

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • Feb. 12, 2021

Dakota Tackett knew that enrolling in Pickaway-Ross' Electrical Technologies program would provide him with a trade that he could use in life.

And after completing that program — and graduating from Huntington — in 2015 he did just that when he was hired as a mechanic at Shawnee Lanes.

But a year later, he decided he wanted to go to college to become a government teacher.

"I had government teachers here at Pickaway-Ross who were really influential for me," Dakota said, citing Darren Plessinger.

"The moral of the lesson is that one about you never know as a teacher what kind of influence you're having on a student until later on," said Darren, when told of his impact on Dakota's educational path.

His completion of the Electrical program also came into play as he maintained a 60-hour-a-week work schedule throughout his time at Ohio University.

"The great thing about all the programs here at Pickaway-Ross are you can learn a trade and go to work in that trade but also try new things and be confident in the fact that you can fall back on the trade," said Kirk Hewitt, Dakota's lab



Dakota Tackett passes out papers to students while substituting for Alex Deaton this week.

instructor his junior year.

While at Ohio University, Dakota had the opportunity to earn class credit by teaching English literacy skills to students in Belize for a week. That trip opened up the world for Dakota.

"I'd never been out of the country before and it was a really profound experience for me to see life through a different cultural perspective. After that trip all I wanted to do was travel and see different things."

Dakota got the chance to travel again when he did his student teaching in Cologne, Germany, in January, where he lived until March when his assignment was cut short because of COVID. Upon completing his coursework, he was invited to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship, for which he has been named a semifinalist.

Dakota said he will learn in mid-March if his application to study abroad is accepted.

"I chose the Czech Republic because I wanted to continue broadening my intercultural horizons," he said. The country's high literacy rate intrigues him and he hopes to learn literacy skills that he can bring back to rural Appalachia.

This year, he returned to Pickaway-Ross as a long-term substitute. For Dakota, who attended preschool here, it's like coming home.

"My mom (Beth) has worked here since I was a kid," he said. "I've grown up here."



Dakota Tackett has grown up at Pickaway-Ross: above left, preschool; above right, high school; and bottom right, his photo taken this year as a substitute at the school.

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