



If you could be anyone, who would you be?

"I would be SpongeBob because he's funny, and he has lots of friends and that's my favorite cartoon."

Brittany Wilson, 9, granddaughter of Fred and Julie Hoskins of Greenwood, third grade, North Grove Elementary School



"Timmy Turner from 'Fairly Odd Parents,' because that's my favorite cartoon."

Ellen Jaeger, 9, daughter of Carol and Joe Jaeger of Greenwood, third grade, North Grove Elementary



"My favorite is Obi-Wan Kenobi from Star Wars because he's adventurous and always ready."

Jacob Fisher, 8, son of Andrea and Brant Fisher of Greenwood, third grade, North Grove Elementary



"I would be Dory from 'Finding Nemo' because she's blue and she's my favorite color."

Brooke Pero, 9, son of Kim Pero of Greenwood, third grade, North Grove Elementary



Teenagers find their calling

Class the spark students need to pique interest in the future

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PHOTOS BY MATT OOLEY

Dream of designing roller coasters? Fancy being a veterinarian?

A class at Center Grove High School lets freshmen explore interests that could lead to future careers.

About 1,200 students have taken the required course in the two years it has been offered, the program organizer said.

Other Indiana schools use the program, known as Orientation to Life and Careers. At Center Grove it's called the Keystone class.

"We want them to start looking ahead before they even have a grade-point average," said teacher Becky Kaylor, who runs the program. "Kids need to have a focus from day one."

Students take the course during their first semester. Among other requirements, they research careers and find a professional to follow for a day, Kaylor said.

Students have shadowed hospital workers, doctors, teachers, a Pacer's athletic trainer and pilots, Kaylor said. One student discovered that designing roller coasters could be more fun than riding them. Another found his love of animals leading him toward a career in veterinary science.

After shadowing a professional, students create a computer presentation about their experience, Kaylor said.

"The job shadow is designed so students get some ideas about themselves and apply that interest toward a career," Kaylor said.



Dillon Etter, a Center Grove High School student, trims the toenails of a sheltie named Hope as part of his duties at Bargsville Veterinary Hospital. He became interested in veterinary science after taking a class that emphasizes job opportunities.

Animal-lover sets sights on vet school

A Center Grove teenager spends time after school feeding peanut butter to injured puppies.

Other times, he helps restrain animals, monitor cat and dog heartbeats and schedule pet checkups.

Dillon Etter, 16, is sampling a career in veterinary medicine by working four days a week at Bargsville Veterinary Hospital.

The teenager said his job and his career plan resulted from shadowing a veterinarian for a day as part of a career-information course at Center Grove High School.

"You might have an idea of what might be an interesting career, but your eyes aren't really opened to the possibilities until you get a taste of being there, doing it," Etter said.

He started working in the veterinary office in November 2004. He said he fell in love with the job.

"The course really motivated me to start looking at the vet as a possible career," he said.

Etter is also studying books borrowed from the veterinarian to learn more about the field.

He ranks near the top of his class and is vying for the Vet Scholars Program

offered through Purdue University, which selects six Hoosiers each year for a scholarship in veterinary medicine.

His love of animals is wide-ranging. He watches the cable TV channel Animal Planet at home and spends time with his dog, three cats, iguana and snake.

But he said working at a vet's office has made him certain it's what he wants to do for a career.

"There's something new every day, every hour, and I love that variety," he said.

Etter usually goes to work about 3 p.m. Most of his tasks involve what he calls "dirty work," cleaning up messes sick animals make and preparing them to see the vet, Etter said.

"Basically, I make them as comfortable as possible," he said.

He sometimes puts peanut butter on his fingers and lets dogs lick it off to calm them down.

He also helps get animals ready for surgery and helps with emergency cases that come to the hospital.

"You can't ask for a more happy ending than when you hear someone say thank you for saving their pet's life," he said. "That's a good feeling."



Dillon Etter examines fecal cultures during a recent shift at Bargsville Veterinary Hospital. Etter says he has an affection for animals, especially his dog, three cats, iguana and snake.



Chris Webb uses a program on his computer to simulate his own roller coasters. Webb, a Center Grove High School student, hopes to make a career of designing the rides.

Design hobbyist hopes to coast into profession

He is a teenager who will ride a roller coaster nine times to study its design.

While friends and family might be screaming and waving their arms in the air, Chris Webb has an inquiring look on his face as he studies the ups, downs, turns and twists.

The 15-year-old Center Grove High School student admits he would rather talk about designing a roller coaster than ride on one.

He is intimidated by the bigger ones, he said.

But Webb gets excited about the screaming reactions he hopes to create someday as a roller-coaster designer.

A career course at Center Grove gave the teenager a chance to shadow an engineer at Paramount's Kings Island in Ohio. Webb got a first-hand look at the roller coaster industry.

"This is something I could see myself doing for the next 40 years," he said. "It's the adrenaline of it, the joy of giving someone an escape from their world."

Webb can sit for hours at the computer in his bedroom. The screen has images of roller coasters in the background, appearing as he loads a simulation program to create his own rides, adding fog or tunnels wherever he wants.

"Some of mine you die on," he jokes about his designs. "I like adding in an extra element where they're safe but they don't feel safe."

Webb can trace his love for coasters

back to a trip to Kings Island when he was in elementary school.

"They told me we were going to a car dealership to see a car that was only made in Ohio," he said, tossing a smile at his dad. "We've had season passes ever since."

He remembers looking up and being mesmerized by the twists and turns of the roller coasters.

Through the years, Webb stayed interested in coasters, studying designs in his spare time.

But he did not think of turning his hobby into a job until taking the career class.

The job-shadowing experience opened his eyes as he traveled throughout the theme park in October, when it was closed for the season.

"I saw the business side of the industry," he said.

He learned about how coasters are built and costs associated with maintaining them, Webb said. He also saw some of his favorite rides taken apart.

His dad said the rest of the family enjoys roller coasters, but for different reasons.

"I'll go on for the adrenaline, the joy of riding," Jim Webb said. "And then he'll start telling us about the coaster's speed, how high it is, and all about the design."

Amused by his dad's comment, the younger Webb is undeterred.

"No one wants to hear it, but I think it's important," he said. "They can roll their eyes all they want."

TAKE NOTES

Oh, the places Dr. Seuss has gone in 101 years!

It'll be one fish, two fish, birthday big wish for Dr. Seuss on Thursday.

The Franklin Boys and Girls Club will celebrate the author's birth at 3:30 p.m. at the club, 101 N. Hurricane St. in Franklin.

More than 100 club members will make crafts, listen to books read by Pi Beta Phi fraternity alumnae, receive books and enjoy cupcakes and refreshments.

Nationally, Pi Beta Phi fraternity has partnered with Read Across America to promote reading and literacy. This year's theme is Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel), who was born March 2, 1904.

Scholarship honors senior's accomplishments

Roncalli High School senior Megan Bartholomew has battled diabetes since early childhood.

In honor of the way she has overcome adversity, she received a \$7,500 scholarship at the Abe Lincoln Scholarship Luncheon sponsored by the Downtown Kiwanis Club in Indianapolis.



BARTHOLOMEW

The event honors a student from each high school in Marion County for conquering difficulties.

Student joins ranks of Statehouse pages

Brianna Faris, 13, of Franklin recently served as a legislative page at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis.

Math scholars top other schools for state win

The Roncalli High School Academic Decathlon Team won a state title in math Feb. 11.

The team also won eight individual medals.

Team members include David Barker, Brian Bauman, Michael Burkhart, Thad Corcoran, Jonathon Hall, Aaron Hommel, Anders Kilmark and Meghan Lehman.