

Benicia students place 5th in World Competition

Lauren Bronson, Benicia High School SAGE team director

In August, a team of five high school students from Benicia traveled to Brasilia, Brazil for the chance of a lifetime; to represent the United States in the seventh annual business competition Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship (SAGE) World Cup.

Our team was made up of Adam Sass, Ryan Kuenzi, Kristen Osterholt, Emmalyn Tringali and myself, Lauren Bronson. We spent the 2008-09 school year working on projects such as raising money to build schools in Africa, selling aluminum water bottles to raise awareness about the harmful consequences of plastic water bottles, and developing strategies to reduce Benicia's carbon footprint. SAGE's primary focus is on using young people to help make the world a better place through a variety of projects dealing with global, environmental, civic, social and entrepreneurial projects. Through a lot of hard work, we ended up winning first in California and second place in the United States. That meant we were one of two teams going to the world competition in Brazil!

This was a dream come true for many of us on the team. Most of us hadn't been outside of the country, let alone competed in an international business competition. We were overwhelmed with excitement, stress, joy and anxiety for what lay ahead.

While in Brazil, we met with kind, intelligent and energetic teenagers from 14 countries and 5 continents. Most of us think of people who live in far off countries as people you could never have much in common with because of differences in our backgrounds, cultures, languages and ways of life. It was quite the contrary. The first night in Brasilia was my favorite. Hundreds of students, parents and teachers all gathered into one large room and simply danced the night away, talking and laughing as if we had all known each other for years. The Brazilians were teaching all of us how to Samba. The Nigerians were teaching us how to move with rhythm. I started teaching other students how to swing and ballroom dance. We were all brought



Left to right: Benicia High School students Ryan Kuenzi, Kristen Osterholt, Adam Sass, Emmalyn Tringali, Lauren Bronson and Chico State mentor Kyle Gyurina

together with the same mission... to represent our country in a business competition unlike any other. We were united in our passion to make the world a better place. It didn't matter what race we were or what language we spoke... we were all one, unified together for the same cause. I think I can speak for every person on our team, that we came back different people in one way or another. To be immersed in such a variety of cultures and the overall experience of traveling to a different country at such a young age, plants in each of us a seed of knowledge

and wonder that we would otherwise not have known.

The Brazilian people are so friendly and vivacious. Our eyes were opened to a completely new way of life. We fed bananas to monkeys in the jungle, cars would park on the sidewalks, most restaurants would make you pay based on how much food you ordered rather than what you ordered, and we tried new drinks such as cashew juice and ate cold cuts for breakfast.

Not only did we place fifth out of 14 teams in the World Cup, we also learned invaluable business skills. We presented in front of large groups of people, all of us practiced our networking abilities, and we learned new sales and marketing techniques. The judges were impressed with our micro-loans program which loaned a combined \$1,275 to entrepreneurs and farmers in nations such as Peru and Uganda.

We have learned what it takes to run a successful business. Each of us plans on entering the field of business in college.

Before this trip we were all coworkers in SAGE and good acquaintances outside of SAGE, but after this trip we became much closer; we became friends and shared an experience that will bind us together in memory for years to come.

It was such an incredible opportunity and a humbling experience that I will not soon forget. The people I met, the beauty I saw, the wisdom I gained cannot bear any price.

Dixon senior spends first week of school in college

Steve and Anita Ferguson

Dixon High School senior, Evan Ferguson (pictured left), spent his first week of high school attending college. Ferguson was invited to attend the Santa Clara University Summer Engineering Seminar which allows participants to explore a variety of engineering careers as well as experience university life. The five-day program included a mix of classroom lectures on the different engineering disciplines along with specific subjects such as vibration, sound and music, nanotechnology, advanced robotics, and sustainable engineering. Interactive activities such as bridge building, wiring a solar concentrator and creating a potato launcher from junk parts rounded out the week's events.

"I would recommend this seminar to anyone interested in an engineering career," said Ferguson. "It also gave me an accurate picture of what the college curriculum might entail."

One of his most memorable sessions was the Duct Tape Olympics where his group taped a student to the wall then observed the strength of their

taping design as one strip of tape was cut at a time.

To gain acceptance into the program Ferguson was required to submit two essays, the first on why he wanted to participate in the program, and the second detailing who he believed to be the most influential engineer of the 20th or 21st century. The application package also required a letter of recommendation from a math, science or technology teacher which was graciously provided by Dixon High School mathematics teacher, Edwin Reed (pictured right).

