

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Fairfield County Workforce Center Hosts Signing Day for Grads**

**Carroll, OH:** – The Fairfield County Workforce Center recently hosted its annual Signing Day for Fairfield County high school graduates starting their careers with a local business. Thirty-eight students and eleven employers were honored at the event that brought to fruition efforts for Fairfield 33 Alliance’s Career Readiness Program by connecting students graduating from local high schools to local businesses in need of employees.

Since 2019, the Workforce Center has taken the opportunity to shed light on students graduating with careers at local businesses. Their employment demonstrates the commitment from employers to hire local talent and invest in our youth and the community. The featured speakers for the event were Lancaster High School alumni Bobby Carpenter and Jennifer Friel.

Carpenter is an All-Ohio football player who went on to play for the Buckeyes and was the 18th overall pick of the NFL draft, playing seven years at the professional level. He talked about a poem called *The Dash* which is included in Coach Jim Tressel’s book, *The Winners’ Manual*. The dash refers to the dash between the dates on a tombstone, indicating the years of someone’s life.

“Each day is precious,” Carpenter said. “How are you going to spend it? Time is the most precious commodity. How are you going to spend that dash? That dash is the time of your life. How do you utilize it?”

Mid West Fabricating CEO Jennifer Friel addressed the students on behalf of local employers and said she is astounded at how the Workforce Center programming has grown in such a short time.

“I want to applaud the parents of the signing students today for the courage to support your child’s choice of a career versus college,” she said. “College isn’t for everyone and a career in the trades or manufacturing provides a good living, with stable employment, allowing you to live your dreams - buy a house, a car, a boat, take amazing vacations whatever it is. We have four students working at Mid West as a result of this program. Two are attending the ceremony and the other two are working! We welcome them to the Mid West family”.

“Signing Day is a big deal for student-athletes that are moving on to play their sport in college,” said Rick Szabrak, Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development Director. “We feel that a student who graduates and pursues a local career should be celebrated equally. We also like to recognize employers who have hired students from the pre-apprenticeship in the areas of electrical, HVAC, water wastewater management, construction, manufacturing, and phlebotomy.”

This year, graduating seniors are beginning careers at Accurate Mechanical,

Claypool Electric, Mid West Fabricating, Fairfield Insulation and Drywall, Fairfield County Utilities, Fairfield Medical Center, Sheet Metal Union, Accurate Electric and Construction, Carpenter Mechanical, Freeland Contracting Co., Messer Construction, and Denier Electric,

“This event is further proof that graduates don’t have to follow the traditional route right after high school, Szabrak said. “With 45% of students who go to college in Ohio not completing their degree, it’s critical that we show students that college isn’t always the best option. Further, we are addressing the workforce issue within our county in the most productive way possible.”

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