

C'ville TV class off to award-winning start



JOHN STORMZANO/staff photographer

Students (from left) Roger Phillips, Kathleen Castro and Laurence Lafferty and instructor Sharon McDonald check with the control room during TV production class rehearsals.

By Kevin Brown
staff writer

Students in Clarenceville High School's new TV production classes are making an impression on professionals in the field.

A public service announcement produced by the class recently won a third-place award in a student competition judged by the Detroit chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

And students who took the class in its first semester last fall won praise from Channel 7 staff, who said the students' public service announcement on the "Can-Do" charity food drive ranked with commercials turned out by professional ad agencies.

SILARON McDONALD, a classroom teacher for 17 years and the host of "Community Upbeat" on Farmington's cable system, is the class instructor.

McDonald called the third-place finish "quite an accomplishment, since our television instruction program is new this year, and we competed with some well-established and highly equipped programs."

The students' public service announcement warns youths of the dangers of drinking and driving. It was selected among 48 30-second spots produced by students at 15 area high schools.

The spot opens with a closeup of collected group photos of high school students, mounted on scrapbook pages. As the pages turn, an announcer speaks: "They say these are the best of times . . ."

"How do you want to remember your friends?" he continues. "Like this — Or like this?"

The camera now shows a girl lying in a coffin. "Get

the picture — Don't drink and drive," the message concludes.

EACH PRODUCTION takes a lot of rehearsal, a lot of pre-production, McDonald said. "They have to operate as a team, everyone has to get along."

McDonald said all students in the class had a hand in the public service announcement, which will air on Channel 56. The entry, produced and directed entirely by McDonald's students, was judged on content, creativity and execution.

In the class, students learn all facets of TV production, from operating equipment, lighting and floor direction to directing and producing. "They get experience at every different job," McDonald said.

The class meets in a classroom converted to a TV studio, with track lights overhead, ceiling-to-floor-length curtains along the walls, and a carpeted set complete with chairs and potted plants, donated by local businesses.

Tape and sound equipment, on loan from the Livonia Cable Commission, rests on a long counter behind the control booth window. Most students, McDonald said, prefer working behind the camera to appearing in front of it.

The students also produce interview shows for Metrovision educational access channel 15 — "Clarenceville Spotlight" and "Clarenceville Community Kaleidoscope." Interview subjects have ranged from Clarenceville schools administrators to the school's homecoming queen.

Beginning May 2, student-produced programs will alternate with Clarenceville schools-related messages on Metrovision channel 15, at noon and 2, 4 and 6 p.m.

Farmington High School recredited

The North Central Association has recredited Farmington High School, according to principal Gerald Potter.

"Once in every seven-year cycle, each NCA school must undergo a comprehensive self-study followed by an NCA team visit," Potter explained. "This school was last evaluated in 1981."

"Continued accreditation means that the conditions for effective education still exist in the school."

Doctor, learning center offer option to Ritalin

A vocal opponent of the children's drug, Ritalin, is teaming up with a Farmington Hills-based basic skills learning center as an alternative to placing children on medications.

"The Huntington Learning Center is a viable alternative to giving a chemical strait-jacket to sharp, intelligent children," said Dr. Saul Margules of Warren.

Margules believes that many bright children diagnosed as suffering from Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) can benefit more from the services of the learning center than from the effects of the drug.

"The children singled out as having the so-called ADD simply need

more discipline, one-on-one instruction and a sense of responsibility," Margules said.

"Ritalin, while capable of physically slowing down a child, has been shown, in many cases, to interfere with long-term learning retention."

Margules and Vivienne Manwaring, Huntington Learning Center director, will give a free joint lecture on the dangers of Ritalin and the services of the center 7-9 p.m. Thursday, May 26, in Room 223 at the Southfield Civic Center, Evergreen and Civic Center Drive.

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