

EMPLOYMENT



SCOTT MASON/The Winchester Star

James Wood Middle School seventh-grader Marnix Hollebrandse gets some help from Winchester Fire Department Lt. Anthony Manzione on Wednesday afternoon at the Worlds of Work Career Expo. About 2,900 children were expected to attend the two-day event.

Kids get closer look at real-world work

By **JOSH JANNEY**
The Winchester Star

KERNSTOWN — Local middle school students got a taste of what the working world is like Wednesday through several hands-on activities during the second Worlds of Work Career Expo.

About 2,900 seventh-graders from the Lord

Fairfax Community College Career Pathways Consortium are attending the event, which began Wednesday and will continue today at the Body Renew Fitness & Family Sports Center.

The consortium's public school divisions are Frederick County, Clarke County, Page County, Rappahannock County, Shenandoah County, Warren County and Winchester city.

The students each received an expo pass-

port that would get stamped as they explored different work fields.

About 65 exhibitors showcased equipment, vehicles and machinery that students had the chance to interact with.

"I've had a lot of fun doing stuff here," said Daniel Morgan Middle School student Ian

See **Work**, Page **A6**

Work

from **Page A1**

Miller. "They teach you what they do in fun ways, and they give you this cool stuff and let you do it hands-on. I got to lay down bricks."

Sally Michaels, the existing business coordinator with the Frederick County Economic Development Authority, said this method of teaching children about careers is more engaging than sitting in a classroom listening to an instructor. The interactive experience allows the students to discover for themselves what they are interested in.

"Our students don't know what they don't know," Michaels said. "Some of them have never had the opportunity to be exposed to these types of careers. If they are not familiar with what their parents do or anyone in their family does, and they've never been exposed beyond that, then this is a chance for them to explore."

She said after seventh grade, students begin to take electives, and this is the time when students need to choose their pathway.

"Not only have they never had the exposure, but education costs a lot of money," Michaels said. "Unfortunately, we have a society that is driven by a marketing campaign for college. It's not always college right away. There's different ways to get an education and get that experience."

At the Valley Health station, students raced to properly put on and take off personal protective equipment, including a mask, gown and gloves. This demonstrated how to avoid acquiring pathogens, or diseases.

Daniel Morgan student Yasmina Guerra said she wanted to be a nurse or a doctor, while her friend Phoenix Viperman said he wanted to have a career in restoring historic homes.

"I feel it is a better way to learn than to just be listening to people talk," Viperman said. "This has been one of the best field trips."

Tate Golightly, from the Middleburg Agricultural Research and Ex-

tension Center, brought a 300-pound miniature horse to his station. He had children pile up on a scale to try to equal the horse's weight, and later had them grab hay to determine how much the horse needs to be fed.

"I liked learning about all of the animals, and I liked the hands-on stuff," said Daniel Morgan student Sarah Blowers. The seventh-grader said she especially enjoyed the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and Blandy Experimental Farm stations, and that she wants to be either a marine biologist or a veterinarian.

Sales engineer Wyatt Mann, from the Lincoln Electric Co., taught the students how to weld through a simulator called VRTEX, which includes a touch-screen monitor, welding gun, tracking device and a work surface. Mann said the VRTEX allowed students to practice safely.

Alek Swift, who wants to go into law enforcement, said he enjoyed the Frederick County Sheriff's Office station, where children were able to work with a fingerprint kit, put on drunk goggles, wear protective vests and get handcuffed.

Frederick County Fire and Rescue allowed students to take out the Shenandoah Fire and Rescue training pumper and spray water on a fake fire. They also were allowed to put on fire-fighting gear, go through a maze and practice CPR on a dummy.

Katie Rice, the career and technical education/STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) supervisor for Shenandoah County Public Schools, said the event cost about \$35,000 to put together, and involved collaboration with the Frederick EDA, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and Barrett Machine Inc.

Due to the costs for the participating parties, Michaels said they would welcome sponsorship for the event in coming years.

— Contact Josh Janney at jjanney@winchesterstar.com