

Career-connect learning is about partnerships

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Community Connections



Provided photo

Student intern Jacob Bergren, top, works with his mentor Dan Kjobech.



Jocelyn Kummer, founder and CEO of the Wenatchee-based tech company Read Your World, had a vision when she reached out to the Apple STEM Network last fall.

As an entrepreneurial company, Jocelyn explained that she was eager to find a way to support the community calling to connect students to career learning opportunities. She explained that she had dozens of projects that students could engage in for some real world learning, alongside a tech-entrepreneur business mentor.

She considered a few options, and landed on a project-based internship model for students that would equip youth with real-world work experience, mentorship and social-capital, and career awareness about the emerging tech sector in our valley.

The Apple STEM Network connected Kummer to Kim Anderson, educator at the Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center. Anderson had spent years advocating for a computer science and tech training program at the Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center. The program finally got underway this school year with support from the Microsoft TEALS program.

Students in Anderson's classroom were already being introduced to industry relevant projects and practicing the technical computer science skills that tech companies need. Kummer's project-base internship idea was a perfect extension for the skill building foundation that the students were getting in Anderson's class.

The pair brought the idea to Wenatchee Valley Tech Director Pete Jelsing, who was enthusiastic to seize the opportunity for their students and Kummer was invited to meet so that he could learn more about her business needs and the opportunity to partner.

Within a few weeks, Anderson, Jelsing, and Kummer had worked out a plan for the internship. They brought it to the students and opened the application for student-interns last December. Several interested students submitted applications.

Kummer is pleased with the budding partnership, "I came in optimistic about the win-win possibilities of offering an internship but was surprised at how easily we got it up and running and how much fun it's been so far. The Apple STEM Network already had a

good internship template to start with, which was helpful. It's invigorating to be part of something bigger in the valley."

The partnership is an example of what a career connected learning community looks like. We are so fortunate to have visionary business leaders like Jocelyn in our region who want to be included in the development of students, and incredibly responsive leadership at the Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center.

Student intern Jacob Bergren was selected recently and has begun working with his mentor, Dan Kjobech. Jacob's resume is growing with relevant, real-world work experience.

"I'm stoked as it's really a win/win for so many involved: the student's getting real-world experience, the business owner is having actual work completed and the joy giving back value to our community, and I'm getting to see the practical connections of education to real-world solutions," said Anderson. "This is secondary education at its best!"

Sue Kane is co-director of the Apple STEM Network for the North Central Educational Service District.
