

Event teaches students about finances

BY LESLIE BIXLER • Staff writer • March 30, 2010

FREMONT -- To help seniors move from high school to adulthood, Fremont Federal Credit Union and Northwest Ohio Credit Unions joined to present "Finance 101: Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk."

About 150 Ross High School students participated in the event Monday. Students walked through an interactive life-sized game that illustrates the financial demands that exist in the real world.

Peggy Rodriguez, director of marketing for the Fremont Federal Credit Union, said, "We feel it went very well. Students filled out surveys and the tone of the surveys was that the kids enjoyed it."

She said now the students know what to expect, and they know it's better to pay off their credit cards so they don't have to pay interest.

Senior Jennifer Sweeney said she thought it was a great hands-on experience.

"I learned how to manage and budget money," she said.

During the game, high school students learned about earning wages and paying bills, what it costs to run a household, how buying decisions affect earnings and adult responsibilities.

"We wanted them to look at their choices and how much they should spend on haircuts, clothes and groceries," Rodriguez said, noting they also had to learn how to remedy their debt. Their options for

that included getting a second job or budgeting their money.

Ross Principal Jose Hernandez said the community partnership is an example of why he loves this community.

"It just tells you we have community partners to help out in any way they can," he said.

The event opened student's eyes to what they'll be expected to do in a couple months after graduation, he said. He heard some students talking about how they couldn't believe everything that has to be paid.

Students had a checkbook with information about their fictional occupation, salary, whether they had a spouse or not, credit card debt, loans and taxes.

"They had to write a check to themselves first," Rodriguez said, noting they had to write the check for 10 percent of what their salary is. She said paying themselves first was important so they learn to establish a savings.

Students went to 12 stations where they could start a family and pay for daycare, find a place to live, pay for utilities, buy a vehicle, buy groceries, make credit card payments and pay for entertainment.

This was the first time Finances 101 took place in Fremont. Next year, Northwest Ohio Credit Unions will have the event at Terra Community College in Fremont and Bowling Green State University.



Fremont Ross students Jennifer Sweeney and Adam Covell calculate their finances as they take part in the Finances 101 game at the school Monday. (Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger)