

NEWS RELEASE

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Technology and Teamwork Showing on Channel MMS



Pictured Above Left To Right: Manteo Middle School Publications' students Shelby Lanier, Elise Gibbs, Mo Creef, Frankie Powers, and Colby Sawyer.

By Amy Montgomery, Executive Director, Dare Education Foundation

As a grantor, you sometimes wonder – are our grants really making a difference? I recently visited one of DEF's grantees – the MMS Publications Class, to see them in action. This year, DEF awarded the class grant funds to "Go Green with Technology." What I experienced amazed me, and upon leaving I couldn't help but think maybe I should go back to middle school to polish my skills!

In recent years, the Manteo Middle School Publications class has grown from 8 students to now over 20, with students applying to get in. Why? Student facilitator Jeff Whitt (MMS Teacher) has updated the class to a 21st Century learning environment for students. No teaching to the test or sleepy students in sight. Rather, interested, talented and technology-savvy kids all around.

When I arrived, I spoke with Mr. Whitt for just a few moments and was quickly put in the very capable hands of Chief Editor and 8th grade student Shelby Lanier. Daily, Shelby oversees the work of several teams, who after a brief staff meeting, go their separate ways to tape Channel MMS, publish the bi-weekly web-based newsletter, assemble the year book, and write a monthly page for the Sentinel. Shelby led me from team to team and I followed... eyes, ears, and mind on overload.

What I experienced were eighth grade students with clear direction, working effectively and efficiently in teams, accomplishing real world tasks requiring the latest technology. When asked about the class, the students said it was a lot of work, but fun. Many of the students reported arriving before school starts to meet deadlines and get the news out just as the school day begins. Of course, in the new 21st Century way, students answered my questions while working at the computer, writing scripts and keeping pace with the speed that information now travels.

Mostly, I thought, what am I doing taking these pictures and writing this story??? Maybe I need to go back to middle school, take this class, and polish my skills.

Most important, I know that beyond a shadow of a doubt that Dare Education Foundation 21st Century Skills Grants are making a difference and it felt so good to be a part of it.

See their work for yourself at <http://mms.darecountyschoolsonline.com/>. Click on MMS News Web for the latest edition.

DEF's 21st Century Skills Grants encourage students to learn by doing, work with one another, and become more socially responsible. Rote memorization is OUT. Thinking, planning, collaborating, communicating and being creative are IN. For more information about DEF's 21st Century Skills Grants, visit www.dareeducationfoundation.org or call the foundation office at 255-5545.

The Dare Education Foundation is an IRS-qualified non-profit organization that raises funds to help every student and every teacher in every public school in Dare County. DEF is funded by private donations large and small, grants, sponsorships, and special events. Funds are used to advance teacher training, create access to new educational opportunities for students, and provide support for innovative programs in our schools. DEF's efforts in putting "Schools First" enrich education for all our students and encourage community involvement in education, which provides the foundation for a strong and vibrant quality of life in Dare County.