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ECU students help children with special needs

By
ECU News Services

Sunday, June 21, 2009

A trio of students in East Carolina University's College of Allied Health Sciences has helped give children with special needs a place to play outside.

A covered outdoor shelter has been built at the Howell Center off N.C. 43 just northwest of Greenville. The center is a private, nonprofit, intermediate care, 24-hour facility for medically fragile infants and children. The 30-bed center provides total care for children with complex medical conditions who are released from the hospital but not ready to go home.

Funding for the shelter came from Howell's corporate office in La Grange, but it was spearheaded and implemented by ECU health services and information management students Jill Best, Haleigh Wilhide and Steven Foy.

"We see a difference in kids being able to go outside," said Best, an infant-toddler specialist and fundraising coordinator at Howell Center who will graduate with a degree in health services management in December. "So many come from hospital environments and have never been outside all their lives. It's a different sensory experience for them."

Tonya Lyons, administrator at Howell Center, praised the students' efforts.

"We're really pleased to have it," she said. "We're thrilled to have the students' participation and their input to improve the kids' quality of life."

The students completed the project for a health information management course taught by Robert Campbell. In the course, students must learn how to manage change, not only from a personal standpoint but from a departmental and organizational perspective because the health care industry is constantly changing, Campbell said.

To help students learn the principles of change management, they are given a project to complete that requires them to implement change either in their personal life, their professional life or by helping an individual close to them manage a lifestyle change.

Best already had the idea for the shelter at her workplace and put out a call to other students who might be interested. Wilhide and Foy were the first to reply.

"The main thing for us was communication," said Wilhide of Pikeville, who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in health services management and is a member of the N.C. Air National Guard.

Since the students were enrolled in distance education, the project was completed through e-mails, phone calls and letters.

Archaeologists examine Confederate shipyard

Though the Civil War has long past, history of this era continues to surface.

This summer, East Carolina University professors and students in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences program in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology spent nearly four weeks identifying and documenting submerged vessels within the Pee Dee River near Mars Bluff, S.C.

Archaeologists made an impressive discovery: They located the sunken site of the Confederate gunship, C.S.S. Pee Dee, a 150-foot-long gunboat.
The Mars Bluff summer field school began May 26 and ran through June 19 under the supervision of ECU professors Larry Babits and Lynn Harris. It also involved researchers from the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina.

"This project aims to increase understanding of the role played by inland Confederate Navy yards during 1862-65 and the type of vessels produced during these years," Harris said.

Grant aids research into kidney cancer

Research by a pair of East Carolina University researchers that could hold a key to fighting kidney cancer has gotten a boost from a $40,000 grant.

The Triad chapter of Golfers Against Cancer has awarded the grant to Drs. Anne Kellogg and Fred Bertrand to help further their research into a substance called a monoclonal antibody that could be used for the treatment of kidney cancer.

Kellogg is a physician and associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Bertrand is an assistant professor of internal medicine/hematology oncology at the medical school.

Dr. Karlene Hewan-Lowe, an associate professor of pathology and an expert in kidney pathology, is assisting in the evaluation of this antibody in human tumor specimens.

Monoclonal antibodies are proteins, produced from a single parent cell, that bind to a specific substance. They can be used to detect or purify that substance and are widely used in hospital and pathology laboratories as components of diagnostic tests.

In cancer therapy, an antibody can be used in several different ways. Some antibodies have the ability to directly kill the cancer cells while other antibodies work best when they are used as targeting vehicles carrying a cell-killing payload (such as drug or radioactive isotope) to the cancer cells.

Kellogg began working with monoclonal antibodies in the early 1990s, looking for ones pathologists could use to diagnose cancer. A few years later, she turned her attention to identifying an antibody that not only could recognize tumors but also be useful in treating them.

Kellogg added that the treatment could have benefits even if it fails short of curing cancer, such as making cancer a chronic rather than terminal disease.

Golfers Against Cancer, founded in 1997, has raised more than $10 million to fund cancer research. The Triad chapter has raised and given more than $1 million, all of which has been donated to cancer centers in North Carolina.

The ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation helped arrange the grant funding from Golfers Against Cancer.

Hoskins receives Smith Student Scholarship

Novice Hoskins, a clinical laboratory science student in the College of Allied Health Sciences, has received the W. James and Susan T. Smith Student Scholarship. The scholarship is for the senior academic year.

