

Spring-Ford High School Students Get Hands-On Experience with Shadowing Program

Five Spring-Ford Area School District Advanced Placement (AP) Biology students were able to get real world-field experience through a new hands-on shadowing program at Rockland Immunochemicals, Inc. on May 20.

Following the shadowing program, students created posters and presentations about what they learned during their time at Rockland on June 2. Students then had the opportunity to compete for a summer internship in 2015, which will be given to one of them. The winner will be decided through a poll on Rockland's Facebook page. The winner will be announced at the end of the summer.

"Students valued the hands-on opportunities provided by this experience," teacher Mary Ann Group said. "We offer other job shadowing opportunities, but this was unique since the students did more than just observe. They geared up in lab coats, hair nets, goggles, and shoe booties, and worked in the lab."

Once in the lab, students were able to learn the steps and techniques scientists use to study cells and keep their samples uncontaminated. Additionally, they worked with new equipment that is only available in the professional fields. Besides hands-on opportunities, the students were able to observe scientists harvesting cells and preparing them for fusions.

"Being able to shadow scientists at Rockland was a rewarding opportunity," senior Amanda Vangieri said. "I learned a lot of new exciting information. I am very thankful for this opportunity."

"We want to incentivize student to go into science fields," Rockland Director of Research and Development Dr. Karin Abarca Heidemann said. "And this gives them an opportunity to see that medicinal sciences can be applied in other careers besides being a doctor. We want to support the education of young scientist who could be our future. This program, our college internship program and the Joy Cappel 2014 Young Investigator Award are examples of how Rockland reaches out to the community to help future scientists succeed."

"This experience was great," senior Harrison Pajovich said. "In class you learn the basic tenets of biology, but once you step in the lab you can see how everything you learn comes together."



(Left to right) Rockland Director of Research and Development Dr. Karin Abarca Heidemann, Limerick Township Supervisor Elaine Dewan, Spring-Ford Senior High School teacher Mary Ann Group, senior Amanda Vangieri, senior Harrison Pajovich, junior Alexandra Rich, junior Hans Kumar, junior Malcolm Hoffman, Spring-Ford Senior High School Principal Patrick Nugent, Rockland Laboratory Director Dr. Carl Ascoli.