

College Access and Preparation Programs  
Mount Wachusett Community College  
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Gardner, MA 01440

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## FIND THE CAPP CONTEST

Be the first to 'find the CAPP!' Inside this newsletter there are three (3) hidden 'CAPPs.'

Once you find them, circle them and bring your newsletter to either your GEAR UP counselor or Talent Search/Project GO counselor or MCAS Coordinator in your school. Your counselor will have a special treat for the students who have found the 'CAPPs.'

Here's what they look like:  
*(and this one doesn't count toward the 3)*



**For more information regarding CAPP or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Pati Gregson, Associate Vice President of Access and Transition or Kristin Sweeney-Moore, Executive Director of CAPP, at 978-630-9248.**

# Spring News 2006



## College Access and Preparation Programs (CAPP)

### What's inside this newsletter:

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- ▶▶ Read to Succeed and Kids to College (K2C)
- ▶▶ News from Talent Search/Project GO and Project Excel
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- ▶▶ MCAS Works
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Visit our website at <http://capp.mwcc.edu> for detailed program information.

Mount Wachusett Community College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution.



Hi Everyone!

My name is Tammy Tebo and I am the new Director for GEAR UP 2011! I am happy to be back in Massachusetts after living in Georgia for the last three years. My background has always been in education and working with kids of all ages and college age adults. I am excited to now be working with Mount Wachusett Community College and the GEAR UP Program. GEAR UP is a unique and energetic program that services 6th and 7th graders in the Fitchburg Public Schools. Right now we have our staff located at Memorial Middle School, B.F. Brown Arts Vision School and Academy Middle School. We have a variety of activities planned for the school year including trips to the University of Massachusetts, Hebert's Candy Mansion and the National Heritage Museum. GEAR UP allows us to provide students with information about attending college while also supporting them as they grow in the Fitchburg School System. I love working in education and truly enjoy helping students to view their educational experience from a unique perspective. Please feel free to contact the GEAR UP office regarding any of our programs. I hope to work with you soon!

Tammy Tebo, M.Ed.  
Director, GEAR UP

# GEAR UP NEWS and Photos



## What's New at Academy

The GEAR UP program at Academy, B.F. Brown, and Memorial Middle Schools all offer an after school program for 6th and 7th graders. At Academy Middle School, the after school program has been running since December.

The program offers tutoring, computer access, and even a snack time. Former GEAR UP students who are current college students and who display a proficiency in math are available to provide academic help to younger students. At Academy, there are twenty-nine students: fourteen sixth graders and fifteen seventh graders. There is also a waiting list. One very rewarding moment at Academy would have to be when Michael Twal, a 7th grader, commented, "I am actually beginning to like school!" Another student, a 7th grader who was struggling academically, received an award for being the most improved in his grade. For the counselors, Farrah Rosado and Cheryl Jobe, it is nice to see the kids improving and showing appreciation for the extra help!

## What's New at Memorial

Students in sixth grade at Memorial Intermediate School in Fitchburg participated in a community service project in December. Over a two-week period in early December, the students were invited to decorate placemats, which were then delivered to The Highlands Long Term Care Center in Fitchburg.

During recess, students could opt to do the community service project or have a regular recess. Some students chose to participate on just one of the eight days while several participated all eight days.

One student, Marlene Robles, made a paper snowman at home and brought it in as an extra decoration to be delivered to the nursing home. Most of the students chose a Christmas holiday theme for their placemats, but others depicted race car designs or wild animals.

The nursing home staff was very pleased to receive the placemats, which they delivered to the kitchen staff. The kitchen staff placed them on the meal trays used by the residents. Forty-nine students participated over the eight days and each received a certificate recognizing his or her community service.

## **More From Memorial!!**

The Faculty and Staff have been very supportive of our program from the beginning. The students have welcomed the GEAR UP staff and taken advantage of several GEAR UP events. At Memorial Middle School we have Victor Rojas, GU - Lead Academic Counselor, Shaunti Snowden, Academic Liaison and Peggy Williamson, Academic Liaison Coordinator of the Kids 2 College Program.

