Woonsocket High School Biotech Students Tour Bard’s Davol Facility

The Associated Press

WARWICK, R.I.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec 14, 2012--Twenty Four students from the Woonsocket High School Biotech program toured C.R. Bard’s Davol facility in Warwick last Wednesday, December 5, 2012. The students suited-up in cleanroom gear and protective eyewear to garner firsthand looks and insight into various aspects of the medical device field.

Beginning in 1874 as a rubber company producing products including catheters, hot water bottles, and blood transfusion tubes, Davol is one of the oldest companies still manufacturing medical supplies and devices. Students on the tour began their day with an overview of Davol’s rich history and its current product lines focusing on soft tissue reconstruction. Davol is a wholly-owned subsidiary of C.R. Bard, Inc., one of the top 10 medical device companies nationwide.

As students prepared to explore the company’s computer-aided product design process, product prototype development, R&D testing labs, advanced quality engineering labs, and manufacturing operations, Davol’s Vice President of Regulatory Affairs, Tom Hutchinson, encouraged the students to be engaged, ask questions, and to think about their own futures.

Students did just that – asking questions ranging from pre-clinical and clinical testing; to the size and design of the “tacks” used to hold hernia mesh patches in place on the muscle wall; to various career opportunities within the industry.

“Today was a great day for Davol,” said Hutchinson after the tour. “Our employees were eager to educate and encourage the students, providing a bridge between their classroom today and their careers in the future.” Hutchinson continued: “Industry interest in supporting education programs, such as those conducted by Tech Collective, is not only a critical means to developing our future scientists, engineers, medical workers, and technicians, but also in advancing Rhode Island economically to become more competitive in the current and future marketplace.” “A day like today gives students tangible information and experiences about an industry which oftentimes is new not only to the student, but their family as well,” said JoAnn Johnson, manager of youth and education programs with Tech Collective. “Raising awareness and providing students with these exciting, hands-on opportunities is a turning point in their decision to pursue a bioscience career. It is exactly what our industry needs. Tech Collective is so appreciative of Davol’s contribution of its facility, time, and expertise today.” The day ended with lunch being provided by Davol and allowing the students an opportunity to talk further with representatives of the company.

Engaging Students in STEM The Davol-Woonsocket High School visit marks the 23

rd industry tour or classroom speaker opportunity Tech Collective has arranged in 2012 within the Bioscience and Information Technology industries. These experiences have connected a total of 507 Rhode Island high school students with organizations including: Cisco, Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Amgen, GTECH, EpiVax, AAA Southern New England, Atrion Networking Corp., OSHEAN, New England Institute of Technology, Bryant University, and the University of Rhode Island.

In addition to tours and speakers, Tech Collective’s Youth and Workforce Pipeline initiatives also include its GRRL Tech and STEM in the Middle interactive technology expos, job shadows, internships, and fellowships, mock interviews, and its Youth Speakers Bureau.

These opportunities are one avenue in which Tech Collective Members and the Rhode Island Bioscience and IT industries are recognizing out-of-the-box approaches of STEM awareness and education.

“Davol, like so many of our Tech Collective Members, expressed the need to develop the talent they require in Rhode Island, and the company is transforming its need into action,” said Johnson. “Of course, youth engagement in STEM is not an overnight “fix,” but with the leadership of industry and education, it is a critical, proven component to a multifaceted approach within a dynamic industry. The students here today are proof.” Student Feedback from the Tour Bonirath C.: "Going to Davol inspired me to do some type of research in the future and to somehow use science to solve problems. This is exactly what my Biotechnology class compels us to do. Listening to all the scientists, engineers, and managers showed me how important creative thinking is and how we should always be thinking of new ideas to promote progress." Derek B.: "Davol was the best field trip I've ever been on during my high school career. Everyone there was very forthcoming in answering any questions and showed us the technology/equipment that was used on a regular basis. It was interesting to see some of the equipment we use in the classroom being used at Davol.” Clayton M.: "The experience at Davol was really cool. Each of the staff members we talked to was informative and friendly. This field trip was the best one I've been on in a long time. It was fun and informative." Jaidan P.: "Davol was a wonderful experience. It connected with many of the things that we talk about in my Biotechnology classroom. The presenters reached out to me in a way that I could understand. It was a fun and interactive tour." Edgardo O.: "I thought the tour was a one in a life time experience. We got to see how they make everything in the company. I learned how important it is to keep a great laboratory notebook." Alondra P.: "This tour was a great experience for me. I learned so much about the techniques and machinery that Davol uses. This tour helped me to think about some of the careers that I could do in the future." Kenneth D.: "The Davol tour was an excellent opportunity for our students to see classroom skills utilized in an actual world of work setting. The students learned and were able to see the importance of accurate note taking, attention to detail, checking and double checking results, etc. These are skills that are promoted in our Biotechnology class every day. Also, all the presenters were able to provide highly technical information to our students and still keep their attention. The Davol tour is one that they will remember for a very long time." About Tech Collective Tech Collective is Rhode Island’s Information Technology and Bioscience Industry Association. Uniting

industry, government and academic stakeholders, our mission is to inspire, engage, educate and employ a high-skill, high-wage Knowledge Economy in Rhode Island. Since its transition from the Rhode Island Technology Council (RITEC) in 2004, Tech Collective has received more than $6M in federal, state and private grant funding to foster industry collaboration, awareness and development through events and initiatives including: Tech10, GRRL Tech, Women in Technology, Bio-Ed, and STEM-based education and training programs for K-16 students as well as incumbent and transitioning workers. Get connected to Tech Collective at www.tech-collective.org, on Facebook (TechCollectiveRI), and on Twitter (@Tech_Collective).

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