

Ball State students create CD-ROM for 'What If' project (10/31/2003)

Ball State University telecommunications students are developing interactive CD-ROMs to help children understand such topics as cancer, pet care and diabetes.

Under the direction of John Dailey, a Ball State telecommunications professor and faculty fellow of the Center for Media Design, students are creating the CD-ROMs as part of the "What If Project" in their multimedia class.

The project, a collaborative venture between Ball State, the Muncie Center for the Arts and the Muncie Star-Press, will consist of a book with an accompanying interactive CD-ROM. Local authors, illustrators and musicians are contributing their work to the project.

"This is a wonderful effort that allows our students to gain a great deal of experience while contributing to a good cause," Dailey said. "Building an interactive CD-ROM to accompany the book allows my students to make a difference in a child's life."

Funding to assist Dailey's students with the project came as a result of a grant from the university's [iCommunication](#) initiative, which is funded by a \$20 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The initiative is preparing students for creative high-tech careers in digital communications.

The first book, "What If Someone I Love Has Cancer," is nearly complete. Proceeds will go to several charities, including the Cancer Center at Ball Memorial Hospital, Muncie Center for the Arts and the Children's Charities sponsored by the Muncie Star-Press.

Stephanie Lynch, a 25-year-old senior from Seymour, has been the primary designer on the first CD-ROM.

"I wanted to get across the point that having cancer isn't as scary as many young children might think," she said. "We told the story from a child's point of view, allowing them to learn things from someone their own age.

"Since the CD-ROM is interactive, children who can't read can scroll down through the copy while listening to the story," she said. "For children who are still learning to read, the technology helps to improve their skills. And, I've tried to make it as visually interesting as possible to keep children interested throughout the book."

Over the next several years 18 books will be created.

Students from Dailey's telecommunications class will develop 2 CD-ROMs a semester. Proceeds from each book will go to charities related to the topic.

The second project's working title is "What If I Knew Someone Who Wanted a Puppy." It should go on sale in late 2003 with proceeds going to Muncie's Animal Rescue Fund.

Books containing the CD-ROM will be available in November at several locations throughout the community, including the Star-Press, 345 S. High St., and the Center for the Arts, 520 E. Main St.

(NOTE TO EDITORS: For more information, contact Dailey at (765) 285-1075 or jdailey@bsu.edu.)

By Marc Ransford, Media Relations Manager

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