

2014 KEYSPOt Highlights

Nelson Playground

By Wayne Morse

2014 was the best year I ever experienced at Nelson KEYSPOt. Every month from January to December, I was reminded why I do what needs to be done here. By January 2014, my high school users had accessed the lab to:

- register for P.S.A.T. and S.A.T. testing,
- make virtual college and university visits from their computers,
- schedule physical campus visits,
- complete umpteen pages of homework, book reports, special projects, and other paper works, and
- “give birth to” their dreaded senior projects.

I kept special lab hours for one high-school student who would not have graduated without the [KEYSPOT](#) being available in his neighborhood. This super bright lad completed his biology and math course requirements needed to graduate! He would sit six hours at a time, working on restoring his credits online, and completed his activities in five days of solid work. Not only that, he developed greater self-confidence, and during the summer he worked as a youth counselor at our rec center while holding down a second job. He also helped me with the KEYSPOt during summer camp and continues to volunteer.

I am more than happy to report that six young adults from our KEYSPOt and rec center became college freshmen this past September 2014. All but one were regular users of the computer lab during their senior year. During that time they were very busy preparing for their next major step in life, adulthood. We at the Nelson KEYSPOt and rec center are proud to say that they are all still in college. Some recently applied to continue student financial aid (using the KEYSPOt computers, of course). They also used the lab for entertainment during their winter break.

A special and exceptional KEYSPOt user is another kid I now call a friend. Although I call him a kid, he is actually 22 years old! He played on organized sport teams at Nelson since he was a little tyke of 9. He graduated high school 4 years ago, and while there he fathered a child. A single parent from the time his child was two weeks old, he depended on his street wit and very little family help to support him and his son. He joined into his family’s (illegal) street business but knew it was not the life he wanted. When they visited the lab, his son would sit at a computer and watch Sponge Bob cartoons, soon becoming the darling of the lab. I would watch him while his dad played a quick game of pick-up basketball. This was his down time from fathering his son all day. You see, none of his younger siblings wanted the responsibility of watching their nephew so dad could have a time out. Because of this young man’s close relationship with the rec and KEYSPOt, we were able to persuade him that earning a college degree was possible for him. He took the bait and is now “hooked” on higher education! His goal is a better life for his son. He could be the first person to graduate college in his family. He now knows that what he started with a few strokes on a KEYSPOt computer is changing his family life forever.

I have another “kid” who became a young adult before my eyes. This young fellow always played on our recreation league basketball teams. He has younger siblings who also are ball players. He had to witness his father, a single parent, physically deteriorate from illnesses due to excessive use of street drugs. With an aching heart, I watched this kid drag himself into the lab to do his homework. Many times I had to hide my pain which was caused from listening to his heart-felt stories, because



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he would keep them to himself if I expressed sympathy. But I needed this kid. Working with people like him is the reason I work in PPR. We were able to “sell” him that education could be his future rainbow. After his father passed, I noticed his absence from the KEYSLOT. He continued his basketball, but education took a back seat. His grades had been on a downward spiral since his sophomore year. College was far from his mind. Thank goodness he had access to our staff, both Nelson and KEYSLOT, because we mentored him, making sure that every “t” was crossed and every “i” dotted, to make him a college freshmen. All happened here at Nelson KEYSLOT: P.S.A.T., S.A.T., university entrance applications, Federal student aid online forms, private scholarship searches and online applications.... And he got in and was able to be successful! Now we are helping him to decide whether or not to transfer to an out-of-state junior college to be near his younger siblings.

KEYSPOTS and its employees WORK!



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