

Job Shadow Day takes off

by Jennifer Doran

KMC Schools Liaison Office

Get your job descriptions ready. Tidy up your desk. Get organized. No, it's not time for your inspection, but it is time for Job Shadow Day.

Job Shadow Day takes place Feb. 2 in conjunction with Groundhog Day. Department of Defense Dependent Schools students will be part of a national effort to "shadow" a workplace mentor through the course of a regular work day.

This project provides local students with a first-hand look at how academic skills are applied to a tangible workplace.

"Job Shadow Day is the opportunity for academics and reality to collide," said Sheila Jolivette, KMC Schools Liaison Officer, 435th Mission Support Group. "Sharing your life experiences and professional knowledge with KMC students can help direct their course in life."

KMC sponsors and mentors are invited to host a student to shadow them throughout the morning. The mentor has a responsibility to demonstrate to the student what they, as an individual, and their organization do on a daily basis.

It's about educating them on skills, demonstrating training necessary to perform that job and letting them experience the reality of a workspace, said Ms. Jolivette.

"An important component of Job Shadow Day is helping students understand the relevance of their schoolwork. Students will observe how English, math, problem-solving and other basic skills are used every day on the job," said Jody Black, Social Studies Liaison, Kaiserslautern District Schools.

"When the students return to the classroom in the afternoon, teachers will facilitate as they share their experiences and, hopefully, it will give the young people a new perspective on their studies," she said.

Job shadowing benefits the community by providing students the answer to the inevitable question, "What do I want to be when I grow up?"

Shadowing helps students realize the relevance of their classroom lessons and provides the opportunity to observe a career in action.

It is also an occasion for mentors to share their knowledge and experience for becoming a successful adult in today's society. And, educators gain the student motivation to learn how to apply classroom lessons to a career.

"Job Shadowing can help a student grow into the responsible adult they aspire to be," said Ms. Jolivette. "Students are provided the information to become positive contributors to society. These children are our future leaders, teachers, doctors, lawyers, pilots, priest, chefs, moms and dads."



U.S. Air Force photo by Carla Arnold

Alyssa, a student at Ramstein American Elementary School, gets the chance during last year's Job Shadow Day to be a judge at Ramstein's Legal Office.

The National Job Shadow Day is in its seventh year of existence and boasts more than one million students and 100,000 business participants for 2004.

According to a recent survey by Junior Achievement, American middle and high school students have unrealistic views of their future careers. In fact, one-third of students learned about career choices from job shadowing.

For more information on participating in Job Shadow Day, contact your student's school and submit a completed permission slip or call the KMC Schools Liaison Office at 489-6771.