



# One-to-One Student Laptop Initiative

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# CenterPoint

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All full-time students at the Center for Arts & Technology have been issued a laptop as part of the one-to-one laptop initiative. Pictured here are students in a ninth grade social studies class at the Center for Arts & Technology Pickering Campus. Shown above are (front to back, left to right) Alyssa Masucci, Brianna Fink (also featured on the cover), Joe Rabenold, Danielle Geary, Katelyn Hallman and Alexandra Somogyi.

## Laptop initiative combines technology and learning

Computer literacy is essential to students who are preparing to enter the work force. Workers need to be adept not only in the technical skills required to operate a computer but also in the critical thinking skills necessary to compile and analyze data.

Students at the Center for Arts & Technology are learning to integrate the computer in all aspects of their academic and career studies. To assist them in this process, the school has implemented the one-to-one laptop initiative. Its goal is to prepare students for learning and working in the 21st century.

The initiative was launched during the 2005-06 school year as a pilot program. During its inaugural year, 235 full-time students at the Center for Arts & Technology Brandywine and Pickering campuses received a laptop. This year, the program was expanded to include all full-time students at both campuses. In addition, the faculty at both campuses received a laptop a year in advance, so they could get a jump start on their tech-savvy students.

According to Dr. Alan Slobojan, director of Career, Technical and Customized Education at the Chester County Intermediate Unit, the laptop initiative was implemented

for three reasons: To improve student learning and increase student achievement; to help bridge the digital divide; and, to prepare students for higher education.

"We need to prepare students for the work place by giving them access to the tools they will use when they enter it," said Slobojan. "We wouldn't expect to teach a carpentry class and not provide students with access to wood. It's the same concept. Computers are pervasive in our society and by providing students with laptops to use for their schoolwork, we ensure that all of our students have the same access to the educational tools and resources necessary for success."

Teachers began to see the advantages of the program almost immediately.

"I recognized two main benefits: First, for students with poor organizational skills, the laptops improve their ability to keep track of work and due dates," said science teacher David Tschachler.

"Second, I can challenge the super achievers much more by providing educational opportunities and materials not previously available in the classroom," said Tschachler.

Social Studies teacher Dave Purdy agreed.

"It's allowed me to integrate creativity into assignments," said Purdy. "It's the old story of tricking them into learning."

Purdy then described a project in which students watched Martin Luther King's speech, "I have a dream." Then, they downloaded the speech as an mp3 and imported it into Garage Band, added music and cropped it to a two to three minute section. With the 'song' they created, they downloaded pictures from the Internet and then added relevant titles to the photos and created a music video.

Meanwhile over in the environmental science class, Tschachler's students were using their laptops to view real-time data of sea level changes in response to hurricane conditions. They then used this information to predict the tides and flooding. Following the hurricane, students compared the actual results with their predictions.

Social studies teacher Lew Gorder summed up student reaction to the laptops: "Technology has improved their motivation, and there is so much more enthusiasm and effort placed towards learning. Students like using technology. So integrating learning objectives using it, makes even basic classroom instruction more enjoyable."



Students in the CAT Brandywine Commercial Graphic Arts program sign off on the proofs for the calendar they designed for Tursack Incorporated. Pictured left to right are John McCormick, Ligon McMurry, Adrian Villagomez, and Heather Scherbinske.

## Printing company taps into student design talent

This year, when Tursack Incorporated, a Consolidated Graphics Company, distributes its annual calendar, it will not only be distributing a handy way to keep track of the days ahead but also the creative design work of the high school students featured on its pages.

Tursack “hired” the CAT Brandywine Commercial Graphic Arts class to design its 2007 calendar. As a result, the work of those students will be adorning the offices of employees at Vanguard, Bank of America and DuPont. In total, over 3,500 calendars will be distributed throughout the Delaware Valley.

According to graphic arts instructor Stephanie Walsh, her students were involved in every step of the process, from presenting their design concepts to Tursack’s marketing department, to creating graphics and designing the page layout, and then

sending the production files to Tursack’s prepress department.

“This has been a tremendous learning experience,” said Walsh. “The students are working for a real client and that’s an experience I can’t recreate with a grade.

“Plus, they are working from concept through finished product and they are learning everything that goes into a project each step of the way.”

According to students working on the project, the experience gave them insight to what they will face in the real world.

“I liked doing it because it gives us experience on what we will be doing in the future,” said 11<sup>th</sup> grader Andrew Sherman from Downingtown. “Sometimes it was frustrating, because you had to figure out what the client wanted. They would say something but really mean something else. Now I know not to

get frustrated but to ask more questions.”

Sherman produced the cover and the month of June 2007.

Ashley Donohue, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader from West Chester, shared her thoughts on working on a real project.

“The deadlines came up really fast,” said Donohue. “But that’s okay because now I’ve actually produced something that will be professionally printed, not just printed on a piece of paper.”

