

Drop-outs turn to Tri-City

by Heleen Veenstra
News Editor

"The biggest advantage is being in a small school with no social classes so they (the students) can be friends with everybody," said Helen Humphreys, full-time teacher at Tri-City Alternative about their program.

Tri-City Alternative is a program, which is connected to Clackamas Community College, where high school dropouts have the opportunity to earn high school credits or their high school equivalency, with the goal to transfer back to a high school, to a college, or to get a job.

The program is based on individualized instruction. Some of the students work on their high school credits which can be done in Basic English, Basic Mathematics, Career Exploration, Personal Finance, U.S. History I & II, Government, and Global Studies.

In the GED program the student can challenge five different areas which are English, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Social Studies and

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Science. This program gives the students the opportunity to go through their high school career faster. "Our GED students are not going back to high school."

About the credits students earn Humphreys said, "All high schools accept credits we give for make-up classes."

The reason for students to drop out of high school are all different. Some of the students come to Tri-City because they were too late in the semester to go to a regular high school and get credits. These students are mostly students who moved here in the middle of the semester.

Another group are the students who have been expelled from high school. Other students who go to Tri-City are the ones with family problems. "They need to get into a school where there are fewer people and more attention."

GED students are at Tri-City because they need to get through their high school career fast because they have a job and need to support themselves or

their families.

The program for the GED students is based on how to prepare for a job by getting recommendations and how to handle job interviews, Humphreys said.

Another group are the students who got out of drug/alcohol programs. These are the students "who do not want to go back to their high schools where they got in trouble."

Humphreys explained these students take classes at the Tri-City program because they do not want to face their "old drug friends anymore."

Pam Curtis, drug counselor, works at Tri-City part-time. Curtis gives education on the subject and leads two support groups. One for chemically dependent families and one for the clean and sober.

Students who participate in the program are from the south end of Clackamas county. There is one program in Oregon City and one in Clackamas and they are both exactly the same.

In each program 150 students are involved throughout the year. About 30 students are there at a time, but they are free to enter and exit from the program whenever they want, so the number varies.

There are two other programs in the northwest related to Tri-City alternatives. One is the Targeted Learning Center, which is almost the same as Tri-City, with the exception that it is for adults instead of high school students.

Vocational Options program is a program where the tuition is paid by the school district and the students who go there are interested in becoming job prepared.

"They (the students) are not expected to go to the high school, but we expect them to get a job before they leave," Humphreys said about that program.

Getting individual help and giving attention to real world issues are courses that are stressed in the program. Each week the students alternate between two activities, fieldtrips and guest speakers.

Humphreys stated that even though students do not stay at Tri-City for a long time they come by and visit a lot.

The purpose of the Tri-City Alternative Program is not to keep students there for a long time, but to get them back into

their old high schools or to a new high school where they feel compatible.

Another purpose is to get students involved in a college situation. Debi Anderson, 16, is a student at the program who is

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taking a typing class at CCC this term.

Helen Humphreys and Donna McDonough are full-time teachers, Jerry Gerspach is a part-time teacher, and Mildred Sandwick is a part-time secretary.

Students go to school on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9-2 o'clock, and on Friday from 9-12 o'clock.

Jon Hayes, student at Tri-City, explained that every morning they come in they have to check in. He said that students have to call in if they can't come on time or at all, so they "gain responsibility."

The program has a point system so if "you do something wrong you lose points." Each student starts out with 24 points in the beginning of the term. With perfect attendance each week the student gains five points, but for coming late or not showing up, points get subtracted.

To keep track of the points Sandwick keeps a book. "I think it's a kind of good idea actually," Hayes said.

Every Monday the students get an assignment sheet with the work that needs to be done for the week. On Fridays the students are supposed to turn in their assignments.

Students can earn three high school credits every nine weeks, and if they worked 65 hours or more a term, each student gets one credit extra.

Concluding how he likes to go to Tri-City Alternative Program, Hayes said, "It's a lot of work, but somehow it's easier than a normal high school."

Students like informal atmosphere

by Heleen Veenstra
News Editor

The atmosphere is nicer, making friends is easier and being able to set your own work pace. These are some of the advantages students named to express why they like to go to the Tri-City Alternative Program. The following are the responses of three students.