The GEAR UP staff arrived at Memorial Middle School on November 21, 2005, and since that first day, the GU staff have been working on different ideas, workshops, and activities to get the students involved in the program. One activity is that of the Community Service Program. The GU staff recruited a group of 7th graders who are very self motivated and eager to help out the GU staff and their classmates. The group prepared their own community service rotation schedule to include decorating bulletin boards, organizing bookshelves, and spreading the word in school. The GU staff is very thankful for this group of volunteers who set the foundation for the rest of the GU students. Community Service is a powerful tool for the students to master and the GU staff is teaching their students the importance of community service.

This group of volunteers is an example of what GU students are all about. For six weeks our group of volunteers worked very hard to make the program a success even with the many different jobs and challenges that were given to them. The GU staff can proudly say that the students surpassed our expectations and accomplished many tasks

along the way. Because of this group's success, the GU staff recruited a new group of volunteers after the Christmas vacation.

The GU staff can't thank this group of volunteers enough for welcoming us with open arms and for helping us out with any questions. From the GU staff to our Community Service Volunteers, Thank you!!

Pictured below from left to right: *Bottom Row* - Jared Richard, Deanna St. Peter, Smit R. Patel *Middle Row* - Ms. Snowden, Jose Rodriguez, Jamelie Ortega, Victoria Lopez, Ashley Valentin, Norma Letamendi, Kathiria Sierra, Mr. Victor Rojas *Back Row* - An'nelly Morales, Maritza LeFebre, Christina Hawkins, Cristal Nieves. (Not in the picture: Jessenia Colon and Colleen Island Mateo)



## **GEAR UP 2011/12 Kicks Off Winter Break with a Field Trip**

On Tuesday, December 27, 2005, a group of 30 students inaugurated GEAR UP 2011/2012 with a *swish*, as participants from Academy, B.F. Brown, and Memorial Middle schools headed to Springfield's Basketball Hall of Fame. This field trip marked the first major activity of the newest GEAR UP cycle and provided students with an entertaining and educational alternative to being cooped up in the house over winter break. In fact, that very idea was the main focus of the trip with speakers and activities that stressed the idea of regular exercise and physical fitness as being essential to a balanced life. As Academy student Jessica Docekal described, she learned how important it is "to stay active."

As soon as students arrived, they were greeted and invited to take part in a scavenger hunt. Shortly afterward, the students were called to "center court" for a clinic and presentation from former UCONN and New Jersey Nets player and current Celtics broadcaster, Donny Marshall. His talk impressed upon the students the importance of exercising and staying in shape in order to become healthier. He spoke at length about his experience as a collegiate athlete. Mr. Marshall stressed that hard work and dedication are important to success both on and off the basketball court. Academy student Jeffrey Duenas learned "to keep your grades up and you will be something good in life." Mr. Marshall is an excellent role model for GEAR UP students and for all students who hope to be successful in athletics or academics. After the presentation, he was nice enough to sign autographs for anyone who wanted one.

After the clinic, students spent time exploring the Hall of Fame and its interactive museum. Not only could students view photographs, exhibits and artifacts of the players and coaches enshrined in the Hall of Fame but they were also made aware of many other

opportunities that were available to entertain and enlighten students. Highlights included a tape-your-own fantasy ESPN segment exhibit, various interactive computer displays and skills challenges to test rebounding, vertical leap, shooting and reaction time. Students were able to try out a collection of historic rims and baskets, including an original hoop made from a peach basket. There were also three-point and free throw competitions.

Later in the day the students re-assembled at "center court" for a presentation from Ronald McDonald that used magic, music, and games to highlight the value of making physical activity a part of daily life. Students saw the importance of getting up, getting moving, and getting active. B.F. Brown student Macy Woodard, who was chosen as an audience volunteer, said that she learned about the "importance of teamwork, exercise, and accomplishments." The presentation ended with the biggest game of 'knockout' ever, with Academy Middle School's own Cedric Robinson taking home second place.

