

Local Businesses Host Lawrence High School Seniors

By Janet Avallone

October 13, 2010—With the help of John Butera, executive director of the Central Maine Growth Council, and the business leaders at the Central Maine Business/Education Cooperative, a field trip to tour 10 area businesses was planned and organized for Lawrence High School Seniors. The guidance department, business department, and GEAR UP personnel also actively planned, organized, and chaperoned the trip. Several classroom teachers had their students research the businesses we would tour a week before the trip, and some students created a bulletin board with facts about each business.



Seventy-five LHS seniors participated in our "Seniors Specials" day which began in The Williamson Center at the junior high. Ken Young, executive director of the Kennebec Valley Council on Government, spoke about job readiness, what employers expect in an employee, and what employees should expect from an employer. Ken also spoke about his career in law, business, and now as director of the Kennebec Valley Council on Government. Our second speaker was Bruce Harrington, assistant vice president, commercial lending, Northeast Bank, Augusta. Bruce, who is a resident of Fairfield and a Lawrence High School alum (1998), spoke about his academic journey and career pathway starting with his enrollment at Maine Maritime Academy majoring in engineering, his transfer to UMO in his junior year and switching majors to business and finance, and then continuing on to obtain an M.B.A.

Students then headed to the 5 waiting buses and each took off in the direction of their first business stop. Each student visited 2 of the 10 businesses and learned about the products or services they provided. After an hour-and-a-half tour and a Q and A period, the buses took off for the next business on their list to visit. When students returned to their classes many teachers asked students to share their experiences with sophomores and juniors in the class, and some did a follow-up writing project.

All in all, this proved to be a rewarding day and a great way to cultivate an essential relationship between education and business. ★

Hats off to Eric Brooks, a GU student who is leading the way!

On Friday, October 15, the Maine chapter of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) met in Bangor. Thirty-five students and their advisors, from Machias, Narraguagus and Schenck high schools, participated in a busy day that included team building, what it takes to be a leader, career and college awareness, how to run a successful meeting, and the election of state officers. FCCLA is a national student-led career and technical student organization.

GEAR UP student Eric Brooks, a junior at the University of Maine at Farmington, is the program director for FCCLA of Maine. Eric, a graduate of Narraguagus High School, was involved in FCCLA throughout his high school years and saw it as an important opportunity to learn and become a leader. He was a state officer, presented nationally at FCCLA workshops, and, when the state advisor position was cut, Eric assumed the role and provided leadership and direction for the 50-plus students and advisors involved in the statewide organization. Eric does this all as a volunteer!



Eric Brooks, FCCLA Program Director

Eric's plan for the future: "I want to teach. I love working with young people." Without the GU grant and involvement in FCCLA Eric said he wouldn't have been able to pursue his dream. Thank you, Eric, for all that you are doing to encourage and support young people in taking on leadership roles in their schools and communities! (GEAR UP staffer Wendy Allen worked with the FCCLA students around career and college awareness and had the opportunity to talk to Eric about FCCLA and his role as director.)

Learn more about FCCLA at: www.maine.gov/education/it/ctso/fccla ★

Lee Academy Alum Charles Longo '07 Elected to Bangor City Council!

Read the article online at www.gearupme.org/news/newsletter.php



Transforming Futures

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Maine State GEAR UP Welcomes New GEAR UP Liaisons

New GEAR UP Liaison in Machias!



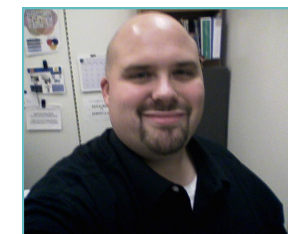
Nicole Case, Machias Liaison

We welcome Nicole Case as the new GEAR UP liaison for Machias High School, as well as Rose Gaffney School and Jonesboro Elementary School. She is currently in her 19th year of teaching, having spent all of those years in her current school district. Nicole recently graduated from Husson University with a master's in school counseling. In addition to her busy schedule as a GEAR UP liaison and math teacher, Nicole also takes on an additional assignment by teaching an early college course at MMHS for WCCC credit. This is a great opportunity for Machias students to get a jump on their college careers!

Nicole is very excited about using her new role as GEAR UP liaison to enhance the college awareness aspects of Machias's Home Base program. She also looks forward to working with staff at Rose Gaffney and Jonesboro Elementary to address transition issues for students. The move from middle school to high school is an important one, and it presents a great opportunity to interact with students around goal setting.

