



Early College environment works for Vestaburg siblings

Tyler and Kailee McGarvey excel in their education, while simultaneously earning high school and college credits



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– Tyler McGarvey

T Tyler and Kailee McGarvey, of Vestaburg, didn’t feel like they fit in at their home high school, so they applied to attend Early College at Montcalm Community College.

Tyler, 20, was the first person in his family to attend college.

“I was bored in my high school classes and was looking for something more challenging,” Tyler said. “Plus, Early College set me ahead of the game and saved me a ton of money.”

Early College students leave their home high schools to attend MCC starting their junior year. During this three-year program, they earn a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit or an associate degree, tuition-free, as part of their high school learning experience.

“My experience in the Early College program was great in every aspect imaginable,” Tyler said.

Both Tyler and Kailee agree the Early College program offers a different

atmosphere than the typical high school experience.

“I like going to a class knowing that everyone is there because they want to learn, not because they have to learn,” Kailee said.

“I feel like Early College gave me the challenge I was looking for, but it was not too challenging to where completing the work was nearly impossible,” Tyler added.

While taking classes at MCC, Tyler worked at Discount Tire and Battery in Edmore. He also played varsity baseball at his home high school, Vestaburg High School, during his junior and senior years in the Early College program, and he helped coach the team during his last year in the program.

Tyler earned an Associate of Business Administration/Management from MCC in 2016. That fall, he enrolled at Ferris State University (FSU) and is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in heavy equipment service engineering technology.

continued on page 14



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– Kailee McGarvey



at Montcalm Community College

In May 2017, he started working as a heavy equipment technician at AIS Construction Equipment in Lansing.

“My job entails repairing, servicing, inspecting and operating many different types, brands and models of equipment,” Tyler said. “One day I could be disassembling an engine and the next I could be rebuilding hydraulic cylinders on an excavator. I love how I never know what I am going to be working on next.

“My experience in the Early College program helps me at work because I have a much better understanding of the management system at AIS,” he added. “Because I completed an associate degree in business management at MCC, I have a better understanding of how the business is managed and run, which makes everything go more smoothly for myself and my managers.”

Shannon Tripp became the director of Early College when the program launched in 2013. She said the program has experienced consistent growth each year, with siblings commonly entering the program.

“Many siblings end up in Early College,” Tripp said. “They’ve seen the amount of work that the program requires firsthand and they still want to do it because they see the many benefits.”

Kailee, 17, joined the program in fall 2016 because Tyler’s experience piqued her interest.

“My brother was one of the first Early College students and it really interested me to see what he went through,” she said. “Like him, I was also not really into the whole ‘high school vibe.’”

Kailee is pursuing an associate degree in business administration/management.

“At first, I was not interested in pursuing this degree,” she said. “I originally wanted to go for a degree in psychology, but I was not completely sure that was what I wanted to do. I then decided that with a management degree, I could go almost anywhere.

“After I graduate from the Early College program, I would like to pursue a business degree at FSU or Central Michigan University,” she added. “I would love to play softball in college as well.”

Kailee still plays softball for her home high school, Vestaburg High School, in the spring, and she also plays for the MBS Jets, a youth fast pitch softball and baseball league in Bay City, in the summer. She also works at Farmer in the Dell, an ice cream shop in Vestaburg.

MCC has nearly 100 Early College students enrolled in classes this fall semester. Thirty-four total students graduated from the program in 2015 and 2016.

Early College accepts up to 45 students per year, and students must apply for admission to the program during their sophomore year of high school the spring prior to enrolling. Each participating school is allotted seats based on its total school headcount. Participating schools include Belding, Carson City-Crystal, Central Montcalm, Greenville, Ionia, Lakeview, Montabella, Tri County and Vestaburg.

Tripp visits all participating high schools each spring and offers multiple informational meetings so students and their families can learn more about the program. Applications are available at the informational meetings, in guidance counselor offices at participating high schools and online at www.montcalm.edu/earlycollege, though attending an informational meeting is highly recommended.

For more information:

Visit www.montcalm.edu/earlycollege

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Call (616) 225-5706



Tyler McGarvey started Early College at Montcalm Community College in 2014, and was a member of the first graduating class.

