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From left to right: Al LeBlanc, Oscar Baronette, Don Larocque, Jim Mazerolle, Richard Schwar on behalf of Childhood Enfranchise, and Wayne Butler.

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High school classroom ... Take 2

Program preps kids for media careers

BY JENNY JELEN

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There is a common perception of what a classroom looks like.

A big dusty blackboard, rows of desks and neutral coloured walls all come to mind. Students in the Information and Communications Technology portion of Confederation Secondary School's Specialist High Skills Major program have a much different view.

Big, bright monitors face the centre of the room, overlooking a green screen that stretches the length of the wall. Cameras are set up at various points around the room, and with the flick of a touch screen, students can pull whichever view best suits the subject matter.

It's certainly a stretch from the traditional high school learning environment.

"Students are being exposed to media broadcasting and film, which is a growing sector locally as more and more productions are taking place in Sudbury and surrounding areas," said Confederation Principal Pablo Gil-Alfau.

To illustrate just how many options are available, representatives from sectors of the growing film and communications sectors spoke to students at Confed.

David Anselmo, CEO of Northern Ontario Film Studios, said students are fortunate to have so many opportunities at home.

"Students in the Specialist High Skills Major program are being given an opportunity that I never got — the

chance to apply what they are learning first-hand in some highly technical fields," he said.

Other guest speakers included Cambrian and Loyalist College representatives, speaking about the formal education route to pursuing media careers, as well as Mathieu Seguin from Motion Arc Studios, speaking about on being on set, Jason Jallet from Nortario Films and Thorneloe University, speaking about choosing a path in media, and Peter Mihaichuk, production designer, speaking about working in the industry.

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David Anselmo, CEO of Northern Ontario Film Studios

The program gives students the chance to earn general and industry-specific certifications. Earlier this year, a group of students from Confed took part in a set etiquette workshop at the studio.

Trevor Liinamaa, a Grade 12 student, said prior to the workshop, he

was thinking of becoming a millwright. Now, he's not so sure.

"I might be turned around by this," he said.

Through the program, students are also able to complete co-operative education courses where they meet the people who could eventually provide them with jobs, make connections and have the chance to earn both high school and college credits at the same time.

Dylan Callens, who teaches the program at Confed, said many of his students are "very serious about careers in media."

"It's been a fairly easy sell," he said. "The industry here is growing and it's visible."

A brand-new state-of-the-art studio, built with a \$67,000 grant from State Farm, helps instill student enthusiasm.

Students have been using the space to broadcast live high school sporting events, community events and school functions.

"I've learned a great deal about media arts throughout the past year," Liinamaa said. "I am now considering a career in media, but I can't decide which field I want to enter because they all seem exciting."

That's the whole idea behind the Specialist High Skills Major programs offered by Rainbow District School Board, according to program co-ordinator Leo Leclair.

"The point of this program is to introduce you to an industry," he said.

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SHANICE COLLEY

Students from Confederation Secondary School's Information and Communications Technology program, which is part of the Rainbow Board's Specialist High Skills Major offerings, have the chance to learn in a state-of-the-art studio. Within the space, they acquire skills to prepare them for jobs in the growing media and film industries.

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