January 2016

Dear Career Carnival Presenter,

On Thursday May 12, 2016 Colchester Middle School will be hosting a Career Carnival for our 8th grade students. We would be honored to have you join us as a presenter to help the students at Colchester Middle School explore a variety of careers in interactive, hands-on presentations. Our goal is for these presentations to grab students’ attention and inspire them to consider their future. Below is some additional information about the day.

**Outline for the day (Tentative Schedule)**

* 8:10-8:40: Set up time for presenters
* 8:45-9:35: Session #1
* 9:40-10:30: Session #2
* 10:35-11:25: Session #3

You will be presenting to three groups of 10-15 students, all the students are in the 8th grade. There will be a CMS faculty member present with each group as well as a volunteer to help keep track of time and assist you if any needs arise.

In most sessions, presenters with different job roles but with similar goals and themes will be presenting together in one classroom. (For example, in a cluster with the theme of “Happy Pets” there might be a vet, a behaviorist, and a groomer.) In some cases, co-presenters will be actual colleagues; in other cases, they come from different but similar work environments. You may be with 1-2 other presenters talking about a variety of careers in that theme. Once you have confirmed your willingness to participate someone from our committee will provide you with the contact information of the other presenters in your theme.

**Career Carnival Goals**

We're hoping that kids walk away from each session with a sense of:

* What you do for work
* What skills and values are needed to do what you do
* How it connects to school (i.e., how what students now study connects to what you do!)
* A bit of your personal story (i.e. how you came to choose the work and life that you have chosen)

**Making it Hands-On!**

Middle grade students learn by doing. Ideally, students will come to understand your career by trying for themselves a small bit of what your job entails. What follows are a few simple ways to approach thinking about how to make your presentation hands-on:

1. Consider Bringing Props

“Props” can be anything tangible that you work with. Examples include:

* A carpenter might bring a plumb line, a standard level, and a laser-level
* A lab scientist might bring a microscope and a few slides
* A choreographer might bring video clips of a routine
* A meteorologist might bring a barometer or a link to real-time weather data
1. Consider Having Kids “Do What You Do”

There’s no better way for students to understand what your job entails than to put them in your shoes. A case study or a real-world challenge is a great way to do that! Examples: A radiologist could ask students to interpret and diagnose x-rays.

* A cake decorator might have students practice piping a rosette.
* A guitarist could have students attempt to match a particular sound by routing an amp through different sets of pedals
* An athletic trainer could have kids practice a basic knee-wrap.

NOTE: We’re hoping that kids leave the Career Carnival with a better idea of what people in different careers *actually do!*  As such, it’s best when students are actually trying for themselves the element of your work that you want them to know about. Using the last example, please consider and reflect on the following activities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Best! | *Presenter facilitates an activity in which each kid can try the wrap!* |
| Better Yet | *Presenter has a student try out the wrap in front of the group* |
| Better | *Presenter demonstrates how to wrap a knee* |
| Good | *Presenter talks concretely about treating injuries* |

Certainly, some kinds of work are more amenable to kids “trying it out” than others. And yet nearly all job roles have at least one element that kids can experience. Think about what element of your job you might have kids try out!

1. Consider Having Kids Tackle a “Real-World Problem”

This may be a good approach if your work is less “hands-on”—and if there are few props to bring with you. A few examples:

* A mediator could bring an example of a real dispute (names changed, of course) and have students debate or role play the different sides in the conflict
* An architect could bring in images of several sites for a new development; kids could then review each site based on criteria and determine the best site.

**Thoughts on Planning and Collaboration**

The thematic nature of Colchester’s Career Carnival is really quite exciting. It is our hope that students leave each “theme-based session” with a sense that there is a multitude of possible job roles awaiting them—and that each of those diverse roles is necessary to make a community and an economy thrive.

The challenge of organizing our event thematically, however, is clear: Since each session will be facilitated by more than one community practitioner, it’s important that presenters connect beforehand to coordinate their time together.

There is no “right” way to do this. There are a few questions, however, that you may way to address together once the planning has begun:

* How might you use the theme that links the various jobs in your session to your advantage? How might that theme be reinforced?
* What will students *do* during their time with you?
* Will you have students do the same thing in each of your three sessions? Or will you mix it up a bit, and have different groups experience different things?
* Will students rotate between “stations” within the session, or will you be facilitating the session together with your co-presenter?
* How will you fit it all in? (You’ll want to balance making time for what you yourself want to present or facilitate with the need to leave time for questions at the end.)

The good news is that we’re here to help. Please use any member of the Planning Committee as a resource in the coming weeks. Especially as you begin to think about what you’ll do with students, we’re happy to act as sounding boards!

Thank you for considering being a presenter at the Colchester Career Carnival. Someone from our committee will be following up with you in the near future. If you decide to participate we will help you to connect with your co-presenter and then be in contact again in April with day-of details for you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions you may have. I can be reached by phone at 264-5817 or email pawlusiakk@csdvt.org.

Sincerely,

Kara Pawlusiak

School Counselor