

Learning Life: Home school student helps with Nasher exhibit app

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DURHAM — The document displayed on the wall-mounted flatscreen shows several bright red boxes, indicating work left to be done.

“It’s not the end of the world,” Youth Digital Studio instructor Justin Richards explains to Henry Edwards and his cohorts on the smartphone application design team: Saul Zimet, Kevin Kopczynski and Jackson Poole. “But we need to finish this project before we start our next one.

“We’re not going to start a new project until everything else is done, which means submitting it to the app store, which could happen as soon as next week.”

Edwards, a home school student from Chatham County, has worked with his team for the past eight months on an application destined for the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. It is specifically designed for an upcoming exhibit, called Light Sensitive, which opens on Feb. 14.

They’ve been working on the project in classes run by Richards and his wife, Molly, in a red brick storefront near Carrabba’s off Mt. Moriah Road.

Kopczynski introduces the app:

“They asked us to make an app that would get people to talk to each other about each picture and get people to socialize. What we did was make our app so it was a game, a sort of scavenger hunt.”

Once the mock-up is onscreen in Multimedia Fusion, Edwards walks through the mechanics of the program. It consists of four basic pages and allows users to answer questions about the exhibit. Correct answers unlock special Instagram-like camera filters.

Juline Chevalier, curator of education at the Nasher, called the project “a great opportunity to collaborate with a local organization and provide the students a chance to see what app design for a real client is like, and for us to come away with an engaging digital tool to enhance the exhibition and our visitors’ experiences.”

The museum staff has enjoyed working with Richards and his students, she said.

“It’s been wonderful to work with YDS,” Chevalier said. “I’ve been very impressed with how Justin has coached the students to work with us as clients. It is clear the students take this very seriously and working extremely hard to learn how to be professionals in the workplace in addition to learning how to create sophisticated apps.”

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The Herald-Sun | Wes Platt Caption: Home school student Henry Edwards looks on as Youth Digital Studio teacher Justin Richards reviews assets for the smartphone application his team has been working on for the Nasher Museum at Duke University.