



# WICPA grant makes "tax day" a reality

By Ann Meronek

Every chance that I get, I attend the WICPA Symposiums. They are a great way for teachers to meet with CPAs, other teachers and college representatives. It is also a chance to share information related to the world of accounting and to learn about future career opportunities it holds for our students. The WICPA is very generous with its time and funds, and is a professional organization that is willing to work hand-in-hand with educators.

I had received a WICPA Career Awareness Grant in the past. It was used to pay for a field trip to tour Wipfli LLP with my accounting students and to purchase QuickBooks simulations to use as part of my accounting curriculum.

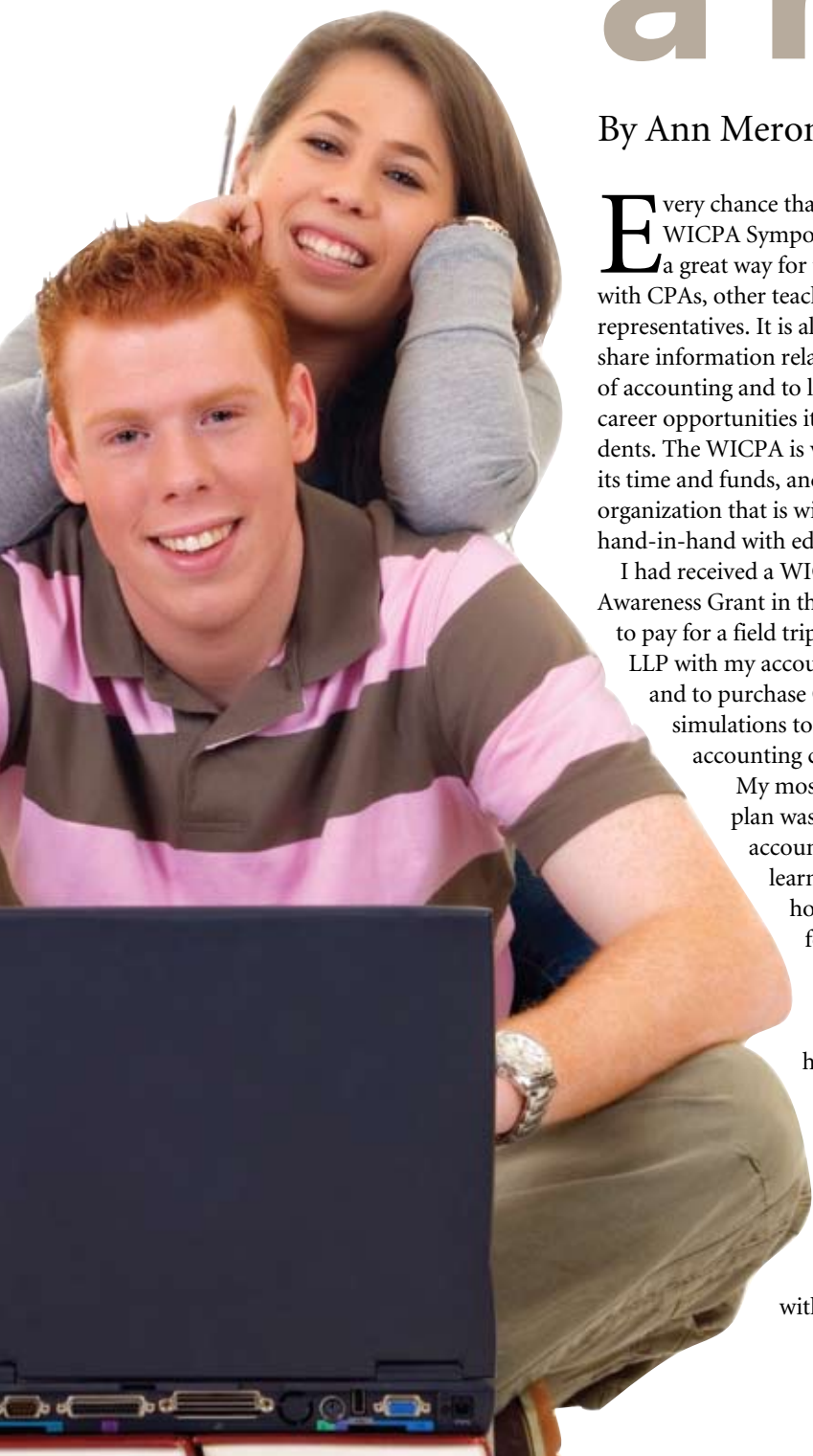
My most recent grant plan was to have my accounting students learn about taxes and how to prepare tax forms (1040EZ and WI-Z) so that they could teach other students how to prepare them. The project provides free tax preparation to the community. Many of my students don't know what to do with their tax forms.

Their parents don't have time to explain it to them or they pay someone else to prepare them. So, I saw this as an opportunity to provide a community service along with a learning experience. The WICPA made this all possible by awarding me a \$1,000 grant.

I used the money to purchase tax books so the students would get some background on what types of taxes there are, and why we need them. We had some discussions about taxes, and then the students did an Internet activity using the IRS and Wisconsin tax Web sites.

Four tax accountants from Virchow Krause & Company, LLP came to teach the students at different times and also participated in our tax day. After their visit, we practiced completing forms, and later did role playing of the tax accountant and client situation. We discussed ethics and confidentiality and how to treat a client. When tax season arrived, the students decided to offer a tax day, in which they would teach other students how to prepare tax forms. The students set up an area in our commons called "Tax Central." They were a little nervous, but they were up to the challenge!

