

# Employees of Tomorrow



Communities  
In Schools

Nassau County

March 2016

The cafeteria at Hilliard Middle-Senior High School looked more like a corporate job fair than a lunch room recently. Dressed in what they hoped would impress, 122 students with resumes in hand interviewed with local employers. The students gained valuable real-world interviewing experience and potential contacts for summer employment.



The CIS Interview Challenge was the culmination of a communication and interview skills program taught at the school by CIS Nassau executive director, Susan Milana. "Sometimes our teens can't identify their skills or positive traits, and nobody is telling them, 'You are special' so I spend time helping them to identify their strengths so they can share these in an interview," said Milana. The students also completed workshops in resume writing, applications, workforce expectations and career exploration coordinated by Hilda Loyd, CIS career and life skills coach in partnership with Hilliard Middle-Senior High School teachers; Carlous Hall, Annette Hodges, Mike Sawyer and Vickie Whigam.



Interviewers from a variety of industries volunteered their time to provide practice interviews, feedback, and career information to the teens. Each student experienced two or more interviews, each with a different professional. Students were scored based on specific criteria, their answers to standard interview questions, and the likelihood that the employer would hire them if a position were available. Students also benefited from employer feedback and coaching at the completion of each of their interviews.

## Top Winners!



## Employers

Joshua Clark (US Marines), Amanda Crawford (VYStar Credit Union), Barbara Wethman & Debroah Lovelady (Walmart), Tina Dunlap (White Oak Plantation), Kyle Malucci (YMCA), Erin Ayers (Paul Mitchell School), Jami Roy (Randstad Staffing), Sarah Bell (Science First), Trevor Thrift (Best Buy), Drew Duffy (CDA Technical Institute), Beck Dawkins (Federal Aviation Administration), William Nolan (Jacksonville Electrical JATC), Larry Arnold (JTECH), Sheena Hobbs (Nassau Sheriffs Department), Laura DiBella (Nassau Economic Development Board), (Northeast Florida Builders), Royce Proctor (OREMC), George Richardson (Sheet Metal Workers), Jodi Henson (Small Business Development Center), Jennifer Cockerham (Southeastern Bank), Angela TenBroeck (Traders Hill Farm), Jonathan Mandrell (US Army) and David Kinter (US Navy).

"The interview challenge was such a great vehicle for the students to prepare for the real world! Not only did they get to practice their skills and hone their resumes, they got valuable coaching and tips from the professionals who just might actually be hiring them some day in the near future. The one-to-one interaction is better training than one can get from reading a book or even watching a webinar on the internet! I was so impressed at their abilities to showcase their limited job experiences and translate those experiences into employable skills. More importantly, it was clear that each student has been given the encouragement and opportunity to be proactive about their futures, which I believe will result in more productive citizens in our community," said Jodi Henson, Consultant with Florida Small Business Development Center.

## Medal Winners!



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