

CHG, WSU team up on internships through Business Links

Tri-Cities YMCA general director Jeri Strange was reluctant to let Washington State University student Brian Rector go at the end of the summer. While interning through the WSU Tri-Cities Business LINKS program, Rector created a Web site for the social service agency in Richland.

“We’re thrilled with the work Brian has done for us and for our clients,” said Strange. “It’s important for the community to recognize the value of his contribution and the efforts of WSU Tri-Cities to place highly qualified interns.”

Rector’s challenge was to develop a Web site that serves a wide audience, including businesses, parents looking for YMCA childcare or sports activities for their children, potential donors and the children the agency serves.

“I really wish we could keep him,” said YMCA’s childcare director Beckie Hildman. “We provided some raw materials, concepts and ideas, and Brian was able to create a great-looking Web site.”

While Rector is returning to WSU’s Pullman campus as a senior majoring in business, the Web site will continue to serve clients in the region. To help YMCA’s marketing director Deanna Smith and the rest of the staff maintain the new service, Rector developed a guide to editing the Web site.

“They have my pager number in case they need to track me down,” joked Rector. “Seriously, it’s been a great experience working with this agency, and I’ve learned some valuable skills in Web development that I’ll be able to use no matter what profession I choose.”

“The internship program sets a high standard on matching qualified interns with area businesses,” said LINKS internship coordinator Debbie Bone-Harris, working for WSU as a loaned employee of CH2M HILL Hanford Group. “The projects the students manage are substantive and focus primarily on information technology and business systems.”

Bone-Harris interviews all of the students and the business owners or managers before assigning students to internships. She wants to ensure that personalities, student goals and business projects match up well.

Business LINKS is part of WSU Tri-Cities’ business development service. This summer, 21 interns were placed with Tri-City businesses, including for-profit companies, non-profit organizations and municipalities.

The internships are supported by grants from the DOE Office of River Protection tank-farm contractor CH2M HILL Hanford Group. The grants pay the interns’ salaries, about \$2,500 for each undergraduate intern. Businesses that have interns assigned to them contribute a relatively small fee to cover other costs.

The new Tri-Cities YMCA Web site can be found at <http://www.tcymca.org>. ♦



WSU student Brian Rector talks with Tri-Cities YMCA general director Jeri Strange about the Web site he created for the social service agency in Richland during his summer internship.