

Students on the job

EDUCATION: Work shadowing opportunity puts spotlight on high school students.

BY RICK FORGIONE
rorgioner@gpnewspaper.com

Seventeen-year-old Byron Jones will probably run for an elected office someday.

He'll get a sneak peak of what that future could be like by job shadowing at City Hall today.

"It will give me a chance to dip my feet in something small before taking a big step," Jones said.

A group of 24 Niagara Falls High School students are participating in today's Groundhog Job Shadow Day, a national campaign that gives

SEE SHADOW ON PAGE 5A

SHADOW ...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

their studies through hands-on learning and a one-day mentoring experience.

"It's a win-win situation," said Jones, a high school senior. "You have nothing to lose."

NFHS School Counselor Rachel Rotella said the students were paired with participating businesses based on interest. The goal is to build positive relationships, she added.

The students will attend an orientation at the high school between 8:30 to 8:45 a.m. and then head out to a variety of locations to work a normal day shift, said Joe Bellonte, a teacher on special assignment and the high school's entrepreneur coordinator.

"It really is a meaningful learning experience," Bellonte said. "It introduces them to the culture and world of work."

Jones chose to shadow workers at City Hall because he's interested in the daily tasks of the life of a politician and government employee. He believes he has all of the qualities needed to excel in the field, including being a good public speaker, writer and the confidence to speak his mind.

"When something's not right, I like to be the person to say it's not right," he said.

Eight of the students are shadowing at Niagara Street Elementary School, including junior Tanisha Steed. The 16-year-old is considering a career in teaching.

"I'm looking forward to observing what teachers do," Steed said. "I'm hoping to get some positive insight and gain some of their knowledge and use it in the future."

Senior Kelly Goodwin, 17, is shadowing at Opportunities Unlimited. She's planning on

Me and my shadow

The following is a list of students and businesses participating in today's Groundhog Job Shadow Day:

■ **NIAGARA STREET SCHOOL:** Tanisha Steed, Corian Hess, Brittany Gornbein, Alicia Bellingham, Maribeth Insana, Ashley Jeckovich, Elizabeth DeMarco and Shavonne Rivera.

■ **WGRZ CHANNEL 2:** Heather Gorman.

■ **CITY HALL:** Byron Jones, Alexander Quincy, Alicia Hurton, Steven Kerfoot, Christina Tyrant and Christi Runkle.

■ **IMPRESSIVE IMPRINTS:** Ashley Wilson and Lisa True.

■ **OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED OF NIAGARA:** Kelly Goodwin and Summer Shine.

■ **WEGMANS:** Joi Robinson.

■ **AMERICAN REF-FUEL:** Harpreet Singh and Mark Putaski.

■ **GILDA'S HOUSE:** Shantrice Jenkins.

■ **NIAGARA COUNTY, DEPUTY CLERK:** Kelly Custode.

attending Hilbert College in the fall and hoping to become a psychiatrist or psychologist.

"It just seems like I am able to help people with their problems," Goodwin said, adding she chose Opportunities Unlimited because everyone there is very kind. "I want to see what it's going to be like and receive any advice they can give."

Each of the students and businesses participating in today's shadow day will be recognized at a luncheon Monday at John's Flaming Hearth, 1965 Military Road. In addition to being presented with certificates, the students will receive tips on the proper way to attend "a business etiquette lunch," Bellonte said.

Contact Rick Forgione at (716) 282-2311, Ext. 2257