



UpLink®

The Ultimate Tomorrow for Kids

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News

uplinkthefuture.org

UpLink is Greater Kansas City's community hub connecting the workplace and the classroom. It connects students and teachers with experiences that promote career exploration with an emphasis in math, engineering, technology and science (METS).



LaunchPad®
Career Liftoff for Kids

LaunchPad connects students to internship and job shadow opportunities in local companies and organizations. It also offers a speakers bureau which connects teachers with volunteer classroom speakers.



TeacherTech®
Access to Innovation

TeacherTech transforms teaching and learning by connecting Greater Kansas City area K-12 teachers with 8-week, paid, summer externships in area businesses, academic institutions and research facilities.



YouthFriends®

Mentors Make Great People Possible

YouthFriends provides valuable opportunities for caring adult volunteers including METS—professionals to mentor students for one hour a week in area elementary, middle and high schools—or serve as e-mentors.

As of May 2008, YouthFriends has welcomed more than 500 new METS mentors in Greater Kansas City.

UpLink is funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

Students and Teachers are Good for Business

UpLink helps companies inspire and cultivate talent

Last fall, Beloit Solutions Group CEO Mike Thiessen made what many might consider an unusual hiring decision. Seeking a tech-savvy, part-time employee to provide help-desk support and make enhancements to one of his company's web sites Mike chose to bypass his usual hiring channels, opting instead to hire a high school student intern through UpLink.

"It's one of the best hiring decisions I've ever made," Thiessen said about student intern Josh Jagoda, a junior at Blue Valley North High School. "Josh is a major contributor to our company—not just because of the daily tasks and projects he completes for us, but also because of the valuable insight he brings to our business. As a business owner, it's critical to stay in touch with younger generations."



From left: Beloit Solutions Group CEO Mike Thiessen and high school student intern Josh Jagoda

A smart investment

Like Thiessen, employers throughout Greater Kansas City are finding that students—and teachers—are good for business. Companies of all sizes and disciplines have begun addressing some of their most pressing workforce needs by partnering with UpLink, a community hub that connects the workplace to the classroom in order to engage, excite and inspire K-12 students to explore real-world applications of math, engineering, technology, science (METS) and business.

Now in its second year, UpLink is helping businesses bring industry concepts to life for teachers and students. In addition to infusing classrooms with YouthFriends school-based mentors and volunteer classroom speakers, UpLink also helps link students and teachers to hands-on experiences outside of the classroom, including job shadows and classroom field trips, student internships and summer teacher externships.

The following employers are offering LaunchPad student internships in 2008:

- Cerner
- City of Kansas City, Missouri
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
- Hyatt Regency Crown Center
- KMBZ/Interiors by Design, Inc.
- YouthFriends

"Kansas City is fortunate to have a resource that brings businesses and education together," Thiessen said. "I think most companies agree that economic and workforce development begins in local schools, but what most don't know is how or where to start—that's why it's great to have UpLink."

Hiring Teachers, Inspiring Youth

In only its second year, TeacherTech is becoming an integral part of area business-education partnerships. More than 50 teachers are preparing to broaden their METS and business knowledge this summer by participating in 8-week, paid externships at 21 area businesses. Participating employers include:

- American Century Investments
- Bayer HealthCare
- Black & Veatch
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City
- Burns & McDonnell
- Cerner
- Children's Mercy Hospital
- City of Kansas City Missouri Water Services
- CVS/pharmacy
- Euronet Worldwide
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
- GE Energy
- JE Dunn Construction Company
- Kansas City Power & Light
- Mark One Electric Company, Inc.



- National Institute for Construction Excellence
- Sprint
- Truman Medical Center
- University of Kansas Medical Center
- William Jewell College
- YouthFriends

First Friday Open Houses 5-7 p.m.

August 1
For current, past and prospective UpLink Partners

October 3
For school district personnel, coordinators and volunteers

Sponsored by SKC Communications
Drinks courtesy of PepsiAmericas
Flowers courtesy of Fiddly Fig

RSVP to Becky at 816.268.3359 or heiman@youthfriends.org • 1800 Baltimore, Suite 400, Kansas City, MO 64108

It Takes a Team

Team mentoring approach helps companies overcome barriers to volunteerism

It happens every day. Companies and individuals get excited about the idea of YouthFriends mentoring, but then hesitate to get involved—fearing they might overextend themselves by committing to weekly visits.

