



December 28, 2011

NR11136

News Release

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NMCC student group collaborates with students from PI Middle School & the PI Historical Society to host ‘Technology Then & Now’

Aroostook County - Members of the Phi Theta Kappa student honor society at Northern Maine Community College partnered with eighth graders at Presque Isle Middle School as well as Kim Smith from the Presque Isle Historical Society to present “Technology Then and Now” on December 15 at the College.

“We wanted to partner with some of the Presque Isle Middle School students and the Presque Isle Historical Society for a project to help raise awareness about how much technology has affected our lives here in the county and abroad, and how far it has come in such a short amount of time,” said NMCC nursing student Jonathan Post, president of the PTK chapter. The event was part of the “Honors in Action” activities the chapter are working on in order to earn national 5-Star status.

The evening featured fifteen presentations prepared by PIMS students each focused on a different technology theme. The groups, totaling 44 students in all, worked in their English, science and social studies classes on the presentations. Classroom preparation for evening was led by PIMS English and Social Studies teacher Bill Guerrette and Science and Math teacher Kevin Malenfant.

“I think this project helped to create a better awareness and understanding of technology and the ability to realize that inventions like iTunes and iPods didn’t just happen overnight,” said Guerrette.

Each group was given the name of an inventor and was instructed to research and learn about that inventor’s contribution to education dating back to the 1960’s. The inventions featured ranged from the birth of the computer mouse and post-it note to the formation of major tech-based corporations such as Microsoft and Apple.

Following the student presentations, Kim Smith from the Presque Isle Historical Society led a presentation on how technology has changed from the 1960s to today, covering a wide range of items from automobiles and telephones to potato harvest and ice harvesting. Also included in her presentation were photos from yesterday and today of downtown Presque Isle, the library and the hospital.

“The project really opened my eyes to how much things with technology has changed over the years,” said Katie Ford, one of the student presenters from PIMS. “The experience really made me appreciate the technology we have now,” added fellow classmate Karen Jones.

The project not only had students reflecting on how much has changed, but also wondering about what technological advances are in store for them down the road.

“I think it will be really interesting to see how technology has changed when we get older,” said eighth grader Olivia Hudson.

In addition to the presentations, a variety of items were on display from the 1960s to today as a visual compare and contrast for participants. To underscore the role of technology, PIMS students hosted the event from the middle school to the NMCC campus using Tanberg video conferencing technology.

A number of students also participated in a “Tech Fast” during the project vowing, to give up one technology related item for a period of 24 hours. Those who took part in the technology fast were entered into a door prize drawing at the end evening. Natalia Pictou and Jesse Sullivan each won a Subway gift card for their tech fasting efforts.

“ Phi Theta Kappa would like to partner with the middle school students on a project like this again, because we hope that in some way it will teach the students that community involvement and academic success go hand in hand,” said Post.

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