All in all, the first field trip of the new GEAR UP cycle was an undeniable success. Students, chaperones, and GEAR UP staff all had a great time and enjoyed a break from the tedium of school vacation. Noe Medero of Memorial Middle School put it best when he said that he would definitely recommend this trip to other students "because they will learn a lot and at the same time have fun." One final note: the GEAR UP staff wish to thank the following adults who acted as chaperones for the trip; Eric Belair, Angel Lebron, Maribel Pinto, Freddie Robinson, and Michelle Woodard-Cormier. Without your assistance this trip could not have taken place. Thank you once again. (Check out our photo on the front page of the newsletter!)

# GATEWAY TO COLLEGE

***As part of an Early College High School initiative, Mount Wachusett Community College is preparing to launch the Gateway to College dropout recovery program, which helps the state of Massachusetts, whom we serve.*** This initiative will be carried out by means of a \$300,000 planning and startup grant provided by Portland Community College, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and their partners, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

***In the Fall semester of 2006, the Gateway to College Program will begin by servicing 40 former high school dropouts on the campus of Mount Wachusett Community College, with the goal of expanding service to a total of 300 students by the Fall semester of 2008.*** Through this pathway, former dropouts will receive a real second chance to achieve educational success by simultaneously working on the completion of a high school diploma and a college certificate or Associates degree. Selected students will earn both high school and college credits by taking courses in a small college classroom setting, either during the day or in the evening. Classes will be taught by dedicated, experienced teachers in conjunction with resource specialists who will provide study skills, career research assistance, and ongoing student support throughout the learning process. In order to help with the transition back to education, all students will complete their first semester in a small learning community of approximately 20 students. They will take classes in reading, writing, mathematics, and College Survival. These classes must be passed with a 'C' or better. All students will take part in an academic lab each week as well. After successfully completing the first semester, Gateway to College students will take college courses with the general college population. The resource specialists will continue to support students throughout the process, and will help them to select a pathway or college major geared to each student's plan for future employment.

***Current or former Massachusetts high school students between the ages of 16 and 20, who have dropped out or who are on the verge of dropping out of high school due to social, emotional, or financial challenges; difficult family circumstances; language barriers; lack of academic support/study skills; or other reasons, may apply for a slot in the Gateway to College Program at Mount Wachusett Community College.*** Accepted students must commit to regular attendance, completion of homework, and proper college behavior. There are no income requirements. Out of school youth who are motivated by the

# GATEWAY to COLLEGE



opportunity to earn a high school diploma and college credits in a supportive learning environment may gain further information by contacting Linda Buckley, Gateway to College Program Director, at (978) 630-9450 or Jennifer Welch, Lead Resource Specialist, at (978) 630-9341. We invite all those interested in applying for this wonderful scholarship program to join the Mount Wachusett College Access Staff as we travel side-by-side on the road to success! **To obtain an application and reserve a slot in a required orientation (May 22), call the Gateway Information phone line at (978) 630-9481.**

## **The Thirteen Myths About Choosing a College**

Excerpted from "College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You"  
8th Edition, 2004-2005

By Steven R. Antonoff and Marie A. Friedemann

*Available in your high school Talent Search counselor's office!*

**MYTH #1: "Colleges are either good or bad."**

Nonsense. In whose eyes is a college good or bad? The key question is not, "is X a good college?" Rather, the question is "Is X a good college for me?"

**MYTH #2: "Future employers and graduate schools give an edge to those who have degrees from prestigious universities."**

Not necessarily. As the general level of quality in colleges has risen over the last several decades, and as more and more colleges have distinguished themselves, employers and graduate school admission staffs can no longer rely on the name of a college as the most important selection factor. What is important is your success in college.

