

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Early college classes pay off for Sturgis student



**CENTREVILLE---**Corey Thelen is a no nonsense kind of guy. A couple of years ago he looked at his future and decided, “I am the one in control here and I want to make sure I get ahead.” So the Sturgis High School junior talked to his parents about advantages like cost savings and an early start to his post-high school education he saw in the Running Start program for dual enrollment with Glen Oaks Community College. Running Start is a partnership between Glen Oaks and public high schools that provides eligible high school juniors and seniors the chance to take college-level courses tuition free. Sturgis High School alone has 230 students in Running Start. Many of the Sturgis students are enrolled in more than one college-level class.

Thelen graduates Friday, May 1 from Glen Oaks Community College and a few weeks later from Sturgis High School. Thelen has been accepted at Grand Valley State University in the fall where he will pursue a double major in Accounting and Finance. He estimates he has saved \$25,000 with the college-level classes. “I had to purchase my textbooks, but many of my books are in the field I want to enter so I plan to hold on to the books and refer to them later.”

“The Running Start program has been amazing. I wanted more of an educational challenge beginning with my junior year, so I met with Sturgis Guidance Counselor Barb Phillips and Glen Oaks student services to track with GVSU. They worked together and I completed 16 courses through Glen Oaks. Some classes have been at the high school, some at Glen Oaks, and some online with the Distance Learning Center,” said Thelen.

One thing made clear to Thelen right from the start was “When you take those Glen Oaks classes you are in college.” Thelen says it has been great to experience the college atmosphere while still living at home. He has been involved in some campus activities like Phi Theta Kappa, the student scholastic society. “Now I am ahead of the game and the transfer of courses to GVSU has been great.” Thelen found the only drawback to be the calendars for the two schools, with spring breaks for the two schools being different. The Distance Learning class proved easy to plan around his schedule.

To be eligible for the Running Start program, Thelen had to be prepared to do college work as demonstrated by his ACT, SAT and/or Accuplacer assessment scores. Enrollment is limited to Glen Oaks Community College classes numbered 100 and above. Students follow their high school schedule and calendar, but those taking classes on the Glen Oaks campus or online through the GOCC Distance Learning Center follow the Glen Oaks semester schedule and calendar. Grade and credit information for each course is recorded on an official Glen Oaks transcript as college-level courses. Credit can be applied toward a Glen Oaks degree or certificate or transferred to another college. Students planning to attend another college or university are urged to check with the chosen school to insure the credits earned through Running Start will transfer.

Some of the classes available through Running Start include Calculus I and II, Computer Aided Drafting-Autocad, English Composition I & II, Fundamentals of Accounting, Human Growth & Development, Introduction to Business, Introduction to Computers and Software, Introduction to Law Enforcement, Psychology, Medical Terminology, Principles of Sociology, Spanish I and II, General Communication-Speech, and Western Civilization I and II.

“Students need to approach college-level classes seriously and study hard. The grades they earn will become part of their college record. The students need to be committed to success,” reminded Tonya Howden, Director of Admissions at Glen Oaks Community College.