

Press Clippings 9/13/2018

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'The possibilities are endless': U46 eighth-graders explore career options at expo

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Elgin police Officer Randy Fries, left, assists Kenyon Woods Middle School student Eduardo Salgado Wednesday in trying on police equipment during the Explore 2018 career expo at the Sears Centre. (Rafael Guerrero/The Courier-News)

Amanda Jackson says she hopes to have a career in music one day but that didn't stop the U46 student from checking out other job possibilities Wednesday at the Explore 2018 career expo.

The eighth-grader said stops at exhibitor booths for professions such as nursing were interesting, and made her consider other options she hadn't thought of as job possibilities.

"Here you can find more opportunities in jobs (students) didn't know about — and some make good money, too," said Jackson, a student at Kenyon Woods Middle School in South Elgin.

About 3,000 School District U46 eighth-graders filled the Sears Centre at Hoffman Estates to explore displays set up by 90 exhibitors, each of which had someone available to discuss the job opportunities in their professions. The event was part of U46's plan to have students start thinking about career options at an earlier age.



School District U46 eighth-grade students attended the Explore 2018 career expo Wednesday at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates. Exhibitors set up throughout the arena, including the main floor. (Rafael Guerrero/The Courier-News)

“Businesses are interested in education,” said Nancy Coleman, executive director of the Alignment Collaborative for Education, the Elgin-based nonprofit collective that worked with U46 in setting up the event.

Unlike years past, the expo was larger in practically every way. The venue shifted from Elgin Community College to the Sears Centre to better accommodate more students and booths. Students and exhibitors were split between the arena’s main floor and the concourses surrounding it. The number of exhibitors nearly doubled from the 50 or so that attended last year.

Students from all eight U46 middle schools rotated from one station to the next; each group spent about one hour at the expo before heading back to their respective schools in Elgin, South Elgin, Bartlett or Streamwood.

“The possibilities are endless,” said Gustavo Maldonado, a Kenyon Woods eighth grader, speaking in response to the number of careers presented at Wednesday’s event.

Among the businesses represented was Symonds-Madison Funeral Home in Elgin, which used the opportunity to discuss such things as mortuary science, the cremation process and the types of jobs available in their industry.

It’s easy to not contemplate a career like funeral director if a student has no personal connection to it, said funeral director Daniel Symonds, a second-generation funeral service professional. But there are definitely careers there, and events like Explore 2018 help teens be exposed to them, he said.

“This is the age when you should be thinking about what you want to be,” Symonds said.

Stacy Rausch, business and consumer information librarian at Gail Borden Public Library, agreed.

“Some kids will not know about certain careers unless they have family in it,” Rausch said. The facility helped U46 and the Alignment Collaborative for Education recruit a diverse lineup of businesses, agencies and organizations to participate in the expo.

The lineup included the Elgin fire and police departments, Elgin-based MKD Electric, Elgin Community College, Xfinity, among others.

“We believe in finding and building the future” workforce, said Glenn Berg, director of human resources and safety at MKD Electric.

Efforts to expose students to career exploration at an earlier age is under way, Coleman said. U46 board members approved the adoption of the Naviance career and college readiness platform into the schools last school year. The alignment collaborative will be working with the businesses and agencies and organizations its partnered with to incorporate work-based education, such as job shadows, internships and apprenticeships, she said.



Elgin Fire Department's Wayde Smith and Debby McMahan talk with students Wednesday inside an ambulance parked inside the Sears Centre during the Explore 2018 career expo. (Rafael Guerrero/The Courier-News)

SPORTS SECTION

Boys soccer: Elgin shuts out South Elgin

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Elgin's boys soccer team improved to 6-1-1 overall and 3-0 in the Upstate Eight with an 8-0 win over South Elgin on Wednesday.

The Maroons led 2-0 at halftime before scoring six goals in the second half.

Alexander Kunicki scored the first goal for Elgin on an assist from Rafael Perez Jr. Omar Lopez scored Elgin's other first-half goal.

Isaac Espinosa scored twice for Elgin in the second half, as did Lopez. Albert Almanza and Eric Villa also scored goals for Elgin.

Harvard 5, Burlington Central 1: The Rockets fell behind 2-0 at halftime in a Kishwaukee River Conference loss.

Nick Varga scored the Rockets' goal on an assist from Cody Shrock in the 71st minute.

Tristan Samuelian made 15 saves for Burlington Central, now 2-5-1 overall and 2-2 in conference.

Girls volleyball: South Elgin stuffs Dundee-Crown

Daily Herald Reports



• **South Elgin's McKayla Geraghty hits against Dundee-Crown's Jenna Brown and MacKenzie Field, right, in South Elgin Wednesday.** *John Starks | Staff Photographer*