Let’s Build What’s Next, Hendricks County!

WestNext is Hendricks County’s collaborative approach to connecting students, schools, employers, and community partners to create stronger career-connected learning opportunities for students and a stronger talent pipeline for our community.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is an important part of that work, giving students opportunities to explore careers, build real-world skills, and learn directly from local professionals through experiences like career exploration, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and other hands-on opportunities.
Whether you can host an intern, welcome students for a tour, share your career in a classroom, provide a job shadow, or simply start a conversation, there is a place for you in WestNext.

See the spotlight below to learn how Hendricks County partners are helping students discover what’s possible.

Ready to take the next step?
Visit https://hendrickscollegenetwork.org/westnext/
or scan the QR code to learn more!

WORK BASED LEARNING SPOTLIGHT

Ava Finds Growth and Confidence at Lifeline Christian Missions



What started as an internship has quickly turned into a powerful opportunity for Plainfield High School senior Ava to grow both personally and professionally.

Ava is interning with Lifeline Christian Missions, a Plainfield-based nonprofit that serves communities around the world through hunger relief and humanitarian aid.

In just a few short months, Ava has gained experiences that many students don’t encounter until much later in their careers.

One of the biggest benefits of the internship, she says, has been the chance to meet people from many different backgrounds.

"At school, you're usually around the same people every day," Ava said. "But here I've met people from all different walks of life and cultures. I've talked to recent college graduates, construction crews, and volunteers from all over. It's really helped me grow and try new things outside my comfort zone."

That growth has already been visible. Ava recently spoke in front of community leaders at a Chamber event and presented updates to Lifeline staff during a virtual meeting with team members located across the country and internationally. Her supervisors say her confidence and communication skills have stood out.

Beyond learning new skills, Ava has also been trusted with a major project. She is currently leading the organization of a community meal packing event, where she is responsible for fundraising, recruiting volunteers, and coordinating the event itself. The goal is to raise funding for a pallet of meals and organize the volunteers who will pack the food.



For Lifeline Christian Missions, welcoming a high school intern aligns with their goal of engaging young people in meaningful ways. "We've always wanted to connect with students and involve them in our volunteer efforts," a team member shared. "This internship gave us the opportunity to bring a student into the organization and help them grow while also contributing to our mission."

Ava will also participate in an eight-week leadership development cohort through Lifeline, where she will join young professionals in weekly sessions focused on personal growth and navigating life after school. This mentorship and relational approach has made a lasting impact on Ava.



"One reason I enjoy being here is that it feels like home," she said. "They ask how my day is going, and they really care about what's happening in my life. It doesn't feel like I'm just an intern."

This fall, Ava will attend Purdue as a direct admit nursing student, and she says the skills she's developing, especially communication, empathy, and connecting with people, will be essential in her future career.

WESTNEXT WBL SPOTLIGHT

Ava's experience highlights the important role employers can play in helping students meet Indiana's Work-Based Learning requirements while also preparing them for life after high school. By partnering with schools and welcoming students into the workplace, organizations have the opportunity to build meaningful connections, mentor the next generation of talent, and strengthen the communities they serve.

For employers considering internships, Lifeline Christian Missions demonstrates how investing in young talent can create real value, for both the student and the organization.

Through hands-on experiences, mentorship, and collaboration, businesses can help students gain confidence, develop professional skills, and explore future career paths.



Ready to Get Involved?

Explore WestNext. Find your place. Take the next step.

Scan the QR code or visit:

https://hendrickscollegenetwork.org/westnext/

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