The project was also a learning experience for Tursack prepress manager Bob Smith, who discovered how short a school day actually is.

“With staff I can ask them to stay late and to work after hours to meet deadlines, but with high school students you can’t do that,” said Smith.

According to instructor Walsh, Tursack’s staff was very accommodating.

“They really worked with us and around our schedule. I know that was tough,” said Walsh.

“It was so good for the kids to work with professionals and to see how they will be expected to act and perform as employees. They got to work with staff at all levels. They worked with interns just out of college, as well as seasoned professionals.”

For Smith the end product was worth it.

“I was absolutely thrilled,” said Smith. “There was a lot of positive outcomes from this project and that’s why we wanted to feature the students prominently on one of the pages and not hide it in a line note. We wanted to celebrate the collaboration.”

Tursack Incorporated, a Consolidated Graphics Company, is located in Morgantown, Pennsylvania.



*Pictured left to right at the ground-breaking ceremony are Gary Smith, Chester County Economic Development Council; Curtis Mason, Penn Township Board of Supervisors; Brittany Kriesel, Avon Grove School District; Rep. Arthur D. Hershey, Pennsylvania House of Representatives; Sen. Dominic F. Pileggi, Pennsylvania Senate; Dr. Jerome Parker, Delaware County Community College; Dr. Gerald Zahorchak, Pennsylvania Secretary of Education; Dr. John K. Baillie, Chester County Intermediate Unit; Robert McCauley, DCCC Board of Trustees; Katherine A. Pettiss, CCIU Board of Directors; and Chad Martin, Oxford Area School District.*

## Breaking ground for a ground-breaking school

The Chester County Technical College High School is one step closer to its September 2008 opening. On October 5, school, state, and township officials broke ground for the dual-enrollment high school to be built in Penn Township in southern Chester County. The facility is a joint venture of the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) and Delaware County Community College (DCCC).

"It may look like we are just building another school but actually we are reinventing high school for the twenty-first century," John K. Baillie, CCIU executive director, told the nearly 150 educators, community leaders, parents and students gathered at the ceremony. "I truly believe we are building the school of the future."

As the first technical and career high school to be built from the ground up in over a decade in Pennsylvania, the new school will serve as a model for future technical and career education centers throughout the Commonwealth.

When designing the new facility, officials took the opportunity

to explore a variety of options that would best meet the needs of southern Chester County and address the changing demands of the work place. As a result, plans for a grade 9-14 hybrid campus that housed programs for high school and college students was proposed, accepted and developed.

The dual-enrollment school will feature three distinct yet interrelated programs of study. The Technical College High School will offer traditional career and technical programs such as the ones now offered at the Center for Arts & Technology. Delaware County Community College will offer for-credit college courses for post-secondary students seeking an associate's degree. However, the most unique aspect of the educational offerings at the school will be the dual-enrollment initiatives that blend high school programs with for-credit college courses.

In addition, the Technical College High School will relieve overcrowding at the Center for Arts & Technology Brandywine Campus, give better access to southern Chester County school districts, and provide space-

saving efficiencies for secondary and post-secondary utilization within the facility.

Brittany Kriesel, a senior at the Center for Arts & Technology Brandywine Campus from the Avon Grove School District, said that although she will not be able to take advantage of the Technical College High School, she is very excited for her little sister who will be able to attend. According to Kriesel, the 90 minute round-trip drive to and from CAT Brandywine hampered her ability to be involved in extra-curricular activities at Avon Grove High School. Her sister, however, will not have to choose between a technical education and playing sports. She will be able to do both.

The Chester County Technical College High School will be located at 280 Pennock's Bridge Road, West Grove, Pennsylvania. Construction began the second week in December.

For more information, please visit the Technical College High School's Web site at <http://www.cciu.org/tchs> or call 484-237-5200.

**To learn more, visit [www.cciu.org/tchs](http://www.cciu.org/tchs)**

## Mr. Fecik elected President of Del Val AALAS



Science teacher Stephen Fecik has a new title, Mr. President. Fecik, the animal science and technology teacher at the Pickering Campus, has been elected president of the Delaware Valley branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS).

According to school principal, Dr. Ronald E. Husband, Fecik is an outstanding teacher whose commitment to his students and his profession is exemplary.

"This is just one more example of Mr. Fecik's professionalism and expertise," said Husband. "He is not just respected in the educational community but also in the scientific community and in the industry that his students are preparing to enter.

"By staying an active member of the laboratory animal science industry, he is able to gain valuable insight into the skills that his students are going to need to be successful in their chosen profession."

According to Husband, Fecik's dedication to teaching extends beyond the school classroom.

"Mr. Fecik teaches all year round and volunteers his time to work with students over the summer through the 4-H Clubs of America," said Husband.