This prestigious seminar receives hundreds of applications from across the country for a limited number of spots, making acceptance to the program extremely competitive. Tuition, room and board fees are covered by grants from sponsoring organizations, so there is no cost to participants. All interested sophomore or junior students can download information from the Santa

Clara University web site at the beginning of the year and submit their applications in the spring.



Anti-bullying video good to go

A locally-produced documentary on bullying has been given the green light by the Solano County District Attorney's office. The new video will be produced by Steve Padilla, Program Manager of Solano County Office of Education's (SCOE) Youth Development Services and Ernie Holly, owner of Timeline Media Productions.

Padilla and Holly produced the successful video *Binge Drinking: The Rite of Passage*, narrated by Padilla's uncle KCBS radio reporter and anchor Dave Padilla.

"We plan to create another powerful tool for young people in Solano County and beyond to address the serious issues related to bullying," remarked Steve Padilla.

The video is being funded by the The Solano County



Left to right: Lisette Estrella-Henderson, SCOE Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services; David Paulson, Solano County District Attorney; Steve Padilla, Dee Alarcón, Solano County Superintendent of Schools

District Attorney's asset forfeiture funds.

For more information on the bullying video or *Binge Drinking: The Rite of Passage*, contact Steve Padilla at 707-646-7604 or spadilla@solanocoe.net. -SJR

Marsalis sits in with Vacaville High School Jazz Ensemble

On September 19, world-renowned trumpeter Wynton Marsalis was driving down Highway 80 on his way to the Monterey Jazz Festival when he saw signs for the Vacaville Jazz Festival. He pulled over at the Nut Tree, got out his trumpet and played five tunes with the Vacaville High School Jazz Ensemble.



"It was an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Derek Fong, the ensemble's lead alto saxophonist. "Definitely the highlight of my high school career."

Marsalis, winner of nine Grammys and a Pulitzer Prize for composing, is generally considered to be the premiere jazz musician in the United States. -SJR

Travis keeps focus on students

Kate Wren Gavlak, Superintendent, Travis Unified School District

In spite of the budget crisis, Travis Unified is keeping the focus on students and what we can do to make improvements for students and staff. Even when we are not able to provide for increased salaries, benefits, and small classes, we can provide facilities that will enhance student learning and the culture of school sites.

With that in mind, we have identified funds for capital facilities to make some much-needed improvements throughout the District.

At Vanden High School, we are installing a new artificial turf field that will be ready for the big homecoming game, and we will be adding an all-weather track. The tennis courts, which have been unusable for match play for several years, are already complete and now provide bleachers for spectators. In addition to upgrading these sports facilities, we have also upgraded selected classrooms with technology improvements.

Golden West Middle School has a newly-updated media/technology lab with 40 computers. Some classrooms have also received SMART Boards or Eno Boards which will support staff use of technology for instruction.



Scandia Elementary School has been upgraded with new “learning wall” furniture, paint and blinds. Center Elementary School has also received new carpeting in classrooms, along with fresh paint and blinds. This is in addition to roof repairs and many other smaller projects to enhance learning facilities.

In cooperation with the Air Force in support of force security issues, Travis Unified has also reorganized the schools located on Travis Air Force Base this year. Scandia Elementary and Travis Elementary are home to military students or Department of Defense students only. Although Center Elementary is technically located on the Base, the site will soon become off-base. In order to accomplish this, a road will be built to Center Elementary that does not require parents or staff to traverse the Base to get to the school site. Hopefully, by the beginning of the 2010-11 school year, the road will be complete, and Center students and their families will be able to arrive at their school by using the new road.

While staff worked virtually nonstop all summer to prepare for the return of students in August, I must acknowledge the many others who came out to assist. We are especially grateful to Travis Air Force Base personnel for their support. At Scandia Elementary School alone, 90 base volunteers helped to pack literally thousands of books and entire classrooms full of materials into boxes, removed old student desks and furniture, disposed of old and obsolete items into dumpsters, and then, when the rooms were ready and newly painted, helped classroom teachers unpack, assemble, and move new student desks and materials into classrooms. We are greatly appreciative and thankful for the exceptional partnership between our district and Travis Air Force Base as well as with our Fairfield and Vacaville communities.

Former SCC student now teaches college

Ross Beck, Director of Public Relations, Marketing and Communications, Solano Community College

Former Solano Community College (SCC) student Frederick Moore recently accepted a tenure-track teaching position at City College of San



Francisco. Moore was a student at SCC in the early 1990s and worked closely with its Mathematics Engineering Science Achievements (MESA) program. He earned a Ph.D. from UC San Francisco, wrote an inspirational book on learning styles, and runs a non-profit group that encourages education. He spoke as a keynote speaker for SCC’s MESA students a few years ago. In addition to his new teaching duties, Dr. Moore will become UCSF’s MESA director and will participate in its biotechnology outreach program in the Hunter’s Point area of San Francisco for the Bridge to Biotechnology program.

