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MHS DECA makes a splash

9/24/2014



Matthew William and his fellow Mustang students row on a boat at the Chesapeake Boathouse in Oklahoma City. Williams and other DECA students learned about teamwork with the help of the Mustang Chamber of Commerce's Youth Leadership program. (Staff by Traci Chapman)

By Traci Chapman

Contributing Writer

Mustang High School DECA members made a splash in a recent team building exercise.

Students teamed up with Mustang Chamber of Commerce officials and members, taking to the water in a dragon boat challenge. The group gathered at Chesapeake Boathouse, enjoying a tour of the Olympic-level facilities before learning the fundamentals and precision of team rowing.

"It was a perfect opportunity for students to see how they need to work as a team, how a group is strong when it works together," DECA adviser Michael Rachlin said.

It also gave the aspiring entrepreneurs time with local business owners, who could give them perspective on the nature of team building and cooperation, Chamber Director Renee Peerman said. The exercise was undertaken as part of the chamber's Youth Leadership program, she said.

Students also learned a bit about the Oklahoma City economy, including the impact riverside facilities – like the boathouse – made a real difference in terms of sales tax collections and tourism.

"When you look at the fact they have colleges building rowing facilities here and then consider the events that are bringing people in not only from Oklahoma and not only across the United States, but from different countries across the globe, it's very impressive and a good thing for students to learn about," Rachlin said.

Chamber members Kevan Gentry, Cathy Jo See, Megan Rose, Brett Armstrong and Danny Lawson worked with students, rowing side-by-side through the waters of the Oklahoma River.

"It was a great time for all of us," See said. "While it is a good chance for the kids to learn first-hand about teamwork, it was also a fun opportunity for the adults to spend time with them."

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"They're a great group of kids," she said.

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