But now, an increasing number of volunteers are easing those concerns by participating in “mentoring teams,” an approach that makes it easier to fulfill the one-hour-a-week commitment—and to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of students throughout Greater Kansas City.

One company implementing the team-mentoring approach is Lee Mathews Equipment.

Since 1954, Lee Mathews has handled engineered pumping applications for contractors, industry and municipalities. When it became a YouthFriends Employer Partner in 2007, its employees decided to volunteer at Scuola Vita Nuova, a charter school in Kansas City, Mo.

Like many companies, Lee Mathews employees wanted to get involved in mentoring but were not sure if they could consistently attend weekly mentoring sessions.

Using the team mentoring approach, about 15 Lee

Mathews team members take turns rotating each week, ensuring that at least three team members are available to mentor students at Scuola every Thursday.

“Everyone from Lee Mathews has enjoyed going and enjoyed the team mentoring process,” Lee Mathews President Tim Howard said.

The mentors visit three classes in three grade levels (sixth through eighth grade) each week, with different mentors helping about 60 students with homework, reading or class projects.

“I think there is never a question if it has been good for the students,” Howard said. “We have been able to help students see a bigger world.”

School Principal Nicole King said, “The Lee Mathews volunteers have been instrumental in helping teachers connect curriculum to real-world experience. The Lee Mathews team allows Scuola Vita Nuova to stretch learning beyond the boundaries of classroom walls.”

Lee Mathews mentoring effort is just one example of how companies and school districts are balancing the busy schedules of professionals while also meeting the needs of the students.



Lee Mathews President, Tim Howard, helps students with a Crayons to CAD math project.

Other area companies involved in team mentoring include HNTB and Harley Davidson.

To get involved, call 816.842.7082 or visit youthfriends.org.

Words to Inspire

Volunteer speakers take careers to the classroom

Training has already begun for the first wave of volunteer classroom speakers, who will begin visiting schools and inspiring students with their presentations this fall.

The speakers bureau is designed to connect area educators with volunteer speakers from METS-related careers who can share details about their professions, bring real-world relevance to subjects being taught in classrooms, stimulate student thinking and enlighten students about a wide range of careers.

Teachers will review and request volunteers via an online booking system. Volunteers can present as often as they choose, with a minimum commitment of four times per year.

“The classroom speakers bureau is just one more way UpLink is connecting educators and students with businesses,” YouthFriends President Lisa Adkins said. “We have many excellent METS employees in the Greater Kansas City area who can share their knowledge and inspire students.”

How to get involved

1. If your company is not yet an Employer Partner, contact YouthFriends at 816.842.7082 to get started.

2. Once your company is an Employer Partner, you will simply need to complete an application and consent to a background screening required of all volunteers going to a school.

3. Upon successful completion of screening and training, you will receive instructions on how to enter your information and availability into the online database. Teachers can begin booking speakers online in fall 2008.

To learn more, please call 816.842.7082 or visit uplinkthefuture.org.

Wyandotte County has been growing its economic base by leaps and bounds. These businesses need and will continue to need employees with math, engineering, science and technology skills. We believe UpLink is a comprehensive program to help us grow our own talent and prepare tomorrow’s workforce to keep our businesses growing. UpLink offers yet another way for YouthFriends to engage the community in order to help young people succeed.

— *Cindy Cash, President/CEO of the Kansas City, Kansas Chamber of Commerce*

UpLink Employer Partners

Thank you to the following Employer and Organizational Partners that actively promote YouthFriends and UpLink within their businesses or organizations.

360 Architecture
Ace Mentoring
American Century Investments
Aquila Energy, Inc.
Bayer HealthCare
Beloit Solutions Group
Bibb & Associates
Black & Veatch
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City
Burns & McDonnell
Cerner Corporation
Children’s Mercy Hospital
City of Kansas City, Missouri Water Services
CVS/pharmacy
Danisco USA

Euronet Worldwide
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
Garmin International
GE Energy
GE Money
GE Transportation Systems
GETS Global Signaling
Harley Davidson
Honeywell
Hyatt Regency Crown Center
JE Dunn Construction Company
Kansas City, Kansas Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City Power & Light Company
Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation
Kansas University Physicians, Incorporated

KMBZ/Interiors By Design, Inc.
Labconco Corporation
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North Kansas City Hospital
Olathe Medical Center
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