

Internships clarify career choices for Clark high school seniors

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IRSC

With career plans of becoming a pilot, Nick Gangi, a senior at Clark Advanced Learning Center, completed a 60-hour internship at Galaxy Aviation.

STUART — Designed to help high school students decide “what I will do when I grow up,” the internship program at the Clark Advanced Learning Center immerses the public charter high school’s seniors in real-world experiences related to their career interests. This semester, students used sophisticated computer drafting to plot county parks, shipped specimens of marine life, assisted with aircraft servicing, handled varied duties in a veterinary practice, developed customer service skills, observed nurses in a hospital Labor and Delivery Department, worked with dental assistants and completed many other internship projects. The final requirement of the 18-week internship course is a Capstone Project requiring each student to explain what was learned, and if the experience reinforced or changed his or her career plans.

“My internship reinforced my desire to become a vet,” said Annie Washio, 17, of Palm City, who interned at Martin Downs Animal Hospital. “It’s good to see people caring for animals, and I also like the fact that as a vet you are a small business owner and independent.”

Logan Shatters, of Stuart, assisted the Martin County Engineering Department, where he used his AutoCAD skills to create engineering templates and plot out a backstop and dugout for a community baseball field. The seventeen-year-old also assisted the Survey Division with field surveys. Shatters plans to go into the Naval Academy and focus on electrical engineering. As a result of the high school/college dual enrollment opportunities at the Clark Advanced Learning Center, he will graduate in May with an Associate in Arts degree ready to continue his education as a college junior.

The Clark is located on the Chastain Campus of Indian River State College (IRSC) and offers students the opportunity to earn high school and college credits simultaneously at no cost to their parents.

With the goal of becoming a pilot, eighteen-year-old Nick Gangi immersed himself in the airport environment at Galaxy Aviation where he interned as a Line Service Technician. "Learning about the ground operations of airports was the most valuable thing for me," he said.

"I got to see how dental assistants really care for their patients and are concerned for their health," said Sophia Monjaras, 17, who interned at Anchor Dental Practice. She plans to continue her education through the dental assisting or dental hygiene program at Indian River State College.

"I really enjoyed my time at Reefcleaners and learned a lot about customer service; I'm interested in a career in aquaculture," said Aaron Lay. The Palm City seventeen-year-old packaged marine invertebrates and macro algae shipped out by the firm to aquarium hobbyists to maintain healthy tank environments.

Desiree Daily interned on the Labor and Delivery floor of Martin Memorial Health Systems.

"I learned the ins and outs of patient care, the signs of true and false labor and how to monitor the fetal heart beat," she said.

Thirty-three Clark Advanced Learning Center students each completed 60 internship hours during the Fall 2010 Semester, and another group of 44 will intern during the Spring 2011 Semester. The Clark Advanced Learning Center, a national model public charter high school, serves about 220 high school sophomores, juniors and seniors with enriched learning opportunities such as internships and job shadowing, with personal attention in a small school setting. Clark students are able to earn college credits at no charge while still in high school through dual enrollment and students typically graduate with a least a year of college completed. Each student is assigned a laptop computer to assist with research.

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