National GEAR UP Week

September was full of activities as USU GEAR UP schools participated in National GEAR UP Week. Schools celebrated National GEAR UP Week as an opportunity to raise awareness in their school and communities about the positive impact that GEAR UP is having on their students. USU STARS! GEAR UP schools participated in many different ways.

In the middle schools, GEAR UP Week focused on helping the students to imagine their future, to visualize attending college and having careers. Many schools participated in a Dream Wall where students were given a piece of paper to write down their dreams for the future and post on the wall. The Dream Wall was in a prominent location where the entire school could see their hopes and dreams during the week and think about how they could accomplish them. Schools also held assemblies and invited guest speakers. North Sanpete Middle School had representatives from Snow College visit to talk about their middle school experiences that helped them achieve their college goals. Topics covered included goal setting, study habits, getting involved and striving to overcome academic struggles with the help offered at their school.

cont. on pg 2

Dayanna Estrada and her family talk with Salt Lake Community College representatives at the Dual Immersion Academy College Fair

Ephraim Middle Schools’ Dream Wall
GEAR UP Week Cont.

At Gunnison Valley Middle School students and teachers worked together in their homeroom classes to learn about a college of the class’ choice. Each class decorated their door themed around their university. The students then had to present during their GEAR UP assembly to the entire school about which college they chose and why.

Dual Immersion Academy had their students spend time using STEP UP manuals, sent from STEP UP Utah, to help students learn about different colleges. Students along with their parents also participated in a College Fair where they could meet with local colleges at information booths and ask questions.

Jimmy Moore, from USU’s Athletic Department, visited Granite Park Junior High to talk to students about preparing now for college, the importance of academics and always having a back-up plan.

In the high schools, GEAR UP Week was full of fun as students got involved and learned more about the program. Wendover High School held a Rube Goldberg machine contest where students were given wood to make a ramp, dominoes, a pin, tape and a balloon. The STEM task was to pop the balloon fastest. At the same event, the ACT importance and test strategies were discussed by Alan Rowley, Site Coordinator. Clearfield High School focused on the road map to college for their students by having teachers share their college bios and a graduation photo booth. Clearfield students also took the time to write postcards to state officials letting them know how GEAR UP has influenced them to pursue a college degree. At Logan High School a Greenpower Car demonstration was held enticing new students to join the after school GEAR UP Greenpower Car building team. The Greenpower team will participate in an exhibition race in April of 2017.

All around Utah and Nevada GEAR UP Week was a great success. We appreciate all the schools that participated and we hope that next year we can have continued success in sharing information about GEAR UP with both students and local communities.

TedxSaltLakeCity

September 17, 2016 Logan High School GEAR UP student Piper Christian had the incredible opportunity to present at TedxSaltLakeCity, an innovative conference that strives to cultivate and circulate ideas worth spreading. Piper spoke about the power of stories and how telling stories influences others. She shared her own story about how she grew up canoeing the lakes and marshes near her hometown of Logan, Utah, camping in Utah’s southern deserts, and hiking the canyons of the Wasatch and Uintah Ranges during the spring, summer and fall. She also shared the danger of being outdoors in winter time in Cache Valley Utah.

Piper spoke of her travels to the 2015 COP21 United Nations Climate Summit in Paris, France as a junior news correspondent. She spoke of how she chose to interview individuals from six continents to learn how ordinary people can find extraordinary ways to combat climate change. Upon returning to Logan, she shared these “climate interviews” throughout her community and discovered the power of storytelling to move people to action. Piper helped pass a Clear Air and Sustainability Resolution through the Logan City Council and is working to pass similar resolutions across Utah.
This fall the American Preparatory Academy (APA) hosted its annual GEAR UP Parent University. Of the event, Site Coordinator Rob Guido said “I’m pleased to announce that our fall GEAR UP Parent University was a success. We had over 40 parents brave the wind and rain to join us for this evening training event.” Chris Macias, a University of Utah representative, as well as Mr. Guido, spoke about college entrance, high school preparedness, and scholarship leads. American Preparatory Academy is a dual language academy and Mr. Macias was able to share information in both English and Spanish for parents. Parents were seen taking notes and the event included a Q&A at the end that was insightful for all parents.

