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Oakland Press recognizes OU program

By **Dawn Pauli**, contributing writer

For the past 15 years, the Team USA/OU College Adventure Program has inspired sixth graders to plan for college by experiencing the Oakland University campus. As a result, the program won The Oakland Press' 2004 Excellence in Education Medallion.

As part of the program, 75 students from Avondale Meadows Upper Elementary School converged on OU in May, attending classes, visiting the Recreation Center and getting a history lesson at Meadow Brook Hall. OU students served as college mentors and guides for the sixth graders.

"We've had this program at Oakland for the past 15 years and for the last five we've done it over a two-day period. The day trip was never satisfying enough," said Debbie Monteath, CAS '72, Avondale Meadows teacher. "The students are from all different abilities and backgrounds. For them, this program opens up a whole world they didn't even know existed.

"The college environment shows them that with hard work, they can do anything. The Recreation Center shows the students that college requires responsibility, but there's still room for fun. The kids stay overnight in Vandenberg Hall and learn from Oakland University professors. To us, this is priceless."

The students attended classes taught by OU professors Dyanne Tracy, Lorenzo Smith and Danny Jordan, and career development coordinator Beth LeBreton, who works in the Advising Resource Center.

"We are extremely grateful for their time and dedication to this project," said Monteath. "We are also thankful for the help of Rebecca Wickham, assistant director of administrative services, and Candace Rogers, coordinator of pre-college programs, for coordinating everything. They are extremely dedicated and are our personal heroes."

In addition to Monteath, Team USA teachers include Kathy Bommarito and Patricia Buller. All are teachers at Avondale Meadows in Rochester Hills. In addition to the Excellence in Education Medallion, TEAM USA received a commemorative plaque and \$500 to support future programs at an awards ceremony in May.

SUMMARY

For the past 15 years, the Team USA/OU College Adventure Program has inspired sixth graders to plan for college by experiencing the Oakland University campus. As a result, the program won The Oakland Press' 2004 Excellence in Education Medallion. OU faculty, students and alumni have helped to make the program a success.

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