

Monday Bulletin on

Services to Youth

To Coordinate ... To Enhance ... To Serve ... Through Communication

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MCTI - The Opportunity School

By Patty Miller-Kramer



A separate entity from the traditional community college or technical school, Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) has provided training for adults with disabilities in Michigan since 1944. MCTI offers a unique blend of caring support services and state-of-the-art training for business and industry today. MCTI operates under the auspices of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

The campus, located on the shores of Pine Lake in southwestern Barry County, is fully

accessible. For eligible adults who have a physical or mental disability, tuition and room and board in the dormitory are free. A career assessment service is available to help students explore career options. A full spectrum of health, psychological, and social work services is also provided. All classrooms, dormitory rooms, cafeteria, library and leisure services are located in one building for easy accessibility out of the weather. At a reasonable cost, a two- and three-bedroom housing complex and daycare center are available adjacent to campus for students with families.

Depending on aptitudes, abilities and interests students may choose to enroll in one of several technical training programs: Automotive Technology, Cabinetmaking/Millwork, Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), Culinary Arts, Custodial, Customer Service, Electronics, Graphic Communications, Grounds Maintenance/Landscaping, Machine Technology, Office Automation, and Retail Marketing.

Each training area has an active Business Advisory Committee comprised of employers in that field. Their participation assures students that the curriculum and equipment meet business and industry standards. MCTI is accredited by the North Central Association—Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA-CASI) and by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The schools training programs are approved by the U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs.

You can find out more information about Michigan Career and Technical Institute at www.michigan.gov/mcti.



Karen Pohja - MCTI's New Director of Career and Technical Education

By Patty Miller-Kramer



**Karen Pohja—MCTI
Director of Career
and Technical
Education**

Karen Pohja started with Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) on July 28th, 2008 as the Director of Career and Technical Education. Karen has a rich background in business, education, and government. For the past 8 years she was employed with the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education, as an Educational Consultant. During that time, she was responsible for the development and alignment of standards/curriculum, instruction and assessment for the Business, Management, Marketing and Technology Career Pathway (including Hospitality and Tourism). There are 1,200 programs and 89,000 students in this career pathway statewide. She also provided professional development and technical assistance to administrators and 1,200 teachers.

Ms. Pohja said "I have really enjoyed getting to know the staff and students at MCTI. I look forward to learning about the current vocational training and opportunities that will come up for new programming."

"Karen has been a great addition to the MCTI team. She has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position," said Dennis Hart, Director of MCTI.

Karen has also worked for Battle Creek Public Schools, Calhoun Area Technical Center (Marketing Instructor) and Spartan Stores (Management). She has a Bachelor degree from Western Michigan University (WMU), a Masters from Nazareth College, a Total Quality Management Certification (Ferris University), and is currently enrolled in WMU's Educational Leadership PhD program.

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the staff here is
amazing. Staff can
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MCTI Student Testimony

By Desmond Meadows

My name is Desmond Meadows and I am from Detroit Michigan. The reason I wanted to come to MCTI ... well at the time it wasn't my choice. It was my mom's choice for me to come here, but I like it now. I am currently learning (OA) Office Automation trade where I am learning to maintain computers and other types of equipment. The support of the staff here is amazing. Staff can help you in any weak learning areas within the school or training.

For fun I play basketball and pool. Those things I like to do personally. There are a lot of things to do here.

My career goal is to graduate and get a job as an IT TECH.

Since coming to school I have met a lot of people, many who are my friends. The key to making new friends here is to be an easygoing person.

I used to take the train to get home (which was a fun experience by the way). But, now I have purchased my own car, from working at MCTI.

I'm part of the MCTI student government, called Hall Senate. What I do is, help maintain the dormitory floor. I'm the judge for my hall, handling the write-ups that occur.

I hope I've been helpful to you all and thank you for reading.



**Desmund
Meadows -
MCTI Student**

MCTI Student Testimony

By Tavia

Written by Tavia, Customer Service Student at Michigan Career and Technical Institute November 13, 2008

I'm a current student at MCTI. I am from Charlevoix, Michigan. My MRS counselor referred me to MCTI. My career goal at MCTI is to graduate from Customer Service Program next term (February 2009).

I have attended several MCTI programs. I came here in June of 2007 for CAS for assessment. CAS referred me to the Reading Clinic. At the Reading Clinic I learned how to break words down and learned the different sounds of letters. It has helped me in an everyday living. I also attended Step Up to better my math skills. Now, I am in the Customer Service program. Some skills I learned in Customer Service are problem solving, telephone skills, stress management, and computer literacy.

The support at MCTI is very helpful. They help me with my accommodations. I am now using a Franklin spelling dictionary. The staff is willing to help me at anytime.

In my off time I enjoy going to do leisure activities. I play tennis, volleyball and pool. I also enjoy watching the basketball team. I own my own car so I go off campus for shopping and movies.

I also have several commitments outside of classroom. I'm involved in student council and I am a dorm driver. I also have a job off campus. I work about 30 hours a week with both jobs.

