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Career Day at Shaler Elementary introduces vast options

ERICA CEBZANOV | Monday, Oct. 23, 2017, 9:00 p.m.



*Louis Raggiunti / For the Tribune-
Review*

A.W. Beattie Career Center student Maxwell Borza explains about robotics to fifth graders from Shaler Elementary during career day Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017.

For Shaler Area Elementary School fifth-graders, the days of learning about careers exclusively from classroom lectures have disappeared.

The students took a hands-on approach during the third annual career day held Oct. 17 in conjunction with A.W. Beattie Career Center students from Shaler Area Senior High School and the surrounding districts.

The high school students led fifth-graders through interactive activities meant to enlighten them about the career school's programs and possible career paths. Clifton Bossong, Beattie's assessment and STEAM — science, technology, engineering, art and math — coordinator said the career center's teachers collaborated with the high school students to create the lesson plans. He wanted the "leadership exercise" to teach his students "how to relate to the younger students, how to organize and plan the day."

Classrooms within the elementary school's winding fifth-grade corridor housed the demonstrations.

A flashing red siren greeted visitors to one classroom as George Brown, 16, and Christopher Budzinski, 17, junior firefighters from Reserve and Millvale, respectively, answered questions about emergency response technology and gave Kathryn Luft, 11, fire-resistant overalls to try on over her clothes.

Meanwhile, Rosie the pug was the star during a veterinarian assistance services demonstration. After a lesson from Rosie's owner, Megan Chuckery, a Beattie instructor, the students used a stethoscope to listen to her heart beat and physically examined her. Carley Colosimo, 16, hopes the students learned how to properly approach strangers' dogs and Mya Wood, 16, wanted the fifth-graders to understand that working in the veterinary field entails more than playing with dogs all day.

Vada Evans, 10, enjoyed learning how to braid hair, playing with popsicle stick curlers with a mannequin head in the cosmetology room.

Beattie cosmetology student Sara Kurta, 18, said she wanted the students to realize that the field isn't just for women.

"It's about being who you are and helping them (the clients) be themselves."

The students explored many science-based career opportunities, too.

Carnegie Science Center (<http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org/>) representatives met with children in the school's auditorium.

"We talked about engineering," Kate Boyle, 10, said.

Celina June, 10, thought the presentation was very interesting.

"They said the biggest thing about engineering is knowing how to take things apart and put them back together," June said.

A lab with a robotic car was an eye-opening experience for Olivia Dutkovic, 10.

"I didn't really know that robotics was a career. I thought it was just something that you did at the science center."

As part of a science technology activity, Mele Perez, 10, and his classmates, attempted to solve a crime by viewing fingerprint slides under microscopes. Ultimately, he thinks auto collision technology might prove a more suitable career.

Ben Swencki, 10, said his favorite activity was testing video games on a computer in the advanced computer programming workshop.

Savannah Gray, 10, said her athletic nature could lend itself to a career in sports medicine and rehab therapy.

"I got to see physical therapy because I can't do blood or anything like that," she said. "We did some exercises to see what you would do if you were in rehab."

"Our goal really is to introduce fifth grade students to career possibilities through Beattie Career Center and also in the working world," said Beth Zelinko, a Shaler Area Elementary School counselor, who coordinated the event.

"From the last couple years that we've done it, you really walk away knowing that they learned something new and saw something new that they wouldn't have normally experienced otherwise. It's a neat opportunity for them."

Erica Cebzanov is a Tribune-Review contributor.

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