

VHS Students Complete Senior Projects

Vernonia High School 12th graders recently completed their Career Related Learning Experience, also known as the “Senior Project.” This Senior Project is a requirement for graduation, and is one of the most interesting portions of their school experience.

This year the Senior Projects were presented on Wednesday, January 10. The Senior Project requires students to submit a written Letter of Intent explaining the goals of their project, then spend at least 20 hours of hands-on experience with a project mentor. They also create a display board explaining their project, and then make a presentation of an eight to ten minute speech in front of a small panel of community judges, where the students explain what they learned during their project.

The purpose of the senior project is for students to demonstrate skills they have learned throughout high school such as communicating, planning, following-through, working with others, meeting deadlines, working to set standards, and challenging themselves to learn new things.

Here is a small sample of this year’s Senior Projects:

Isabelle Admire did her project on graphic design, creating a portfolio of ten pieces. Admire drew pencil sketches and then used a software program, MediBang Paint Pro, to finish the piece with lines, colors and shading. Admire says she started drawing as a hobby when she was 12, and is now planning to pursue it as a career. She is considering attending Pacific Northwest College of Art next fall.



Ty Brown job shadowed his mother Angela Brown who works for the City of Scappoose where he learned all about wastewater and water treatment processes. Brown says he plans to attend the Environmental Water program at Clackamas Community College to get certified to operate water and wastewater plants and pursue a career in the industry.



Alura Byler job shadowed her equine ferrier Don Murphy and learned about horseshoeing. Byler observed Murphy shoeing and trimming the hooves of several horses and then had a chance to do the work on her own horse. Byler is part of the U.S. Pony Club and earned a certification for her work on her project.

She says she is not interested in pursuing this as a career, but gained a lot of experience.

Courtney Barklow explored careers in social services. She interviewed several professionals in the industry including someone who worked in Foster Care services, a Social Services Case Worker, and a DHS Supervisor. She also helped deliver Meals on Wheels in Vernonia, visited Vernonia Cares, and gathered donations and created Blessing Bags for the homeless. She delivered them to the Salvation Army in Portland and handed out sweatshirts and blankets to homeless citizens. Barklow says she would like to pursue a career in Social Work.



Morgan Harral explored In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) because of her interest in animal science and animal husbandry. Once she started her project with mentor Jim Krahn, who is involved in the animal husbandry field, and visited a dairy in Tillamook, she expanded it to include human IVF as well. She visited an IVF clinic in Portland. Harral says she will attend Southwestern University in Kansas on a volleyball scholarship and will study biology; she is not sure if she will focus on animals or humans.

Storm Henson did his project on Dietary Guidelines by studying athletic nutrition with mentor Terry Fultz. Henson developed three different diets for himself for one month each, one to gain weight, one to maintain his weight, and then one to drop weight as he prepared for the winter wrestling season. Henson kept a log for each month to track what he ate, his athletic performance, and how his diet impacted him. He plans to pursue a career in the health field.

Maddie Zavales explored a career in radiology where she observed numerous MRIs, CAT scans and ultra sounds being performed by more than 20 different technicians at St. Vincent Hospital. Zavales said she was planning to attend Oregon Institute of Technology to study, but after spending time in the Emergency Room, she is now considering a career as an ER nurse, and is going back to St. Vincent to do another job shadow in the ER.

Jacob Hylton created an “Intro to Jazz” music class after school where he taught two musical pieces that he created to interested students. Hylton and his students then performed the piece at the school Winter Concert. His mentor was Vernonia music instructor Matthew Urban. Hylton, who plays the tenor saxophone, is hoping to pursue a career in music.




Haley Lindsay explored a career in special effects make-up by working at a Halloween haunted house called The Fear PDX. Haley had a chance to work in makeup and in costumes, and also had a chance to be an actor. While Haley says she now longer wants to pursue special effects make-up, she would like to minor in Theater Arts in college.

Lizzie Barnes interned at the Oregon Humane Society animal hospital in Portland for ten weeks and did a lot of the work a vet tech would do. She observed and worked in surgeries, helped patients in recovery, filled prescriptions, and worked in a laboratory. Barnes says she plans to pursue a career in veterinary medicine, possibly in surgery, at either OSU or Pacific University.



Nick Bennett job shadowed two police officers, Officer JD Leininger in Hillsboro and Officer Eric Shaffer in Vernonia. Bennett said his rides were pretty exciting and that he observed a variety of situations during his time with the officers, including domestic disputes and a variety of traffic stops. He learned about how a LiDAR gun tracks auto speeds. Bennett will head to naval base training in July and hopes to become a Navy Seal.



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