, I liked the sharing at the tables.

Liaison3: There were lots of great people doing lots of great things!!

Liaison4: Discussion was best, I got more details during this time.

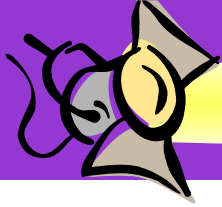
Liaison5: Being able to discuss ideas with others.

Liaison6: Congenial and collegial relationships and atmosphere.

Liaison7: Talking with others who are trying to do the same kind of work!

MEGU: Thank you for your responses, we think this meeting was a success!





Spotlight on 2008 National NCCEP/GEAR UP Conference

By Bonnie Clark

LAST July, I was privileged to take a student and her mom to Washington, D.C. My student, Miranda Prior, was chosen to represent Maine at the National Youth Leadership Summit. Miranda was chosen based on her application and teacher recommendations. I was her official chaperone, though her mom went as well. I knew we were in for an exciting trip when I met them at the airport to go. None of the family had ever flown before, or even been to an airport. Miranda and her mom were very cool, but the older folks were pretty nervous.



Miranda Prior, center

Thanks to the generosity of Maine Support Network, we were able to schedule some extra time to do a little sightseeing, as the Youth Leadership Summit agenda stated that the participants did not have time for sightseeing. As soon as we got our room, we picked up a double-decker bus right from the Hilton, where we stayed, and did the 3 hour tour. It was so hot that it was only comfortable as long as the bus was moving. But it was a thrilling ride. That was Friday. Saturday morning we took in the National Zoo and on Saturday afternoon, we turned Miranda over to the YLS program directors, and she was theirs until the conclusion of the program. Miranda's mom and I were registered at the National Gear Up Conference, which was going on at the same time. The Washington Hilton Conference Center was pretty awe inspiring, all by itself. And it was only about 3 blocks away from Dupont Circle subway station. Both our groups did meet for meals and plenary sessions. I assisted the Maine Support Network folks with their workshop. There were some very exciting speakers and an extra special surprise speaker- Hillary Clinton. The scholars in the YLS also put on a little presentation for one of the plenary sessions, and there was a graduation and recognition ceremony the last day. Miranda was one of 5 scholars who won an additional \$500 scholarship for their essays on community issues.

All during the next few days I met many interesting people from all over North America. Several states and territories had large numbers of GU students with them, attending the conference. There were some workshops for students and parents. We also kept running into groups of Gear Up students around town who seemed to be doing some kind of Gear Up summer camp. I discovered that different Gear Up programs have many different components to achieve the same basic goals.

The youths attending YLS were from many diverse ethnic groups. Having to work together was a real awakening experience for all of them, but they got along fabulously. They were kept so busy they could hardly stay awake during the meals. We had an extra day after the conference, but Miranda was so worn out that we just hung out at the hotel until it was time to go. We did go to see Arlington National Cemetery after the last session on Wednesday. Miranda was so tired but so glad she attended.

Overall it was a wonderful time, and I think that I got as much out of the trip as well as Miranda and her mom did. I know that Miranda was much more ready to go to college in September than she was before the Summit, as well as more motivated to step up as a leader. I highly recommend other liaisons try to get students to apply for this opportunity each year, but keep in mind that they need more support than most families do. Many of them have never traveled anywhere at all, and may be too proud to ask for help. I suggest you check out NCCEP's website, www.edpartnerships.org for announcements and opportunities. It was a privilege for me to experience this exciting time with those two fine ladies. ❁

Scrub Club (cont) Each camper learned helpful terms for communicating with deaf individuals in a hospital setting. The Hospital security/safety supervisors demonstrated to campers how to diffuse a potentially risky situation. Hanger Prosthetics also enlightened participants about the world of prosthetics, and reminded them that the field is not just about arms and legs.



To introduce the campers to Scrub Club's World Project, Dr. Connie Adler shared her experiences of training medical staff in developing countries, along with the desperate conditions in which many families live. After campers witnessed the stark socioeconomic differences that exist between cultures, the campers had a newfound enthusiasm to help the impoverished.

Donation boxes were set up around the community to collect old t-shirts which were then converted into diapers for families in developing countries. To construct the diapers, campers were divided into three stations: the first station had five sewing machines buzzing along merrily, the second had

participants cutting the arms off t-shirts, and the third had t-shirts folder in a manner to be sewed. By the end of the week, campers created 180 diapers and the results of their hard work will be sent to countries where their efforts will make an impact. The exciting week ended with an ice cream social and slide show with parents and the CEO of the hospital. ❁



Technology Corner

EINSTRUCTION! "CLICKING INTO GEAR"

Chuck Pirello and Dan Breslin, eInstruction representatives for Maine, donated a full set of clickers to the Maine Support Network. We will be using these fun technological devices to model new ways to engage students in classroom instruction. These instruments allow teachers to pose questions and garner instantaneous assessment reports. They can use these reports to check for understanding as well as to identify areas where specific students may need additional instruction.

Emily Liebling used the clickers to engage the RTACs, Liaisons, and staff from Partnerships for Success at the September Mind Meld (see "Mind Meld" on front page). These devices allow individuals or groups to respond to questions posed for the whole class by using an LCD projector and a computer. The responses, although anonymous to everyone but the teacher, allow the class to see how others answered the question.

Here are some examples of the questions we've used...

...at the Mind Meld:

What was the first year Maine received a GEAR UP grant?

- a) 1990 b) 1999 c) 2001 d) 2005



...at Portland High School:

How can I tell how much college will cost me?

- a) Look up the cost of attendance for the college
- b) There's no way to know until I'm accepted to the college and get my financial aid package
- c) Schools that have lower tuition will cost me less
- d) Private schools will cost me more

How would you answer?

For more information about the clickers and eInstruction please visit the website at www.einstruction.com or contact:

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New GEAR UP Maine Yearbook!

GEAR UP MAINE IS PLEASED TO SHARE its first annual Yearbook. The 2009 GU Yearbook will be mailed to legislators who serve as representatives in GEAR UP districts, members of the legislative Educational Committee, and other college access stakeholders. Information from the yearbook includes a map and listing of GEAR UP schools, quotes from GEAR UP school staff and administrators, and data indicating the progress on each of The Maine State GU objectives. There are also lots of fun photographs! Check out the full electronic version of the yearbook on our website at www.gearupme.org. ❁

GEAR UP

Serves Parents Too!

By Ray Cook

Maine Parent Federation GEAR UP staff presented a new course for parents of high school students at Lawrence Adult Education in Fairfield on three Wednesdays this past September. **Your Child And Higher Education: What Parents Can Do** provided parents and students with information to help each student prepare for the process of applying to higher education; selecting the higher education path that suits him/her best, and coming up with a plan to ensure he/she can pay for post-secondary education.

Janet Avallone, GEAR UP Liaison at Lawrence High School commented "The relaxed atmosphere made it easy for parents [and students] to ask whatever questions they wanted, without hesitation, and they ended up staying 45 minutes over the scheduled end time - WOW!"

MPF GEAR UP offered the course through Adult Education programs this fall in areas served by GU high schools around the state. MPF turned to Adult Education to host our classes for parents due to their expertise in accommodating the wide range of adult interests in their communities. They will be offering another course, designed for parents of high school seniors (**Goodbye High School, Hello College**), through Adult Education programs in the spring.

For more information about either of these courses and where they will be offered contact Ray Cook, GEAR UP Parent Involvement Activities Coordinator at Maine Parent Federation: 1 (800) 870-7746 or rcook@mpf.org.