

Students reflect on job training program

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Four Minneota students have been participating in Work-Based Learning, which is a collaboration of business employers and the high school.

The four students in the program are Brooke Moore, Isabel Bruner, Abby Frie and Ava Larson.

David Moriarty supervises the program, while also teaching business classes at the high school here.

"The students supported through the semester in gaining valuable insight into careers of interest," he said. "For example, students are asked to journal daily about their experience, noting what they like and dislike. Feedback and encouragement are provided. Weekly assignments are also given to deepen student learning and add academic rigor to the course."

Work-Based Learning, which is also often referred to as On the Job Training, provides students the experience of working in a field that relates to the potential career these students are considering. This program also allows students to connect knowledge gained in class with a workplace setting.

"Students enter the program with an idea about a career or interest," Moriarty said. "They are asked to contact local businesses to determine if they are interested in providing on-the-job training, so that part is self-guided. Students also take a career assessment that suggest multiple career options."

The Work-Based Learning typically lasts one semester, although it can last as long as needed.

"In many ways, Work-Based Learning allows students to test drive a career before investing time and money pursuing education without even knowing if they like the job," Moriarty explained. "On-the-job training will enable students to understand that a future career will be a good fit, providing the students with confidence."

Moore, Bruner, Frie and Larson shared their experiences working with those businesses:



Brooke Moore

BROOKE MOORSE

For OJT, I work at Runnings in Canby, and my supervisor is Brenda Alley. I have been working at Runnings in Canby since June 24, 2021.

Through OJT I have been able to connect with more people from both

the Minneota and Canby communities and have been given the opportunity to compare them. I have met many different people while working in Canby and have made a lot of connections through my boss and supervisor.

Work-based learning has taught me to be more considerate to those working in retail, mainly for the fact we have to do quite a bit of work to make the store look perfect. Besides adjusting things in the store, we also have to handle customers who come to us with their problems. We end up handling different types of animal feed, car merchandise, paint, gardening, and a lot of toys.

We rearrange the store, give great customer service, and create friendships with each new employee and customer. Working in the smallest Runnings store has given me more opportunities than if I was working in a bigger store.

Work-based learning is getting out into the real world and working at your job site where you see the ins and outs of the job and how it could be in the real world. You get treated as if you were another adult working there, and you are able to see the different dynamics of the job. It's a really good opportunity for those entering the workforce after high school, or those who want to see if they can work in college.

While working at Runnings, my co-workers and I have had a lot of laughs. A large majority of my co-workers are older and more experienced in the job, so if I were to have a question I know where to go to ask. I really enjoy the people I work with, and the relationships I've created with my co-workers will give me laughs for a lifetime.

My plans for after high school are to attend South Dakota State University for Agriculture Education, to hopefully obtain my Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with my teaching certificate.



Isabel Bruner

ISABEL BRUNER

At my OJT, I helped out with anything the Tri-County Veterinary Clinic in Taunton needed help with. My main supervisor was Trish Bordewyk, although I work with everyone there.

Work-based training helped me grow as a person, because it has shown me great communication skills, and great helping skills. At the vet clinic, I get to see amazing procedures, and I got to help and learn how to help animals in need. Something I really enjoyed on site was getting to see all

the cases up close and learning how to help and getting hands-on experience. My favorite part was working with the large animals. Although I love working with the small animals, it was very interesting working with the large animals.

Another great thing was getting to see all the animals coming in. Some were brought in just for shots and others for more serious injuries.

Work-based training is a great way to find jobs that you will be interested in as you get older. Finding a career can be hard for you to do and doing On the Job training is a great way to find the perfect way to find your perfect job.

I have always been interested in working at a veterinary clinic and doing OJT has given me the opportunity to see and work in an amazing clinic with amazing people. At this vet clinic they are great teachers and can answer any questions I have. They also teach me many new things that I had not known about before. They have really helped me with my knowledge of other animals and have helped me understand how to help animals in any situation.

Although there are many great experiences and learning opportunities it is not always easy working with animals. Sometimes there are hard decisions you need to make working with animals, but it is what is best for the animals. Even though it can be a hard choice, it needs to be made even when you don't want to make the choice. Overall, I loved working at the Tri-County Veterinary Clinic.

ABBY FRIE

My work-based learning site was with Sarah Stassen in the 3rd-grade math class at Minneota Public Schools.



Abby Frie

I was able to see my learning in practice by letting the student inform me on what they know and go from there. I learned about the different ways that kids learn and how every single one of them has the chance to succeed given the right tools.

At first, I enrolled in this class because I was unsure what I wanted to do with my life after high school. After working with the students and making personal connections with the students, I now know that my calling is to be a teacher because I want to help shape the future, starting with the youth.

