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Somerset Tech students intern at high-end resort

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A group of eight Somerset Technology students are fine tuning their job skills at the elite Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort in Farmington.

Those interested in pursuing automotive technology, cosmetology, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and other careers have been interning at the 2,000-acre resort since April 21.

Despite the demands of working at such a reputable resort, workforce preparation coordinator Vanessa Gardner is very pleased with interns' overall attitudes and progress.

"The students have been able to step up to the plate and meet the requirements needed to work in a high-end establishment," she said.

The students have been interning at Nemaocolin one day a week for six weeks, working closely with job mentors and keeping daily journals of their experiences. Travis Vogel (carpentry), Jeremy Clevenger (HVAC), Logan McClintock (HVAC), Corin Young (cosmetology), Melanie Todaro (culinary), Jesse Burnsworth (automotive technology), Neil St.Clair (electrical occupations), and Vawni Reese (marketing and business education) have been building job skills in their desired professions since the end of April.

Gardner said they will be given internship grades May 26.

"We want students to work on their technical, professional development and people skills," she said of the internship.

Jesse Burnsworth, a Berlin junior focusing on automotive mechanics, finds the overall experience beneficial in more ways than one.

"I've developed skills in routine maintenance of company vehicles and gotten to meet so many new people," said Burnsworth. "I can also use this experience for my senior project."

After completing his requirements at the tech center, Burnsworth plans to further his education at the University of Northwestern Ohio.

Vawni Reese enjoyed her experience in business and marketing education at Nemaocolin. "It was a fun and exciting," she said of the internship. "The people were great and the overall experience was so educational."



Automotive technology intern Jesse Burnsworth takes a break from a hectic work day to pose with his mentors at Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort. From left are: chief mechanic Bill Reicholf, Ed Barry, Don Burd, Joe Pirl and intern Jesse Burnsworth. (Submitted photo)

North Star junior Neil St.Clair thinks his time spent doing electrical maintenance at Nemaocolin has been very eye-opening. "It shows you what reality is," he said. "You get to work with people who are way more experienced than you are."

Logan McClintock, a Turkeyfoot sophomore, has acquired new skills in his field of interest as well. While interning at Nemaocolin, McClintock has done mostly maintenance work on the resort's air conditioning system.

His classmate, Turkeyfoot sophomore Jeremy Clevenger, has gained valuable training as well. "I've become more confident in my job skills," he said.

The resort, which includes a zoo, PGA golf course, ski slopes and casino, requires high standards of employee professionalism. These individuals must be trusted with millions of dollars worth of artwork and other valuables, such as a \$1 million Tiffany lamp.

"When you look at what the students are getting - both skills and job certification - it's pretty amazing," said Gardner of the internship.

In fact, Gardner said, eight of the school's 17 programs are teaching entry-level positions at Nemaocolin. Certifications include everything from a cosmetology state board license, to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (gas line) certification, to a fiber optic (electrical) certification. The school's internship was partially funded with grant money from Southern Alleghenies Career Education Partnership for Youth and Goodwill Industries.

Three of the tech center's former students are now working as estheticians at Nemaocolin's renowned spa. The resort draws in wealthy visitors from Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. and has even attracted celebrities like Tiger Woods, Ray Charles and Robin Williams.

Gardner hopes that the Nemaocolin internship will form a solid connection between class lectures and the workforce.

"I want students to understand that what they learn in school is applicable to the real world," she said.

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