Overview of the Apple Valley High School E³ STEM YCC Program

Apple Valley High School’s E³ STEM Program is a joint effort by the high school, the community, and local businesses and colleges to enrich students’ educations with STEM-related preparation and experience while they are still enrolled in high school. Students can earn college credits through classes in a wide variety of STEM career fields and pathways. Students interested in nursing can obtain their CNA (Certified Nurse’s Assistant) certification and be offered an immediate job through a business partner.

Students are supported academically through a community volunteer-staffed tutoring center open during the school day and after school. Students also receive college-prep, career-readiness, and leadership training. Additionally, the E³ STEM program provides students with hands-on experience in their field of interest through job shadowing, internships, mentoring and more, demonstrating the value of STEM to professional life and career opportunities.

Lastly, students meet regularly with E³ STEM academic and career counselors – including volunteer business professionals – for counseling, educational guidance, and whatever further support they may need to help shape their future. Through the E³ STEM program the next generation is being educated and prepared to thrive in the workplace.

Program Highlight

The AVHS E³ STEM program has inspired the community, businesses, colleges, and high school to unite toward the common goal of preparing students for the future. Business professionals have enthusiastically hosted job shadowing, provided work-place experiences, and placed students in internships. They have also offered education, work-readiness training, and motivational talks, preparing students to be effective employees and business community leaders.

Thanks to the many volunteers who give their time to providing individualized guidance such as mentoring and career-counseling, the E³ STEM tutoring center expanded its hours from 108 in one school year to 347 the next. The center is regularly staffed by Augustana retirement home residents, Uponor employees (including the company president), and other community members.
Local colleges join the effort by offering courses for college credit and meeting with students to provide program information. These partnerships are a crucial component of the program.

**Success Story**

AVHS E³ STEM boasts many success stories:

- Students lacking direction have found a place in E³ STEM, transforming their grades and solidifying their goals.
- Students have stretched their abilities and found that they are capable of more than they thought possible – receiving an A in a college course taken as a high school junior, for instance.
- They have participated in job shadowing and internships which unveiled pathways to achieving their career aspirations.
- They have received individual counseling that has helped them better understand their interests, values, skills, personalities, and how best to use their gifts and choose a college and a major.
- E³ STEM has opened doors that wouldn’t have been opened for many students as expressed by E³ STEM student Serena Abraham:
  - “I love E³ STEM because it provides opportunities for my future that wouldn’t be available otherwise.”
- E³ STEM makes immeasurable positive impacts on students and their futures.

**Community Impact**

The AVHS E³ STEM program has made a huge impact on our community by generating communication and collaboration between community members, businesses, colleges, and the high school. Working together, each group learned more about the other and their interdependence. Businesses learned what they could do right now to ensure better employee candidates in the future. Colleges learned how they could guide and educate high school students in the present to fill their classrooms with stronger students in the days to come. And the high school learned how to position their students for success in college and future careers. These groups motivated and inspired each other while educating and preparing students for the workplace. As a result of this successful four years of collaboration, Apple Valley mayor Mary Hamann-Roland ended the grant with a meeting of politicians, business leaders, college staff, and the high school to cement the partnership and guarantee its continued focus on creating thriving students and a qualified workforce.

**Apple Valley High School E³ STEM Grant**

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