

PFEW Celebrates Business!!

Amid all of the country's economic woes we read about daily, there is a wonderful and unique program that is designed specifically to celebrate American private enterprise. That program, ***Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week (PFEW)***, is open to all of our area 10th and 11th grade students and is celebrating thirty-two years of providing outstanding educational opportunities for Pennsylvania young people during its four sessions this summer. Completely funded, taught and staffed by practitioners from the Pennsylvania private sector, PFEW is world renowned for the quality of its curriculum and for the "emotional journey" that its participants take as they explore the American private enterprise system.

With the challenges faced by the American economy, PFEW's important work has taken on even greater significance in recent years. John Trombetta, president & CEO of the Foundation for Free Enterprise Education (PFEW's parent organization) said, "*Young people today are frequently "off balance" by what is occurring in the broad American economy. The average sixteen or seventeen year old has never experienced an economic downturn and certainly not one of the magnitude which our country is currently struggling through. Too often they are jaded and cynical about business and business people and by what they have read in the newspapers or seen or heard on TV and radio. Fortunately, PFEW can, and does, completely transform a young person's attitudes after they have spent seven days with some of Pennsylvania's outstanding business men and women.*" Does it work? Of the nearly 1,400 students who attended last summer: **97.7%** reported that they had a better understanding of the American free enterprise system and their roles in it; **95.3%** reported that PFEW would be helpful in choosing their career; **96.8%** related that PFEW would benefit their personal lives and a whopping **97.5%** wrote "my sponsor's money was well invested." Considering the average age of a PFEW participant is sixteen or seventeen, those are high marks indeed!

PFEW will run four individual sessions in July and August of 2010. Applications are being accepted now and may be obtained through the guidance office at any area school. (Sessions this year will be held at either Lycoming College or the Pennsylvania College of Technology, both in Williamsport, PA.) Students are on scholarship and each participant is assigned to be a member of a "management team" operating a computer-simulated "company" for an imaginary three years. A "loaned executive" from the Pennsylvania business community is with them for the entire week as a "Company Advisor" as the team explores all aspects of today's highly competitive global marketplace. The students hear from speakers on a variety of topics that are germane to the private sector: Business and Finance, The Role and Relationship of Business and Government, Taxation, Labor Relations, Business Ethics, and much, much more. Is PFEW effective? Consider this quote from Ms. Caroline Margolis of Abington, PA, "***You have given me a glimpse of the real world and the knowledge of what greatness I am capable of. This program has changed my life, now I feel confident about my future. PFEW gives a very special opportunity for students to learn about business and ourselves that school alone cannot do.***"

The Chamber is proud to support PFEW and encourages local companies and civic organizations to provide sponsorship for our area students and, if possible, even volunteers for the sessions. (PFEW is totally taught, funded and staffed by the Pennsylvania private sector.) Each student attends PFEW on a fully tax-deductible \$525 scholarship (the actual value of the scholarship is \$1,500) which is provided by a local firm or organization. The students wear the sponsor's name during the program and all scholarship providers are recognized in a variety of ways for their support. Students write to their sponsors following the program to report on what they have learned. PFEW is also an approved organization through the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

If you would like to learn more about this award-winning program and how you can help, or if you have a member of your family who might want to participate, visit the PFEW website at www.pfew.org. You may also contact John Trombetta, president & CEO of the Foundation for Free Enterprise Education which presents PFEW at (814) 833-9576 or e-mail him at john@pfew.org. Thank you!

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Picture Caption: *2009 PFEW student "management team" discussing their corporate strategy.*