The award recognizes more than 30 years of academic contribution to ECU by Dr. Susan T. Smith, retired department chair and professor emeritus in clinical laboratory science, and her husband, the late Dr. James T. Smith, who was a biology faculty member.

Hoskins, originally from Macon, Ga., is a nurse who first became interested in clinical lab science while working as a phlebotomist. After graduation, she hopes to be a generalist or work in a clinical chemistry department, with an eye toward medical school.

Bagley recognized by nurse-midwives foundation

Becky Bagley, clinical instructor and director of the nurse-midwifery master's concentration in the College of Nursing, has received the 2009 American College of Nurse-Midwives Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award.

Bagley's students nominated her for the award, which recognizes excellence in academic education, clinical education, research or clinical preceptorship. The award also recognizes faculty who exemplify and support the highest standards of midwifery practice.
Downes wins Clinical Achievement Award

Meta Downes, associate professor of speech-language pathology, has been awarded the prestigious 2009 Clinical Achievement Award from the North Carolina Speech-Hearing-Language Association.

The award goes to one person who has demonstrated exceptional contributions toward the evaluation and treatment of individuals with communication disorders in the state.

Downes received a plaque from the state association and a certificate from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation.

As winner, she also will be North Carolina's nominee for the Louis DiCarlo Award given by the national foundation at their annual meeting.

Downes has been on faculty in ECU's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders for 35 years. She also taught French for three years at ECU. She earned a master's of education and a master's in speech pathology from ECU. Her husband is Shel Downes, professor emeritus of rehabilitation studies at ECU.
Al Clark: Of mind and music: ECU aging study explores new pathways

Sunday, June 21, 2009

Many lost years ago my dad would sit at our spinet piano in the living room and play chords. Up and down the keyboard he would go, not playing written notes, just sounds he liked, making it up as he went along.

It was music to his ears — even if to the rest of us it seemed to be something less.

I inherited his love of the sound — if not the discipline — of music, even though I later learned a little bit of guitar and banjo technique. Still, I have found myself over the years imagining the satisfaction that would accompany the ability to look at music and then play it.

But my brain never seemed up to the task.

Now, at age 61, I am trying again, and along the way I'm seeing what else might be going on with me brain-wise. This time, though, it is part of an East Carolina University study that hopefully will shed light on how the aging brain works, and how musical instruction can affect cognitive ability. The study is funded through a grant from the Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago, Ill.

Jennifer Bugos, ECU associate professor of music education and research, has launched the study, entitled, Bimanual Coordination in Successful Aging: A Model Music Program. She is recruiting 240 subjects, ages 60 to 87 who will take part in 45-minute musical training sessions each week for 16 weeks. Participants will be asked to spend 30 minutes a day in practice or study in addition to the class time.

Prior to this course of study, participants take a battery of mental dexterity tests, which are repeated after the 16-week period to gauge the effect of the training on mental ability. Dr. Bugos says she is still seeking interested participants. You can reach her at (252) 328-5721 or at bugosj@ecu.edu.

This past week I completed the battery of pre-tests, and I have to say that afterward I felt I had just spent an hour or two at the gym. But even so, the experience had a rejuvenating effect — for a time afterward my cortex seemed somehow more electric. I recommend it.

Dr. Bugos told me she was drawn to this field of study after seeing the positive effects of music on her late grandparents: Elmer, who suffered from dementia; and Grace Bugos, who had Alzheimer's disease. She had noted there was something about that mysterious link between mind and music that resonated beyond the simple sound a string makes when cleanly struck or plucked. With this study, she hopes to document this link more precisely, and in the process perhaps develop a training model to serve as a treatment for failing minds.

My father, too, long after his chord-punching days, died under the dense cloud of Alzheimer's, his final days spent in a haze filled with longing for familiar moments from lost times and distant places. His musical asides on that old spinet likely were among those times. He never got back to it, but maybe I can. If you're interested in finding a few of these yourself, come join me and the rest of us old-timers for this study.

Who knows what else we might discover together?

Al Clark is executive editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at aclark@coxnc.com.

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Huizar joins staff at medical school, ECU Physicians

Dr. Isham Huizar, a pulmonologist, has joined the faculty of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group practice, ECU Physicians.

