



Special points of interest:

- Physics Circus.
- New Website.
- Gaming Camp.
- Welding Camp.
- Education Summit.
- Project STOMP.
- Marsh Madness.
- Upcoming events.

Fall Semester Brings A Variety of Opportunities for Involvement

For GEAR UP Waco, the past fall semester has been an exciting time filled with many programs for Waco ISD and LaVega ISD. To address academic achievement, knowledge and expectation needs, GEAR UP Waco implemented enriching programs. All were focused on students, parents and teachers in the Waco community.

The Wetlands Marsh Madness provided an environmental science hands-on experience by including biology and chemistry based content with discovery and experiments, plus actual real world applications at Lake Waco Wetlands. .

GEAR UP staff used this experience as a way to connect with students in the classroom, as well as to make GEAR UP's presence and mission known in the community.

The Math Initiative's Super Saturday program provided technology and mathematics-based training for both

students and teachers in order to increase students' understanding and achievement in math. Teachers expanded and enhanced instructional strategies for their classroom. Students from WISD participated in Saturday sessions focusing on the concept of measurement. Students learned the basics of measurement and how it is used in math calculations. GEAR UP staff discussed the variety of jobs that use math and measurement with the students and focused on the steps students need to take to reach these jobs. This opportunity was a great way to show students how classroom learning experiences prepare them for the working world.

The Think College program focused directly on key components including: academic preparation, college selection, application process, and financial aid that directly address significant needs in attainment, as well as gaps in student and parent knowledge and expectations about college.

GEAR UP graduate students spoke at several parental involvement programs and at WISD schools this past fall to promote college awareness to parents in the community. Information about financial aid and admission processes were also provided. Parents and students alike were eager to learn more about how they could encourage their children to begin thinking about college, even during the middle school years.

In all instances where GEAR UP graduate students interacted with students, the main focus was encouragement. All programs presented this semester focused on the importance of education, as well as the steps that will help in obtaining a high school and college degree.

Upcoming Events.

- Math Initiative Teacher Professional Development Day. January 31, 2009 from 9 am to 12pm @ Baylor University. This training opportunity is for 8th and 9th grade math teachers in WISD and LVISD. Teachers will engage in activities to support Math Super Saturdays.
- Math Super Saturday: Brazos and Wiley Middle School Feb 28, 2009, (9 am - 3 pm) Baylor University Draper 211. Under the direction of Baylor University mathematics professors, 8th grade students will engage in hands-on math and technology activities designed to help students prepare for college.
- Math Super Saturday: Lake Air Middle School Mar 21, 2009, (9 am - 3 pm) @ Baylor University Draper 211
- Math Super Saturday: Tennyson and University Middle School Mar 28, 2009, (9 am - 3 pm) @ Baylor University Draper 211

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THE GREATEST



CASPER www.baylor.edu/CASPER

The Physics Circus.

Physics Circus a Success

The 2008 Physics Circus took place from March 19 through April 11 at the Mayborn Museum Complex.

This year's theme was "Who Wants to be a Scientist?" The event combined aspects from prominent game shows, such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, *The Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy* and *The Price is Right*.

Students had the opportunity to explore the world of physics in the

Physics Fun House. The Circus was put on by CASPER, Baylor and TSTC's sponsored Center for Astrophysics, Space Physics and Engineering Research.

For information about Physics Circus 2009 call:
(254) 710-3763.

"LEAF developed over a two-year period from parents expressing the need to learn English in order to meet the needs of their children, obtain better jobs, and become more aware of the services of the community"

The literacy program that began in 2003, continued to touch the lives of the limited English speaking community in Waco.

The program, originally designed to help parents of students enrolled at Cesar Chavez Middle school, was

offered to any community resident.

The classes met this fall for one night each week. Baylor University students, along with Dr. Randy Wood, led classes devoted to helping participants develop English speaking and reading skills.

This program seeks to provide, not only language help, but presents topics of interest for the participants and builds parent involvement in their child's education.

CIS leads students in positive directions

Communities in Schools (CIS formerly MCYC) is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization.

Waco's CIS-HOT, works in area schools to create a positive learning environment for students to receive encouragement, counseling and academic help outside of the traditional classroom

setting. CIS-HOT uses GEAR UP's Think College Component in their services to provide information to students about college choices and financial aid. They also partner to encourage students to develop positive habits that will result in strong academic and social success.

GEAR UP staff and graduate assistants will continue to work with CIS on both the WISD and LVISD middle school campuses this spring.



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GEAR UP in the News

Inspiring Students Toward Higher Education, the GEAR UP Way

At last month's Greater Waco Community Education Summit it was fascinating to see a whole room swing 180 degrees. That was when GEAR-Up volunteers from Baylor University spoke at one of the "stakeholder" group sessions.

The session focused on getting more young people to seek higher education.

The Baylor volunteers were seated inconspicuously at the back of the room. When they began speaking, you could sense a spotlight turn. They provided exactly the kind of input concerned citizens were there to hear.

GEAR-UP is a program in which volunteers connect with students and help them focus on the possibilities of higher education. The current Baylor volunteers were matched up with middle-schoolers and are following them into high school.

This involvement far transcends the proto-

typical "career day" opportunity or a speech from someone successful. This is mentoring.

Hands-on involvement is the best kind of role modeling. Waco needs to get as many young people as possible in the mind-set of continuing with their educations after high school.

The committee for this session laid out three action items: college enrollment fairs; a directory of services for students considering college; and college mentors for secondary students.

Human touch is the key to any success these initiatives might have.

