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GAME INTERNSHIP PLACED BY COMMUNITY TIES

Traverse City Student Gets Hands On Experience Without Even Leaving Home

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Rick Lesley of Traverse City is studying Game Design and Development at Michigan State University. In a tough economy and in a state with limited game companies, Rick was looking for hands on experience in the field of games, but didn't want to have to leave Michigan to get it. Luckily for Rick, a local program called Community Ties was willing to help. Last spring, Rick was contacted by Communities Ties and asked about his career goals. Community Ties is currently trying to connect Michigan youth with internships and local professionals so that students are aware of the opportunities at home. They call it "preventing bright flight" and aim to be a resource so Michigan's best and brightest youth don't leave our communities because they feel opportunities only await them elsewhere.

Community Ties connected Rick with a company in Ohio called Flash Game License (FGL) that was willing to offer a remote internship. Rick interviewed with FGL and was offered an internship for the summer. "I actually worked from East Lansing/London/Traverse City and it was very easy to do no matter where I was," Rick said of telecommuting for FGL. He was able to work for them from home in Traverse City, while at Michigan State for school, and while on study abroad.

The opportunity was a win-win for Rick and Flash Game License. Rick worked as a Flash Game Reviewer for never before released games. "I would happily recommend this internship to anyone with a passion for games or even a basic understanding of what constitutes a good game and a willingness to help others. I have met a ton of cool people through FGL. It has been very rewarding to help fellow developers better their games to hopefully get them a better sponsorship."

Rick's position started as a non-paid internship, but FGL was happy to offer him a paid part-time position after his internship. Adam Schroeder from Flash Game License said, "Rick has obviously been a top rate performer during his internship here at FlashGameLicense since he has now become one of our part-time employees." Rick felt fortunate to be connected to Flash Game License and have the opportunity to work for them remotely, "Working for FGL virtually was actually very nice, so much so that I am gladly going to continue working for them."

Community Ties is trying to make a difference in local Michigan communities, one connection at a time. They currently have an internship competition where they will pay for an intern for a company. The competition is for businesses looking to employ talented youth and also students (high school and college) looking to be connected to an internship for real-world experience.

The current competition is for businesses in Grand Traverse, Marquette, Oscoda, and Otsego counties, or any business willing to offer a remote internship to a student from those counties.

Students are also encouraged to apply to be selected as the winning intern in their field of choice. For more information on the internship competition, visit <http://www.communityties.us>.

About Community Ties to Entrepreneurship

Community Ties is a multi-year program that aims to forge new social ties among youth and local entrepreneurs through online social networking and community development activities. This project maintained and developed by Michigan State University and is supported by the National Research Initiative of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA, Grant # 2008-55401-04592 and Kellogg Foundation grants. The project director is Dr. Robert LaRose of MSU's Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media. Dr. LaRose defines the project this

way, "We hope to energize youth and local entrepreneurs to carve out new economic opportunities together in a changing economy and to show local youth that there is a future role for them in their home community." For more information please call Wanda Repke at (231) 995-7085, email repke@msu.edu or visit the Community Ties Website at <http://communityties.us/local>.

Game Program at Michigan State University:

The program Rick is in at Michigan State University is the Bachelor of Arts in Media Arts & Technology with a concentration in Games, Web, and Interactive Media and a specialization in Game Design and Development. For more information visit: <http://tism.msu.edu>

About FlashGameLicense:

FlashGameLicense.com is a virtual community and marketplace servicing 5000 flash developers and over 1000 companies interested in licensing their games. Over the past year they have brokered over 1000 games making developers over \$1,250,000. For more information visit FlashGameLicense.com

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