The field experience increased my knowledge of the profession to really get a feel of how much work it truly takes to be a good teacher. Mrs.

Stassen spends a lot of time perfecting her lessons in and out of the classroom but shows true selflessness in the profession. She truly loves her students and wants to see them succeed every single day. You can see in her work ethic and attitude how much she loves being a teacher. She does endless research to better her understanding of a child's ability to learn and what helps them learn faster and more efficiently.

I realize that the job is more than teaching children but also building their character and teaching them more than state standards and required curriculum. Teaching is a sacrifice made to shape the future, but with the right mindset and a genuine passion, then we can do more than just give children knowledge.

AVA LARSON

Ava Larson took on the challenge and enrolled in the "On The Job Training" class so that she could receive some experience in the classroom to help her make a decision about her future.



Ava Larson

Her work-based learning site is in Mr. Larson's 5th-grade classroom. When Larson graduates from high school, she is still unsure what she wants to do for college, but this class helped her narrow it down a little bit.

"This class has helped me grow as a person by stepping out of my comfort zone a little bit," Larson said. "I also got to grow closer with all of the students."

Larson is in the 5th-grade classroom right away in the morning from 8-9 a.m. every day. At that time, the 5th graders just have a study hall hour.

"Every day I help the students with whatever homework that they have due," she said. "Sometimes, I even get in a little group with them to help them on their math IXLs. Something that I really like about being at my work site is just being able to be with the kids and help them in any way that I can."

Larson describes the work-based learning course as a great way to receive experience before going right into the work field.

"I would highly recommend taking this course," she said. "If you are on the fence about going into a certain field, this course helps you get experience from a field of work to help you gain some knowledge about that certain field. During my experience, I have been able to see a little bit more on what actual goes into teaching other than what everyone thinks."

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But when McCoy went to board the plane, local authorities claimed his test was positive and that his passport numbers were documented incorrectly. The documents were written in French so McCoy was unable to read them but figured everything was fine after being told he tested negative.

McCoy was then placed under quarantine in a run-down and mold-infested room in a former hotel with several others, although he was the only American. Packard returned to the United States to attend to matters at home and waited for McCoy to return.

But hours turned into days, and days turned into weeks. The story became widespread news and McCoy was getting support from many people he didn't even know, besides family and friends.

Even though McCoy eventually was allowed to be placed under house arrest at a place Grinder had rented out, he was treated more like a criminal than a brief visitor to the country. He was not allowed to see all of his test results, had to pay for those he did get to look at, was required to pay for the guards who made sure he

didn't try to leave, and did not receive adequate food or water.

The U.S. Embassy personnel finally convinced the Togolese prosecutor to allow him to finish his quarantine at the rented home of Grinder and his brother, Trever, who stayed in Togo as long as McCoy was being held there.

Every time McCoy figured he was going to get to leave the country, something else came up such as his test was positive, he needed to quarantine longer, and finally that he was charged with falsifying his test result because he signed a French-written document that he figured was accurate and Togo officials claimed it wasn't.

Eventually, more drama unfolded as the prosecutor ended up arresting McCoy, who was facing a hefty fine and a possible prison sentence. Instead of trying to fight the charges with the U.S. Embassy personnel as he had been trying to do, McCoy did some research and hired Sousupke.

Casey stood before the judge on Wednesday, Jan. 12 and pled not guilty to all charges. The prosecutor asked for a six-month prison sentence with no suspended time and a \$2 million CFA fine (\$3,500 in American money).

The court case dragged on and on as the prosecutor grilled McCoy and attempted to cor-

ner him into saying something that could be used against him.

"I just told the truth," McCoy said. "Because the facts were the truth."

McCoy had written down what he wanted to tell the judge when he was allowed to give his final statement. His attorney felt his words were perfect.

"I knew I couldn't cry, and I needed to be strong," McCoy said. "That's what everyone over there was telling me."

As the judge was about to read her verdict, Sousupke placed his hand on McCoy's shoulder. Danial, who was interpreting, placed his arm around McCoy's back.

"I thought to myself, whatever happens, happens," McCoy said.

As the judge read the verdict, McCoy had no idea what she was saying in French. Bryan Cox of the U.S. Embassy told him the judge found him guilty to six months in prison, but the sentence had been suspended.

McCoy was also fined 500,000 CFA (\$900).

"I was on cloud nine," McCoy said. "I was so ready to get out of there."

First, though, McCoy had to return to the police station to fill out paperwork to be released. He then returned to the house he stayed at while under house arrest.

"We still had a lot of things to do before we (Casey and the Grinder brothers) could fly back home, but we had it all planned out to get everything done the next day (Thursday, Jan. 13)," McCoy told.