Jose Lugo, 17, used to go to

"I want to be a fashion designer. I want to go into fashion merchandising first and then I want to start designing."

Oregon City High School and is going to Tri-City now because "I was kicked out for fighting police."

"I went here once before and I like this place." The first time Lugo went to the program for one week.

Lugo said that after that week he left home and quit school. After a year of living on his own he moved in with a foster family and he started high school in Oregon City. But after three months he had to go away and now he is going to Tri-City.

"It's work at your own pace. It's more comfortable and laid back," said Lugo to explain why he likes this program.

Lugo is studying for his high school credits. He is taking Personal Finance, English and "I don't remember the other one."

"I want to be a fashion designer. I want to go into fashion merchandising first and then I want to start designing." He said he wanted to go into designing because "I've always loved clothes. I think the styles

likes to travel and he has been to Arizona, Manhattan and California. Lugo said, "I used to live in Arizona." He lived in Oregon first, then moved to Arizona and "then we got bored and moved back."

After the interview Lugo said "thanks" and after asking him for what, he responded, "you got me away from work."

Shawn Teedle, 18, is going to

the Tri-City program because "I quit Canby High School."

Tweedle said that he has gone to the program for four months now and he likes it because "you can do more your own work. You can be your own person."

He is at Tri-City to get his high school credits for Literature, English and Career Exploration. Career Exploration is a class where "you evaluate what career

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you want, what schools you need and where the jobs are."

Asking for his career plans Tweedle responded, "I want to be an auto body mechanic."

"My brother went here and got his GED and I knew I could get my high school credits here, so I decided to go here." Tweedle said that when he is done with his credits he will go to Clackamas Community College to get his

own shop. I will probably go to Southern California then."

Debbie Anderson, 16, used to go to Putnam High School, but she dropped out "cause I didn't really like the way Putnam was, the classes. I decided to come here and I like it a lot better."

"Work at your own pace instead of being rushed," is what she likes about this program Anderson said.

The classes Anderson is taking are Career Exploration, Advanced English and Global Studies. She is also taking a Typing I class at Clackamas Community College.

"I took typing before in high school but didn't learn a lot, so I decided to take it again so I could learn to type better."

About going to college Anderson said, "It's kinda like high school, sitting in your desk. Here people move around a lot."

"I've been here for three terms, I'll either go back to the high school or to the college to get my high school credits and get my diploma."

Anderson expressed that she went to the Tri-City Alternative program instead of college because "When I started here I was 15 and you have to be 16 at a college."

She said she thought about going to another high school, but she isn't sure because she doesn't know anybody at another high school.

"My mom talked with my counselor and he mentioned this, so she called here and found out about it (the program)," Anderson pointed out, to explain how she got involved in the program.

All of the students seem to be happy that they have the opportunity to go to the Tri-City Alternative Program instead of a high school where they weren't able to succeed.

"I like to apprentice at a place for a while and then open up my own shop."

nowadays are really dumb, so I want to design my own."

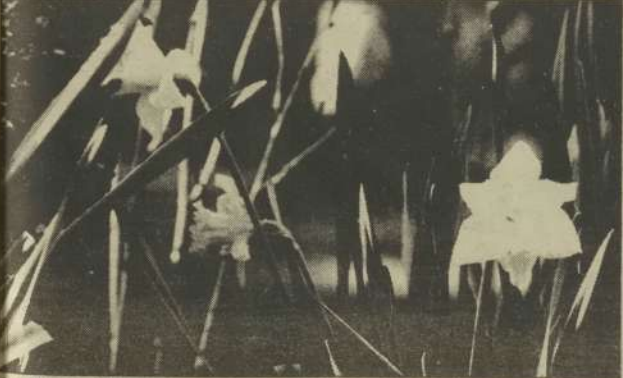
"I would like to go to Europe to see the styles. I know you guys (Europeans) are way ahead, and this (the American styles) is just a joke."

Lugo pointed out that he

two year degree in Auto Body Mechanics.

Tweedle pointed out that he became interested in cars "when I got my first car and it needed bodywork."

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