Huizar joined the Department of Medicine as an assistant professor. He comes to ECU from the University of Washington, where he completed subspecialty training in pulmonary critical care medicine and a fellowship in lung biology with a focus on inflammation and fibrosis.

Huizar has a medical degree from the Universidad Anahuac in Mexico and completed residency training at St. Raphael’s Hospital, affiliated with Yale University, in Connecticut. He has also trained at Columbia University in New York and Brigham & Women’s Hospital in Boston. He is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Medical
Salon Show auction benefits East Carolina Heart Institute

City Art Gallery and the East Carolina University Medical and Health Sciences Foundation hosted the Summer Salon Show on Thursday to benefit the East Carolina Heart Institute. The sale, held at the heart institute, included paintings, photography, glass and ceramics by regional and national artists and introduced the paintings of Juliet Barrus of North Carolina and Sallie Benton of New York. ECU Athletic Director Terry Holland and his wife, Ann, served as auctioneers.

The Summer Salon Show will continue at the gallery, 511 Red Banks Road, through Friday. For more information, call 353-7000 or visit www.CityArtGreenville.com. Go to reflector.com/scenaround for more photos from the event.
Thanks, Dad

Laurels — To Father's Day and the opportunity it affords to show appreciation for the love and devotion shown to children by their dads. Children who are raised with the help of an affectionate, committed father are more likely to excel in life, particularly young men who need a strong male role model. So here's to you, dads. Let us help you enjoy Sunday as a way of saying thanks.

Sifting Bath dirt

Laurels — To a group of young Swedish violinists who joined with members of the Greenville Suzuki Association Monday night for a strings concert. The event is part of an ongoing exchange program between Suzuki groups and is designed to build new friendships and share ideas about music.

Laurels — To the relatively seamless switch from analog TV to digital among local television stations. Although a few viewers had issues and questions, station managers reported a smooth transition during the long-awaited changeover. Now perhaps the quality of programming will improve as well.

Laurels — To at least one positive effect budget cuts stand to have for students who ride buses. Reductions in the school system's transportation budget have officials planning to do away with the wasteful practice of having buses stop at every student's driveway. Going back to the old system of designated bus stops will save fuel and have the added benefit of encouraging kids to walk more.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
Former Charlotte mayor gives $1 million to UNC school

FROM STAFF REPORTS, The Charlotte Observer

Former Charlotte Mayor Richard Vinroot and his wife, Judy, have pledged $1 million to the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government.

The gift, the largest individual pledge ever to that school, honors Vinroot's friend and former law partner, Bob Bradshaw, Jr.

The university announced the gift this afternoon. The money will go to UNC's School of Government.

"Judy and Richard Vinroot have shown extraordinary generosity and thoughtfulness in creating this new professorship and fellowship," Mike Smith, the school's dean said in a statement.

Bradshaw, now retired, was a GOP leader in Mecklenburg County who went on to become chairman of the state party. Vinroot, one of his proteges, served two terms as mayor and ran for governor.

Of the money, $666,000 will be matched by a state fund to create the $1 million Robert W. Bradshaw Jr. Distinguished Professorship. Another $334,000 will establish the Robert W. Bradshaw Jr. Public Administration Fellowship.

"Bob Bradshaw spent many years encouraging good people to enter public service, and then mentoring them once they did so," Vinroot said in a statement. "Wonderful examples of this are former Gov. Jim Martin and 9th District Congressman Alex McMillan, both of whom are among Bob's protégés.

"I'm most grateful for what Bob did for me personally, but more so for what he's done for everyone in North Carolina throughout his professional life. Accordingly, Judy and I can think of no better way to honor Bob than at the School of Government, where public service is the essence of their mission."

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For Colleges, Small Cuts Add Up to Big Savings

By TAMAR LEWIN

College life may look different in the not-so-distant future: Students squinting out dirtier windows, faculty offices with full wastebaskets and no phones, sporting events in which opponents never meet, and paper course catalogs existing only as artifacts of the wasteful old days.

While colleges and universities slashed their spending this year with wrenching layoffs, hiring freezes and halts in construction projects, they whittled away at costs with smaller, quirkier economies, too:
¶At the University of Washington, the communications department faculty did away with their landlines. ("Phones were our biggest line item," said David Domke, the department chairman. "We've still got landlines in common areas and for staff, but we're saving about $1,100 a month by getting rid of faculty phones.")