GEAR UP is thrilled to have Nicole serving the students and staff of Machias!!!

Maurice Langlois New GEAR UP Liaison for Carrabec School District



Maurice Langlois, Carrabec Liaison

"I was hired by MSAD 74 as part of its School Improvement Grant plan to help improve Carrabec High School's SAT scores. Even though my teaching certification is in secondary social studies, I have been doing SAT prep tutoring and classroom teaching on and off for the past 8 years and have a great deal of knowledge on the subject. Since SAT prep is so strongly tied to post-high school planning, and college in particular, the district decided to make me GEAR UP liaison as well. I couldn't be happier about that decision. One of the best parts of working in SAT prep has been talking to students about what they plan to do after high school. As GEAR UP liaison I get to do that on a schoolwide level that I never did before. Helping kids in the college search process, and working to make that world more accessible to them, is very rewarding and really kind of fun."

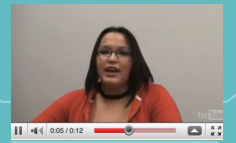


Linda Penkalski with Corinna Domagala, Sumner's new Guidance Counselor

Linda Penkalski New GEAR UP Liaison at Sumner Memorial High School

Linda retired this summer from 40 years as a science teacher and guidance counselor and now is the GU/MELMAC liaison for Sumner Memorial High School. Linda says, "This is the perfect job for a retired guidance counselor because I am still working with students and helping them with their postsecondary plans. I am still working with my colleagues at Sumner and I get to deal with the positive aspects of planning." ★

Former GEAR UP Student in the News!



Cassandra Dana

Cassandra Dana, a GEAR UP student and graduate of Lee Academy, was recently the second GEAR UP student interviewed for Navigating the Real World, Inc., a Maine non-profit organization that provides information to help people in their teens and twenties deal with important life decisions and challenging circumstances. The Interview Project gathers first-hand accounts from young people on topics ranging from high school and college experiences to choosing a career and living on your own.

Currently a freshman at the University of Maine at Orono, Cassie was asked to share her experiences preparing for, and transitioning into, college. Look for her interview on the Navigating the Real World website: navigatingthereal-world.org. ★





SPOTLIGHT ON: National GEAR UP Day:

September 30, 2010, Celebrated in Maine Schools

GEAR UP Day at Lubec Consolidated School was focused on Grades 7 and 8, due to the closure of our high school. An informative bulletin board was displayed for all middle school students that included lots of material about being better prepared for college. Also, a presentation was given for Grades 7 and 8 to explain the meaning of GEAR UP. It is never too early to get the students focused on the importance of being ready for college!

-Anne Seavey



Lawrence High School Bulletin Board

Lawrence High School began the celebration of National GEAR UP Day a few days early. On Monday, September 27, during the morning announcements, Principal Pamela Swett talked about the GEAR UP program and what it has meant to our community. She also explained that Governor Baldacci had declared Thursday, September 30, as Maine GEAR UP day. Each morning of that week, Mrs. Swett read a GEAR UP fact to the entire student body. This generated many questions about GEAR UP and college access. On Thursday, September 30, I hosted a snack/refreshment time during homeroom for the 70 senior GEAR UP students. It was a great opportunity to speak to them as a group about the upcoming college application season and how the GEARUP program would be able to help them now and in the future.

-Janet Avallone

At Carrabec High School, in North Anson, we integrated our GEAR UP celebration into our Spirit Week. Each day of Spirit Week has a theme and contests for the different classes. On GEAR UP Day (College Day) teachers were encouraged to wear something that represented their alma maters, and students got points for their classes for dressing up in clothing with college logos. There was also a faculty college/university scavenger hunt to see if any student could find out all of the institutions of higher learning attended by each faculty member. Even though it took me a week to compile that information, four students were able to gather it in less than 3 hours. Finally, we had a GEAR UP DREAMS display in the cafeteria where students could write their post-high school plans. Overall, it was a highly successful day.