They were very patient and helpful to their "clients" and thoroughly explained how to prepare the tax forms so that they would be able to prepare their own forms in the future.



We set up a laptop computer, printer and copier so that we could copy the tax forms and gave each client a folder to save them in. We were also ready to e-file with anyone who chose that option.

The accountants from Virchow Krause were available to check over final forms and answer any questions. We ended up with some unique situations, including a student with dividends, e-filing child credit issues and parents who brought their students' tax forms in to be filed. Even students who weren't in our class also learned a few things about taxes!

Some students said they wanted help, but forgot their forms. So, we decided to offer another version of the day, which we called "Tax Day 2.0" because it was only part of the day during lunch hours.

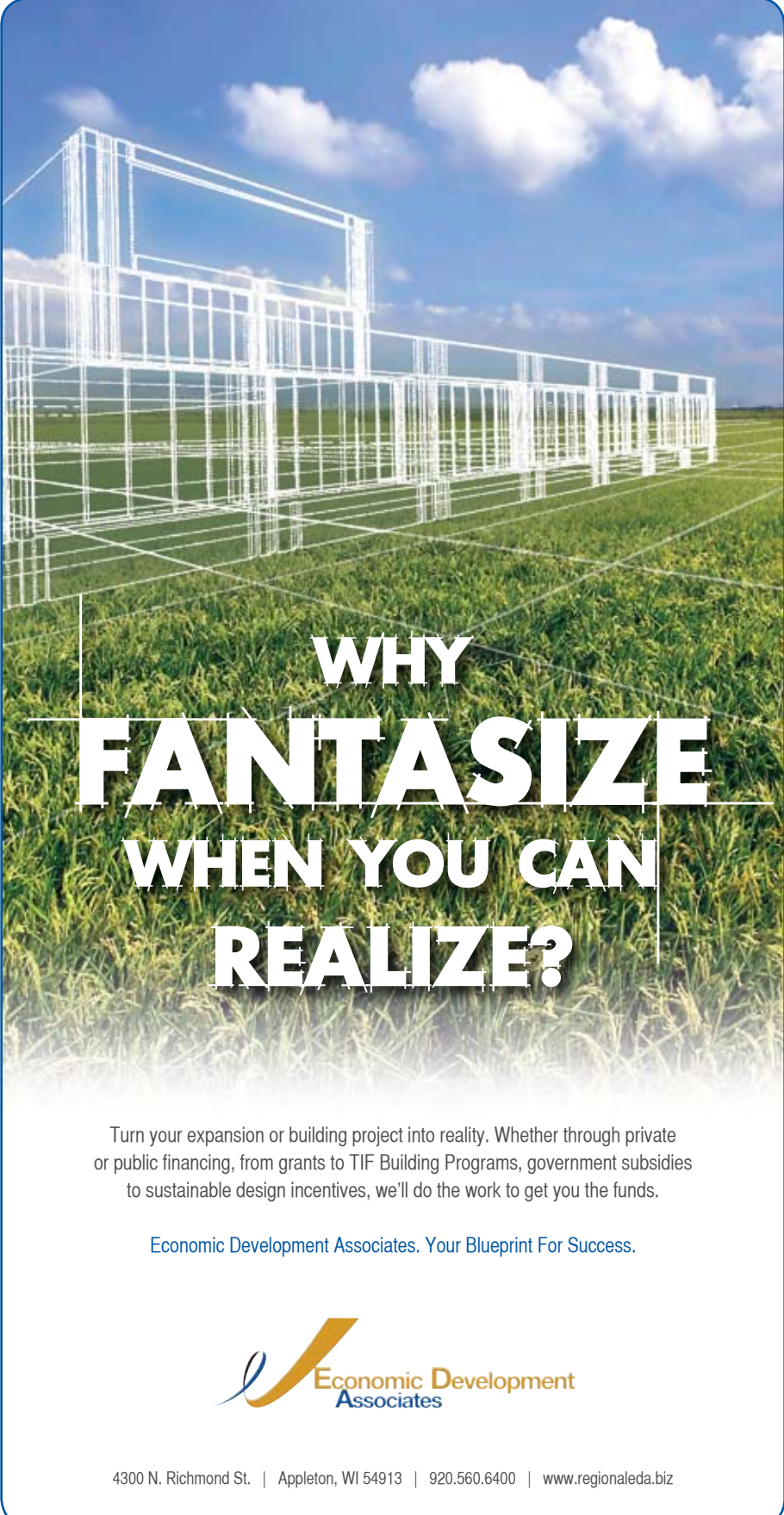
The students evaluated the project and presented their experiences in class. We gave out an evaluation form to people who came to have their taxes filed. There was also a drawing for a \$25 debit card for those who had us do their tax forms.

The students were chosen by one of our local television stations, WAOW TV-9, as "Class of the Week." They were honored on the television show, "Wake Up Wisconsin." An article and some pictures taken at the event were also posted on D. C. Everest's Web site. The Everest Herald & Wausau Daily Herald also wrote an article, "Tax Day 2.0."

After April 15, the students will tour Virchow Krause's offices and have a meal with the accountants to celebrate the end of tax season. It will give the students a chance to learn more about the type of environment accountants work in and to spend some personal time with the accountants.

I have written a grant for 2009 and received \$1,700. The grant will be used to improve and add to the tax project. I am looking forward to making it even better next year! ● ● ●


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