¶At Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., the women's swim team held a "virtual swim meet" with Bryn Mawr College, in Pennsylvania, about 112 miles away. Each team swam in its home pool, then compared times to determine the winners. ("We probably saved $900 on bus travel," said William G. Durden, Dickinson's president.)

¶At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the traditional bus tour of the state for new faculty members was suspended this year. ("In a recession, people don't want to see 100 faculty members traveling around and staying in hotels," said Holden Thorp, the chancellor.)

Across the country, colleges have come up with a host of ideas that, taken together, stand as higher education's household hints for living on a budget.

Campus life is getting a bit dirtier as housekeeping standards are relaxed. Oberlin College in Ohio saved $22,300 by scaling back on window washing, and Pitzer College in Claremont, Calif., is power washing its sidewalks and windows once a year instead of twice. Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., is having office trash picked up weekly instead of daily, a change that eliminated three custodian jobs.

And in a move that directly involves academics, Carleton, which recently eased teachers' course loads to five per teacher from six, now plans to return to six courses to save money.

After years of boom times that led to competition among colleges to provide more luxurious dorm rooms and student centers, some perks of campus life have gone by the wayside. Dickinson, for example, is saving $150,000 by cutting back on free laundry service for students and an additional $75,000 by eliminating free ESPN and HBO in student rooms.

Whittier College in California cut one day of its new-student orientation, saving $50,000. Whitman College in
Walla Walla, Wash., put a cap on students’ free printing in libraries and labs, limiting them to $60 worth of free printing per semester. Next year, students will be limited to $50 per semester.

Most widespread, most proudly announced — and, it seems, most likely to have nicknames — are cost-cutting programs that help sustainability. Hundreds of colleges and universities are turning down their thermostats to save on heating, in programs like “Chill-Out” at Davidson College in North Carolina.

Cafeterias, too, are saving money, cutting food waste and reducing hot-water and detergent costs by eliminating trays. When Whittier began “Trayless Tuesdays” last fall, lunchtime food waste dropped to 4.6 ounces per student from 7.4 ounces — and the college saved almost $30,000 a semester after going fully trayless in the spring.

Many colleges are reducing their use of paper by putting admissions brochures, course catalogs and phone directories online instead of on paper.

Colleges are also installing low-flow shower heads and energy-saving light bulbs and holding contests to see which dorm can most reduce its electricity costs.

At Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pa., the contest resulted in almost $3,000 saved as students competed in turning off lights and unplugging chargers and printers. Students in participating dorms got 25 percent of the savings, $730, for pizza parties and other programs.

Davidson saved more than $10,000 by switching from bottled water to tap at most college events.

Many colleges are rebuilding computers instead of buying new ones, limiting the purchase and use of campus vehicles and scheduling more videoconferences and less travel.

Room phones and voicemail systems are fading away now that the vast majority of students depend on their cellphones. Cornell College, in Mount Vernon, Iowa, estimates that it saved $40,000 by not replacing old voicemail equipment.

Rhodes College in Memphis economizes — and gives students work experience — by hiring students in 25 professional staff positions, saving $725,000 a year. And the College of Wooster in Ohio is trying to hold on to financially struggling students, and their tuition dollars, by offering minimum-wage summer jobs in its “WooCorps,” which has almost 200 students painting rooms, landscaping and growing vegetables this summer. WooCorps students will get an extra $1,000 in their financial aid packages — and help the college complete more maintenance projects than usual.

Many colleges are cutting food-service options, too. Wooster shuttered one of its two dining halls, and Oberlin reduced the operating hours at its cafe.

Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa., is no longer serving breakfast at trustees’ meetings; instead, it will give trustees passes to the cafeteria. Faculty members there will now have planning sessions over brown-bag lunches instead of dinner at the president’s house.

To some, little cuts are more energizing than irritating.
“We found a way of saving money that doesn’t hurt the student experience, and I think everybody’s happy,” said Mr. Domke of the University of Washington. “With cellphones and e-mail, everyone can get hold of us. People think it’s funny that we’re the communications department and we cut phones. But it’s just a symbol, an old technology.”

He paused before continuing, “I’ve suggested to geography that they may want to get rid of their globes.”