

## COMMUNITY

# Edgewood center supports youth program

The U.S. Edgewood Chemical Biological Center will continue its tradition of supporting community outreach this winter as the Center's Advanced Design Manufacturing Division helps provide real-life job skills and experience to participants in the Maryland Freestate Challenge Academy at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

The Maryland Freestate Challenge Academy, a tuition-free program that aims to provide 16- through 18-year-old at-risk teens with skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens, was created in 1993 as part of the National Guard Youth Challenge Program. As one of the original 10 states to embrace Challenge, Maryland formed the Freestate Challenge Academy through a cooperative agreement between the Maryland National Guard and the National Guard Bureau.

To graduate from the program, cadets must successfully complete each of academy's eight core components. As a part of the job skills component, the ADM Division will host two class sessions this year that will help cadets develop technical and functional job skills they



ECBC Engineering Acting Associate Director Ron Pojunas, right, presents certificates to cadets from the Maryland Freestate Challenge Academy, a tuition-free program that aims to provide 16- through 18-year-old at-risk teens with skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens. ECBC has partnered with the Maryland academy for the past eight years.

can apply in a workplace setting, following their graduation from the program.

"These are kids who have had a tough time in life and for one reason or another have been kicked out of school," Mark Schlein, chief of the ADM Division, said in a press release. "As a last resort, they can apply to a program like this. Many apply, but only a few are

selected."

Academy organizers first expressed an interest in partnering with ECBC in 2002. ECBC Engineering Associate Director Bill Klein was so impressed during a visit to the academy that in December of that year, the first four cadets started working in the ADM Division.

"During a visit to the academy,

I met several cadets and was immediately impressed by the caliber of the program and the youth," said Klein, who expanded ECBC's participation to include cadets in the Engineering Test Division based on the success of the first session.

The academy's initial program consists of a 22-week residential phase during which cadets learn self-discipline, leadership and responsibility. Participants live and work in a controlled military environment, which encourages teamwork and personal growth. A 12-month post-residential phase consists of helping enroll students in continued education, technical school programs or entry-level employment.

The cadets' days are filled with classroom work and physical education. They learn to depend on each other and to work together as a cohesive unit. Things like television are only available on occasion as an award for outstanding accomplishments and behavior.

As a means to provide the cadets with hands-on work experience, Schlein implemented a learning experience for the youth that would allow them to design a product showcasing their experience. They created

the product using tools they learn to use in ADM, such as computer-aided design and rapid prototyping.

"During the second half of the semester, the cadets are placed in different working sites on post. Business workers or congressional workers take on cadets and have them work part-time in their offices, coming in two days a week for three weeks. This gives the youth the opportunity to learn first-hand from professionals and mentors," Schlein said.

Over the years, ECBC's ADM and Test divisions have become two of the most coveted placements offered through the academy's job skills core component and assignments the cadets hope to get, according to Klein.

"We've built up a quality program here. The ADM and Test division workers really put some thought and preparation into how they can make the cadets' experience valuable, educational and enjoyable," he said. "We've really established a long-term relationship with the academy and I see that relationship continuing well into the future."



The 2011 Derby After dArc Celebrity Chef and Auction Planning Committee set the stage for The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region's seventh annual event scheduled for March 26, at Maryland Golf and Country Clubs in Bel Air. Event proceeds benefit people with developmental disabilities. Pictured from left: Julie Barthel, Melita Maxwell, Sandie Choucair, Rhoula Monios, Jen McCullough, Elaine Orbino, Carol Frontera, Jeff Herget, Scott Walker, Tim Hammond, Rosaria Wolff, Elise Lanahan, Vince Licari, Julie Epps, Garnett Parker, Jan Haddy, Anna Lambdin, Cathy Schmidt, Connie Donato, Kris Butcher and Sean Parks. Not pictured are: Teri Augustine, Dana Bauer, Mary Carol Beard, Kathy Beck, Kristy Breslin, Terry Castagnera, Anne Cerruto, Mark Dardozi, Tony DeCastro, Susan Dilworth, Patricia Donovan, Georgeanna Garceau, Scott Garceau, Meg Holahan, Hope Lookingland, Debbie May, Roxanne McNish, Angela Miller, Kathleen O'Hara, Mary Paramore, Tommie Pagotto, Anne Marie Spakowski, Detre Tarbert, Morya Wallace, Sophie Wittelsberger and Debi Williams.



PHOTO BY BOBBY PARKER

On Feb. 10, Deerfield Elementary School held its fourth annual Black History Fair. Students came to the gymnasium to hear presenters speak about their culture, their jobs and the importance of working hard and being successful in school. The Black History Fair was organized by parent liaison Shirley Warfield. Pictured, from left: Chika Nzelibe, Michael Ellzy, Michael Calhum, Karol Block, Kiafa Knox, Suhasini Bhamaee, Bertha Copeland and Leon Grimes. Not pictured are Bobby Parker, Troy Thompson, Robert Blackwell, Kelvin Reid, Lillie Galloway, Jennifer Carroll and Lillian Harris.

## Eric Eckstein honored for work with Scouting

Eric Thomas Eckstein Sr. received the Silver Beaver Award, given to those who through dedication and tireless service, give of themselves to assist in the betterment of the youth of local communities. He exemplifies all 12 of the Scout Laws and is recognized as a Scouter with integrity and honor.

He is a beacon for Scouting professionalism and spirit and takes great pride in living the Scout Oath and Law. He has devoted his time, talent and resources to work with the Boy Scouts. He stepped in to be Roundtable Commissioner so that leaders could be

trained and kept current.

He has energized the District Advancement Committee by recruiting more members, facilitating work with the Scouts and upholding a high standard for Eagle. His work is appreciated throughout his district. He has been a model and mentor for the Scouts in his Troop as well as the Scouts in his district. He has worked with the Order of the Arrow and inspired his Scouts to be active in it.

Eckstein is active in his church and a valued trustee for his local union's medical fund.

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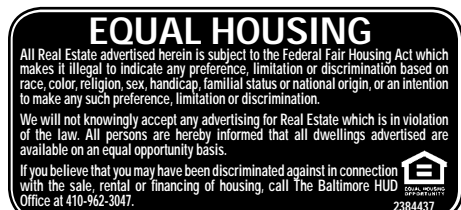
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