

We get by with a little help from our friends
By Howard Norris, Graphic Arts Tech Prep Instructor

Graphic Arts students at the Warren County Career Center received an enormous amount of assistance from local business and industry, as they prepared for their annual Skills USA contest. Springboro Junior Caleb Gibson, was slated to represent the career center in the offset printing competition held in Piqua last March. The major problem has always been, both the regional contest as well as the state and national contest use printing presses and bindery equipment that are very different from the ones in the Graphic Arts lab at the career center. Caleb spent three separate days “shadowing” the press operators at Mound printing in Miamisburg. The owners and employees there took extra time to give Caleb the “ins and outs” of presswork on the exact Heidelberg press he would be running in Piqua and beyond if he placed in the top three.

Two other Career Center students, Andrea Williams, Lebanon and Megan Mundquist, Little Miami were to compete in Advertising Design. They were permitted to “shadow” at the School of Advertising Art in Kettering. The school arranged for them to work with a student ambassador for the day, using advanced graphic design software and techniques.

Justin Long from Franklin was preparing for the Customer Service contest. The folks at the Lebanon Sign-A-Rama host Justin for a day of intense problem solving with their very own counter personnel.

The Graphic Arts Program also sent a team of students in the category of Tech Prep Showcase.



They are Tori Blazer, Springboro, Daniel Gandert, Franklin and Erin Janes, Kings. Their project was the production of a career oriented coloring book. The support they received was amazing. RIS Paper Company donated all the paper for the project, and a number of other small donations were made to allow the coloring books to be produced at no cost to the school. (Pictured at left, students at Bowman Elementary School enjoy the coloring books!)

Our final two competitors were Clinton Vearil, Little Miami and Jazmene Keller, Springboro. They designed and produced a video to promote the career center’s fire science program. Butterfly Productions Video Services, a video production company in Springboro, came to the school to offer guidance and also provide the program with 2 full boxes of DV tapes. A dollar amount cannot be placed on the professional advice provided to the program. Our photography contestant was permitted to job shadow 3 times with Eric Hatch at his South Lebanon photo studio. Mr. Hatch has also come in to speak

to the class. One major area of the contest, which happens to be Mr. Hatch's specialty is photo restoration. Mr. Hatch's guidance and knowledge is priceless.

What better way for these students to prepare for a competition than to interact and learn from true professionals in their respective areas of study. Their normal lab activities and setting can only do so much during the two and a half time period they are here. Intensive study with an expert qualifies everything they have learned so far.

Like every program at the career center we are appreciative of the on-going assistance and advice we receive for our industry partners through our advisory meetings, which are held twice a year. But, it is wonderful and refreshing to see the amazing efforts some of our local business professionals make to ensure our students succeed. Whatever the end results are for these student competitors, one thing is for certain; every possible preparation has been taken to get them ready.

Skills USA contests begin in March and proceed through most of the summer. Graphic Arts has placed a 10th and 4th place in the last three years.