



UpLink: Connecting Businesses and Classrooms to Inspire the Next Generation of METS Professionals

This year, greater Kansas City welcomed UpLink, the area's first-ever community hub connecting businesses and K-12 education with an emphasis on math, engineering, technology and science (METS).

Operated by YouthFriends and funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, UpLink encourages and inspires students to explore, study and seek METS-related careers by seamlessly connecting business with students, teachers and classrooms through three key programs:

- **YouthFriends:** Connects K-12 students to school-based mentors and e-mentors, with a particular emphasis on mentors from METS fields
- **LaunchPad:** Introduces students to METS careers through job shadowing, student internships and volunteer classroom speakers
- **TeacherTech:** Strengthens classroom education by connecting teachers to eight-week, paid summer externships in METS-related fields

Gaining Insight Through Externships

This summer, 10 area teachers and employers participated in the pilot year of TeacherTech. In addition to employers receiving top-notch summer employees for key projects, teachers also benefited greatly by receiving exposure to real-world applications and advancements in METS fields and the workplace in general—knowledge they're already incorporating into their classrooms.

Angela Beshears, a math teacher in the North Kansas City School District who worked as a curriculum developer for American Century Investments, believes TeacherTech externships provide a great opportunity for teachers to gain first-hand knowledge to benefit students.

"This was a great opportunity for me to experience the business culture and see how math is applied in the real world," she said. "Sharing this experience with my students is invaluable."

Susanna Barchack, a chemistry teacher in the Raytown School District, agrees. Barchack spent her summer working as a research and design technical assistant for Bayer HealthCare's Animal Health Division.

"This position gave me the opportunity to implement regulatory lab practices in the classroom," she said. "I hope it helps my chemistry students develop a feel for what scientists do on a day-to-day basis."

Jenn Dolson, who worked this summer to develop a Mini-Med School program with doctors and researchers at the University of Kansas Medical Center, enjoyed knowing that her knowledge was valuable to her employer.

"As we developed the Mini-Med curriculum, I think I was a good resource for the doctors on what will work in the classroom with students, and what methods are usually unsuccessful," Dolson said.

High Demand

Even with minimal marketing during the pilot year, more than 200 area teachers submitted applications for the externships offered this summer. That number is expected to triple in 2008, with a goal of placing at least 50 teachers in externships next summer.

Area employers are encouraged to participate in UpLink to help advance METS education in Greater Kansas City. Companies can participate in LaunchPad and YouthFriends any time throughout the year—and employers still can get involved in TeacherTech next summer. For more information, contact Client Services Director, Rachel Plotkin, at 816.842.7082 or visit yf-uplink.org.

Kansas City Life Sciences Institute is a Founding Partner in this solution for advancing METS education and workforce development in Greater Kansas City.

2007 TeacherTech Externs



Susanna Barchack, Raytown School District
Employer: Bayer Animal Health
Job Title: Research and Design Technical Assistant

Joseph J. Berthelsen, Blue Valley School District
Employer: SPC TelEquip
Job Title: Product Standardization Coordinator

Angela Beshears, North Kansas City School District
Employer: American Century Investments
Job Title: Curriculum Developer

Steve Cassity, Hickman Mills School District
Employer: Walz Tetrack Advertising
Job Title: Agency Marketing System Analyst

Jennifer Dolson, Raytown School District
Employer: University of Kansas Medical Center
Job Title: Program Developer

Walt Gomez, Kansas City, Missouri School District
Employer: Black & Veatch Corp.
Job Title: Scientific Writer/Technical Researcher

Michelle Nixon, Blue Valley School District
Employer: Science City at Union Station Kansas City
Job Title: Space Science Education Program Developer

Michele Radio, Blue Valley School District
Employer: YouthFriends
Job Title: Peer Coach

Ron Robinson, Kansas City, Missouri School District
Employer: KCP&L
Job Title: Program Coordinator

Betsy Wilkin, Olathe School District
Employer: Kansas University Physicians, Inc.
Job Title: Policies and Procedures Coordinator