I have many goals that I want to accomplish. I work really hard to achieve my goals. I understand how to balance my schedule. I advocate well for myself. I don't let people tell me what I can't do. I figure out how to overcome the obstacles. I am look forward to a great job and great future.

-Tavia



Tavia -
MCTI Student

MCTI Student Testimony

By Phoebe Olivia VanBuren



Phoebe VanBuren -
MCTI Student

My name is Phoebe Olivia VanBuren. I grew up in Flint, Michigan with my parents and older brother. I lived there until I was 15 and then moved to Big Rapids, Michigan and have been living there for about 6 to 7 years now. I went from foster care, which was my first home I had when I went up there to Transition Apartment to living on my own. I have been living on my own now for 3 ½ years going on 4 years.

My MRS worker introduced me to MCTI 5 years ago and I was undecided then about whether to go there or not even though I loved the place when I first saw it. I was undecided and confused then and I didn't know. Then years went by and I finally said OK it's time for me to get my life straightened out. I need to get my high school diploma and get into a field that I love to do and also get a job that I love, which would be in my field. I also needed to meet some new people.

So I went to MCTI to get in a trade (custodial) that I love so I could get a job as a custodian and mainly get my high school diploma, which I finally got!!!! Yeah!!!! Getting my high school diploma was interesting and a long time coming. I am proud that I have it.

I love my career of becoming a custodian. Actually it's genetic, my dad and his side of the family are janitors and then came me, who loves to clean and organize. It's fun and relaxing. I enjoy it and I have passion for custodial work. Thanks to my MRS worker, the program manager and instructors, I have learned what I have learned. They did such a great job.

At MCTI I didn't do a lot of fun stuff because I was so busy. I did have fun sometimes – I went to the movies, shopping outings and to the haunted house with my boyfriend. There are a lot of things to do at MCTI.

MCTI has helped me a lot. If it wasn't for MCTI, I wouldn't have my high school diploma. MCTI encourages me about everything. MCTI has a great staff and support system. If you need someone, they are there for you. The MCTI staff is there for me a lot. I love the support here.

When I am ready to go home after both terms my parents will come from Flint to pick me up. I don't go home during the term because I have no way of getting there. Having my parents come to get me is a great thing. It's nice. I enjoy MCTI and I have accomplished what I needed to accomplish.

Making a Referral to MCTI

Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) accepts student referrals throughout the year. Referrals are reviewed for acceptance and scheduled for enrollment. MCTI has four terms each school year: September, November/December, February, and May. MCTI wants success for each and every student and has established a review process to support a successful experience.

Measures for success at MCTI:

- ◆ Student shows an interest in a vocational training program at MCTI.
- ◆ Student has the ability to manage their daily living skills and medications independently.
- ◆ Student need to be 18 years of age (not at time of referral but upon enrollment).
- ◆ Possess a FS-IQ of 75.

Referring a transition student through Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS):

- ◆ MRS staff usually become involved at some point during the Senior Year in High School.
- ◆ MRS meets with the student to determine eligibility for services.
- ◆ MRS works with the student to determine if a referral to MCTI is appropriate.
- ◆ Referrals for High School students are usually sent to MCTI starting in January of the senior year.
- ◆ MRS Counselors gather information to send a referral packet for review to MCTI.

In the referral packet:

- ◆ Updated academic or aptitude testing.
- ◆ Psychological evaluation that looks to identify disability stability, potential barriers and student strengths, as well as a current diagnosis.
- ◆ General Medical Evaluation.
- ◆ TB test within the last year.
- ◆ MRS Service Authorization.

MRS has a specific form that is used for the General Medical Evaluation. If there are functional limitations, MRS or MCTI may request a Physical Capacities Assessment to outline the specifics of those limitations.

Supportive Services available to students attending MCTI vocational training:

- ◆ High School Diploma/GED.
- ◆ Pre-vocational programming to upgrade basic math and reading skills.
- ◆ Medical and counseling services.
- ◆ Leisure activities.
- ◆ Job search training and placement services.

Referrals are reviewed in the order in which they are received and turn around time is about one month. MCTI notifies the MRS Home Counselor of acceptance or denial. If accepted, notification of a projected enrollment date is sent to the Home Counselor. MCTI strives to be as accurate as possible when determining projected enrollment dates, but these dates can change due to capacity at MCTI. Some programs have a waiting list, so it's possible for someone to apply to Culinary Arts and have to wait two terms (20 weeks) before enrolling. Formalized invitation letters to the prospective student are sent out five to six weeks prior to the enrollment date at MCTI.

For questions or additional admissions information, please contact Jennifer Zuniga, MCTI Admissions Counselor at 269-664-9223, TTY (269)664-9294.

Save the Dates

Michigan Career and Technical Education Conference
MI Department of Education/Career & Technical Education

Mapping to College and Careers

February 8–10, 2009

Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

www.ucecpd.ferris.edu

1-800-562-9130

Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA)
Annual Spring Conference

“Outcomes Express”

March 18–19, 2009

Bavarian Inn, Frankenmuth

www.michigantsa.com

Health Ed

52 Practical Strategies for Asperger’s Syndrome

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