

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • Feb. 5, 2016

Learning doesn't just take place in the classroom. Many teachers work to arrange field trips so that students can experience firsthand such things as government, science, literature and the work force.



But the field trips aren't free.

Thanks to Susan Schwalbauch, academic specialist, and Dave Pentecost, students in his Advanced Earth Science class will get to reap the benefits of off-site – and hands-on – learning.

The pair has been awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, funded by AEP, that will help cover the costs of a daylong trip this month to COSI, Orton Geological Museum at Ohio State University and Perkins Observatory in Delaware.

"It's important for them to understand the earth/sky relationship and how astronomers do their work," Dave said of the goals of the trip. "Also, it exposes students to geologic specimens."

Then in May, the pair is going to take the students to Mammoth Cave, Ky., with field work stops along the way.

Susan said the trips are a culmination of the learning that they've done thus far.

"We're giving them a learning experience and a life experience," she said, adding that many students have never been outside of Pickaway and Ross counties.

"The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio appreciates the value of hands-on experiences, which is an important component to career exploration and gaining practical experience," she said.

"Exposure to real-life experiences breeds a desire



Susan Schwalbauch and Dave Pentecost worked together and were awarded a grant that will fund a field trip for some of Dave's science students.

to do more of the same," said Dave, who took a geology class while attending Ball State University that put him on a path to study it more fully, earning a bachelor's degree in earth science education and history and a master's degree in geology.

Now he shares that appreciation with students.

Last year, he and Susan, along with Scott Snyder, took a group of Advanced Earth Science students to the Cincinnati Observatory for a one-day trip and later the group went on a camping trip to Caesar Creek State Park in Waynesville.

Dave has a goal of someday creating a field camp for Pickaway-Ross students that would allow them to spend two weeks studying an area of the Southwest.

"It's hard to overestimate the impact that can have on people," Dave said. "If that were not true, colleges wouldn't be filling field camps for hundreds of students."

Susan said the trips have another effect: "It inspires kids."

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