

'Professionalism Is The Key That Opens The Door To Opportunity'

J**ob, Life Skills Taught In New Course**

A new class has been added to Mt. Healthy High School this year, one that will give students the skills they need to prepare for life after high school.

Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates (JCG), a non-profit organization that began in 1982 by the Cincinnati business community, offers a "School-to-Career" curriculum to help seniors overcome challenging obstacles, graduate and successfully make the transition from school to career.

Trish Meridy, a career specialist who received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, oversees the program at the high school. She began her career at JCG in 2002, beginning at Western Hills High School then moving to Norwood High School until last year. This year at Mt. Healthy, she teaches two 90-minute classes every other day.

The job readiness program will help about 45 students

identify career interests through internet research, job shadowing, part-time jobs, and community service projects.

The class is beneficial to students, Meridy said, because it teaches them to "use professional, career and leadership skills acquired in JCG to blast-off to life's next level." That next level is to use what they "learn today to lead tomorrow."

Meridy and her students have picked a theme for this year, Professionalism Is The Key That Opens The Door To Opportunity. The theme complements the goal of the course, to integrate academic and social skills needed to obtain, keep and advance on the job.

Students will also receive support in and out of school. Mentors will help students prepare and pass the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), and social service connections will be presented to meet individual needs.

"Simple things within my

scope may be professional clothing assistance, checking to make sure grades are on task and OGT remediation," she said. "Major things like homelessness, providing resources for a parenting student and family issues, I will elevate to the proper school official for further direction."

The program also offers follow up services after graduation to help students overcome any hurdles they may encounter, so they can continue on the path to success.

Students will then take these newly developed skills and compete with other schools with the same program in 10 competitive events. Competitions are held each April, just prior to a Career Development Conference.

JCG is funded by the State of Ohio, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) contracts, schools and through local foundations, corporations and individuals. The program currently serves 10 schools in Greater Cincinnati.

Mentoring Achieves 10-Year Milestone

The Healthy Mentor Program is "On the

program continues for its 10th school year. All five Mt. Healthy elementary schools. More mentors are needed to guide students in school and in life. Volunteers will be asked to give 30 minutes a week, or every other week, mentoring the same student in reading and/or math skills.

"Watching a student progress academically is especially rewarding," Linda Urso, program coordinator, said.

Mentors are needed weekly for 30 minutes during the school day from 9:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

The district also has after school mentoring opportunities to be a Big Brother/Big Sister from 4-5:30 p.m. on Mondays at Duvall Elementary and Tuesdays at Frost Elementary. A background check and brief training are required.

Call Urso at 602-1677, or e-mail lorso@mthcs.org, to begin making a difference in the life of a student.



Ann Miller, a mentor since the program's inception 10 years ago, works with Ke'Shayla Stearns, a third-grader at Duvall Elementary.