

Area freshmen 'THINK' manufacturing

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Dominic Griggs, 14, of Bellevue High School uses a thermos scan at the Whirlpool Corp, Table at the THINK Manufacturing Showcase at Terra State Community College. The scan is used for electrical wiring at the plant.

FREMONT - For the third consecutive year, Sandusky County freshman students were exposed to the world of manufacturing and opportunities for well-paying jobs at local manufacturers.

The 2017 THINK Manufacturing Showcase at Terra State Community College on Friday featured area businesses such as Whirlpool Corp., Style Crest, The Freeman Company and Vanguard Career Center in Fremont.

Students visited more than a dozen stations to meet with electricians, spokesmen and women, and human resources representatives who gave presentations to students from Sandusky County schools.

"I think it's important to start kids early, and expose them to what job opportunities are out there in the county," said Beth Hannam, Sandusky County economic development

director. "Even if the students are not going into this field, it is good to show them the various pathways that exist."



Emma Knudsen, left, shows Bellevue High School classmates how to assemble a Lego object as part of Style Crest's teamwork initiative. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

Hannam said there can be misconceptions about manufacturing jobs, with some people thinking that only manual labor positions are available at local factories.

With the growing demand and increased use of technologies to run more efficient companies, many manufacturers have created positions within the past decade dedicated to computer programming and maintenance.

Darcelle Johnson, a 14-year-old freshman at Bellevue High School, said he is interested in a career in manufacturing.

Along with four other Bellevue High School classmates, Johnson's first exposure to manufacturing came at the Style Crest Inc. booth, which challenged students to work together to build a Lego object.

"What we are doing here is working on teamwork," said Jeni Kranz, Style Crest director of human resources. "Each student gets 10 seconds to come back and look at the object and then they have to work together to build what they see."

The challenge, aside from the correct use of the Lego blocks to make an exact replica of the object, is to correctly use the color blocks for each portion of the object.



Steve Mendez, 14, of Fremont Ross High School screws together a casting mold that is used to make food service packages at The Freeman Company. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

"I liked the Style Crest table, because we were able to work as a team, and I think we did a good job," Johnson said.

Kranz said teamwork is important in manufacturing because each person on the assembly line has a job.

"If you can't solve the problems on the line, or work together, you will either have poor quality products, or a lot of scrap metal that can't be used."

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Hundreds of students attend the THINK Manufacturing Showcase at Terra State Community College on Friday. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)