

Partnership helps students succeed in business and life

The DECA program offers high school students practical experience in the working world. It offers Publix a chance to connect to our communities.

A career preparation organization, DECA operates chapters in more than 4,000 high schools across the country. Many of our younger associates, especially those interested in careers in marketing, management and entrepreneurship, participate in their school's chapter.

Cashier Brandon Sproule, #583, Weston, Fla., joined his school's DECA chapter for a simple reason. He enjoys competition and the world of business.

"What intrigues me about business is that you can have an idea and make it work by accomplishing goals and meeting expectations," Brandon said. "The DECA program has changed my perspective about what it takes to succeed in business, and I've applied what I've learned to my job at Publix."

Cashier Brian Geil (left), Front-service Clerk Abigail Marsh and Front-service Clerk Andrew Bishop attended this year's International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, Calif.

Future leaders

While DECA participants learn new skills and how to apply them in business, perhaps the most important lesson is to trust themselves. Through competition and collaboration with others, DECA students gain confidence and develop an eagerness to learn.

As a mentor to some of these students, Regional Director Sam Pero has seen their inquisitive attitude at work.

"These young men and women absorb business like sponges," Sam said. "They're excited about being in the program, they want to learn, and they have an impressive commitment and passion for improving themselves."

At DECA competitions, student participants team up to address various real-world scenarios using actual case studies from the business world. They are asked to put themselves in the position of business leaders and deliver practical solutions. The judges grade them on the content and delivery of their presentations.

Cashier Heather Broussard, #878, Valrico, Fla., gained plenty of confidence from her involvement in DECA. She recently placed first in a district competition and went on to place third in a state competition.

"These competitions have prepared me for life and given me confidence for the future," Heather said. "It's also given me pride in where I work. Publix had already taught me much of what I needed to know for these competitions."

Field Marketing Coordinator Bob Daneke served as a judge at DECA's 2008 national competition in Atlanta. Bob participated in similar competitions in high school as a member of DECA. This time, he was on the other side of the table.

"It rekindled some memories," Bob said. "We give them challenging scenarios, and they handle them so well. They are an impressive bunch of students."

Publix's support

Publix has been involved as a partner of the DECA program at a national and state level for years. Our partnership includes everything from occasional guidance in helping students select a major to continuing a relationship with students as they graduate college and begin to look for jobs.

In addition to sponsoring several DECA events, many store managers work closely with the organization's chapter in their hometown. Other retail and support leaders partner with the organization as mentors, guest speakers or judges of DECA competitions.

Store Manager Dan Black, #569, Dacula, Ga., has served as a judge in the food marketing category for regional, state and national DECA competitions. He participated in the DECA program when he was in high school.

"It's an amazing program and a great partnership for Publix," Dan said. "It's another way for us to strengthen our relationship with our communities."

Publix DECA Scholarships

This year, Publix honored eight associates involved in DECA with \$1,000 college scholarships. Congratulations to this year's winners, who were recognized at DECA's national competition in Anaheim, Calif.

Cashier

Ashley Alexander
#129, Brandon, Fla.

Front-service Clerk

Daniel Allegrone
#457, Spring Hill, Fla.

Front-service Clerk

Andrew Bishop
#1047, Spring Hill, Tenn.

Cashier

Brian Geil
#596, Sugar Hill, Ga.

Front-service Clerk

Michael Gordon
#457, Spring Hill, Fla.

Cashier

Megan Jones
#754, Tampa, Fla.

Front-service Clerk

Robert Mannino
#596, Sugar Hill, Ga.

Front-service Clerk

Abigail Marsh
#301, Altamonte Springs, Fla.