“MESA reinforced the importance of community and the value that is inherent with an effective study group,” remarked Moore. “MESA was my first instance of consciously realizing that others valued diversity in science.”

Dr. Moore has helped carve a path for under-represented students interested in the sciences. While finishing his Ph.D. at UCSF, he cofounded the nonprofit Building Diversity in Science to provide mentoring and resources to young people in hope of improving their access to world-class universities and careers in science. He recently launched the Scientific

Empowerment Movement, a statewide initiative that connects urban youth to science and technology through sports and entertainment.

Solano Community College is where Dr. Moore began his academic pursuit, and also participated in the MESA Program, later transferring to UC Berkeley where he studied genetics at UC San Francisco and received his Ph.D. in 2002.

He was recently awarded the prestigious Peter Haas Public Service Award from UC Berkeley, which is the highest honor bestowed to an alumni.

For more information about

SCC’s MESA Program, go to www.solano.edu/MESA, or contact Mostafa Ghous, MESA Director, at 707-864-7000 or Mostafa.ghous@solano.edu.

“The Solano College MESA program was my first instance of consciously realizing that others valued diversity in science.”

If your child gets sick with the flu

If your child is 5 years or older and otherwise healthy and gets flu-like symptoms including a fever and/or cough, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you consult your doctor as needed and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is younger than 5, or of any age but has a medical condition like asthma, diabetes, or a neurologic problem, and develops flu-like symptoms including a fever and/or cough, call your doctor or get medical attention. This is because younger children and children who have chronic medical conditions (like asthma or diabetes) may be at higher risk of serious complications from influenza infection, including the new H1N1 strain. Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Even children who have always been healthy or already had the flu before can get a severe case of flu. Call or take your child to a doctor right away if your child regardless of age has:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Trouble waking up or not interacting
- Irritable and does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough
- Other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough

Children should not go to school, day care or camp if they are sick. Your child should stay home to rest and avoid giving the flu to other children.

Children can go back to school after having the flu if 24 hours has passed after their fever is gone. Their fever should be gone without them having taken a fever-reducing medicine. A fever is defined as 100°F or 37.8°C.



Cooper students take Odyssey of the Mind to Iowa

The Smokebusters from Cooper Elementary School in Vacaville made it all the way to the May finals of Odyssey of the Mind in Ames, Iowa. The third-graders, who had never competed before in this competition, ended up placing 26th in the nationals.



The Cooper Smokebusters are, left to right, Zachary Kellis, Paris Wickliff, Justin Moore, Nick Smith and Caleb Barnes and Coach Ms. Tamara Barnes.

The students had placed first in the Regional competition in Natomas last May and competed against 19 teams from eight regions in the state finals in Brentwood where they also placed first.

The students designed a Smokebuster vehicle that helped a fictional character, Bob, stop smoking. Each Smokebuster sang a song addressing the negative impacts of smoking on the human body and explained how their vehicle traveled through the body cleaning the mouth, lungs and blood vessels.

The Odyssey of the Mind is an intellectual competition that involves creative problem-solving opportunities for students in kindergarten through college. Kids apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. In competition, they are given eight minutes to solve the problem. -SJR

Learning opportunities at F-S Adult School

Cathy Chan, Ed.D. Assistant Principal, Fairfield-Suisun Adult School

The Fairfield-Suisun Adult School provides students with endless opportunities to further both educational and career goals. A variety of programs ranging from Career Development, Vocational Training, English as a Second Language and Parent Education to High School Diploma and GED courses are offered during the day and evening to meet the needs of all students.



Student instructors LaShawn Devereux, left, and Meghan Hall, right, demonstrate the proper ways to give a back rub during the CNA Skills Fair.

One particular program, the Certified Nursing Assistant or CNA program, is a comprehensive 250-hour course approved by the California Department of Health Services. This course instructs students in basic nursing care and includes supervised training in local health care facilities. Recently, a Skills Fair was held in the CNA classroom to enable students to experience the varied aspects of providing effective medical care. Students had the opportunity to become engaged in real-life simulated situations by assuming the roles of patients and student instructors. This "on the job training" will be an asset to students as they begin their off site training at local long-term care facilities.

For more information, contact the Fairfield-Suisun Adult School at 707-421-4155 or on the Web at www.fsadultschool.com.

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