

A World of Their Own

By Kelsey Kennedy

INDIANAPOLIS (OCTOBER 22, 2010) – TAKE A LEISURELY WALK THROUGH THE NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION CAREER SHOW AND YOU’LL PROBABLY END UP LEAVING WITH A TREASURE TROVE OF KEY CHAINS, PENS, A RANDOM ASSORTMENT OF OTHER PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS, AND A HANDFUL OF BUSINESS CARDS. AFTERWARD, YOU CAN WALK ACROSS THE HALL FOR A PLETHORA OF INTERESTING WORKSHOPS. FOR FFA MEMBERS, THIS IS A WORTHWHILE WAY TO SPEND AN AFTERNOON (OR TWO). FOR THEIR TEACHERS, COLLECTING BUSINESS CARDS AND PROMOTIONAL PENS IS NOT THE MOST PRODUCTIVE OR EXCITING AFTERNOON. FORTUNATELY FOR TEACHERS, AN ENTIRE SECTION OF THE CAREER SHOW WAS DEDICATED TO THEM.

TEACHERS’ WORLD OCCUPIED A SMALL SECTION OF THE CAREER SHOW AT THE 83RD NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION, BUT IT WASN’T LACKING IN INFORMATION. ACROSS THE HALL, TEACHERS COULD TAKE A BREAK IN THE INTERNET CAFÉ, OR TAKE A CLASS IN ANY ONE OF THE THREE INTERACTIVE TEACHER CLASSROOMS. THE CAREER FAIR SECTION AND WORKSHOPS AIMED TO GIVE TEACHERS A CHANCE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PRODUCTS AND TOPICS THAT THEY COULD INTEGRATE INTO THEIR CLASSROOMS. THE INTERACTIVE TEACHER CLASSROOMS WERE LOCATED IN THE CAREER FAIR FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, BUT WERE MOVED TO SEPARATE ROOMS ACROSS FROM THE EXHIBIT HALLS. THE TEACHERS’ WORLD SECTION OF THE CAREER FAIR IS RELATIVELY NEW, AND COMES WITH THE DECISION TO ORGANIZE THE CAREER SHOW INTO SECTIONS FOCUSING ON DIFFERENT TOPICS.

A TOTAL OF 31 COMPANIES HAD PRODUCTS OR SERVICES ON DISPLAY IN TEACHERS’ WORLD. THEY RANGED FROM CURRICULUMS PACKAGES TO LAB KITS TO COMPUTER PROGRAMS, ALL DESIGNED TO LIVEN UP LESSON PLANS. MANY OF THE COMPANIES FOCUSED ON AGRISCIENCE EDUCATION. THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS PROJECT, CURRICULUM FOR AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE EDUCATION (CASE), HAD REPRESENTATIVES ON SITE TO TELL TEACHERS ABOUT THEIR FULL-YEAR CURRICULUMS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. LAB-AIDS REPRESENTATIVES WERE ON HAND TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMPLETE LAB KITS COVERING TOPICS SUCH AS FOOD SAFETY, TOXICOLOGY, BIOFUELS, AND EVEN DNA, RNA AND PROTEIN SYNTHESIS. TECHNOLOGY COMPANY, VERNIER WAS AT THE CAREER FAIR FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHOWCASING THEIR DATA COLLECTION SENSORS AND INTERFACE SYSTEMS DESIGNED FOR STUDENT LAB ACTIVITIES. ALL OF THE EXHIBITORS IN TEACHERS’ WORLD OFFERED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT WERE DESIGNED TO HELP TEACHERS CREATE CLASSES THAT ALLOWED STUDENTS TO LEARN ABOUT REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS OF AGRISCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, IN AN INQUIRY-BASED ENVIRONMENT.

THE THREE INTERACTIVE TEACHER CLASSROOMS FEATURED A TOTAL OF 19 DIFFERENT CLASSES HELD OVER THE COURSE OF THREE DAYS. IN THE DUPONT AGRISCIENCE CLASSROOM, CLASSES FOCUSING ON PHOTOSYNTHESIS, WATER, AND TOXICOLOGY. IN THE

PFIZER ANIMAL HEALTH CLASSROOM, IMMUNOLOGY, VACCINES AND SWINE AND EQUINE HEALTH WERE THE FOCUS OF THE CLASSES. ORGANIC AGRICULTURE, DIVERSITY AND CANINE TRAINING WERE AMONG THE TOPICS COVERED IN CLASSES IN THE THIRD INTERACTIVE TEACHER CLASSROOM.

SHARON MATZGER, A TEACHER FROM BASHA, ARIZ., SAID SHE ATTENDS THE WORKSHOPS ALMOST EVERY YEAR. SHE APPRECIATES THE CLEAR, PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THE CLASSES GIVE HER SOMETHING TO DO WHILE HER STUDENTS ARE EXPLORING THE CAREER FAIR. HER FAVORITE ASPECT OF THE CLASSES, THOUGH, IS SIMPLE: "I THINK IT'S JUST NEW IDEAS."

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