



Computer camp trains for jobs

Instructor Brian Culp assists Rocky Orozco as he installs an operating system in a new computer.

The Computer Technician *Basic Skills Camp 2010, held*

June 2-30 at the Regnier Center to train youth, ages 18-21, who met low-income guidelines, put the “fun” in the fundamentals of computer operations. Funded by Workforce Partnership monies funneled through the U.S. Department of Labor and the Workforce Investment Act, the goal was to teach youth basic information technology skills in preparation for employment.

“This is a good opportunity for me to pick up another skill,” said Regina McKinney, 20, Overland Park, who was installing an operating system in a computer she was building.

Students attended the camp for free and received a \$500 stipend. JCCC’s Center for Business and Technology developed the class in response to a WIA Youth Activities request for proposal and partnered with Kansas City Kansas Community College in its implementation.

Students spent half the day focused on soft skills – business writing, team building and interview techniques – and half the day on information technology – PC hardware and software and A+ content.

“This is a good core base for a job as a service technician at a Best Buy, Micro Center or any business across the country,” said instructor Brian Culp, who taught the information technology portion of the camp at JCCC and KCKCC, Leavenworth.

“I thought this class would further my experience in computers. I’ve learned a lot of good things, like how to put

a computer together from point zero,” said Chris Watson, 18, Shawnee.

The exercise of assembling desktop computers was not just academic. As trite as “win-win” sounds, this concept really was. Computers built in the basic skills camps were donated to nonprofit agencies through means of RFPs written by the students and posted online.

“This is a good group of students who are getting a lot of real-world experience,” Culp said. “No matter what field they go into, knowing how to work with computers is a good thing.”

The unique element of this camp, compared to similar WIA camps around the country, was its employment placement component. Following the completion of the camp students developed and implemented a personal plan to secure employment working one-on-one with a professional employment coach and mentor.

“This program was designed to reach young people who want to enter the workforce,” said Irene Brenon, project manager, Workforce Partnership. “This course offers them the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and workplace skills necessary to compete in today’s job market.”

Fifty-three students participated in the concurrent camps – 11 at JCCC, 12 at KCKCC, Leavenworth, and 30 in two camps at KCKCC’s main campus. **Im**