## Pickering announces students of the month

Congratulations to CAT Pickering's students of the month for September, October and November. They are **Kristen Hunsinger**, **Lauren Ruzik** and **Alex Hartman**.

- **Kristen Hunsinger** is a four-year Pickering student in the Animal Science and Technology program. She has distinguished herself as a member of National Honor Society, as class secretary, secretary of the 4-H Livestock Club, and as president of the 4-H Sheep Club. Kristen has demonstrated her commitment to her school and fellow students as a member of Skills USA, the Chester County Student Forum and the Youth-to-Youth Exchange. Also, Kristen has put her skills to work for the past two years as a veterinary assistant. Kristen has also raised sheep, swine and cattle; and, has shown them competitively for the past three years. Further, Kristen is a member of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) and has participated in its technicians' day program.
- Health occupations senior and October student of the month **Lauren Ruzik** is a member of the National Honor Society and the National Technical Honor Society. She has served as class president during both her junior and senior years. Lauren is active

in the Student Council, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Skills USA and the Chester County Student Forum. She is a charter member of the Pickering Key Club and has participated in the People-to-People Student Ambassador program visiting countries of the South Pacific, including: Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand. For the past two years, Lauren has qualified to compete in the Health Occupations Students of America national competitions. She is a strong student, and plans to continue her education in the field of respiratory therapy upon graduation.

- CAT Pickering's November student of the month, **Alex Hartman**, has been an outstanding student distinguishing himself by achieving honor roll status every marking period since starting at Pickering in ninth grade. He has been involved in school activities such as Student Council and the Chester County Student Forum. As a telecommunications program student, Alex has completed all of the program's instructional levels to date and currently is working on the industry recognized Broadband Premises Specialist Certification. Upon graduation, Alex plans to put his skills to use as a PECO lineman or possibly as a Comcast or Verizon technician.

### Brandywine students earn gold and silver

Congratulations to CAT Brandywine child care students **Julie Poliski**, **Julie Hertzog**, **Mandy Donnell** and **Cheryl Welker**. The four students earned gold and silver medals at the 2006 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America national competition.

The students earned their medals as follows: Donnell and Welker, gold medal, *Focus on Children*; and, Poliski and Hertzog, silver medal, *Interpersonal Communications*.

### Health students sweep essay contest

Congratulations to **Elika Lesh**, **Danielle Poloway**, and **Abbey Ivens**. These three Pickering Health Occupations students won first, second and third place respectively in the Pennsylvania Career Link of Chester County essay contest: "Why a 10th grader like you should consider a health career."

TOPCATS

## Pickering students support children with autism

CAT Pickering students have joined the national Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) in their efforts to support children and families affected by autism. The national HOSA organization has chosen as its 2006-2008 service project "Autism Speaks."

This two-year effort is aimed at supporting children and families who face this disabling condition through volunteer efforts, fund raising and community education in conjunction with the National Alliance for Autism Research.

Locally, the Pickering HOSA chapter is working with the Chester County Autism Network and Brandywine YMCA to provide respite for parents of children with autism. Pickering health occupation students will volunteer one Saturday a month at the Brandywine YMCA to provide activities and social events for children with autism. In December, the students assisted with a holiday party at the YMCA. In addition, the Pickering chapter of HOSA conducted a fund raiser for Autism Speaks that centered on making and selling holiday ornaments.

## Holiday Hope Chest helps families have a joyous holiday season

Over 400 Chester County families were treated to a free day of shopping at the Center for Arts & Technology Holiday Boutique and Dollar Store at the fourth annual Holiday Hope Chest on Saturday, Dec. 2.



Practical Nursing program director Patty Knecht began the Holiday Hope Chest as a way of giving back to the community and helping her Chester County neighbors in need. CAT Brandywine staff and students collected new (and like new) items from area businesses and then "sold" them to Chester County residents in need. Each family was given 50 CAT dollars to purchase either new items from the boutique or like-new items from the dollar store.

## Brandywine students raise money and awareness for United Cerebral Palsy

Ralph Showalter and Will Supplee, business academy students at CAT Brandywine, are organizing two fund raisers for United Cerebral Palsy. The first is to sell CAT "Paw" stickers and the second is a Rockin-in-the-New Year Rockathon on December 31. Money raised will help provide services such as housing, therapy, assistive technology training, early intervention, social and recreation programs, and more.

### Campus Date Savers

- **January 25: Eighth Grade Parent Coffee & Dessert Night**  
The evening will feature informal tours, time for parents to talk to counselors, administrators and teachers, and, of course, coffee and dessert! For more information, visit [www.catpickering.org](http://www.catpickering.org).
- **March 24: 2007 GETT Event**  
Girls in grades 6 through 12 and their parents are invited to attend the FREE Girls Exploring Tomorrow's Technology (GETT) event on March 24, 2007. For more information, visit [www.cciu.org](http://www.cciu.org).



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# CenterPoint

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