College students can persuade without lecturing. They can tell students that not only is college important in improving one's earning potential, it's also a fun and defining experience.

Too many young people in this community are missing out on that opportunity, though financial aid is there for the taking. An official of Texas State Technical College told the session that sometimes scholarships at the school nearly go begging for applicants.

With a unique program like the Waco Foundation's MAC Grant, which bridges available federal and state assistance, no student who has completed high school or acquired a GED should consider himself or herself "not college material."

Getting this message out is going to take more than pamphlets and mail-outs. It's going to take the human touch.

"College students...can tell students that not only is college important in improving one's earning potential, it is also a fun and defining experience,"

Waco's Education Summit Prepares the Community for Success

Citizens from all across Waco's community met last month to develop a strategy to help our city's current education situation, and GEAR UP faculty, students, and parents were right in the midst.

Waco's low rate of employees with higher education, while not a major problem now, will cause huge issues for the future of this area. Simply put, there are not enough employable positions to sustain such a large number of people without degrees. Designed specifically to promote conversation about this topic and to provide tools to approach it, the Education Summit was a huge

success. Held at the Waco Convention Center on November 19-21, the Summit hosted excellent speakers and workshops, each with a unique perspective and service to offer. An overall theme, however, was that education is not just the school system's job.

The Summit offered resources and discussed opportunities for families to not only support their children throughout their required schooling, but to encourage them to set goals for themselves and seek out high education. It also encourage employers, business,

and corporations to open their doors in new and creative ways- everything from tours of a facility to giving guest speeches can have a positive impact on someone who has never seen the other side of business before.

The popular saying "It takes a village to raise a child" is proving itself to hold true as the Waco Community bands together to encourage young and old students to continue their education.

"Changing the face of education in this county is going to take a whole lot more than talk,"

WILD Project Promotes Positive Action

On October 29th, Gear UP Waco sponsored a WILD event that prepared educators for the task of involving their students in environmental action projects.

Many times, students are given a pamphlet, or perhaps even watch a video on the necessity of protecting the planet and doing our part to keep it clean. However, these messages are often forgotten once the classroom is left behind. That's why the WILD project focuses specifically on hands-on, in depth investigations of

our surroundings.

The program spotlights four main ideas: Awareness, Participatory Democracy, Habitat Exploration, and Taking Action. Through these venues, students- and their teachers!- can learn more about where we live, and more importantly, how we can protect it and keep it clean.

In addition to this altruistic message, WILD promotes teamwork and collaboration to not only address problems, but develop solutions as well.

Projects such as these get students children involved, interested, and excited!

Articles on this page were used with permission from The Waco Tribune Herald.



Summer + Fall Semester in Review.



Pictured left to right Dr. Jewel Lockridge, Project Director for GEAR UP Waco, Dr. Sharon Shields, Supt. of La Vega ISD, Waco Mayor, Virginia DuPuy, Dr. Roland Hernandez, Supt, Waco ISD Arati Singh from the Academy of Educational Development at the National GEAR UP Conference in Washington, DC.



Linda Hewgley (right) LVISD 8th grade Science works with Melissa Mullins of Marsh Madness in Summer Swamp School



GEAR UP math initiative instructor led students on field trip during Project Stomp Camp.



Student at the TSTC gaming camp wearing the motion capture suit used to digitize his likeness to be used in a mock video game.



Teacher Involvement in Marsh Madness- (right) Doug Stockton and (left) Linda Hewgley- 8th grade Science, Summer Swamp School



Jewel Lockridge, Project Director for GEAR UP Waco and Project Coordinator, Norma J. Batts join students at TSTC welding camp for lunch.

Summer + Fall Semester in Review.



Students on field trip during Project S.T.O.M.P. Camp.



Students at the Wetlands during Project S.T.O.M.P. Camp.



Students practice their piloting skills at the TSTC Welding Camp.



One of the many GEAR UP math initiative instructors present during Project S.T.O.M.P. Camp



Graduate students interact with Parents during Parent Night at Wiley High School.



Parent Trip to TSTC.



More pictures like this one from the GEAR UP Gaming Camp and other events can be found on the new website.

Gear Up Waco On the Web!

In addition to the exciting educational programs that GEAR UP supports, resources are also available online through the website at: <http://www.gearupwaco.org>.

The site offers tips for students, parents, and teachers about school success. Also information about previous GEAR UP programs, contact the GEAR UP staff, and even watch videos of GEAR UP events!

Facts about GEAR UP.

1. What is GEAR UP?

GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. It is a grant program designed to significantly increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

2. Which schools are participating in GEAR UP Waco?

Brazos Middle School, Cesar Chavez Middle School, Carver Academy, Lake Air Middle School, Tennyson Middle School, University Middle School and La Vega Jr. High School George Dixon Campus, A.J. Moore Academy, University High School, Waco High School and La Vega High School.

3. Who are the GEAR UP Partners?

Baylor University, Math Initiative, Learning English Among Friends (LEAF), Project Democracy, Physics Circus, Wetlands Marsh Madness/ City of Waco, Waco Independent School District (WISD), La Vega Independent School District (LVISD), Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and Communities in School of the Heart of Texas (CIS-HOT)

4. Which students can participate?

GEAR UP Waco's 2007 grant works with and follows present 8th and 9th graders in Waco ISD and La-Vega ISD until their high school graduation.

5. How can parents participate?

GEAR UP's parental involvement component works to foster relationships between parents and the school and to increase parental understanding of college access by hosting college nights, college tours, and career expos. Through the part of GEAR UP called "Think College," parents receive information about college applications and financial aid.



We're on the Web
WWW.GEARUPWACO.ORG



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