

Charter Steel school drive earns top grade

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Organized by interns, Fill the Bus campaign collects 295 backpacks

Corporate interns typically use their time on the job to learn the ins and outs of life in the business world.

Thirteen interns at Charter Steel's Saukville plant also used the summer to learn about business as well as teach their co-workers a little about community caring through the Fill the Bus campaign.

The intern team organized and coordinated a month-long collection of school items for local children in need.

As a result, children at eight Ozaukee County school received 295 backpacks filled with supplies just in time for the start of the new school year.

Money collected from employees at the plant was used to fill each backpack with notebooks, folders, markers, scissors, glue, pencils, pens, erasers and a calculator.

The back-to-school windfall was shared with five school in the Port Washington-Saukville School District and three schools in the Northern Ozaukee School District.

The interns capitalized by creating a competition between the four divisions at the Charter plant — melting, rolling, shipping and administration.



Company officials were so impressed with the employee support of the community outreach program, they agreed to match the amount collected.

School administrators, too, were overwhelmed by the success of the campaign when the colorful backpacks were dropped off prior to the start of school.

“We had so many wonderful reactions,” said Donna Polgar, of Lincoln Elementary School in Port Washington.

“This was such a great community outreach. At registration, I had several parents not knowing how they were going to get all the stuff they needed for their children to go to school. When I told them what Charter was doing, several started to cry.”

The reception was equally enthusiastic in Fredonia.

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“The Northern Ozaukee School District was so pleased to be part of this tremendous fundraiser on behalf of our students at all levels. Receiving this great gift will help so many students in need and help lessen the burden of school-supply shopping or replacement during the school year,” said Supt. Blake Peuse.

“We could not be more happy to have such a great relationship with an excellent community partner, such as Charter Steel.”

One of the company interns, Scott Watry, an Ozaukee High School graduate, delivered the backpacks to Fredonia.

Charter has hired between 10 and 15 interns each year at its Saukville plant. According to the company, many become full-time employees after graduation.

In addition to the widespread support for the Fill the Bus collection, the interns said they have found their time with Charter fruitful.

“I am thoroughly enjoying my internship at Charter Steel,” said Stephen Campagna, who worked as a purchasing assistant.

“I feel confident that the professionals around me have, and are, displaying the ability to help me learn and allow my career to grow. The culture is exactly what I was looking for. I would and have encouraged friends and family to work for Charter.”

Fellow intern Matt Hasketh has been equally impressed with how much he has been able to absorb on the job.

“I have been exposed to more technical aspects of the steel industry than I ever anticipated. As a consequence, I have also learned more about steel and metallurgy in general,” Hasketh said.

“Even though I worked at a steel mill, I learned much more than just the steel-making process. I learned and experienced a wide range of different processes used in the steel industry. I was truly impressed with the people I worked with, the amount of information I had access to learn from and the company in general.”

Charter Steel, a division of Charter Manufacturing, is a leading American supplier of carbon and alloy steel bar, rod and wire products. Its parent company has manufacturing and distribution facilities in Wisconsin and Ohio.

Image Information: CHARTER STEEL INTERNS gathered around backpacks filled with school

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supplies from the Saukville company's Fill the Bus collection. Interns and their assignments included (from left) Jared Schneider, roll quality control; Karl Lemke, production planning; Chris Shaw, tech services; Katelyn Quinn, human resources; Andrew Radon, logistics; Chad Master, accounting; Trevor Swartwout, processing; Stephen Campagna, purchasing; Scott Watry, customer service; and Hillary Brummond, quality assurance. Not shown were interns Matthew Hasketh, tech service; Michael Htwe, electrical engineering; and Tim Lux, processing maintenance.