



Kalitto Oliveras, 16, a junior at Union-Endicott High School, looks at progression photos of his dental work during Groundhog Job Shadow Day at Hatala Orthodontics in Johnson City.

Orthodontist doesn't just see his shadow...

... he sees 11 of them



Mark P. Hatala, D.D.S., talks to local high school students about a career in orthodontics.

What is the purpose of Groundhog Day for those among us who have lost faith in, or never really cared about Punxsutawney Phil.

or some other (supposedly) weather-predicting woodchucks such as General Beauregard Lee of Georgia and Canada's Warton Willie?

For 11 high school students, it was a day to try and figure out what they want to do for the rest of their lives. For about three hours Tuesday, "Groundhog Job Shadow Day," a sophomore, eight juniors and two seniors from five different high schools got a chance to observe professionals as they performed their jobs at Hatala Orthodontics in Johnson City.

Most of the students said their interest is rooted in their experience with their own dental work. "It's neat to see the changes (in the teeth)," said Mackenzie Hartmann, a senior at Susquehanna Valley High School. Hartmann said she wants to get into the field of orthodontics because of the potential of making peo-

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ple happy with their looks and in turn making their lives better. "I know it made me happy," Hartmann said of her own dental work.



The process of making indirect bonding in the lab was one of the tasks students were able to observe.

The job shadowing only added to Hartmann's interest in the profession. "It's pretty helpful to see what they do," she said. "You think it's just braces, but there's actually more to it," she added.

The "more to it" part is what Dr. Mark Hatala wanted to emphasize about the orthodontics. "It's

not just me," he said. "It's a team effort to make it work." Hatala added, giving credit to other members of his team such as dental hygienists and lab technicians.

At the end of the day, 11 young people left Hatala Orthodontics with a better understanding of the profession. So what if some marmot somewhere did, or did not, see his shadow? These 11 people may have not learned what the weather will be like for the next six weeks, but they were armed with the knowledge of who they can possibly be for the next six decades of their lives.

Students from local high schools are seen from behind a panoramic digital X-ray machine during a tour of the facilities at Hatala Orthodontics.



Dental hygienist Becky Storrs shows students, including Union-Endicott junior Steve Rogers, 16, right, the programs used to keep track of a patient's progress.