A huge thanks to Wendolens Ruano, APA’s new senior College Access Advisor, for helping with arrangements and answering college questions.

SU STARS! GEAR UP students have been visiting college campuses around the state of Utah this fall. On September 9th, Mount Logan Middle School brought eighth grade students to Utah State University for a campus tour and a college visit of their choice. Logan High brought their eleventh grade students to Utah State University to gain insights about the admissions process at USU as well as financial aid opportunities. GEAR UP juniors also visited a major of their choice around campus from Business to Agriculture and even Outdoor Product Design. In October, North Davis Junior High visited USU on two occasions and participated in engaging activities put on by the Army ROTC. The American Preparatory Academy brought their eleventh grade students to USU to learn what it is like to be a student. They had the opportunity to ask questions to a student panel, visit a major of their choice and hear from Dennis Kohler, Director of the Academic Success Center at USU, about how to achieve academic success.

Similar visits happened across the state. North Sanpete High School scholars visited Brigham Young University to learn what life is like as a college student and Eagle View Elementary went to Price to visit the USU Eastern campus. Students from Eagle View were happy to find out that USU Eastern is not too far from home and is the least expensive campus in Utah for Utah residents. Ephraim Middle School students visited Snow College during an after school field trip where they learned about the college environment and atmosphere as well as potential majors in the future. Logan High students also visited Westminster College and the University of Utah so they could compare private versus public tuition, courses and other information. A great time was had by all students as they experienced what their future will be like in the next few years as college students.
The eighth graders at Mount Logan Middle School participated in Reality Town on October 12, 2016. During the Reality Town experience, students were given an opportunity to take a glimpse into their future. Each student received a life scenario which explained their career, salary and family situation. Students were then tasked with developing a budget and lifestyle while living within the limits of their monthly income. Throughout the day students also completed Mock College Applications, explored Virtual Job Shadow, attended an internet safety training and a STEP UP to High Education and goal setting presentation. Students also had the chance to receive more information about the pathways offered at Bridgerland Applied Technology College in Logan, Utah. Reality Town helped Mount Logan Middle School students to prepare for their future today!
Logan High School Butterfly Project

This fall USU STARS! GEAR UP students at Logan High School (LHS) have been learning about the life cycle, habitat and migration of butterflies as their classroom has become a Monarch habitat. Shaunda Wenger, a Biology Teacher at LHS, thought it would be interesting for her students to learn about the population changes of Monarchs in the Cache Valley. Weneger is fostering student learning and responsibility as she teaches her students how to distinguish males from females, search for butterfly eggs, and to propagate milkweed so that students can study their own monarchs next year.

LHS students along with Weneger will be focusing their learning on the area of migration. Students are interested in knowing where Monarchs migrate once they leave Utah. These scholars have developed a system of tagging the butterflies on their wing with a light colored sticker before releasing them. The hope is that when someone else sees the butterfly in the future they will look at the tag, go to the website and enter in the information about where the Monarch was last seen. Weneger and her students will continue to follow their butterflies throughout the winter and into next year to see where they have traveled as well as raising their own population in their own classroom through the winter.

College Carnival at Eagle View Elementary

Eagle View Elementary hosted its first annual Fall College Carnival in early November. Teachers from each grade hosted different college games based on either a college or a pathway to college. Students participated in various games such as the college dish gummy bear toss, a bean bag toss about different post-secondary education degrees and other games to learn college terms. There was also a booth that focused on information found in the STEP UP manuals and other college reading materials.

The College Carnival was held in conjunction with the fall book fair. The main purpose of the College Carnival was to get parents into the school. It was a great success in getting parents involved with their student and interacting with teachers about the importance of developing good study skills, taking rigorous courses, and preparing for college.

USU STARS! GEAR UP Administrative Team

Program Director Cohort 1 - Eric Packenham
Program Director Cohort 2 - Jim Dorward
Program Coordinator Cohort 1 - Melia Balls
Program Coordinator Cohort 2 - Heather Ericson
Business Officer - Meg Boudreto
Business Officer Cohort 1 - Brent Baum
Business Officer Cohort 2 - Charlotte Jackson
Data Analyst - Doug Reiter
Web Developer - Zachary Stocks
Staff Assistant - Sandra Martinez
Office Assistant - Rachel Remund