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PRESS RELEASE

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Our 2024 Teacher Externship Program Connected Classrooms to Careers!

WICHITA FALLS, Texas – Workforce Solutions North Texas placed over 25 career education teachers from our 11-county region in externships this past summer to learn directly from people working in their industries.

This new program is bringing real industry updates into the classroom to better prepare our youth for their future! 27 teachers completed externships with local employers this year.

Ashley Ellsworth, a Wichita Falls ISD Culinary Arts Teacher who completed her externship at the Flamingo Baking Company in Wichita Falls, said the program allows her to bring more than just her baking skills back to the classroom.

“I actually learned more than I thought I would,” Ellsworth said. “It wasn’t just about pastries, it was more business aspects of running a bakery which I’ll talk to my students about in class as well. My senior level students, they also talk about running businesses, not just about the cooking and baking aspects but the financial aspects of running your own business, costing of ingredients, how to cut costs so you make more money in the long run.”

Jacob Smyers, a Holliday ISD Culinary Arts Teacher who completed his externship at the Wellborn 2R Steakhouse at Delta Hotels by Marriott in Wichita Falls, had similar takeaways.

“I learned a few cooking techniques that I hadn’t seen or that I hadn’t done in a long time that I kind of got to brush up on, but I also learned more of what management, HR departments, food and beverage management, what they actually look for in a new hire,” Smyers said. “I feel like that is going to be something that I really help my students with. Yes, I teach culinary arts, but I also teach career readiness as far as going out into the real world, and I want them to be fully ready for a career in customer service. I feel like knowing those things and hearing their feedback is going to be the most beneficial thing for my students in the future.”

Peyton Wood, a Wichita Falls ISD Agriculture Science Teacher who completed her externship at Autumn Leaves Flowers & Gifts, emphasized the importance of on-the-job experience.

“Now I have a lot of answers that I didn’t have before, and I have that real-world experience. We talk about real-world experience all the time, especially here at the Career Education Center,” Wood said.

“We try to send them out with a certification. Now, I’m not just giving them a certification, I can give them real experience that I, myself, have experienced, it’s not just like ‘oh I’ve heard this before.’ That would probably be the best thing I’m going to be able to bring back in the classroom and why it’s important for teachers to go out and experience the real things.”

“I know some of the soft skills have kind of been lost over the last few years as far as just having interview skills, or email decorum, or ways of communicating with people that I think is really something we can work on to help better prepare them for actually having those real-world interactions,” Smyers said.

“I really think any job as a teenager helps prepare you for whatever job you choose to do in the future because work experience is invaluable,” Ellsworth said. “Whether it’s customer service, learning a skill, obtaining a certification, I just feel all of that benefits you over just bookwork. Hands-on learning is so invaluable.”

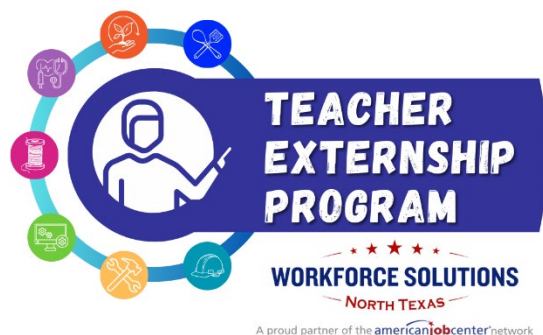
About Workforce Solutions North Texas

Workforce Solutions North Texas mission is to place North Texans in jobs and equip workers with skills that foster economic development. Led by a local board consisting of volunteer members from the communities we serve, a majority of which come from private industry, Workforce Solutions North Texas provides services to employers and job seekers in Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger and Young Counties.

This organization is also part of a statewide system of local boards which set policy and oversee expenditures of funds in their individual areas. These boards are non-profit and receive funding from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Texas Workforce Commission.

For details on Workforce Solutions North Texas and the services offered in coordination with its network of other local workforce development boards across Texas, visit www.ntxworksolutions.org.

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