

The following text is from an article that appeared in the *Eagle Times*, April 2010

By ANGEL ROY
Staff Writer

A black cocker spaniel sat on an exam table at Claremont Animal Hospital on Wednesday, having tartar cleaned from its teeth by veterinary technicians.

“You can come a little closer to take a peek if you want,” a technician told the two middle-school students donning scrubs in what is known as the hospital’s “command central. Fifteen-year-old Trisha Parent ventured a step forward.

“I could do that (for a job) but I would be feeling the pain, too. What is tartar?” Parent asked of the teeth-cleaning procedure.

“Calcified food and bacteria on your teeth,” replied Evelyn Page, assistant office manager at the animal hospital. Parent, a student at Unity School, and Claremont Middle School student Julia Hackett, 14, spent the day Wednesday at the animal hospital, learning about positions at the clinic and the procedures and processes conducted there as part of the job shadow day coordinated by the school district and the Upper Valley Business and Education Partnership. More than 700 students from 13 Upper Valley middle schools participated in this year’s event.

“Research shows that middle school is a critical time for children to start exploring careers because it helps shape their high school educational path,” said Kathi Terami, executive director of UVBEP. “(Job shadow day) gives them motivation to take higher-level classes to pursue careers that they’re interested in.”

Dan Roisman, Claremont Middle School guidance counselor, said that he hopes by participating in the program students will be able to connect what they are “doing (at the school) in terms of academics to relevance in the world of work.”

“Also, we want the students to begin thinking about types of work they might like to try,” Roisman said. “I feel it is a wonderful connector to our middle-school students and all of the wonderful skills and traits that they have to offer our business community.”

Students interested in job shadow day were asked to fill out interest surveys, which Roisman said were reviewed by a committee of middle school guidance and family consumer science staff members.

“There is a connectiveness there, as both guidance and family consumer sciences work with students in vocations and what the future is going to look like,” Roisman said.

The students' interests were then matched with businesses participating in the program.

"We had people interested in becoming pilots," Roisman said. "We had a hard time filling that request."

Page said that the animal hospital has participated in the job shadow program for many years.

"We feel that it is very important to expose young individuals to the field and help them realize what it takes for education to become a vet and expand their horizons to other positions," Page said. "People really need to be exposed at a young age for education requirements to be met. They will realize that they need to really study hard."

"What did I tell you that you will have to study?" Page asked Parent. "Math and science," Parent replied.

After her visit to the animal hospital, Parent said she is ready to take on the seven years of post-high school education she will need to become a veterinarian.

"After graduation, I can think back (to this experience) and realize that I want to be here and know what to expect when trying to be a vet," Parent said.

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While Claremont Police Capt. Mark Chase said Claremont Middle School student Tyson Varkcham, 12, would not learn or experience everything about a job in law enforcement during his six-hour visit to the police station, he said it would be good exposure to a "day in the life" of a Claremont police officer.

"We tried to show him every job assignment we have here, from dispatch to prosecution, detectives to parking enforcement," Chase said.

The captain said Varkcham was exposed to a "taste of some training" by learning about "use of force" — both deadly and non-deadly. The student also shadowed Bill Wilmot, overseer of the department's policies to ensure they are in alignment with those of the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc., which granted the department recognition status in November.

"For a 12-year-old student that is not overly exciting, but it's part of the job," Chase said.

Varkcham said he has thought about going into law enforcement and that his experience at the department increased his interest.

“The field is very interesting,” Varkcham said. “It is just different than sitting at a desk all day.”

Upon their return from their respective jobs for the day, students were to evaluate their experience. Roisman said he anticipated the evaluations showing a positive impact had on students by the program.

“When they come back to do their evaluations, I’m going to have a smile on my face, I’m sure,” he said.