

Perkins News

A C H A N C E T O B L O S S O M

Doctor Franklin Perkins School • Perkins Adult Services • Davis Manor
Perkins Behavioral Health • Perkins Child Development Center • Rein in a Dream

Winter 2014

Perkins School Students Visit Area Colleges



Students and staff gather before touring Fitchburg State University.

High school seniors and juniors across the country are in the midst of the ever-important college tour season – and Doctor Franklin Perkins students are no exception! Students have already visited Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg State University, and Porter Chester Institute with plans to visit Salter College, Quinsigamond Community College, and Middlesex Community College in the coming weeks. Visits and tours were organized by Career Development Coordinator Lisa Beneche. Students report that this time in their life can be a little overwhelming, but the career program has helped them to figure out what they're interested in and what they might want to study more.

As part of their visit to Fitchburg State University on February 11, nine senior and junior students from Perkins met with staff in the admissions office and were led on

a campus tour of the four-year public institution. By the end of spring, students will have visited a whole range of schools, reflecting the array of interests and proficiencies of Perkins students.

"It's an exciting time for students as they transition from high school," said Beneche. "The career program culminates in senior year and helps students find the route that will be the most satisfying and rewarding to them. I love being a part of it."

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Circle of Learning for Social Saturdays!



Ben C. favors the Lego activity.

Got a tween or teen who could benefit from a structured social outlet on the weekends? One that just happens to offer lots of fun opportunities (swimming, crafts, Legos®, games, interacting with small animals, dirt biking anyone?) to help develop social skills? Join in our Circle of Learning! Circle of Learning kicks off its spring session later this month and promises to deliver 12 weeks of balanced structure and fun to give kids the confidence and social skills wherewithal they need to connect with other kids. The popular Saturday program, held from 10 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at Perkins, is specifically designed for children ages 8 to 14 with social learning deficits.

“Circle of Learning has been a wonderful experience for my son. He is building relationships, confidence and maturity. I especially like the interaction with the animals where Lucas has to sense how the animal feels and respond appropriately to make the animals feel safe and conformable around him.” Stephanie H., parent.

This year’s spring and fall sessions will focus on the theme of “Kids Make a Difference,” which will be woven throughout the curriculum. “The program has a loyal fan base of about a dozen boys who keep coming every session,” notes Assistant Executive Director for Programs, Tim Hammond. “To me, that’s the highest form of praise and evidence of why it works so well. “

The Doctor Franklin Perkins School is pleased to announce its new website. Learn more about our school at www.dfps.org

Focus on Fundraising

Eleventh Annual Perkins Golf Tournament

Be on the lookout for our new golf marketing material landing in your mailbox this coming spring and be sure to mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 20, 2014 when we return to Sterling National Country Club for the 11th Annual Perkins Golf Tournament. If you’re not on our tournament mailing list, but would like to learn more, please contact kflathers@perkinschool.org for more information on this year’s fun-filled event – all to benefit the students at Perkins!



Team Fred C. Church at the Tenth Annual Perkins Golf Tournament.

Centered Riding Techniques Clinic

Professional development is important in our work with students and adults at Perkins. *Rein in a Dream* is no exception. Seven riding instructors and staff participated in a three-day training event that focused on Centered Riding Techniques. Taught by Advanced Centered Riding Instructor, Judith Cross Strehlke, the classes offered personal instruction on breathing exercises, movement techniques, and visual images to improve rider balance. Instructors have been applying the new-found knowledge and techniques to subsequent riding lessons to hone students' mindfulness. Owing to a horse's innate intuitiveness, horsemanship is an ideal medium to assist students in developing a stronger awareness of how their behaviors affect those around them. "Being able to modulate behaviors to elicit a positive response translates into improvements in every aspect of a student's life – from home, to school, to among friends – making the Rein in a Dream program an extremely valuable therapeutic tool," affirmed Program Director, Cherie Ansin.



Perkins clinician, Meredith Norton, and Phoebe team up for a great class.

Adult Vocational Program Booming



Paul P. giving 100% to his job at the Perkins Laundry.

Separate from their employment, vocational clients participate in skills development and training, as well as social and recreational activities. A career building component was added last year to address safety in the work place, work ethics, interviewing, and dressing for success. Participants feel fulfilled through their employment and through their friendships formed both off and on the job!

The Perkins multifaceted Adult Vocational Program has grown by half since last spring and now remarkably numbers 35 clients. These men and women spend their weekdays at Perkins in a variety of unique capacities. From independent and supported group employment on campus, to off-site employment at businesses in the community, to making items for the agency craft shop, there is something for every interest and ability.

"We've been told that we are the first choice of families due to our capacity to create meaningful jobs and activities that clients want to participate in," remarked Adult Services Program Director, Linda Alger. Clients work an average of 10-15 hours per week in areas including housekeeping, cafeteria, and laundry. They are paid by the hour for their time spent at work.

Students Enjoy Guest Lecturer from Harvard

Twelfth grade students in Alexander Greenfield's class recently enjoyed a guest lecturer from Harvard University's School of Public Health. Dr. Richard Pollack, an entomologist with more than three decades of experience studying diverse insects, pests, and vector borne disease agents, came to their classroom and shared his vast expertise.

Dr. Pollack, or "Rich" as he preferred that students call him, walked students through using iPad technology in tandem with his own high-power microscope. Students were able to view a wide range of species. "I got good pictures!" exclaimed student Kate C., as with the touch of a key on their individual iPads, screen shots from tablets recorded and were ready for viewing under high magnification. "This blended learning style of observing organisms and discussing them with a world-renowned expert in real-time was thrilling for the students – and me!" marveled Mr. Greenfield, the teacher. Organisms were both alive and dead (one dating back seventy years) and ranged from the indigenous to the exotic. Student council member Adaaro B. noted, "He made me realize that Madagascar cockroaches are not that disgusting; he is kind of my inspiration for looking to get a tarantula." Insects examined by the students included: carpenter bee; honey bee; Monarch butterfly; Viceroy butterfly; hawk moth; Madagascar hissing cockroach; African giant millipede; and scorpion.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

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Perkins • 971 Main Street • Lancaster, MA 01523 • 978/365-7376 • 978/368-8861 fax • www.perkinsprograms.org

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