



## **Camp Success Helps Area Students Bridge Gap between School and Work**

Fifty middle schools students, many experiencing some serious academic challenges in school, made significant progress in their summer school studies this past July by participating in the [Silver Crescent Foundation](#)'s Camp Success, a science and technology camp that bridges the gap between what students learn in school and how they can lead productive careers in the future.

Sponsored by [CPM Federal Credit Union](#) and two local manufacturers, [BorgWarner TorqTransfer Systems](#) and [Sandvik Tooling Supply](#), Camp Success helped these young people build their skills and knowledge as they took part in a variety of fun and educational activities during two one-week sessions. Each camp focused on various science, technology, engineering, and math concepts that manufacturers use on a daily basis as well as exposed campers to the importance of critical thinking, problem solving, good communication skills and teamwork. The students were divided into three imaginary companies and they took on roles as plant manager, financial officer, marketing director, production technicians, among others to simulate what takes place in a real business. Throughout the camp the students' companies competed in a number of exercises to achieve the best overall performance.

Students attended workshops at Clemson University where they built balloon rockets to learn about testing, measurement, documentation and accuracy. In another exercise, they developed and operated a production assembly line to learn about the value stream and productivity. They also researched ways to use alternative energy as a source of supplemental power for their companies. In every problem they were presented they learned about the "cost of doing business," reinforcing how businesses operate in the global economy.

They also traveled to BorgWarner, Sandvik and Blue Ridge Electric Co-op for field studies where they heard from employees about their jobs, learned what skills were needed to be successful in those careers and participated in hands-on activities that gave them a greater appreciation for what these companies do to support the real world.

"The management at BorgWarner has placed a high priority on working with students and educators to show them the important role manufacturing plays in our community," explained Dan Robbins of BorgWarner. "Having our associates spend time with these students and by demonstrating the value of teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking, we hope they will be better prepared and more confident as they return to school in the fall."

Steve Gourdin, a maintenance engineer for the Westminster-based Sandvik, agreed that helping the Seneca middle school students was part of his company's responsibility to be good neighbor in their local community. "Hosting the students from Camp Success was a great opportunity for our company to

show local students how much we care and give them a glimpse of the opportunities available to them right in their own backyard.”

Not surprisingly, the students enjoyed the field trips and credited the experiences of working in teams and solving problems together as their favorite parts of their week-long camp session.

Camp Success was developed several years ago as a summer program designed to show middle school students and their parents the value of engineering, technology and manufacturing careers on citizens’ everyday lives. “For the past several years we have conducted four or five camps annually across the state, and each year we try to help them identify what interests them, what they enjoy and then we link what they enjoy to career opportunities,” explained Tony Smith, president and founder of the Silver Crescent Foundation. “We were intrigued last year when Tammy Brock with Seneca Middle School approached us about having a camp where we helped kids that didn’t match the profile of our previous campers. She explained that they were at risk of dropping out and was looking for opportunities to reignite their interest in school.”

“One very important thing I have learned working with these kids is they are all smart kids. Somewhere along the line they have lost interest, maybe become a little lazy and that lack of motivation has led to poor grades. It is not the lack of ability. When they visited the plants many of them saw things that interested them. When they experienced success in team work and problem solving, we could see the lights come on,” Smith added.

The camp was a collaborative effort that brought together a number of educational and industry partners. In addition to CPM, BorgWarner and Sandvik, representatives from ATS, Square D/Schneider Electric, Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, Blue Marble Science and Clemson University all contributed time, resources and expertise to make the campers’ experience meaningful and fun. The foundation also appreciated the leadership of Jim Alexander, Oconee County’s director of economic development, and the Oconee County Industrial Group for their ongoing support of activities that promote manufacturing careers, including its upcoming Anderson Oconee Pickens Businesses and Industry Showcase which takes place September 20-22 at Clemson.

“Camp Success is helping students in our community who are at risk for dropping out of school, a proposition no one wants to concede,” suggested Rick Murphy, Regional Education Center Coordinator for the area. “By bridging the gap between what students explore in the classroom with the world of work that awaits them, we are making significant steps in helping young people make more informed decisions about their futures. That’s really the guiding principle of the Personal Pathways to Success™ initiative.”

*The Silver Crescent Foundation’s mission is to promote manufacturing vitality and career opportunities in South Carolina. With more than 30 years of experience supporting education, engineering and technology development, the 501 C3 Foundation is dedicated to addressing the needs of the future workforce pipeline by supporting programs that capture the imaginations of young people and foster a desire to become the designers, engineers and manufacturing leaders of tomorrow.*