

## **Annual Careers-in-Action Tours Expose School District of New Berlin Students to High-Demand Industries**

New Berlin, Wis. – Careers in the fields of healthcare, advanced manufacturing and computer science were the focus of the School District of New Berlin’s 2019 Careers-in-Action Industry Tours last month.

More than 100 students across grades 8-12 took advantage of the experiential learning opportunity, a key part of the annual College and Career Readiness Event Series, which helps inform the students’ high school course selections and post-secondary planning as part of their Academic and Career Planning (ACP) process.

ACP plays an important role in preparing SDNB students for successful futures. The district provides more than 30 different programs of study which allow students who have an interest in a particular content area or career cluster to align their learning to that chosen path. It also encourages students who choose to take a more traditional approach to their high school education to use the planning process to focus on the course sequences in the core subject areas along with taking classes in the humanities, fine arts and world languages. The Careers-in-Action Tours offer valuable experiences for all students regardless of their current plan through exposure to varied industries, working environments and potential careers.

For Matt Hunt, SDNB’s College & Career Readiness Specialist who coordinated this year’s tours, determining which industries to include involved several factors, not the least of which were labor market projections.

“Our team looks at the top career interests as indicated through student surveys, and tries to reconcile their interests with those jobs that the state has found to be the ‘hottest in terms of current projections for openings and salaries,” said Hunt. “For the past couple of years, the industries of healthcare, advanced manufacturing and computer science/IT have consistently been at the intersection of those lists.”

The annual tours also draw attention to the wide range of careers such as marketing, accounting and human resources that play supporting roles within the featured industries.

The healthcare tour began with a visit to Community Memorial Hospital where students toured different departments including emergency, physical therapy, pre-op clinic, cancer care and medical imaging. They also learned about career opportunities and areas of growth within the Froedtert system during a “lunch and learn” with hospital employees. Later at Carroll University, the group toured the health sciences department and heard from a student panel that shared its experiences of pursuing a degree in the field of health science. The visit to Carroll helped students connect the careers they observed at Community Memorial to the academic and technical skills necessary for future success in those disciplines.

Students interested in advanced manufacturing and engineering visited KHS USA, Inc., an international manufacturer of filling and packaging equipment used in the bottling industry. Close to 30 students heard from company professionals about the industry, the career opportunities available within it, and the roles each department plays in the overall business. The group toured the facility including areas of process engineering, assembly, welding, fabrication and quality assurance and saw how everything - and everyone - contributes to the final product.

A day-long field trip to Direct Supply, a leading provider of senior living equipment, e-commerce and service solutions, helped interested students connect their coursework to a potential future in information technology (IT). Students were guided through a Lego “scrum” simulation designed to provide students with an experience that mimics an approach used by Direct Supply team members when developing software. The approach accounts for changing requirements by defining an incremental and iterative process in a collaborative environment, requiring teamwork, problem-solving and communication skills. Students also toured the building and learned about careers such as software engineer, data science analyst, network engineer and quality engineer.

According to follow-up survey data, students overwhelmingly found the events helped inform their academic and career planning by assisting them in better understanding careers possible within an industry, and how to best prepare for them.

“We are grateful to Froedtert Community Memorial Hospital, Carroll University, KHS, Inc., and Direct Supply for partnering with us on this year’s tours,” Hunt said. “The insights gained through these tours are invaluable as students continue to explore possibilities and plan for their postsecondary future.”

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