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Streamwood High School Students Explore Career Pathways on Spring Break

Collaborative community program offers 'real world' exposure

STREAMWOOD - For many U-46 students, Spring Break 2019 means a week off from school, but for more than three dozen Streamwood High School students, it will provide a chance to explore future careers within their community.

Thirty-nine SHS students are scheduled to take part in the 2019 Streamwood Career Exploration Program (SCEP) from March 25-29. The weeklong mini-internships place students in Streamwood enterprises and organizations where some will tackle typical issues in business and early childhood education, while others will learn about new technologies and developments in manufacturing.

The exploration program, which was founded by the Village of Streamwood, is in its fifth year, and is a collaborative effort between SHS, School District U-46, and the village's Community and Economic Development Commission.

"This unique program is possible because of dedicated teachers, a supportive business community, and students eager to apply their school work to the world of work," said Streamwood Village President Billie Roth.

During the week of March 25, the students will report to eight companies or associations that will expose the students to approximately 10 potential career pathways within three of the [16 Nationally-Recognized Career Clusters](#).

"The goal is to expose these students to the real world by having them work on industry-based projects with the potential for implementation," said Dr. Barbara Thomas, a SHS business teacher who supports the SCEP program with help from fellow educator Matt Erbach. He teaches precision



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manufacturing at Streamwood and oversaw the first SHS group to participate in SCEP.

The “real world” aspect is ingrained throughout the process. Students had to apply to the program, then show up in proper business attire for interviews with members of the Streamwood Economic and Development Commission who select students to participate in the program based on their interviews.

Some students will concentrate on a business experience, working with either Streamwood Behavioral Health on a new services business marketing plan or with Heidner Property Management, developing a promotional plan for a café. Other students will gain an exposure to early childhood education by completing a project focused on new or modified curriculum programming for the Elgin Boys & Girls Club.

Students selected for the precision manufacturing pathway will visit Trelleborg Sealing Solutions, BBS Automation, Otto Engineering, and the Technology and Manufacturing Association to see the latest tech in action. The SHS students will also complete an in-house project at school.

Eight students will report to Streamwood Behavioral Healthcare System, where they will work with Eric O’Brien, who is the Director of Business Development for the behavioral health treatment facility. The students will spend the week producing a formal business proposal for a new service line. O’Brien said it’s an ambitious project for high school students, but one that he has confidence they can handle.

“We’ll be showing the students a realistic view of what would be expected of them as business professionals,” O’Brien said.

Streamwood High senior Anna Rataj will be one of the students involved in the Streamwood Behavioral Health project. This will be her third year as a SCEP participant. Rataj, who will attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign next year and hopes to work in museum management, said the program gives her an opportunity to interact with students from her school and to hone her communication skills.

On Friday, March 29, the final day of their week, the SCEP participants will meet at Streamwood Village Hall for a noon luncheon where they will make



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presentations about their projects, and receive certificates and their stipends.

“It’s not the kind of experience you can get in a classroom,” Rataj said.

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley, approximately 45 minutes west of downtown Chicago, and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. Nearly 39,000 pre-K through twelfth graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, Visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).