

FBLA partners with business

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Members of Holyoke Chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) joined forces with Computers Etc. two years ago to form a new business venture called the Cartridge Connection.

The Cartridge Connection sells printer cartridges for profit. The business was developed from the ground up with the FBLA Chapter asking Computers Etc. to work with them in creating the fund raiser.

A team of three FBLA members, Sydney Nelson, Duncan Brandt and Brian DeBoer, used this opportunity to construct a project, Partnership with Business, by taking part in the planning of this fund raiser.

The Cartridge Connection was approved in January of 2008 to be one of the national sponsors of FBLA. Since then, the project group has updated the fund raising material to be more user-friendly. Team members and Computers Etc. employees have attended national, state and regional FBLA conventions to promote the Cartridge Connection and it has been very popular throughout the country.

One of the four goals established between the Cartridge Connection and Holyoke FBLA was to help students learn how to start a business. Team members noted there is no better way to learn than to work hands-on with a project. This has been a fantastic learning experience for them.

Their second goal was to be involved in a project that would keep the money in town. This project allowed money earned to be kept by FBLA and local businesses.

An integral part of being able to develop the Cartridge Connection was seeing how the program functioned when students actually went out to sell printer ink cartridges. Evaluating the program and implementing any changes to make it a better program for all schools was the students' third goal.

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The final goal of the group was to create a program that would be long-lasting. The kids plan to create an online account-access form that auto-updates to purchases continuous and simple. Each business's purchases will benefit an FBLA member, establishing a stable system.

The students' involvement in developing and improving this was a huge learning experience. They had several meetings with Lori Nelson, Kellie Race and advisor Kristie Ham to discuss the plans and how to get the students involved with this learning experience.

They perfected packets to be sent out to all of the schools including things like a master order form, letter to advisors, a fund raising program agreement form and a cartridge form for each business to fill out on what kind of cartridges they regularly use. The packets also included materials for each student that had a sales pitch, a convenient booklet the group developed and order forms.

Nelson, Brandt and DeBoer are now busy finishing the report and will attend the FBLA State Conferences April 18-20. They hope to make it to the National Leadership Conference this summer in Nashville, Tenn.