**MYTH #3: "Colleges always choose the 'best' students."**

Nope, it's not true. College admission staffs work long and hard to choose students, but no foolproof or magic formula exists. Colleges consider so many variables: courses taken, scores, grades, extracurricular activities, as well as a host of other variables.

**MYTH #4: "Schools that cost more are of higher quality."**

Why would this be true? A college education can be expensive even at a state university. Students should look at how well a school matches their own college selection criteria and make few judgments about quality on the basis of cost.

**MYTH #5: "The more rigorous the admission standards, the higher the quality of education."**

The quality of education is often not directly related to admission standards. Many superior colleges do not have particularly difficult admission requirements.

**MYTH #6: "Cost is really important in determining where I can go to college, so I will likely have to attend a local school."**

Not necessarily. Billions of dollars are given to students and families annually to help defray or in some cases completely pay for a college education. The federal government, states, individual colleges and thousands of public and private organization make funds available to college-bound students. The important strategy is research the financing options available through the web, your guidance counselor, and your Talent Search/Project GO or GEAR UP counselor.

**MYTH #7: "Test scores are the most important criterion in college admission."**

Not true. Colleges use a wide variety of criteria in choosing students. The quality of the courses you've taken in high school and your grades in those courses are valued most highly by colleges.

**MYTH #8: "There is only one perfect college for me."**

Perfect colleges rarely exist. All colleges have good and bad points and all vary in terms of the attractiveness for any individual student. Your goal is to research and find several colleges that best meet your needs.

**MYTH #9: "I'm a failure if I don't get into College X."**

It's hard to convince students that this is not an appropriate way to think about the admission process. College X might be looking for a particular trait, such as someone who comes from a rural background. What matters is that you are at a college where you can use your talents, be challenged in class and have a successful experience. If you plan well, you will have such choices.

**MYTH #10: "Some secret strategy can get me admitted to college."**

No way. No strategy-secret or open-automatically unlocks the admission door. Students have been known to agonize for days over an application essay without realizing it's not the topic that matters, but the content! Don't try to "package" yourself in wrappings that are not you. Choose colleges that fit.

**MYTH #11: "Relying on magazine lists of 'Best Colleges' is the best way to determine whether a college is right for me."**

One size does not fit all. No ranking considers the "feel" of a college: its atmosphere or what the students are like. It's far better to rely on resources such as counselors, alumni, and actual visits to the campus to help you determine if a college is right for you.

**MYTH #12: "If I don't know what career I'll pursue, I can't really choose a college."**

The fact is, there is only one chance in 10 that a person will be doing anything connected with his/her major 10 years out of college. College choice, after all, is not only about life after college. It is also about life during college. Find a place where you will be happy.

**MYTH #13: "A good college is hard to get into."**

No. There are hundreds of "good" colleges. In fact, a good match college is often easy to get into. A brand name college is often hard to get into because everyone else is applying just because it's a brand name (and not because it's a good match for them).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC, AND RESEARCHING COLLEGES, SEE YOUR TALENT SEARCH OR GEAR UP COUNSELOR.**

## READ TO SUCCEED!

It is a saying educators cannot repeat enough. It is a truth the students have come to realize as they prepare to take the MCAS next month. It is also the motto for the Reading Club at Gardner Middle School, which was formed by Project GO students in October 2005. The Reading Club provides an opportunity to learn about the world, develop curiosity, and appreciate literary applications while building vocabulary and word comprehension. Every Thursday for an hour after school, a typical classroom is transformed into a world of wonderful plots and characters. The students, advised by Talent Search Counselor Andrea Campanale at Gardner Middle School, are asked to sit in silence and let their imaginations run free. They are encouraged to choose a book from a Recommended Reading List but may pick their own if it is pre-approved.

