



# News Release

Missouri Western State College • 4525 Downs Drive • St. Joseph, MO 64507 • (816) 271-5649

**Contact:** Kristy Hill

**Phone:** (816)-271-5649

**Title:** Public Relations/Marketing Director

**Email:** [hillk@mwsc.edu](mailto:hillk@mwsc.edu)

**3 pages**

## **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ENGAGE IN SUMMER RESEARCH AT WESTERN**

**St. Joseph, Mo.** —June 27, 2003— When Darcie Elder of Gallatin, Mo. starts college this fall at Missouri Western State College, she will see a lot of familiar faces and places. She and 14 other area high school students are partnering with Western students and faculty members this summer to conduct research or participate in applied learning projects at the college as part of the second annual Western Summer Research Institute (SRI). The Institute began May 28 and will run through July 18.

“It (the Institute) has gotten me used to the college. I have met most of the biology and chemistry professors,” said Darcie, a 2003 graduate of Harrison County R-IV High School of Gilman City, Mo. “It’s been interesting and fun, and it will help me decide if I want to pursue research or not.”

The seven teams, two more than last year, are conducting research in a number of areas, including biology, chemistry, physical education, mathematics and nursing. Projects include investigating the effects of NAFTA on displaced workers, educating high school females about preventable birth defects, generating soybean-based biodiesel fuels using solid phase catalysts, examining methods of reducing test anxiety, and the proof or disproof of a variety of mathematical patterns and puzzles.

-more-

### **SRI, page 2 of 3**

Darcie's team, which also includes Mary Kariker of Union Star R-II High School and Western students Jenny Lamp and Christi Saverino, are studying the interaction of anti-tumor drugs with DNA and their effects on gene expression. (Other students participating in SRI are listed at the end of the article).

The high school students will receive research credit on their college transcripts, and the college students also receive research credits as well as a \$1,000 stipend.

SRI is valuable to all the participants, according to Dr. Ben Caldwell, associate professor of chemistry and Institute director. Everyone, including faculty, benefits from the opportunity to conduct long-term, meaningful research. In addition, those newly graduated high school seniors, like Darcie, have a chance to meet faculty and students before they start college in the fall.

The Institute will conclude with a symposium July 18. Each research team will present their projects' findings in an oral presentation, followed by a reception and poster session. The symposium is open to faculty, staff, students, family members of all participants and the community.

SRI receives financial support through external grants from the March of Dimes, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and the Louis Stokes Heartland Alliance for Minority Participation from the University of Missouri.

The following is a list of the Summer Research Teams:

#### **Educating Female High School Students about Preventable Birth Defects**

Dr. Evelyn Brooks, Nursing  
Vera Onkoba of St. Joseph – Western student  
Elizabeth Woolery - Benton HS, St. Joseph

-more-

**SRI, page 3 of 3**

**The Interaction of Anti-Tumor Drugs with DNA and Their Effects on Gene Expression**

Dr. Ben Caldwell, Chemistry

Christi Saverino of St. Joseph – Western student

Jenny Lamp of Tina, Mo. – Western student

Darcie Elder - Harrison County R-IV, Gilman City, Mo.

Mary Kariker - Union Star, Mo.

**The Effects of NAFTA on Displaced Workers**

Dr. Dan Cox , Government, Social Work & Sociology

Will Kariker of Union Star, Mo. – Western student

Tara Duckworth of St. Joseph, Bishop LeBlond

Tim Seufert of St. Joseph, Bishop LeBlond

**The Interaction of Anti-Tumor Drugs with DNA and Their Effects on Gene Expression**

Dr. Todd Eckdahl, Biology

Sara Freel of St. Joseph – Western student

Bart Phillips of Shiloh, Il. - Western student

Ben Clark - Savannah HS

Nathan Harness - Benton HS, St. Joseph

**Generating Soybean-Based Biodiesel Fuels Using Solid Phase Catalysts**

Dr. Steve Lorimor, Chemistry

Dan Pfister of Falls City, Neb. – Western student

Cody Conner - St. Joseph Christian

Tom Crowley - Savannah HS

**The Proof or Disproof of a Variety of Mathematical Patterns and Puzzles**

Dr. Jeff Poet, Computer Science/Mathematics/ Physics

Victor Onkoba of St. Joseph – Western student

Dustin Daffron, Benton HS, St. Joseph

Heather Goforth -Savannah HS

Chris Thomas - Central HS, St. Joseph

**Examining Methods of Reducing Test Anxiety**

Dr. Brent Walker, Health/Physical Education/Recreation

Jill Haynes of St. Joseph – Western student

Jamie Cunningham, Mid-Buchanan R-V, Faucett, Mo.

Tara Gnuschke, Cosby, Mo, - Savannah HS

Michael Venenga, Agency, Mo.- Mid-Buchanan R-V

—end—