-Maurice Langlois



Decorated door at Jonesport-Beals

During the week of National GEAR UP Day, all teachers and staff at Jonesport-Beals were encouraged to decorate their classroom/office doors with items from the colleges that they attended. Every staff member participated; some even used bags, bumper stickers, or calendars to add pizzazz to their displays. Our art teacher, Lisa Marin, printed off all the required classes for her program so the students could see what she had taken while attending USM. On National GEAR UP Day, I took down all the information that had been posted on

the doors and passed out questionnaires to the students. The students were not aware of the fact that I would be doing a questionnaire. This was to see who had actually taken notice of the college information. The students that were able to provide the correct college information about the staff were then entered into a drawing for a prize. One of our senior GEAR UP students actually won the prize—a platter of cookies and a big bag of candy! This activity was a lot of fun and was well received by all.

- Donna Alley

On GEAR UP Day, Narraguagus High School displayed a picture of all teachers, as well as a picture of the school each of them attended. Students were to match the two and the winners of a gas card were chosen from correct entries. The students had fun guessing what school each teacher attended and then asking teachers questions to get hints about the college they attended. After the display was taken down, the teacher pictures were matched to the school he/she attended and placed by the teachers' doors in the hallway.

-Lucille Willey

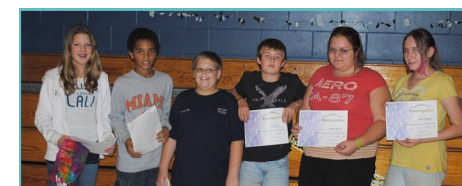
Old Town High School, and Jobs for Maine's Graduates, co-hosted "A Passport to Your Future Day" with a career and college fair and an open house. Students from Helen Dunn Elementary, and the high school, submitted articles in community papers/newsletters to create awareness of GEAR UP and GEAR UP activities in our schools. 7th and 8th graders had a college scavenger hunt and are currently creating personal learning plans. Both schools had announcements made throughout the school day.

-Kim Ketch



Sumner student Briana West in front of Teacher's Journeys bulletin board

"You Can Get There From Here—Pathways to Success at Sumner Memorial High School!" This was the theme of our GEAR UP Day activity at Sumner. Teachers posted their journey from high school to their present job. A senior GU student, Briana West, helped organize the activity. In advisory, students did the same activity and shared their future plans.



Students at Lee Academy

At Lee Academy and Mt. Jefferson Junior High School, we held an essay contest to help celebrate GEAR UP Day. Our winning entry was Marrinna Farrington's.

"Why I want to go to college . . .

Well, it seems a little bit early to be thinking about college in the 6th grade but I have been preparing myself for a while. I like to dance, sing, and play musical instruments. I plan to major in musical theater and dance. I have danced 8 years, with 3 different instructors. I have had to give up a lot of fun time to long hours of dance. My mom has taught me that hard work, determination, and perseverance will get you far in life.

I have participated in pageants for 4 years. They have helped teach me how to perform, how to speak with eye contact, and be confident. When I win at a pageant or talent show I put my money in the bank for college.

I am excited to go to college. I have had to narrow down where I want to go. I have looked at many colleges and they all have something different to offer. Julliard is my favorite.

I am the oldest of 5 children, so I will go to college first. I will try to set a good example by setting goals and working hard. I will educate myself in the arts and work hard at my school work. Because some day I want to become a performer and a teacher so that someday I can ask my students, 'Why do you want to go to college?'

And if they ask me why I wanted to go, I can tell them that I wanted to be inspired."

-Emma Irish

At Hodgdon High School, each of the teachers talked about their college experiences during their advisory sessions. Teachers displayed a small poster saying what their alma mater is, and wore a t-shirt or sweatshirt from their college. Each student received a "Kick Start" booklet that will be used for future advisory sessions.

-Sr. Peggy Walsh

GEAR UP Day at Madison Area Memorial High School turned into GEAR UP Week. We ran a contest for a week where students went around to staff and discovered where they went to college. The top three students that came up with the most correct answers were awarded a gift certificate to local businesses. Staff enjoyed sharing where they went to college and students were surprised to see the different places their teachers had attended. The students were also surprised to see that many teachers had attended more than one college due to the fact that they are life-long learners and have continued their education beyond the required years.

-Abby Michaud



Mt. Abram Teachers

During the week of GEAR UP Day, students participated in a challenge to match up the teachers to the colleges and universities that they had attended. On GEAR UP Day many of the staff wore sweatshirts and jackets from their alma maters. Not only did this spark great conversations about college in the classes, but the teachers were happy to relive their college years and it was a great reason to wear sweats to school! Much praise was given for the day and many conversations were started, that are still continuing, about colleges and universities.

-Monica Hedstrom ★