

For Immediate Release

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DOUGLAS EDUCATION CENTER STUDENTS WELCOME UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO FLEX CREATIVE TALENTS IN MOCK DISASTER

30 DEC Students Create Realistic Injuries to Aid First Responders in Massive Earthquake Simulation

Monessen, PA., April 27, 2010 – The morning began as any other in the quiet southwestern PA countryside. Nonchalant commuters were beginning their day, going to work and looking forward to the weekend. At first, many of those who were stuck in traffic felt the earth tremble and wondered if they had hit the rumble strip on the edge of the road. After a moments hesitation the commuters continued on their way.

When the quake struck the sound of screaming filled the streets. People ran in every direction, frantically looking for family members as their homes crashed down into rubble in front of them. Crying children called out to their parents - there were many injured, and many dead.

As they waited for help to arrive the disoriented and injured kept repeating the same question over and over, how could one possibly prepare for something like this? The answer: They prepare by practicing and testing the system.

Students from Tom Savini's Special Make-Up Effects Program at Douglas Education Center (DEC), the premier creative career institution located in Monessen, PA, joined forces on Friday, April 23, and Saturday, April 24, with the Southwestern PA Emergency Group (Region 13) in order to develop a realistic emergency preparedness exercise, Seismic Phoenix. The exercise was designed to test the capabilities of first responders and hospitals across Westmoreland, Allegheny, and Fayette counties should a natural disaster fall upon the region.

One of the biggest challenges in organizing an event such as this was developing makeup for multiple volunteer 'casualties'. Makeup effects had to be realistic, medically accurate, durable, and had to be done fast on the morning of the exercise. A team of 30 DEC rallied together to take on this ambitious project.

When the massive earthquake shook southwestern Pennsylvania smoldering wreckage, broken glass, and bodies of wounded civilians were strewn everywhere thanks to the creative expertise of the DEC students. One victim had ugly shards of glass protruding from her arm, and a man wandered around in a daze, skin peeling from severe burns. Certain prosthetics and prop materials were pre-made to simulate open wounds, burns and broken glass.

Dr. Thomas Stein, medical director for Seismic Phoenix noted, “The moulage was wonderful and was well received by patients, providers, observers and evaluators. The urgency and immediacy is so well enhanced for the providers, it takes the realism up a quantum.”

All 30 makeup artists worked together to create appearances for the victims. The DEC team had a month to prepare for the exercise and only about an hour and a half each day to complete the makeup on the volunteers.

John Matechen, director of career services said, “A project like this is wonderful for our students to participate in because it emphasizes the importance of being able to think on your feet and react to situations that are constantly changing. An exercise like this prepares them to handle any circumstances that may arise on the job.”

“This experience allowed our students to test-drive their career in a real world scenario,” said Matechen. “These experiences will help to ensure that they will be confident as they move forward in their future careers.”

For more information, please visit www.dec.edu.

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ABOUT DOUGLAS EDUCATION CENTER

Established in 1904, Douglas Education Center (DEC) is the premier creative career institution located in Monessen, PA. DEC creates an educational atmosphere that not only fosters the highest standards of excellence in all students, but also helps these students develop an awareness of social responsibility and ethical behavior. DEC offers programs in special make-up effects, digital film, illustration, graphic design, cosmetology, medical and business. DEC instructors are industry professionals who have actual working knowledge and experience in the programs in which they teach.

ABOUT TOM SAVINI’S SPECIAL MAKE-UP EFFECTS PROGRAM

In the world-renowned Tom Savini’s Special Make-Up Effects Program students learn all aspects of special make-up effects. This 16-month program has graduated students from 48 states and who are currently working in a variety of fields ranging from Hollywood FX shops to the toy industry to prosthetic labs. This program covers all disciplines of special make-up effects including: Cosmetic Make-Up, Sculpting, Anatomy, Life Casting, Eyes and Teeth, Animatronics, Creature Design, Mold Making, Painting Techniques, Appliance Prosthetics, Character Make-Up, and Hair and Beard Application.

For more information, call 412-684-3684 or visit us online at www.dec.edu.

