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High School Internship Programs Prove Successful

Local communities partner with U-46 to offer career exploration and experience

For seven Bartlett High School students, summer break this year provided more than the chance to rest and recharge. The students reviewed municipal construction plans, helped foster economic development, and even investigated non-permitted chickens, all as part of a new internship program.

The opportunity marks the most recent partnership with a local municipality and School District U-46 to better prepare students for college and careers. Just down the road from Bartlett, the Village of Streamwood has sponsored the Streamwood Career Exploration Program for four years during spring break. The weeklong program has offered 75 Streamwood High School students the opportunity to explore careers in manufacturing, business, retail, and early childhood through the support of the Village and local businesses.

“We’re grateful our local municipalities and businesses have been so willing to offer students hands-on experiences to help them think about their future,” said School District U-46 Chief Executive Officer Tony Sanders.



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“Once students get to apply their knowledge and skills on the job, they are a lot more motivated to learn and excel.”

The BHS interns will be recognized during the Tuesday, Aug. 21 Bartlett Village Board meeting which starts at 7 p.m. at Village Hall, 228 S. Main St., Bartlett.

The Streamwood Career Exploration Program has focused on a variety of career fields while emphasizing transferable skills such as work ethic and management. The program started in 2015 and focused on manufacturing, and promoted the concept of “white collar manufacturing.” The second year expanded the program to have students look at manufacturing careers, while also pairing it with post-high school education options. In 2017, the program worked with local retail businesses. Students were presented with a real life business concern, and had to work with business owners to craft a workable solution. Earlier this year, the program incorporated business concerns from three fields – manufacturing, retail business, and expanded into early childhood education.

“This program has allowed us to link the talent of our students, with skills in demand from our businesses community,” said Streamwood Village President Billie Roth. “Businesses have hired students that have participated in the program, for summer and school-year jobs, as well as provided career opportunities. The program provides a direct connection between classroom knowledge and the world of work.”

The Bartlett High School students completed 40-hour internships this summer with the Village of Bartlett as part of a new program created by the



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Alignment Collaborative for Education (ACE), an organization of business and community leaders who work together to support the District's goals and priorities. Key among those goals is to ensure that District schools are teaching the skills students will need to succeed in college and the workforce.

The Bartlett internships for students Meher Mirza and Sareena Shah centered on engineering. Patricia Marsigan and Britney Yu worked with the village's Geographic Information System, utilizing software that analyzes data through spatial relationship analysis and mapping technology. Students Azam Khan, Emily Hettinger, and Ishan Desai rotated among several village departments.

"We were thrilled to work with these amazing students," said Village of Bartlett Administrator Paula Schumacher. "We look forward to watching their future success and continuing to develop this internship program."

The students worked on several projects, she said. They helped create a welcome packet in both hard copy and digital format that will be used to familiarize new Bartlett residents to the village. The students also helped update the village's code enforcement software, and they used their editing skills to help produce segments for a village video program that spotlights local businesses.

Meher, who is studying at the BHS Science, Engineering and Technology Academy, spent her internship in the village's public works department. The prospective class of 2019 graduate said she is considering a career in engineering, so it was a good fit.

“My internship was really informative,” Meher said. “I learned a lot about civil engineering.”

Meher said she got to review the same building plans as the village engineers, and then had a chance to shadow them in the field. The broad scope of duties handled by the village’s public works department was eye-opening, she said; Meher went out with Bartlett employees to document a situation where a resident was reportedly keeping chickens on their property, but had not sought village approval to do so.

Intern Britney Yu said she is considering studying computer science in college, so working with the village’s GIS mapping system was right up her alley. It had some ties to the computer-aided design work she has done at BHS.

She spent some of her time outlining and making data points that will help Bartlett complete a major road repaving project. Britney also received career advice from village employees.

“They helped us with interviewing and resume tips, which was really great,” Britney said.

The village is producing a package of guidelines and helpful tips that will be available to other Alignment Collaborative for Education members, as ACE expands the internship program to other local businesses and units of government.



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All School District U-46 eighth graders will get the opportunity on Wednesday, Sept. 12 to learn more about their career interests through the fourth annual curriculum and career expo. The event, called "Explore 2018," is also offered through the Alignment Collaborative for Education and will be held during a weekday for the first time in order to ensure that more students get to meet and talk with professionals in their field of interest. Students will be bussed to and from the expo at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates. To learn more, visit the District website [here](#)

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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. More than 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](#).

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