Among the things that needed to be done was to take the COVID test again, extend their visas, get new passport photos taken, reserve airline tickets, and get all documents printed out for the airline when they checked in.

Meanwhile, the three guys checked into a nice hotel in Togo to shower, swim in the pool and feel like they had more freedom after being locked down for so long.

Even though there were a few delays, the men got everything done on Thursday and awaited their test results. The Grinders both tested negative, but McCoy's test came back positive.

"I called the U.S. Embassy to ask them what was going on and they couldn't believe it," McCoy explained. "There said there was absolutely no way possible it could be positive."

The embassy personnel called McCoy back later and had arranged for him to meet with the director of the lab of Health and Sciences.

"She told me that they were aware that people were having the same issue as I was and

that she would run the sample differently," McCoy explained. "She didn't charge me for the test, even though I had to pay for all the other tests."

In all, McCoy took 10 COVID tests while in Togo. He was told he would get the results of this last test by 5 p.m. that same day.

The result never came that day, so McCoy and the Grinders drove to the lab at 9 a.m. on Saturday (Jan. 15) and waited for the director to arrive.

The tests were negative, the men said their goodbyes and hurried to the airport to make it in the required two hours before the flight was scheduled.

"When I went to check in, the guy didn't run a code or anything. He just glanced at my papers and said, 'You're good'. If they had done that in the first place, I wouldn't have been here for a month."

But the dilemma wasn't quite finished. When they men went through customs, McCoy was told that his test result didn't count because he hadn't paid for it. As had happened throughout his ordeal in Togo, authorities requested money from him for many things.

"We each gave him a few bucks and he just put it in his pocket and let us go through," McCoy noted. "The nightmare was finally over."

The three men arrived in

New York at 5:15 p.m. (CST), checked into a hotel and cleaned up. They flew to Minneapolis and arrived at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday. Lacie picked Casey up and drove him back to Minneota where he celebrated Christmas with his mom and stepdad, Lois and Vernon Heald, along with other family members.

"Lacie held my hand the whole way back from Minneapolis," said McCoy. "When I saw Ellie (his 11-year-old daughter), she jumped in my arms, and we held each other tight."

McCoy missed out on Christmas, New Year's and his daughter's birthday while being held unfairly in Togo.

Later that night, McCoy returned to his home in Dell Rapids, SD.

"It's good to be home," he said. "It's still all hard to believe. I just can't thank everyone enough for all the love and support they've shown me. My family, Lacie, my friends, and a lot of people I don't even know. It means so much to me."

Obviously, he means a lot to them, too.

NOTE: Friends have set up a GoFundMe account to help defray some of the costs Casey amassed during his quarantine/house arrest time in Togo. That link is <https://gofundme>.

Vikings win 9th Grade state consolation title



The Minneota 9th grade-and-under wrestling team claimed the consolation championship at the team state tournament this past weekend in Mora.

The state tournament included 24 teams from all classes that qualified.

Minneota went 5-1 in the tournament. The Vikings beat Foley 34-28, lost to Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton 52-22, then defeated Fulda 47-25, Rosemount 50-26, Hastings 48-29 and Foley by rule.

Minneota qualified for the state tournament by placing third in the state qualifying tournament the previous weekend. In that meet, Minneota defeated Redwood Valley 72-6, lost to United 38-30, beat New Ulm 48-32 and topped Canby 45-17.

Members of the team were Kaden Lasnetski, Blake Mead, Adam DeVlaeminck, Quinton Anderson, Cael Fier, Chase Johnson, Destin Fier, Browdy Lozinski, Brock Fier, Eli Gruenes, Kyson Arndt, Noah Gorecki, Kyler Lozinski, Matt Gamrak, Heydan Danielson, and Sam Myhre. Managers were Hunter Danielson and Nolan Van Keulen.

Minneota coaches were Wade Gillund, Brock Buysse, Kris Fier, Drew Bouwman and Matt Buysse.

Students

2 on SE Tech President's List

Braxton Downing of Ivanhoe and Logan Sussner of Minneota were recently named to the President's List at Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls.

To attain this recognition, students must be degree-seeking with a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Downing is enrolled in Information Technology Security, and Sussner is enrolled in the Electrician program.

3 named to LATI President's List

Zachary Hennen, Evan Moore and Grady Moore, all of Minneota, have been named to the Lakes Area Technical College's President's List.

The President's List is limited to full-time students who have achieved a semester grade-point-average of 3.5 to 4.0. Evan Moore achieved a 4.0 GPA.

Schuelke on Alex Tech Dean's List

Logan Schuelke of Minneota was named to the Dean's List at Alexandria Technical & Community College for academic excellence during the fall semester.

Those named to the Dean's List have achieved a GPA of 3.5 or higher.