This year, rising seniors Jessica Dye and Michael Harris represented WVU Upward Bound at West Virginia State University’s College Summit. Dye and Harris learned about various aspects of the freshman year of college.

According to Harris, the most memorable bonding experiences occurred during the program’s Rap Sessions, in which each student spoke about his or her greatest accomplishment and greatest obstacle.

Dye and Harris each had a one-hour session with a college counselor. The students discussed preferred majors. The counselor shared the colleges that would be best suited for their interests.

Advice on writing a personal statement was incredibly helpful, Harris said. The students were divided into writing teams, where each student received help from their peers and writing coach.

“I made a lot of friends and felt better prepared for college,” Harris said. *By Jessica Dye*

On July 8, the WVU Upward Bound group visited the High Ropes Course, located at the WVU Research Forest. The Alpine Tower, Giant Swing and Plutonium Puzzle were just a few of the challenges faced by 14 students and four advisors.

After a complete safety instruction on how to use the harnesses, students attempted to climb the Alpine Tower - a 30-feet rope ladder.

The Giant Swing is a metal cord suspended 10 feet in the air. Once a student is clipped into the contraption, it can be raised to more than 25 feet. Suddenly, when the clip is released, the brave volunteer swings back and forth freely on a bungee cord.

As part of the Plutonium Puzzle, students were challenged to carry a bucket of water (without spilling a drop) across a set of stationary logs. The maze required critical problem solving and teamwork. *By Joya DeWitt*

The WVU Challenge Course tested teamwork, leadership and communication skills for UB students. Fourteen students completed obstacles on the WVU high ropes course, including the Giant Swing.

On July 1, UB students put on rubber boots, strapped on chest waders, and jumped into Decker’s Creek.

The goal of the volunteer work was to help clean the acidic creek, and make it habitable for wildlife.

Four students worked to clear foliage around the creek. Other students assisted marine biologists, who were building a fixed, steel-side bed.

This construction will allow the water to run between varieties of rocks, promoting better purification. *By Cody Howdyshell*
On July 21, tired yet eager Upward Bound students climbed into two passenger vans, awaiting the adventure ahead of them.

Before arriving at Dolly Sods, the students stopped at Blackwater Falls, witnessing the beautifully cascading water.

“It seemed as if the ride would never end or as if we would never arrive,” one student commented.

At Dolly Sods, students walked to a place called Bear Rocks.

“The view from the rocks was like looking upon mountain ranges that never ended,” Kristi Knotts said.

Students also had solo reflection for 45 minutes - a time designated for inspirational thought.

The journey ended at Seneca Rocks. By Erica Ashbury

All program participants traveled to Davis and Elkins College to participate in the annual UB Olympics, meeting fellow UB’ers from across the state.

In checkers, Kimberly Barr played against a Potomac State student.

In basketball, the WVU team - Erica Asbury, Cody Howdyshell, Jessica Helmenstein, KoAnna Morris, Paul Stover, Tamaryn Ashcraft, Timmy Dillsworth, Tommy Dillsworth and Jessica Dye - made a stand against Davis and Elkins. The final score was 8-24.

The WVU volleyball team - Cody Howdyshell, Timmy Gamble, Paul Stover, Erica Asbury, Kristi Knotts, and KoAnna Morris - finished 18-25. By Jessica Helmenstein

Have you ever melted worms before?

After this summer, Upward Bound students can answer “yes” to that question.

Led by instructor Tiff Fess, students worked with night crawlers as part of a cellular respiration experiment. Students used potassium hydroxide pills, dye, test tubes and a glass rod as part of the test. The worms were then added to a compost bin to show how they work to decompose other objects. By Tamaryn Ashcraft
“What is the hardest transition to make from high school to college?”
- Michael Harris, Grafton High School

Ashley: There are many differences between high school and college. In high school, for example, you live with your parents. In college, you are on your own. For many, the biggest transition is just that. It is difficult to move away from your family and friends.

However, in some ways Upward Bound helps you out by taking you away from your family, and allows you to connect with people you wouldn’t normally hang out with.

But don’t worry - college is not all bad! One of the great things about college is that you are starting a new chapter in your life. In this new chapter, you kind of get to create a new you. You may have different friends and/or try new things.

