



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FBEP ANNOUNCES NEW WORKFORCE PROGRAMMING

Uniontown, PA – The Fayette Business Education Partnership is proud to announce its recent receipt of almost \$75,000 in funding to support the next round of in-school, youth workforce development programming in Fayette County.

As the Fayette Chamber of Commerce's workforce development initiative, FBEP graciously accepted more than \$50,000 in grant funds and \$25,000 in corporate donations ahead of the 2019-20 school year.

The chamber, Fayette's largest and most active business advocacy and marketing organization, created the Fayette Business Education Partnership in 2012, in response to the need for quality, skilled employees countywide.

The partnership works directly with Fayette County's six school districts, local workforce development organizations and hundreds of regional businesses. Its programming aims to unite local students with our business community, in the hopes of guiding the students to good, family-sustaining jobs here in Fayette County.

Chamber executive director and FBEP co-chair Muriel Nuttall said all Pennsylvania schools are required to put a career pathway in place for every student.

"One of the goals of the Fayette Business Education Partnership is to provide programming that helps schools fulfill their career pathway requirements, while helping our students find valuable careers," Nuttall said. "There is power in bringing students and teachers together with our business community - from entrepreneurs to manufacturing, to healthcare. Pulling the professionals together with the learners creates enthusiasm and sparks career awareness."

Some FBEP programs are created with the goal of generating interest in fields that weren't previously considered by students, noted Janet Ward, Westmoreland Fayette Workforce Investment Board Youth Programs Coordinator and FBEP co-chair. One such program is the Williams Fay*West*Greene Mechanical Arm Challenge, a fluid hydraulic and pneumatic competition for middle schoolers.

"Watching young people come into a room with no idea of the basics of hydraulics and pneumatics and walk out a few hours later having built a mechanical arm using fluid power is amazing," Ward said. "The students are engaged in a program that can make them think about engineering fields and they get excited about the process and the competition."

Another returning program this school year is Spark! Fayette, a full, broad-based entrepreneurship curriculum, which has been greatly expanded and gives students both real-world experience and a chance to win prize money.

Spark! Fayette will include middle and high school participants and culminate in a business pitch competition, similar to the popular reality television show “Shark Tank.”

FBEP Coordinator Kathi Hull said two job expos are planned during the school year to introduce the business community to Fayette’s high school sophomores and seniors, as they prepare to enter the workforce or proceed to post-secondary education, respectively.

“This program is a great example of teamwork, as we bring several partners to work with our students and job seekers,” Hull added. “FBEP is proud to work with PA CareerLink Fayette, the Westmoreland Fayette Workforce Investment Board, Herald Standard Newspaper, and the Uniontown Mall. It is a driven group with a mission of getting our students and residents into good, family-sustaining jobs.”

September’s expo will focus on the 10th graders as they refine their career paths and interest areas, while February’s event will focus on seniors as they prepare to graduate, as well as college students. Both expos will also be geared toward local job seekers.

Two brand new FBEP initiatives for 2019-20 are Fayette Youth Leads and Plant, Pack and Grow!

Kicking off next summer, Fayette Youth Leads will be a pure leadership program which brings together some of the county’s engaged 10th to 12th grade students to learn about effective communication, appreciating differences, teambuilding, conflict resolution, goal setting, decision making, community mapping and community leadership.

During the school year, Plant, Pack and Grow! will focus on our area’s agriculture and food manufacturing industry. In partnership with several local and statewide organizations, the program will introduce youth to industry representatives and help them discover the many existing and developing opportunities within the food manufacturing industry.

“This program is a priority to Fayette County, where agriculture continues to be a leading industry,” Hull said.

Finally, the Fayette Business Education Partnership is proud to announce the receipt of funds for the Future Fayette Workforce Teacher in the Workplace Cohort 2 program.

Last year, 25 high school teachers representing all six local school districts, as well as the Fayette Career and Technical Institute and Connellsville Career and Technology Center, worked with approximately 100 local businesses and organizations to develop curriculum to bring the real world of manufacturing and healthcare to their students.

“The strength of the program was in bringing multi-disciplinary teachers together and helping them shape the message of the availability of good jobs right here in western Pennsylvania,” Hull said, adding Teacher II will grow to include more than 30 middle and high school teachers and focus on STEAM careers and professional learning communities.

STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

The program will once again visit a variety of local businesses, as well as unite our schools’ administrations and local legislators in tackling the workforce crisis.

In addition to the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, FBEP proudly partners with the Westmoreland Fayette Workforce Investment Board, Intermediate Unit 1, Catalyst Connection, Williams – Laurel

Mountain Midstream, Penn State Fayette – The Eberly Campus, Penn State Extension, Republic Food Enterprise Center, PA CareerLink Fayette County, Herald-Standard Newspaper and Uniontown Mall.

For more information, call the chamber at 724-437-4571 or visit www.fayettechamber.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the 2016 Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

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