

Students Connect with Professionals at Career Event

By Scott Fishman

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University School in Davie has a unique twist on Career Day.

As part of their Career Connections event, more than 50 professionals from Nova Southeastern University and beyond were dispersed into eighth-grade classrooms. The five or six participants in each classroom took part in a moderated panel discussion and had a question-and-answer session with students.

"Eighth grade is sort of the platform for high school," said

Stefanie Gillman, guidance counselor and event organizer.

"We really use it as a springboard to get them excited about college and career. We do have career education activities for our sixth- and seventh-graders. This builds on it, culminating with an awesome experience."

Students were exposed to careers in law, medicine, culinary, science, psychology, photography and movie producing.

Stacy Silver, president of Silver Hospitality Group, has signed up for Career Connections the past three years. "The key is at eighth grade, you're not going to determine what your career is, but the whole point of this is to open their eyes," she said. "You never know what extracurricular activity or class or teacher will help them find that passion. Hopefully, they can use that passion to go into the career they love."

Peter Feinberg said the panel in his class featured speakers from a variety of backgrounds. "There was a mom here that worked as a veterinarian and started as a pooper scooper," he said. "It was very clear you don't get what you want the first try. You have to start from the bottom. Now she is an emergency veterinarian."

Isabella Fraser is hoping to become a veterinarian and was excited to see what to expect. "A vet came in and told me about this summer program at Cornell University," she said. "She opened my eyes to it. She also said I can email her and ask her more questions or shadow her one day. I hope to do that."

Sebastian Rabassa enjoyed hearing from Chetachi Egwu, professor of communication studies at NSU. "She has done many voiceovers," he said. "I really like acting. That's what I want to do when I grow up."

