



FEBRUARY 18, 2022

ACADEMY PROGRAM INTERN: SARAH COLBY

Sarah Colby is an East High senior, enrolled in the Academy of Life Science. Currently, she is interning with Viant, a global medical manufacturing company with 24 worldwide facilities, including two in Orchard Park.

Sarah, in the Academy since her sophomore year, always knew she wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. She was vacillating between Life Sciences and Engineering, both Academies offered in our high schools, when she met a Viant representative at an Academy Advisory Board networking event.

"Figuring out what you don't want to do is just as important as figuring out what you do want to do," said Sarah. She applied for an internship at Viant this past summer, going up against college students for the opportunity.

"I was skeptical about bringing in a 17-year-old High School intern, but the fact that she is still with us 6 months later is a testament of her performance and the value she brings to the team!" says Jay Such, Viant Senior Commercial Development Manager and Sarah's direct supervisor.

Jay says Sarah's resume showed up on his desk last summer during the company's search for an intern. "The task at hand was to automate some Excel templates along with creating user's guides for the same. I felt we needed...more than a 17-year-old high school student," Such says, "but as I was setting Sarah's resume aside, two items piqued my interest; her major was Academy of Life Science, and she stated she was proficient in Excel. Working for one of the largest contract manufacturers in the medical device industry, I was very curious about her choice for a major. I decided the least I could do is bring her in for some job interview experience and would then be able to ask about her interest in Life Science at the same time."

Jay was pleasantly surprised, and the interview that started out as an exercise turned into a symbiotic professional working relationship. As Jay tells it, Sarah earned respect through her confidence, honesty, and familiarity with advanced features of Excel, "that the vast majority of Excel users would not even understand," Jay says. He adds that in the ensuing conversation, her infatuation with all things "medical," specifically around Cardiology & Ophthalmology, amazed him. Viant, after all, produces more than two million ophthalmic devices (cataract treatment) annually, so Ophthalmology is one of Jay's passions as well. Tried and true, Jay says Sarah has been an integral part of a number of successful projects in the company, and the list is growing with requests for her assistance from others that have seen her results.

"Mentoring an intern takes a lot more time and effort than I ever imagined," Jay says. "What I didn't realize is that I would be gaining just as much, if not more, value than Sarah gains during her internship. Sarah is an integral part of our team working on projects and has taken over some of my weekly/monthly responsibilities which include frequent correspondence with Viant's Chief Commercial Officer, VPs, the over-all commercial sales team, and beyond. In the short time that I have known her she has earned my respect, she's demonstrated that she is trustworthy, and she continually strives to exceed expectations. The enthusiasm she brings to work each day is contagious."

Moreover, Jay says, "On a weekly basis, new confidential devices show up that she is getting intimate knowledge of at the earliest stage of their design."

For Sarah's part in the intern experience, she says she felt integrated into the company immediately. "When you're working for a great company--like I am fortunate to be--they really want to be a part of helping you. An internship like this is super beneficial and sets you apart from many candidates in the long run."

To her fellow students Sarah says, "I don't know why anyone wouldn't take advantage of the Academy Programs and internship opportunities. I'm the only kid at an all-adult professional facility. Sometimes I found myself on the phone, talking to someone across the world. While I had to adjust to that, it was great to see how willing everyone was to help." The bottom line according to Sarah is, "Grab the opportunity for how it looks on paper, and grow from the experience."



BOOK LOVERS MEET THEIR MATCH

"What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day than finding your perfect match in a book?" asks Lynne Knaze, Library Media Specialist at West Senior High. And so, Mrs. Schubring's 9th grade English students spent a block in the West Senior library with Ms. Knaze doing some book "speed dating" this week. "Each student filled out a profile of a book they loved then shared it at the 'romantic' library cafe complete with ambient lighting, music, and Hershey's kisses. Finding literary matches was easy and fun. "Great reads were shared, book love connections were made, and fun was had," says Ms. Knaze. "It was a perfect Valentine's Day!" We always want students to love reading!



LIFE SKILL: ART + ADMIRATION

Every year, the Studio in Art students at East Senior High School create Celebrity Portraits. Students select someone they admire and draw them from a reference photo. Students in art teacher Jeanine Beyer's class create their portraits using the grid method--drawing the contours of the head, facial features, and hair. Then students use graphite pencils to render in their drawing using a full range of values. Mrs. Beyer marvels over her students' talents. This year, she was especially thrilled by the work of Jack Monson, a life skills student in teacher Laura Tobia's class, who chose to draw his favorite Buffalo Bill, Josh Allen. "Jack has impressed me this school year with his artistic ability," Mrs. Beyer says, "but his portrait of Josh Allen, was incredible. Jack completed this one-hundred percent on his own. I would love for the West Seneca community to see Jack's drawing, and maybe Josh Allen too!" We're with you, Mrs. Beyer. Congratulations on your lifelike representation, Jack. It's Buffalo Bills proud!



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CLUB

On Wednesday February 16th, West Senior's International Relations Club (IRC) went to dinner at the West Side Bazaar downtown. The students enjoyed Thai, Ethiopian, Burmese and Japanese cuisine. IRC'S events are especially enjoyable when joined by our exchange students. This year, West is fortunate to be hosting four AFS friends from Ecuador, Norway, Thailand and Japan. The students highly recommend the food!



