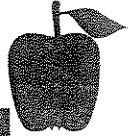


E D U C A T I O N



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Clay students "walk the walk" at Finances 101

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Life isn't always as much fun as the classic board game, but it was for more than 250 area high school students when Owens Community College hosted Finances 101 "Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk."

Walking the walk, Clay sophomore Dean Shadler left Owens with \$1,210.26 and a Dodge Viper. Clay senior Frank Gander had the winning \$100 ticket from the 50/50 raffle while attending the Bowling Green-Toledo football game. However, Clay junior Brad Bancer got himself into serious debt, despite driving a Chevrolet Malibu and earning \$21,000 annually working in a warehouse. The money was worth the equivalent of Monopoly money, but the lessons were real.

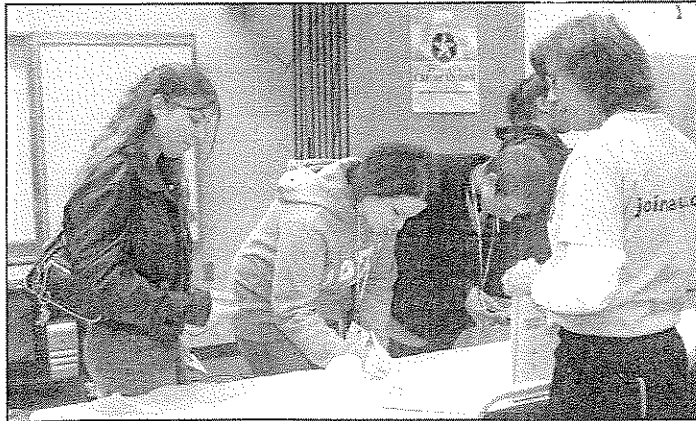
"I learned I didn't need all the stuff that I wanted to get," said Clay sophomore Elizabeth Dille.

"Just right out of the start, all of a sudden I got two kids and I was already \$300 in debt," explained Bancer. "I went to the next thing, and I got into worst debt."

Clay faculty members Bill Kepp and Deb Lofquist accompanied six Clay students, who took their chances with the Finances 101 game of life, picking cards at random, spinning wheels, rolling dice, and ultimately having to make life changing decisions based on those random results that would help determine their financial status.

Kepp teaches a three period course about success at Clay's Career Technical Center and Lofquist teaches family and consumer classes, including a new class this year which focuses on financial survival for young adults about to experience living on their own for the first time.

Even though it was all pretend, for many of the students, it became an important endeavor for the hour or so it took to walk through the game. Cheers were often over heard, and growls were also over heard among the dozens of high school students as their compan-



Elizabeth Dille rolls the dice at the Game of Life held at Owens College. Beside her are fellow Clay students Nikita Wilber and Brad Bancer. At far right is Paula Saunders, President of Northwest Ohio Credit Unions. (Press photo by Ken Grosjean)

ions drew "Get out of Jail Free" cards or won the state lottery. Some of the more real end results, however, such as how many children to have, what occupation to take, and how to spend money, were more real.

"Owens Community College is excited to host an event dedicated to educating area students about important issues related to personal finance," said Jennifer Irelan, Owens assistant director of enrollment services. Nine other schools sent students through the journey, and some, such as Bowling Green, had over 20 students "walking the walk."

"Throughout the day, high school students were able to learn about life's many lessons about finance and take advantage of the expertise and advice being offered by Northwest Ohio community organizations. The goal is to provide each student with the opportunity to gain practical knowledge about how to exercise fiscal responsibility throughout their lives."

Here is how it worked. Once entering

the college's audio/visual classroom center, each high school student was dealt a dose of reality by first being randomly issued an occupation and a monthly income. A game of chance then followed as each participant spun a wheel to determine his or her number of children.

The high school students then proceeded around the room, stopping at various tables in which they encountered different scenarios that may occur in real life. The program takes them from payday through expenses like taxes, car payments, insurance, groceries and even unexpected costs like the loss or care of a loved one.

Officials from credit unions who sponsored the event say their goal was so to help students learn basic skills such as how to write checks and use of a credit card.

Winning the raffle at the BGSU-UT football game was only part of Gander's experience. Working in the field of sports management, he drove a four door automobile, had two kids, and

bought a house, adding up to a positive experience he attributed to "good luck."

Those who were successful with their rendezvous with life were rewarded by being able to purchase luxury, although pretentious, assets. The real rewards came afterwards as each student compared his experience with his classmates. Shadler earned his living as a financial planning assistant, had no children, and good credit. Therefore, things turned his way.

"I paid a lot of money out. If I didn't get the car (Dodge Viper) I got, I would have had a lot more," Shadler explained. "Come on now, it was there, I had to get it. I could have spent like \$200 or \$1,300, but I had good credit so that was a positive thing that helped me out."

Like Shadler, sophomore Heidi Hintz was another Clay student who, when rolling the Las Vegas style dice that determined how many children the student would have, it came up blank. That meant not only having no children, and it meant huge savings.

Hintz ended the journey with \$600, calling it an "average" experience that included owning a used car and living in a two room apartment, but also that "it was a lot of fun."

Dille's experience was similar to Hintz's, only she called her voyage through Finances 101 a result of "in-between luck" - meaning, a little good, a little bad. She was in debt for a while, but managed without a loan to recover, despite having two children. She worked as an emergency medical technician, which may have helped, and drove a Chevy.

For senior Nikita Wilber, things went downhill quick, in a way similar to Bancer's experience. "I ran into a lot of problems. I went bankrupt and was short \$700 at the end. It was all bad luck and I didn't get very much good luck throughout it," Wilber said.

Wilber's employment, at the draw of a card, was as a bus driver. She had three children, a two bedroom apartment, and drove a used car.