



The magic of TV comes to Amherst

Amherst Middle is the only school in the world to utilize Serious Magic

By Melanie Larsen
TheAmherstRecord.com

AMHERST — Students at Amherst Middle School are getting the opportunity to do more than just zone in front of the television set — they are getting the chance to actually make the magic of television happen with TechTV.

Amherst Middle School technology teacher Rob Zdrojewski wants his students to experience video production in a non-complicated and friendly format through the help of Serious Magic's Visual Communicator, a video production program focused on making video production more user friendly.

Each morning since the start of June, Amherst Middle students watch a live broadcast of their school's news, anchored and run by fellow students.

"We are a pioneer school," Zdrojewski said. "I think we are the only one in the world. The program is only a year and a half old."

Zdrojewski took the project on his own when he built the new television studio, replacing the old studio that was tightly crammed in a old copy room.

"It was all evenings and weekends," he said. "I think I logged over 800 hours."




As a technology teacher and event videographer, Zdrojewski wanted to bring his love of video production to his students.

"It is cross-disciplinary with English, writing, technology and public speaking," he said. "When the kids watch themselves it builds confidence. Self image is very important for middle schoolers."

Nick Ferrara, a seventh grader, has been involved in the studio since its inception.

"It is a lot easier and runs smoother than the old studio," Ferrara

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said. "It is something to do. To get involved in. I just like it."

Through Visual Communicator and the new studio, video production has become a lot easier for Ferrara and his fellow classmates.

"The entire design and the way that it is run is a lot easier," he said. "We were all falling on top of each other to get to the same button in the old studio."

With TechTV's popularity growing, Zdrojewski is offering summer course in digital video television production, as well as studio internships in the fall.

Students are already lined up at the teacher's door to sign up, Zdrojewski said.

The summer course will be offered for students in grades seven and up from July into August.

The courses are open to students from all school districts.

For more information about the summer courses, or about Amherst's TechTV, visit www.AmherstTechnologyRocks.org.

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