

The DALLAS POST

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS AND LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



'Circle' teaches life lessons

Developmentally disabled young women benefit from "Circle of Friends" program.

By REBECCA BRIA
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When Megan Deubler saw her younger brother, Zach, move away to school, she wanted to go, too. But, because she has Down syndrome and cerebral palsy, college was not an option for the young girl.

"I wanted to go because I wanted to be a full-time student and take actual classes. That was my goal. It feels great that I did accomplish it."

- Megan Deubler

Or so she and her family thought. Deubler, 24, of Lehman Township, graduated on May 17 from the Circle of Friends program at Misericordia University. The program is an on-campus transitional program for young women who have developmental disabilities. The women must be between the ages of 18 and 23 when they begin the program.

"I wanted to go because I wanted to be a full-time student and take actual classes," Deubler said. "That was my goal. It feels great that I did accomplish it."

The Circle of Friends program was the idea of Dr. Susan Sordoni, a Misericordia alumnus and parent of a young woman with a developmental disability. Sordoni, of Harveys Lake, approached the college president about the need for such a program and the Circle of Friends began in the fall of 2002 as a commuter program. One year later, it was converted into a residency program so the wom-

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Megan Deubler plays with her dog "Ariel" at her Lehman Township home. Deubler recently finished the Circle of Friends program at Misericordia University. The on-campus residential program teaches young women with developmental disabilities independent living skills and provides educational and social activities in a college setting.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Students in Kelly Cave's Research Writing classes at Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School are equipped with state of the art technology through Classrooms for the Future state grant. Cave says students' grades have noticeably improved in all of her classes since her classroom received the technology.

New technology for L-L students

'Classrooms for the Future' equips school with laptops

By REBECCA BRIA
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For some Lake-Lehman students, school has never been so much fun.

Thanks to a "Classrooms for the Future" state grant of over \$200,000 this school year, eight classrooms at Lake-Lehman Junior and Senior High School have been equipped with technology, including 24 student laptop computers, one teacher laptop computer and an interactive promethium board.

The school also received video, digital and Web cameras.

Students in Kelly Cave's Research Writing classes utilized the technology to create podcasts to promote the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Podcasts are MP3 audio files posted on the internet for others to listen to and can be downloaded onto a computer, iPod or other mobile device.

Currently, the students are helping the SPCA by creating vodcasts, or video versions of podcasts, and mini documentaries. In the future, they will make mini Wikis, Web sites or similar online resources which allow users to add and edit content collectively.

The students will build mini Wikis on various topics relating to the SPCA, animal testing, animal cruelty, the use of animals in circuses and animal cloning.

Cave says students' grades have noticeably improved in all of her classes since her classroom received the technology.

"It's amazing the difference having the technology now," Cave said.

"I see a total turnaround in my students. It's almost as if they're learning without realizing it."

The students say they look forward to Research Writing class because the technology makes it more enjoyable and interactive. They do not become

bored as easily in regular classrooms.

Ninth-grader Jamie Aldrich likes that he can interact with what Cave is teaching instead of just staring at a chalkboard. Claire Sesson, a ninth grade student, feels the computers allow her to work at her own pace.

Freshman Nikki Snyder says the way the class uses the computers is what makes it so special.

"It's different because we're using the computers in a different way than we normally do," Snyder said.

"Instead of just typing papers and surveys, we make podcasts and videos. With the technology advancing in the modern world, we're advancing with it."

Prior to taking the Research Writing class, many of the students did not even know what a podcast was.

Cave says this new technology will help them in college and their careers.

In addition to their research on the SPCA, Cave's students held a monetary and goods drive for the organization.

The students were required to each solicit three businesses for donations.

They opened the drive up to the entire school and Lake-Lehman School District to collect as many resources as possible.

Eight more classrooms will be equipped with the new technology through the "Classrooms for the Future" grant next year.

Rebecca Bria, a staff writer for The Dallas Post, can be reached at 970-7436.



Students work on their projects with laptop computers.

"Instead of just typing papers and surveys, we make podcasts and videos. With the technology advancing in the modern world, we're advancing with it."

Nikki Snyder
Freshman

Ross Elementary hosts Earth Day events

By REBECCA BRIA
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McKenzie Connors hopped along in her sack with all her might, collecting pieces of "garbage" in her lane as she went forward. The 6-year-old emptied the "garbage" into a bin and hopped back to her classmates in Tracey Long's kindergarten class with a smile on her face.

"It was hard because I was bouncing my legs and they started to get tired," Connors said. "And I almost fell down. I like it whenever I jump."

The race was part of Earth Day activities on April 25 at Ross Elementary School in which all children in the school participated.

Teachers devised activities for the event and students in each class rotated among the different activities.

"It gives the kids an opportunity to reflect on what Earth Day is about," James said. "It gives them a chance to get outdoors and participate in hands-on activities."

James says this year's weather on April 25 was the nicest they have had for Earth Day events. Highs on April 25 climbed into the 70s under clear skies.

"This is my very first one (Earth Day at Ross) so it's an awesome feeling to watch the kids enjoy themselves on a day like this,"

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Sixth-grade students listen to the "Food for Thought" presentation as part of Earth Day activities on April 25 at Ross Elem.