Last quarter, students had the opportunity to compete with other members of the club. The student from each grade who read the most books between October 18th and January 6th won a gift certificate to either Barnes & Noble or The Mall at Whitney Field. There were two winners: Jennifer Antocci, a sixth grader who read 15 books and Brittany Burdick, an eighth grader who read 19 books. The contest is being run a second time, from February 1st through May 1st. Contest rules are the same. Students must write a summary, book review, give an oral presentation or do an artistic representation for each book read within the contest period. All Project GO students at the Gardner Middle school are encouraged to join the club and take part in the contest. Snacks and books are provided.

"To read a writer is for me not merely to get an idea of what he says, but to go off with him, and travel in his company."

—Andre Gride

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

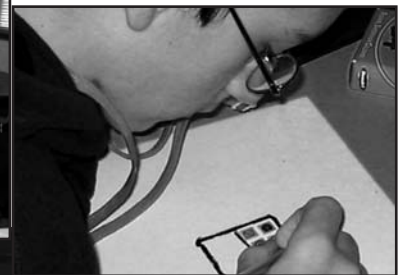
—Sir Richard Steele

Sixth graders in the public schools of Gardner, Fitchburg, and Leominster participate in the Kids to College program. Sixth grade is an important time when many students begin to think about what they would like to do after high school graduation.

The Kids to College program provides a variety of activities geared to:

Inform students about the choices they have, excite them about future opportunities, and encourage them to work hard in school. The program culminates with a campus tour of a local college. Colleges that will be visited this year include: Mount Wachusett Community College, Franklin Pierce College, Holy Cross, Clark University, Springfield College, Boston College, and Fitchburg State College.

*Special thanks to Peggy Williamson and Deb Bibeau for coordinating the Kids to College program for the 900 participating 6th graders*



Kids to College

## Visit to University of Massachusetts, Amherst by Talent Search/Project GO and Project Excel Students

What's a fun way to spend a Sunday? By taking a guided, walking tour of the campus of University of Massachusetts, Amherst! That's just what students from Samoset and Southeast Middle Schools did on a sunny November Sunday in 2005. We arrived at the Robsham Visitors' Center, where we were met by our tour guide, Adam, a senior majoring in political science. As our group crossed the main part of the 1,450 acre campus, we paused on the Haigis Mall in front of the Fine Arts Center, where Drew informed us of the names and uses of the different buildings. We stopped in and tried out a classroom in Herter Hall, discussed the architecture of the Old Chapel, and headed over to the twenty-eight story W.E.B. DuBois library, which houses 5.7 million items available for use (and has four high-speed elevators). Along the way Adam stopped often to answer questions and make us aware of special points of interest.

On the Northeast campus, we checked out a room in Knowlton Residence Hall. The rooms are wired for phone, cable and ethernet; there is a community study/lounge, recreation room (pool and ping pong), TV room, laundry,

and vending machines. Having toured across a large part of the beautiful campus, we were all ready for lunch. Fortunately for us, from Knowlton it was just a short walk to Worcester Dining Commons, where we arrived just as UMass students were flocking in for their mid-day meals, too. We enjoyed a delicious meal from an array of food choices, and were entertained by the performance of a jazz combo, playing right in the Dining Commons! After lunch we traversed the campus, making our way to the Mullins Center, where we watched the UMass Minutewomen's basketball team play Holy Cross in their home-opening game. The Minutewomen won, 63-54!

We'd like to thank the admissions staff at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, for the great tour, delicious lunch, and exciting basketball game. It was a wonderful way to spend a Sunday! Thanks also to the dedicated Educational Talent Search/Project GO staff for making this trip possible! If you would like more information on UMass, visit their website: <http://umass.edu>

# NEWS FROM TALENT SEARCH/PROJECT GO AND PROJECT EXCEL

In front of the Mullins Memorial Center at UMass Amherst: First Row, left to right: Alex White, Nayram Garcia, Denise Ramos, Megan Bibeau, Wendy Mai. Second Row: Ha Nguyen, Stephanie Pereira, Julia Ashton, Emily Archambault, Kristine MacBrian, Tour Guide Adam Fielding. Third Row: Kate Watkevich and Tyler Jones