“How do I know what major to choose?”
- Kimberly Barr, Clay-Battelle High School

Ashley: This is a question many struggle with. Even college students have trouble choosing what they want to do with their life. The first piece of advice I have for you is remember it is your life and only you can choose. Don’t let others tell you what to major in.

Second, when considering what your major should be, you should try different things and ask yourself, “Can I picture myself doing this for the rest of my life?”

Other than that, my last word is go with your gut.

“How do I choose what college to attend?”
- Jessica Helmenstein, Grafton High School

Ashley: This decision may be one of the most important in your life.

First, you want to make sure the college you are looking at has the major you chose.

Secondly, when choosing a college, always consider the location of the school.

Another thing to consider is how you will pay for it. Usually in-state schools are cheaper than out of state, private colleges are more expensive than public, and bigger colleges don’t always cost more.

Other things to consider: class size, dorms, campus size, and if it is a party school or not.

Once you’ve narrowed it down to about three schools, make sure to tour them and take notes. Ask lots of questions, too. Remember this school will be your home for four or more years.
SUMMER PROGRAM BRIEFS

INFORMATION LITERACY
What is curiosity?
Each step of “The Big 6” answered this question. Summer program students learned how to locate reliable information sources and how to use advanced information databases.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE
Courses in two languages - French and Spanish - were offered. Students worked throughout the summer on expanding vocabulary.
“It was so fun!” said Timmy Gamble. “And in the long run, we need to learn language for any jobs we may go into.”

“THE PRODUCERS”
Students attended a matinee performance. The Broadway musical entered taboo realms, but managed to entertain young and old alike.
“It took laughter to a new level,” KoAnna Morris said.

UNBIND YOUR MIND
As part of the “Unbind Your Mind” activities, students shared life stories. Instructor Melissa Chesanko enjoyed working with the students.
“They taught me a lot while at the same time having fun,” Chesanko said.

WVU ORGANIC FARM
The day at the WVU Organic Farm was full of fun, laughter and hard work.
Jim Kotson provided a brief explanation of an organic farm. He then took students to the rotation plots.
The UB students then split into two groups, one that picked green beans and one that dug potatoes.

PROFILES

FRAN BENNETT
Fran Bennett has been with Upward Bound since its start at WVU.
Bennett says she first wanted to work with teens because she believes in the potential of everyone.
In addition, Trio and other programs like Upward Bound provide a great vehicle to help our students to tap into their abilities, Bennett said.
By working with Upward Bound, Bennett says she feels like she can play a role in helping students realize their goals and dreams. By KoAnna Morris

HEATHER SUMMERS
In March 2008, Heather Summers joined Upward Bound.
“It was a great opportunity to work with kids that go to the same school I graduated from,” Summers said.
As for personal advice, Summers encouraged students to continue onward to college because “job opportunities are more plentiful.” By Tamaryn Ashcraft

LAUREL SPIGLER
Like Fran Bennett, Laurel Spigler assists with running Gaskins House and has been with Upward Bound since the start.
“Laurel is a great person to talk to and she gives really good advice, and people can really learn a lot from her,” Kimmie Barr said. By Jessica Dye

WE WOULD LIKE TO ISSUE A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR ASSISTING WITH THE SUMMER PROGRAM: KATIE MEHLE, DAN MILLER, NINA SPADARO, KATIE UTTERBACK, ADVENTURE WEST VIRGINIA, FRIENDS OF DECKERS CREEK, AND THE WVU CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Look around,
Everyone is sitting.
Together.

Different fingerprints,
Riddle everything, overlapping,
Together.

Eager, concentrated, sad, happy faces look at me,
Right now,
Together.

Our pasts are so different,
But we accept it,
Together.

Though we’re all close,
Each and every one of us is clutching secrets to their hearts,
Once again, together.

And it’s okay.
Cause it’s not your past that makes you who you are,
It’s something that we can realize only on our own.

But it helps to be...
Together.

A poem by Upward Bound student, Jessica Helmenstein. The work was read as part of the inaugural Upward Bound banquet.
Upward Bound is a federally-funded grant program. Funded by the Title IV TRIO grant from the US Department of Education, the project services are free to eligible students. Upward Bound is an Equal Opportunity in Education project, and therefore, does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race or disability. The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume it is endorsed by the Federal Government.