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Local Industries Welcome Students

Education has extended beyond traditional classroom walls for YCC students at Anson High School as they have been welcomed into local industries who are partnering with the school in the new Youth CareerConnect: STEM Academy Program.

"It can be a real challenge for students to select a career when they know far too little about what each career includes," stated Deborah Davis, Director of the YCC STEM Academy. "We have to get them 'out there' into the various career industries so they can make wiser choices about their futures."

AHS Principal Charles Murphy agreed and added, "We are extremely pleased to have the resources that the YCC grant provides so that we can afford to take students into the world of careers to see what people doing real STEM work actually do."

Recently, students completed their first round of visits to Columbus McKinnon, Hornwood, and Carolinas Healthcare System-Anson. The resulting enthusiasm from students was evidence enough that the design of the YCC: STEM Academy is on target. Going into industry worksites helped students to understand what the real working world is about.

"I didn't know what a 'hoist' was until we visited Columbus McKinnon," Keasia commented after the first industry site visit. Her comment was typical of many made during and after the tour of this local industry that has national impact in terms of their products and training.

At Columbus McKinnon, students witnessed the creation of hoists from melted steel to the finished product, packaged for shipping. This industry partner is known worldwide for designing, manufacturing, and marketing materials handling systems and services to efficiently move, lift, and secure heavy loads. Key products include hoists, actuators, cranes, and lifting and rigging tools used by many different industries.



"I had no idea," one student stated, as Career Development Coordinator Kim Ingold gave a brief explanation of why Columbus McKinnon is a major player in the advanced manufacturing career world. There were some who had never heard the word 'hoist,' and, therefore, had no idea what one actually is. Keasia also expressed amazement that it was possible to make parts that combined together into a product that can hold so much weight.

Another YCC student, Garrett, said he had used hoists with his dad and grandfather, so he wasn't sure if the trip would be beneficial for him. Afterwards, he said the tour was more fun than he had expected because "it was cool seeing how that product is actually made."

Jarvis Woodburn (top photo), Columbus McKinnon Plant Manager in Wadesboro, directed the tour for several groups of YCC students. As they moved through the plant, Woodburn patiently explained each step in the manufacturing and engineering processes. His explanation regarding the career pathway of engineering and the role engineering plays in the production of hoists significantly increased student understanding of the value of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) to advanced manufacturing.

The next visit was to Hornwood in Lilesville, a textile manufacturer providing fabrics in the U.S. and other countries for such uses as team sports, automotive, reverse osmosis filtration, footwear, medical banner and expo markets. "A major goal for this tour was to help students understand that fabric is a big deal - that manufacturing fabric is about more than sheets and the clothes we wear everyday," stated Davis. "There are research, development, and engineering elements involved in the work at Hornwood; and we want students to understand the complexity of that industry and how many other industries their work impacts."

YCC students received a strong welcome from Chuck Horne, President; Wesley Horne (2nd photo down), Vice President; Ray King, Plant Manager; and Larry Adams, Human Resources Director. During the personalized tour, students heard explanations of the various products and materials used to produce the finished tricot and circular knit fabrics. State-of-the-art knitting and dyeing machines excited some students while finishing machines and the color-creation laboratory drew the attention of others.

Joy, a ninth grade YCC student, expressed her appreciation of the research and development lab onsite at Hornwood. "I saw how various colors are created, and I liked that part especially," she stated. Fellow student, Jonathan, made it clear that he was amazed by all he saw, stating "I had no idea all these products are made here where I live, and they're used for fabrics, car interiors, shirts, banners, and so much more."

Chuck Horne (lower photo), President of the company, addressed students at the end of the tour, providing history of the company and showing examples of final products that customers create with their fabric. Kim Wilson, Safety Coordinator, assured safety of YCC students and emphasized the need for safety awareness in manufacturing and engineering fields. Students expressed that they are beginning to see what it means to choose a career in Advanced Manufacturing.

The third industry partner that YCC students visited was Carolinas Healthcare System-Anson, journeying only a few hundred yards up Highway 74 to the new facility. Jill Lucas, Manager of the facility, and Beth Diggs led the tours. Students visited the inpatient area, emergency room, operating room, laboratory, and imaging room. To make the experience even more memorable, CHS employees performed the first ultrasound on one of the YCC male students. Students were intrigued with the helipad that allows aerial transport of critical cases.

"The entire health and wellness industry is one of the most rapidly growing career fields of the future," explained Davis, "so having Carolinas Healthcare System as one of our primary industry partners is vital to the success of our YCC: STEM Academy." Students often think of the medical industry as being filled by doctors and nurses mostly, but that industry requires many technician-level employees, plus engineers for equipment and facility purposes; computer specialists for record-keeping, data management, and marketing; and business and financial specialists. Students learned how complex the medical field can be as they listened to explanations about the facilities and the types of jobs available at CHS-Anson. Alexis, a YCC student, commented on all she had learned in this authentic career site visit and stated, "This visit makes me want to consider a career in the medical field. I especially liked the lab area."

Youth CareerConnect students will continue industry site visits during the first semester of their freshman year. They will tour Schaeffler USA in Cheraw, S.C., next, another key YCC partner. They will also have the opportunity to tour other area business sites so that they can expand their understanding of the world of work and the importance of wise career choice. Exploring the career pathways of Advanced Manufacturing, Medical Sciences, Engineering, and Information Technologies will help students to focus their study for the remainder of their high school years.

"We are so fortunate to be one of the 24 sites across the nation to receive the Youth Career Connect high school to college program," Principal Murphy commented. "We plan to open the eyes of students to careers and how their choices today can transform their lives tomorrow. Our industry partners are vital to us, and we thank them for taking the time to support our YCC students."



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