# North Central Educational Opportunity Center

**Calling all parents, grandparents, guardians,  
aunts, uncles or other adults!**

Did you know that in addition to offering career and college counseling to middle school and high school students, Mount Wachusett Community College's College Access & Preparation Program (CAPP) also has a program dedicated solely to adult learners, ages 19 and older, who are looking to improve their career, go to college, get their GED or take ESL classes? The North Central Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) provides free academic and career counseling to help you set realistic career and academic goals and complete a student learning plan. So, whether you're looking to improve your job skills through additional training or schooling, begin a college certificate or degree program, or go back to get your GED, the educational specialists at the EOC can help you. Call Yong Saddler to make an appointment in either our Leominster or Gardner locations: (978) 840-0176 extension 107.

## Services Offered:

- ✓ Career exploration and assessment
- ✓ College options
- ✓ Financial aid counseling
- ✓ Assistance with financial aid application (FAFSA)
- ✓ College admissions counseling
- ✓ Assistance with admissions applications
- ✓ GED referral
- ✓ English as a Second Language referral

## EOC Hours:

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM  
Tuesdays 8 AM - 7:00 PM

100 Erdman Way  
Leominster, MA 01453  
(978) 840-0176 extension 107

444 Green Street  
Gardner, MA 01440-1000  
(978) 630-9568



*We are pleased to announce the promotion of Valerie Charlonne from Assistant Director to the position of Director of the EOC. Congratulations Valerie!!*

Visit our website: <http://eoc.mwcc.edu>

# DUAL ENROLLMENT

*du-al* [Latin *du lis*, from *duo*, two.]  
*en-roll-ment* *a.* The act or process of enrolling.

Hey Juniors and Seniors! Want an extra academic challenge while earning college credit at the same time? How about enrolling in classes at Mount Wachusett Community College? With a 2.5 GPA and approval from your guidance counselor, you could be well on your way toward earning credits for college which also satisfy high school graduation requirements, all while still in high school!

Dual enrollment courses are college courses which transfer to most two and four-year public and private colleges and universities. Taking dual enrollment courses during high school means you will be getting a jump on your college credits. Some dual enrollment students enter

college up to a full semester or one year ahead of the rest of the entering freshman class. Thinking of enlisting in the military right out of high school instead of going to college? The extra college credits could help you enlist at a higher rate of pay than someone who has no college credits, plus the credits you earn will transfer to most colleges at military installations worldwide.

If you're a student who is academically motivated and good at managing your time, you are a great candidate for the dual enrollment program. If you think you have the "right stuff," please contact the MWCC admissions office at 978-630-9110 or email [admissions@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:admissions@mwcc.mass.edu).

## GET SUPPORT AND

## SUCCEED AT MWCC

### MCAS WORKS!



During Fall 2005 Mount Wachusett Community College collaborated with Fitchburg High School in a new MCAS support program for juniors and seniors called MCAS Works! The program provided instruction in math and English in reparation for the MCAS exam. Instructors Alison Briggs, Paul Parillo and Adam Gadoury provided daily tutorials to students with results showing that 40% of program participants passed the November MCAS exam. In addition to the MCAS prep classes, students were involved in different workshops relating to the workplace. MCAS Coordinator Aurea Rodriguez facilitated a variety of workshops which included: How to Dress for Success, Interview Tips, and How to Write a Resume. The program will culminate with students participating in job shadowing placements at MWCC, coordinated by Elaine Murray, during February school vacation. We want to thank all of our students for their hard work and dedication to pursuing their education!

MCAS Pathways is a Massachusetts Department of Education initiative offered to targeted graduating students who have yet to reach proficiency on the MCAS exam.



Students receive MCAS classes, academic advising, career counseling and tutoring at Mount Wachusett Community College. There are a day and night options. For more information, contact the CAPP office at (978) 630-9248.