

APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE



Martha Ponge
Director of Apprenticeship

Summer Manufacturing Bootcamp in Full Swing

On day one of our Summer Manufacturing Bootcamp we asked our 14 and 15-year-old campers, primarily from the Syracuse City School District, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Even though half of our campers are enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs within the district, the answers – to a great extent – still included the common favorites of doctor, lawyer, and professional athlete. While those are noble professions to aspire to, I still wonder why the answers to this question never seems to change.

The only way to change the paradigm is to expose the kids to what other careers exist. Enter Sunoco, Bartell Machinery, CPP, and Manth Brownell who opened their doors to our 26 boot campers and offered a firsthand view of what career opportunities are available at their facilities as well as what a typical day looks like.

Our camp was brought to life out of a discussion with MJ Piraino, the new Operations Director at CNY Works, Jennifer McCullough from Working Solutions and the American Apprenticeship Initiative, and the Apprenticeship team at MACNY. It was our mutual goal to work with this age group to offer foundational employability skills and exposure to the world of manufacturing in Central New York. Students in the 14 to 15-year-old age group are rarely qualified to find summer employment opportunities. We hoped that the camp would position them for meaningful employment opportunities with our companies next summer, after they turn 16.

We used the “What STEM Am I” survey to introduce the students to the many jobs available in advanced manufacturing and the skill sets necessary to initially enter those types of jobs. We worked on applied work skills through in-class modules on decision making, conflict resolution, and dependability. The students took classes to upgrade their Microsoft Office skills, where the emphasis was on utilizing a consistent process to maximize our efficiency with the programs. We used Sketch Up to introduce students to 3D modeling and did hands on projects that enhanced creativity and team building skills. Microsoft Excel was introduced to help campers create a budget for managing their first paychecks and a SEFCU representative was brought in to help with money management.

All of our efforts, while valuable and well received were perhaps a close second to the field trips to our MACNY member companies, who all participate in the Apprenticeship Program. The visits to the facilities offered an opportunity to see facilities they never knew existed and many job titles they had never heard of. Students who lacked firsthand knowledge of manufacturing were asking well thought out questions stemming from a genuine curiosity in what they were seeing and what they researched the days before. We all enjoyed the time we spent with these students. We liked the opportunity to be a part of their summer and building relationships. We hope that next summer we will be able to do this again and that all of our companies will want to engage with our youth. The chance to build the pipeline is gone in the blink of an eye!

