

LEARNING BY DOING

July 17, 2017 at 4:00 pm | By [Hillary Gavan \(mailto:hgavan@beloitdailynews.com\)](mailto:hgavan@beloitdailynews.com)



Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News Hendricks CareerTek Construction Academy attendees Patrick Gerdeman, Aiden Dutter, Nikaiya Ammons, Alyvia Hartwig and Jacob Hartwig carry a planter box. During the 2-day Academy, students built planter boxes for the city and picnic tables for the Beloit Fire Department.

BELOIT - For youngsters, building things can translate into building confidence.

Area youth attended the Hendricks CareerTek Engineering and Construction Academy last week and were eager to show off their new creations, which included picnic tables and planter boxes. The youngsters said they learned a lot from Corporate Contractors, Inc. (CCI) associates who worked alongside them.

"It was fun sanding and working as a team," said Alyvia Hartwig, 10.

Although Nikaiya Ammons, 15, said she hopes to one day become a criminal lawyer, she fell in love with construction at the two-day academy. She plans to take her first construction class when she gets back to Beloit Memorial High School this fall.

Located at 625 Third St., Suite 300, in the Ironworks Complex, Hendricks CareerTek offers a unique space for employers and students to intersect. It provides students with workshops and educational opportunities in high-demand career fields such as coding, healthcare, construction and trades, manufacturing and

entrepreneurship. This summer CareerTek is offering its engineering and construction academy, a fire ops academy, the chance to join the Hendricks career press and many other opportunities to give kids a taste of the career world. The opportunities are open to kids in the Greater Beloit area. At Thursday's event there were students from Beloit schools as well as Roscoe and Janesville.

At the engineering and construction academy, students designed and built picnic tables to be given to fire station one and planter boxes for the city's parks department.

Marling Lumber donated all the materials for the projects, according to Hendricks CareerTek Business and Education Director Tina Salzman.

The kids also had the opportunity to tour construction sites at the Ironworks as well as at the new YMCA downtown. CCI architect Julia Randles and Hendricks Commercial Properties (HCP) architect Josh Mory taught kids about architectural principles. Lindsey Hartwig of CCI and Salzman led the Academy which focused heavily on hands-on activities.

"We partner the business community alongside kids and open up that world," Salzman said.

Kana Wong, 14, said he hopes to one day be an architect and wanted to learn how to build and learn about tools. He said working with so many people at once was a challenge which taught him teamwork.

Patrick Gerdeman said he wanted to learn to do the things his dad can do and found he learned a lot in a short amount of time.

"Every 16 tenths of an inch counts," Gerdeman said.

Salzman said the fire ops academy is the next opportunity for youth age 15-21. As of Thursday, there were still openings. Attendees will work alongside area firefighters, learn to wear gear, use tools and learn about basic life saving measures.

For more information on CareerTek programming people can visit hendrickscareertek.org or call 262-203-3942.