



Are you looking for the experience of a lifetime...in one day? *Take Your Teacher to Work Day* is a program designed to provide teachers with a work experience in an occupation of their choice for one school day. Mary Ann Kauffman, Business Technology teacher at Bayshore High School, recently participated in a career shadow at Mixon Fruit Farms. While at Mixon's, Mary Ann gained a greater understanding of farming, merchandising, advertising, shipping and marketing and how these occupations relate to the business of growing and selling citrus in Manatee County.

Mrs. Kauffman observed numerous jobs available to employees ranging from food preparation to growing and nurturing orange, lemon and grapefruit trees. A valuable part of this experience was discussing with the owners, Dean and Janet Mixon, the history of the family business up to present day operations. Mary Ann shadowed Mrs. Janet Hagerty, who is responsible for the merchandising and marketing at Mixon Fruit Farms. Erin Hagerty, a student of Mrs. Kauffman, accompanied her teacher for the career shadow experience. Erin realized the importance of her mother's position and all the responsibilities that go along with marketing the fruit industry. "The value of a student's point of view and seeing first-hand the connection between Business Management, a course Erin is currently taking in school, and 'real life' duties of her mother was awesome," said Mrs. Kauffman.

In career and technical education (CTE) classrooms throughout Manatee County schools, students are learning the value of work ethic, the importance of communication and teambuilding, and the necessary industry skills to prepare for the workforce. Mrs. Kauffman stated, "*Take Your Teacher to Work Day* validates what I am doing in the CTE classroom everyday. At Mixon Fruit Farms, everyone works together as if they are all part of the same family. The employees, from high school age to senior citizen, value the individual worth of each and every worker. Mixon Fruit Farms demonstrate an EdVantage Core Value that says, 'We believe that all people have value and can add value.'"

As a follow-up to the career shadow, Mary Ann shared with her students a PowerPoint presentation, complete with pictures and video, about her educational experience at Mixon Fruit Farms. She has scheduled a field trip for her students so that they may also experience an opportunity to visit one of Manatee County's oldest and most successful family owned and operated business that is right in our own backyard. "This work experience and field trip created a relevancy between classroom education and future career pathways. *Take Your Teacher to Work Day* is a program that I strongly recommend other teachers to pursue."