

# Students get hands-on tour

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TORRINGTON - Around 20 students from area schools took a tour of electronic manufacturing firm Altek Electronics Tuesday to get a look into the real world of work.

"We need people with these skills," Altek President Richard Razza said. "It is so essential."

The program was created by Dymax Corp. CEO Andrew Bachman to give students a chance to experience what is required in various occupations with the hope of keeping them engaged and not making bad decisions.

"We are hoping to get the kids involved and turn their heads before making wrong life choices," Bachman said.

Bachman enlisted the assistance of Altek and other businesses of various disciplines to offer students a chance to explore real-world company operations. Bachman said he currently has 15 interested companies and is hoping for about 20. Each company will give two or three tour events during the year, Bachman said.

"We hope this becomes a national program," Bachman said. "It gives

kids a chance to experience hands-on."

Altek is a family-run electronic assembly company at 245 E. Elm St. that has grown swiftly, vice president Sabrina Beck said. The firm has grown from 64 employees to 110 in the last few years and has expanded sales from \$8 million to \$13 million annually, Beck said. The firm's clients include Otis Elevator and Gerber Garment Manufacturers.

Following a tour of the facility, the students were allowed to make a circuit board of their own that would disable the remote on their televisions at home so their parents couldn't change the channel.

Dayna Ingraham, 11, of Torrington, attended the event with her mother Debbie Ingraham, an employee of Altek for the last two years.

"This is awesome," Dayna Ingraham said about the tour and her project. "Making the board was easier than I thought it would be."

Dayna Ingraham said she would

like to work in animal control when she completes school, but said she might consider working in a plant like her mom.

Razza said times have changed since he was looking for work after the service and wished he had a similar program to explore career options.

"People never used to look past their own neighborhoods," Razza said. "An operation like this has 30-40 different functions (for the students to see)."

Bachman feels the program will help the country's shortfall in technology education and create better workers for the community and for his business, which recently expanded into a new building.

Beck said the opportunity to see what is available in the work world is good for the students.

"They are going to college or join the workforce in the next few years," Beck said. "They will hit the real world before they know it."

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**Andrew Bachman  
Dymax Corp. CEO**