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WHS girls earn national recognition for their tech knowledge

Posted: Thursday, May 20th, 2010 BY: TODD GUILD

In a packed classroom at Macquiddy Elementary School on Monday a group of fifth-grade students were busy at individual workstations, each learning the essentials it takes to operate a computer and eventually to design their own web page.

For Watsonville High School freshmen Idzel Cano and Brianna Flores, who were helping with the instruction, teaching the lessons brought closure to a circle that began when they themselves learned computer basics as sixth-graders.

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The program, called "Tech Teach," is part of Watsonville TEC (short for Technología-Educación-Comunidad,) created to bring south Santa Cruz County students up to speed with information technology, where organizers say Latinos are vastly underrepresented.

When they are high school freshmen, the fifth-graders will have a chance to return to the classroom to teach.

As middle school students at Lakeview Elementary. Cano and Flores were part of an after school program called the Girl Game Company, in which they learned the basics of video game design.

For their participation in the programs, they have earned the National Center for Women and Information Technology Award for Aspirations in Computing, which honors high school girls who make strides in computer sciences. As part of the award they received a \$250 gift certificate, an Ipod Touch and a one-year pass to the Tech Museum in San Jose.

They also get a chance to tour Google's sprawling Mountain View campus, known as the Googleplex, where they will meet engineers.

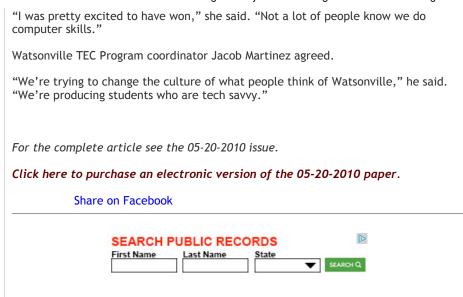
"I like it," Florez said of her teaching experience. "I really get along with the kids."

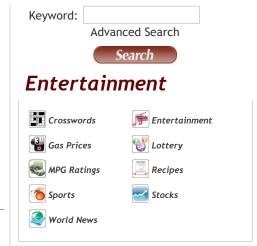
Cano said the award will help improve the image of south Santa Cruz County Schools.

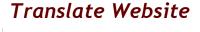
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