The entire staff of the Utica GEAR UP program has been extremely busy over the past few years, but the acquisition of new equipment this past summer has made their work a bit easier.

Through the GEAR UP grant, they were able to purchase $60,000 worth of laptop computers, iPads, graphing calculators along with two mobile charging stations.

“A lot of our students come from poverty,” says Todd Kubica, Director of Utica GEAR UP. “We are working with families who don’t have the means to provide this kind of technology to their kids. So, this purchase provides equity for all the students to gain access to the technology that they are going to have to master to be successful in high school and in college.”

The Utica GEAR UP acquired 50 student iPads, 10 staff iPads, 18 Dell laptop and 60 TI80 graphing calculators. The charging stations can accommodate all the laptops and 30 of the iPads, with the others being charged on the power shelves. The Utica GEAR UP works to tutor, mentor and assist the current 9th grade class in the Utica School District through to graduation.

There are 747 students in the program, which will continue for another four years. To ensure the best instruction, the GEAR UP staff was trained through MVCC’s Educational Technologies on how to how to utilize this technology.

“The technology is usually good for four-to-five years, which makes purchasing this equipment the perfect time,” said Patrick Mangino, Youth Academic Specialist. “Right now a lot of the kids are in Living Environment and we have downloaded some cool apps like Frog Dissection and other apps which supplement what is being taught at Proctor High School. We also have an app, which helps support the ESL (English as a Second Language) program to help develop their English language skills.”

The GEAR UP program is running classroom all nine periods each day at Proctor High School. For this reason, 20 iPads are based at the school. The laptop charging station will also be moved to the school to create a mobile computer lab in this classroom. The other 30 iPads are used on the College campus to support the Math Corps classes on Saturdays.

“The United States Department of Education likes us to share the equipment with other federally funded programs. So Upward Bound has been using some of this technology when we are not using it. This way, the technology is not sitting idle,” said Kubica.

For the graphing calculators, the Math Corps contacted the 9th grade teachers on what hurdles they are confronted with.

The math teachers replied the students don’t know how to use the calculators. In response, the Math Corps curriculum was modified to expose the students to the calculators and teaching about how to use the functions over an eight-week period.

“All the students were exposed and trained on the use of these calculators so they could begin the journey of discovery and mastering the use of the graphing calculators. The following week, the calculators were used in classroom instruction down at Proctor,” said Mangino.

The next acquisitions for GEAR UP are six Lego Mindstorm robotic kits and software, for which the students will use the laptops to write command code and use the iPads to implement the commands.

“One of the big features of the iPads is they are a social device. We have a rule that this is meant to be a collaborative tool. Students can use this technology to do research, visit college sites, and help figure out what they want to do after school,” said Mangino. “Right now it is a good hook for bringing in the kids into the program.”
George J. Searles, Ph.D., led a discussion of contemporary poetry at Acacia Village, the retirement community at the Masonic Home, on Friday, October 11. Dr. Searles has also authored a new poem in The Southampton Review, published by SUNY Stony Brook at Southampton. He is a Professor of English and Latin in the Center for Arts and Humanities.

Communitas

Submit information for Communitas to rhaubert@mvcc.edu

MVCC HOSTS GUEST FROM RUSSIA – On Wednesday, October 16, MVCC hosted a visitor from Belgorod State University (BSU) in Russia. Alexander Avdeyev is a Lecturer in Psychology with the responsibilities for international projects. Mr. Avdeyev is the cousin of Alla Naumovich in the Library and several MVCC alumni. Possibilities for collaboration were discussed including faculty and student exchange, joint cross-cultural research projects, and distance learning. BSU is one of 15 research universities in Russia and has 32,000 students in a city of 300,000. From left are: Robert Christman, Todd Marshall, Alexander Avdeyev, Terry Schwaner, and Jon Meeter.

Nivia Cavic joins the MVCC community this fall as the new Counselor Associate in the New Directions Program, in the Office of Civic Responsibilities and Judicial Affairs. Her duties will be to recruit students to the New Directions program while facilitating a smooth transition into college from their former lives as ex-offenders. She will anticipate and help remove barriers to students’ success along with assisting students in a smooth transition to what lies ahead of them when they graduate. Toward that end, she will be called upon to help identify best practices throughout the college and create opportunities for cohorts within the college community. The daily tasks associated with these initiatives is varied to include processing documentation, presenting information sessions, assisting students in completing paperwork and helping to facilitate a perceptual shift in students’ mindsets – one that moves from formerly incarcerated student to future graduate and proud member of the Mohawk Valley Community College Alumni Association.

A current resident of New Hartford, Cavic moved to central New York from Westchester County five years ago to be close to her husband’s family. She is the mother of five children, who range in age from 25 to 5.

