

LEADERSHIP ashtabula county LAUNCHpad

LEADERSHIP LAUNCHpad Kicks Off Programming Year in Ashtabula County

ASHTABULA - High School Seniors from all over Ashtabula County participated in their first program day on Thursday, October 4th, as part of LEADERSHIP Ashtabula County's LEADERSHIP LAUNCHpad program.

Participants gathered early in the morning at Grand River Academy to review the agenda for the day, eat breakfast and catch up with each other and LAUNCHpad staff.

"As seniors, their year is packed with events, activities and decisions and they can get really weighed down by stress," LAUNCHpad program manager, Stacy Stevenson said. "We are really excited to have so many seniors choose to spend time with LEADERSHIP Ashtabula County this year and I'm looking forward to sharing these experiences with them as they prepare for the next phase of their lives."

Students traveled to Molded Fiber Glass where CEO Richard Morrison, along with Corporate Director of Information Technology, John O'Neill, Sr., and Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Andy Juhola (LEADERship Class of '95) spent time fielding their questions and engaging in conversation with them.

Students were interested in hearing about workforce challenges, education needed in the field and how the speakers manage their work-life balance.

After an in-depth tour of the facility and manufacturing floor, where MFG has been the fiber reinforced plastic parts manufacturer for the Chevrolet Corvette since 1953, participants transitioned from the industry perspective to agriculture with a trip to Brant's Apple Orchard.

Orchard owner Brian Diehl (LEADERship Class of '09) met with seniors over lunch at the orchard and discussed the challenges of rapid business growth, the nuances and regulations of agriculture, leadership and entrepreneurship. Students also spent time in the orchard exercising their own teamwork and leadership skills with a game of capture the flag.

Edgewood Senior, Katie Eldred recalls the Brant's from her childhood with just one small bakery window and has been impressed with the growth. "Seeing the change in Brant's is amazing. The growth Brian has established is wonderful, especially for a place like Ashtabula." Eldred said. "Brian mentioned the numerous changes that have been made, but what shocked me the most was all the little things that we would not expect to need to be done in order to move the bakery to the other side of the building."

Eldred also commented that prior to their visit she had not been aware of the hiking trails at the orchard. "We played an intense game of capture the flag at Brant's too, which was a great bonding moment for our youth leadership group," Eldred said. "Besides playing capture the flag we paired up and talked with a fellow classmate. I learned a lot about my partner's goals for his future and would love to see them unfold like Brian's did."

LAUNCHPad seniors will meet again on November 1 and participate in activities focused on health, well-being, resiliency and personal growth.

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