

School and local business partner to promote 'Women in Charge'

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It is one thing to donate money for a cause. It is a truly heightened level of support to also devote time and human resources to that cause. Recently, local manufacturing company Itron committed financial support to the Women in Charge mentoring group at Seneca Middle School.

However, the company went even further by hosting the group of promising female math and science students at their facility to help them see and hear first-hand what a career is truly like in traditionally male-dominated science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) fields.

After an initial introduction to the company, the students split their time at the West Union facility between a lively roundtable discussion with female employees who work in a variety of professions for the company and a tour of the



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manufacturing floor. While on the tour, the students not only benefited from hearing employees in various areas

describe their work and areas of expertise but also had the opportunity to learn from their tour guides, two Clem-

son University co-op students, about how participation in a cooperative-education program at a university can

benefit them educationally and professionally. Arguably the most meaningful part of the trip was the roundtable discussion where the students were able to hear from a group of successful, professional women about their careers, educational choices and the obstacles they have experienced and overcome as they pursue STEM careers.

The Itron employees who gave of their time are:

Initial Introduction — Kathy Crouse, Chris Smith and Brooke Dobbins; Plant Tour Guides (Clemson University Co-op students) — Samuel Welch and Brianna Rasnick; Factory Area Guides — Martin Page, Gary Rowe, Eric Quesnel and Scott Billingsley (and his team), Roundtable participants — Katie Malton-Kargel, Donna Olsen, Preethishri TPV, Summer Loving, Alice Flower, Shama Afnan and Marion Nichols.