Cavic holds a B.S. in Psychology from Marymount College, M.S. Ed. in Pupil Personnel Services/Counseling from Fordham University, and a Ph.D. in Educational/General Psychology from Capella University.

Her research interests include the study of human behavior in group settings, particularly educational and sport environments. Her dissertation is titled “An Examination of the Role that Positive Physical Contact Plays in Team Sport Performance and Team Dynamics in Girls’ High School Basketball.” It is an ethological study of touch behaviors and how these behaviors, which are rooted in evolutionary biology, impact sport performance in female athletes.

New Faces @ MVCC

The MVCC women’s cross country team continues to dominate both two-year and four-year colleges this season.

At the Hamilton College Cross Country Invitational, the Hawks were led by Andrea Szewczyk with a personal best time of 19 minutes, 45 seconds. This performance earned her the honor of being named MVCC Athlete of the Week for the week ending October 13, 2013. Szewczyk helped lead the women’s cross country squad to a No. 1 national ranking in the NJCAA. Szewczyk is a sophomore liberal arts major who graduated from Ilion High School.

Athlete of the Week

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The MVCC Board of Trustees received a big boost of experience in education as Carol J. Fox became the newest member this fall semester.

Fox comes to the Board after 37 years of service in the Utica School District. During her tenure, she was the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for five years where she assumed complete responsibility and duties related to the K-12 curriculum. Prior to this, she was the principal of Donovan Middle School from 1990-97, principal of Proctor Junior High School from 1987-90, principal of Sunset/Jones School from 1982-87, and assistant principal of Utica Free Academy.

Fox holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from D'Youville College and a Master of Science in Education from Canisius College. She went on to complete her C.A.S. in Administration from SUNY Cortland.

Her experience in educational leadership is extensive, having served on the search committee for the superintendent of Utica Schools, Board of Education Policy Making Committee and Reconfiguration Committee. Fox’s experience extends to serving on the CIMS Steering Committee for Oneida-Madison BOCES.

Fox holds permanent certification in Elementary Education, School Administration and Supervision, Secondary Mathematics and School District Administration.

During her career, Fox has been honored with many awards, including Educator of Distinction in 2010 by the Genesis Group. Recognition for accomplishments have come from the Historic Old St. John’s Parish Council, National Science Foundation, NYS Middle School Association, the Utica School District and many others.

FIGHTING BREAST CANCER - As a show of solidarity for “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer,” members of the MVCC faculty, staff and students wore pink on Friday. The “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk” will be held on Sunday beginning at 10 a.m. at the Masonic Care Community located at 2150 Bleecker Street. Team MVCC will be gathering for a 9:30 a.m. photo near the fountain by Fellowship Hall.

MVCC collects donations for local rescued dogs

This week CCED opened its doors to serve as the drop zone for donations to assist with the recovery efforts of 12 dogs recently rescued in Herkimer.

Faculty and staff once again demonstrated their spirit of generosity by dropping off blankets, canned dog food, treats, towels, and toys. In addition, more than $115 was raised to help pay for antibiotics. CCED staff will deliver the collected items and monetary donation to the Herkimer County Humane Society, where the dogs are being cared for, Friday evening.

If you miss the Friday deadline and are still interested in making a donation, please contact Kristen Skobla at 792-5685 or kskobla@mvcc.edu.
On Friday, October 11, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo visited the Rome Campus for a lecture on the duties and responsibilities of a lawmaker in Albany.

Griffo addressed the topic of local, regional and state economics and how politics plays a role in generating opportunities for businesses and industries. He went into detail of the work he does in Albany.

With the newest economic topic being the nanotechnology complex located at SUNY Institute of Technology in Marcy, Griffo gave some behind the scenes insight as to how this deal came about and where it is expected to lead.

Following his initial talk, he took questions from the more than 30 students in the audience which sparked insightful discussion. Griffo is on the NYS Economic Committee, which accounts for many facets of the work he does.

Students asked the senator about the Orion Bus situation and about an upcoming conference at Rome Labs which is to focus on bringing more economic money to the area.

Griffo is a past Mayor of Rome and former Oneida County Executive. He was presented an MVCC vase by Rick Quest, Ph.D., Dean of the Rome Campus.

Did You Know! 69 percent of full-time, first-time students last year accepted federal grant money.

MVCC, Stanley to present “Magic Rocks!” with Leon and Romy from ‘America’s Got Talent’

On Saturday, Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. at the Stanley Center for the Arts, Utica native and MVCC alumnus Leon Etienne and Romy Low, America’s Rock Illusionists, will make their first large-scale public hometown appearance since the couple’s run on NBC’s “America’s Got Talent.” The show, “Magic Rocks!” promises to be a high-voltage, theatrical production featuring illusions and rock music. Admission is $10 for general, $5 for MVCC employees, and free for MVCC students.