

## Career Center has ‘Girls with Goggles’ event



Career Center Robotics & Advanced Manufacturing junior Troy Radcliff, West Holmes, helps a sixth-grade girl use a virtual welder. - Submitted photo

The Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center Commons area was a sea of pink as over 300 area sixth-grade girls donned pink T-shirts and sported pink bags to participate in the first “Girls With Goggles” event on Oct. 27. “Girls With Goggles” was made possible by the North Central Workforce Alliance (NCWA) of Ohio, the Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center and a **“Women’s Grant” from the Ashland County Community Foundation**. Participating school districts were Ashland City, Black River, Crestview, Hillsdale, Loudonville, Mapleton and Ashland St. Edwards.

Pink goggles were the order of the day as the young ladies were invited to explore non-traditional (often male-dominated) careers through hands-on activities. Girls could opt to visit three program areas choosing from: Animal & Veterinary Science, Automotive Technology, Construction Technology, Criminal Justice, Engineering & Design Technology, Networking & Electronics Technology, and Robotics & Advanced Manufacturing Technology. Career Center staff members led the activities in each program assisted by junior and senior Career Center students while members of the student-led Interact Club acted as building guides. The girls gained hands-on experience with activities such as running an electric drill, using a hand plane, changing a tire, identifying the proper food for various animals, building a small network circuit, participating in a simulated crime scenario, and manipulating robots and robotic arms.

Local NCWA members were on hand with exhibits to talk about area jobs that require skills taught by Career Center programs. Participating NCWA employers were Mielke Construction, the Ohio Soybean Council, the Ashland District of the Ohio Department of Transportation, and Brethren Care. Atlas Bolt & Screw Co also hosted an interactive exhibit.

The girls' enthusiasm was palpable as their experiences grew throughout the day. Asked to name a favorite, the answers were all over the map with every program being mentioned. Asked what she learned from the day, one 6th grader related, "I learned I'm capable of much more than I thought." Lynnette Kuschel, Language Arts teacher at Mapleton said, "It's a really great way for the girls to have some hands-on experience and get them excited about different jobs." Kym Irwin, guidance counselor at Ashland Middle School summed up the day saying, "This was impressive. The hands-on stations made it real and hopefully it will spur interest in coming back (to the Career Center)."