

## Chalk Talk: San Mateo County teachers sharpen skills during summer

BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

Article Last Updated: 07/27/2008 10:07:06 PM PDT

Some local teachers are spending the summer break from school sharpening their own learning to benefit their students.

Take Mike Hickam, an eighth-grade teacher at Nativity School in Menlo Park.

He's interning at Intel as a marketing specialist. That's an "experience I can take back to the classroom," he said.

Hickam is among about 110 educators from San Mateo and Santa Clara counties who earned fellowships to intern this summer at companies or universities through the nonprofit Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education.

The Santa Clara-based organization partners with businesses and higher-education institutions to improve teaching and learning in science and math.

Gigi Kruse-Silva, a biology teacher at Carlmont High School in Belmont, is interning as a research-laboratory fellow at Stanford University.

She applied for the fellowship to gain additional lab experience that she can take back to her students.

"I learn so much from teaching," she said, "but I lacked some lab skills, which limited some of my instruction."

But because of the fellowship, "I have designed a lab for one of my classes," she said.

Kruse-Silva is also collecting information from Stanford students and professors about jobs in the sciences that she can put in podcasts.

Fellows also provide companies and universities with skilled professional summer employees, organizers said.

Most of the fellowship projects focus

on science, math or technology, but other work involves fields such as marketing and technical writing.

Advertisement

This is Hickam's fifth summer with Industry Initiatives.

"The fact that I get to see the latest and greatest in technology gives me great ideas on what I can do in the classroom," Hickam said.

For the upcoming academic year, he plans to have his eighth-graders create a computer slide show about their last year at the school and write accompanying essays.

That ties in with his work at Intel, where he's editing videos and analyzing news about the company.

The fellowship "really revitalizes you," Hickam said. "It gets you excited to go back to the classroom and share your summer experience with the students. You find new and innovative ways to make the material come alive for students."