

How Sweet It Is: Students sample Mel-O-Cream careers

Hot, fresh donuts - enough to make the mouth water!

That is exactly what happened at Farmingdale Elementary Monday when Mel-O-Cream International, Inc. rolled into town.

The team of presenters comprised of Dave Ryan, Human Resources Director, Chad Larson, Quality Control, and Jim McGowan, Transportation Supervisor, spoke to wide-eyed fourth grade students about the variety of career opportunities available at their production facility located west of Springfield near Curran.

Students at Farmingdale have been listening to a variety of speakers over the past two weeks in order to prepare for the annual Rite of Passage career project required of all fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students in Pleasant Plains.

After hearing the speakers, the students will write a report about their chosen career and develop a PowerPoint Presentation to visually display information about their future endeavors. Mel-O-Cream's partnership with Farmingdale helped students to see a local business that relies upon employees in a variety of positions to help produce a product with which students are familiar.

"I eat at Mel-O-Cream often, and I like to try something different every time," stated fourth-grader Kristi Biggs.

During the Mel-O-Cream presentation, students were awestruck as they had the opportunity to see Larson heat glazed and cake donuts (previously thawed from the Mel-O-Cream frozen dough line of products) to 200 degrees and then cover them with a stream of perfectly sweetened glaze.

Once the donuts had cooled slightly, students had a chance to take a walk in Larson's shoes

and become Mel-O-Cream's newest quality control agents.

"It was cool to see the donuts being glazed and sampling them," said fourth grader Justin Cain after hearing that Mel-O-Cream samples from each batch of donuts produced at the plant.

"It was two thumbs up - Mel-O-Cream is great!" noted another student, Ashley Engle. Students were also impressed to learn that donuts not meeting quality specifications are shipped away and turned into poultry feed.

Transportation Supervisor Jim McGowan provided students with the opportunity to see the transit side of Mel-O-Cream by allowing them to explore the hauling capacity of a semi-tractor trailer. Students enjoyed seeing the inside of the cab, and they especially relished the opportunity to see the sleeping quarters.

"I always wondered if they would have enough room, and now I know that they do," said student Abigail Weiteers.

McGowan expressed to the students that drivers need to put safety first and also have strengths in mathematics, computer skills, and record keeping. Mel-O-Cream International, Inc. transports its frozen dough prod-

ucts to over 30 cities in 12 different states.

"I didn't know that they drove semis, I just thought they made donuts for Springfield," said Chris Moore, fourth grader.

One of the final steps of the day was a question and answer session with Human Resources Director Dave Ryan. Ryan stressed to the students the need to be a team player and work in a collaborative environment, using the analogy of members of an orchestra.

He relayed to the students that one instrument cannot play an entire piece alone, just as one person cannot run the plant alone - it takes a team. He also noted that students wishing to work in the manufacturing or food science industry should consider a strong background in mathematics, science, and technology.

Mel-O-Cream International, Inc. utilizes highly sophisticated technology as well as robotics in order to carry out the facility's daily functions, which helps to yield over one million donuts each week, in addition to the other lines of products produced.

For a virtual tour of the Mel-O-Cream facilities, visit their website at www.mel-o-cream.com.



Austin Ruzik and Heide Van De Bur explore the cab of one of Mel-O-Cream's semi-tractor trailers.

Auburn Office Hours

Monday - Wednesday

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