

Lincoln-Way District 210

News Release

From: Taryn Atwell

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RE: Special visitors attend Lincoln-Way Animal World classes

Shortly before Lincoln-Way students took final exams, teacher Patricia Nugent scheduled a special visit for her Animal World classes. Cheri Johnson, Executive Assistant to Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow, brought two service dogs to Nugent's Animal World class at Lincoln-Way Central and Lincoln-Way East. Assistant State's Attorney Chris Vukmir also brought a service dog to Nugent's Lincoln-Way West Animal World class.

The Labrador retrievers, Jackson, Kiwi, and Angus, are used to comfort children who are victims of sexual abuse or severe physical abuse. The dogs work with handlers Johnson and Vukmir to help comfort defendants in mental health court, drug court, and veteran's court. The animals are specially trained in the Will County Canine Unit, and also showcased their tracking capabilities while in class.

"It's important that we get these opportunities during high school because they can aid in our choices later on," says sophomore Veronica Szafoni. "It opened me up to realize that there are lots of varieties of jobs with dogs, not just the traditional few everyone thinks of."

Handlers attended Lincoln-Way Animal World classes to expose students to a few of many careers that relate to animals. Students of Animal World class also attend the Joliet Junior College Weitendorf Agricultural Education Center in order to gain animal handling and evaluation skills while working with swine and sheep.

"With these speakers, we are able to learn not only what the job entails, but how to set onto that career path...It is amazing to hear stories about all the things these dogs are capable of doing," says sophomore Hannah Barnard.

Animal World class became available to all District 210 high school students this year, and is an updated version of Introductory Horse, Large and Small Animal science classes. It is a yearlong course allowing students to learn about species of livestock and companion animals including: basic anatomy and terminology, breeds, and behavior. Students interested in animals are able to take classes in pre-veterinary studies such as Wildlife and Animals and Humans in Our World, which studies how animals and the environment impact human health.

