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**Michigan Colleges Foundation and University Preparatory Academy  
Collaborate and Show Student and Environmental Outcomes**

*The Innovative Third 90 Program Pairs MCF College Faculty and Students with UPA Students to  
Conduct Hands-on Environmental Research*

Michigan Colleges Foundation (MCF) and University Preparatory Academy of Detroit (UPA) hosted a special presentation on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at UPA to showcase initial results of a new collaborative model, *The Third 90 Program*. The Third 90 utilizes teams of college and high school students under the direction of college faculty to work collectively on projects that create positive environmental change. The academic classroom is extended outdoors with extensive “hands-on” field and lab work and also across the high school and college continuum.

The morning presentation included an overview of three research projects (water, soil and wildlife) conducted on property in Monroe County along the River Raisin. Doug Ross, Founder of Detroit UPA opened the program and explained the significance of this new model to more than 100 students and guests including Bob Thompson of the Thompson Foundation, Glenda Price, former President of Marygrove College, and Jerry Jung, CEO of Michigan CAT, who provided the funding and property for this project.

Bob Thompson, in closing the presentation, said, “The real beauty of this program, outside of the extraordinary environmental work, is the opportunity for UPA students to work alongside and interact with college students and professors in such a meaningful way and the mentoring that goes on. After participating in something like this, how the students view their future is expanded – from the colleges they consider to the career possibilities they choose to pursue.” Thompson also recognized the impact and importance of the teachers who are committed to making a difference for students. The recent fall-term project teams explored environmental topics and research with field opportunities in a way that provided many opportunities for mentoring and relationship-building that fostered personal growth. This project is part of a comprehensive strategy to prepare Detroit high school students to enter and also complete college at a 90 percent rate, and so is named, *The Third 90*.

According to Dr. David Fike, Marygrove College President, MCF campuses represent collectively the third largest university in Michigan and are distinguished by a liberal arts tradition that provides highly personalized educational opportunities for students – much like the UPA experience. Michigan Colleges Foundation launched this innovative environmental conservation project with four of their 14 MCF campuses (Marygrove College, Albion College, Siena Heights University and Madonna University), Detroit UPA, and Ducks Unlimited to create a wetland in Monroe County along the River Raisin. All total, about 25 individuals were involved in the pilot including the 10 UPA students, four MCF faculty members, a UPA science teacher, five college students, and several other project managers from MCF and Michigan CAT.

The project funder working with MCF is Jerry Jung, CEO of Michigan CAT, who is a strong supporter of preserving Michigan’s environment. Jung told the students that, “... all of us are connected and need to play a role in the preservation of natural habitats so they will be sustained for future generations to enjoy. And also, that an understanding of our connectedness is important no matter what field you choose to pursue.” Jung thanked the faculty and students for their role in the research and the initiative.

UPA Sophomore Kiara Coleman had this comment about her experience with the project, *“Overall, I had an amazing time with everyone involved. I am so thankful for Ms. Miles and every professor and student that helped me during this time and I’m grateful for the wonderful opportunity. This was an amazing learning experience and it helped me with some life-changing decisions.”*

Ernest Conerly, a junior said, *“Working with Marygrove was my favorite experience because it was hands-on... being able to extract the different elements from the soil samples. This was great because I learned what nutrients the soil has and needs.”*

Tamiria Perkins, also a junior said, *“I was able to step out of my comfort zone and perform new science experience. I learned how to test soil samples with different solutions, and I was able to test soil samples in a real science lab with equipment.”*

The Third 90 project will again be offered for a second-term with a new team of students and research goals. For more information about *The Third 90 Program* or to arrange an interview with either UPA , Michigan CAT, MCF or a campus faculty leader, please contact Karen Mulligan at (248) 356-3114.

Michigan Colleges Foundation (MCF) supports 14 colleges and universities in the liberal arts tradition, leveraging the transformative power of its collective resources for Michigan’s future. Since 1949, MCF has supported student scholarships and collaborative initiatives to advance excellence at its member institutions. MCF member institutions include: Adrian College; Albion College; Alma College; Andrews University; Aquinas College; Calvin College; Hillsdale College; Hope College; Kalamazoo College; Madonna University; Marygrove College; Olivet College; Siena Heights University; and Spring Arbor University.

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