CAREER CAFÉ: LAW ENFORCEMENT

During a recent Career Cafe session at East Middle, Detective Jeff Coia of the West Seneca Police Department visited with our 6 – 8th graders. Detective Coia told students about his career path, daily responsibilities, and showed them tools of the trade, such as demonstrating a fingerprinting kit. He also spoke about related careers in law enforcement. Students again asked great questions, shared information about their own family members in law enforcement and talked about their career goals. Career Cafes feature a variety of professionals from different backgrounds. East Middle Counselors, Warren Yokom and Ann Marie Canaple, base the bi-monthly café guests on students' interest inventories. Next up is a Personal Trainer/Coach/Professional MMA fighter, followed by a civil/wastewater engineer. Student Brodie Wilson says, "I thought Detective Coia did a great job, and I really enjoyed the fingerprinting demonstration."



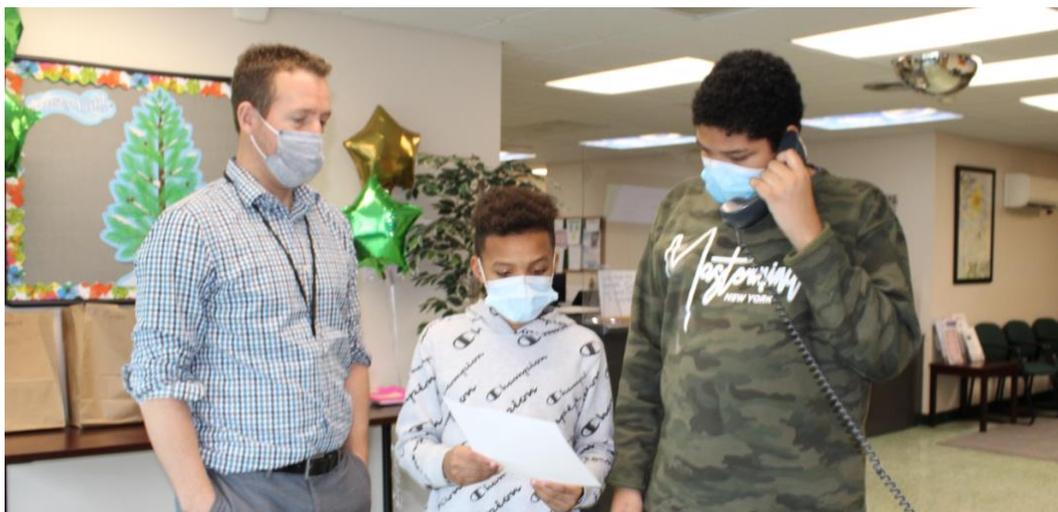
TEACHING TALENT

West Senior music teacher John Hasselback is, and has been, a staple in the Buffalo jazz scene for many years. Each year the JazzBuffalo organization sponsors a poll, seeking nominations for the region's best jazz performers. Our own Mr. Hasselback has won "Best Trombonist" every year since the poll began. This year he also won "Middle/High School Jazz Educator of the Year." His students certainly agree with that. John was also a member of the band that won "Most Memorable Performance of 2021" with the George Caldwell Sextet. Our students are familiar with Mr. Caldwell as well because Mr. Hasselback has brought him in several times for masterclasses with our students. Speaking of great musicians Mr. Hasselback knows; his wife, Lisa, won "Best Pianist," and his son, John III, won "Best Album". Thank you, Mr. Hasselback, for inspiring our students, modeling greatness, and bringing in fellow prestigious artists.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH MOMENTS

Principal Jason Marchioli of East Middle School has dedicated Black History Month (BHM) moments to afternoon announcements this month. Students from each grade level choose passages or facts that they find meaningful to read school-wide to their peers in celebration of BHM. On Monday of this week, 6th grade students, Jordan Lindsay and Mark Pierre read the following, "Martin Luther King advocated for peaceful approaches to some of society's biggest problems and was a key figure in the American Civil Right Movement." The students said they enjoy sharing important historic information with their peers. It makes them feel proud, and they are glad that BHM is recognized and celebrated at East Middle and across the nation.



ALLEDALE: "ALL ABOUT" STORIES

In teacher Jennifer McCrone's 1st grade classroom, students write a series of "All About" books on various topics. The format teaches them to approach any subject and write a fact-based narrative about it. Students were asked to write about any topic in which they are an "expert" to teach to others. Most wrote about animals, a sport, a person, or themselves. Once completed, students were advised to pair up with fellow classmates to read each other's books. The exercise in presenting their books was both fun and informative. Every day in the WSCSD is all about you, students!



100TH DAY

Today marks the 100th day of school, and our elementary grades celebrated the occasion in various ways, all with the number 100 as the theme. Here, teacher Virginia Chatelle's UPK students string 100 beads, paint 100 dots, and more!



The Weekly Brief will be paused next week due to winter break, and will resume on Friday, March 4th. Archived briefs can be found [on the WSCSD website](#).

Enjoy your weekend and winter break!

Matthew Bystrak
Superintendent