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Program lets students use NKU technology

Teens to work with Redwood clients

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HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Twenty high school students will get the chance to use technology at Northern Kentucky University to solve communication problems for disabled clients at Redwood School and Rehabilitation Center.

The project is part of the INTERalliance IT Careers Camp open to students from Campbell County, Covington Catholic, Highlands, Notre Dame Academy, Ryle and Villa Madonna Academy. The camp runs July 21-25.

"We have a lot of individuals who are very difficult to understand," said Deb Case, Redwood's director of technology solutions. "For instance, some have cerebral palsy and a lot of them can't sign because they don't have the motor control."

Case said she believes the Redwood staff will benefit from being questioned by the students about their clients.

"It's going to open our eyes to different perspectives," Case said. "I know they'll ask our staff different questions as they try to develop something; they'll ask questions that will make staff think about things in ways they haven't thought of before."

The camp is sponsored by NKU's College of Informatics. Teams of five students will compete to see which team can invent a communication enhancement device.

The students will present their inventions to a panel and one will be declared the winner of the Redwood Challenge.

"I am looking forward to the upcoming INTERalliance Careers Camp at NKU with much excitement and hope for the campers who participate," said Teri Slick, assistant dean for the college.

"Since the founding of the College of Informatics in 2005, we have made it an unstated goal to continually offer innovative learning opportunities for current and future students. This IT careers camp fits perfectly with that goal."

Case said she thinks working with the disabled will allow the students to broaden their career choices.

"It's great because it's going to expose them to be around a lot of individuals who have different needs at an early age and direct their careers in directions they weren't previously thinking about," said Case.

"Maybe they'll come back here to work or do some volunteering."

This is the first year for the camp, but the College of Informatics plans to continue them.

"This year's offering at NKU will hopefully be the first of many as we include Northern Kentucky's high schools in this important outreach," said Doug Arthur, executive director of the INTERalliance of Greater Cincinnati.

"NKU has really pulled out all the stops to make this an amazing experience for 20 young students."
