

Students Get Real-Life Lesson in Dentistry

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[Students Get Crash Course in Dentistry 2-3-2009](#)

Some Vestal students learned more about the dental field recently. NewsChannel 34's Samantha Hensell takes us on a trip to the orthodontist's office.

February 2nd is all about shadows. For most people it's about if Punxsatawney Phil will see his shadow. But for some Vestal students it was about job shadowing. The high schoolers got a look behind the scenes at Dr. Hatala's orthodontics office in Johnson City. Each student had a different reason for attending.

Junior Michael Mendsen says "My grandpa was a dentist so that got me interested in the dental program. Then I got my braces here so I decided to come here and check it out and see what he does."

The students first learned about the front office where patients are admitted. Then they went into the clinic to watch a hygienist take a mold and give a check-up. After that, they headed to the lab. By visiting the different parts of the office, the high schoolers said they got many of their questions answered.

Junior Monika Ivanova says "Mainly how much education you need, and secondly what skills you need and how you interact with other people."

Whether they decide a career in orthodontics is for them or not, Dr. Hatala hopes the students keep researching job opportunities.

Orthodontist Dr. Mark Hatala says "More importantly what I share with them is to continue to do things like this. Spend time visiting other offices, other careers, in the workplace and that way they can make their best decision about what they want to do the rest of their life, for their future."

Next year, a new group of students will participate in the job shadow program at the office.

