



### ***Bridging the Business/Education Gap!***

The **Digital Safari Academy @ Mt. Diablo High School** in Concord, CA (DSA) is a three year college and career program beginning in the sophomore year of high school. **The goal of the DSA is to integrate multimedia design with the core curriculum** through project-based learning. The Academy has won over a dozen statewide awards for web design and design excellence.

**The DSA has been selected as one of two academies in the nation to participate in the Career Academies Research Project** - a pilot program to develop models for increasing student exposure to careers and career paths through enhanced interaction with businesses and employers. The Career Academies Research Project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.



***Our students would like to make a Career Exploration Visit to your company. Our students are the future and we need your help to prepare them to be their best! You'll also be helping develop a model for bridging the business/education gap that will be used throughout the country!***

### ***Please, Host a Career Exploration Visit***

As part of the Career Academies Research Project, 11th grade students will participate in at least one **Career Exploration Visit** to a cooperating host company to introduce them to different types of settings where graduates within their career areas typically work. Unlike a typical field trip, **our students will arrive prepared and will be fully engaged** during the Visit. DSA students will have participated in workshops at school to research your company, plan interview questions and identify what they hope to observe and learn. The goals of a Career Exploration Visit are to:



- Expand awareness of jobs, careers, and work environments connected to a theme
- Make connections between what is learned at school and what is expected in the workplace
- Observe how employees apply job-specific skills, how transferable skills are used in a variety of jobs, and how technology is used in the workplace
- Develop the skills to interact comfortably and confidently with working adults
- Gain an awareness of the academic, technical and personal skills required to get and keep jobs

### ***The Digital Safari Academy: Redefining School, Redefining Cool!***

Over their three years in the Academy, students work on a series of academic and multimedia projects completed using industry standard multimedia tools. Through the completion of these projects, students work towards mastery of skills in graphic design, desktop publishing, animation, interactive authoring, photography, sound and video production, 3D design and presentation software. Additionally, the nature of the project-based-learning environment gives students a variety of experiences in planning, management of people and resources, working with clients and meeting deadlines while they learn to be confident, self-sufficient, and creative problem solvers – all important job skills for the economy of the 21st century. Our project design methodology has been adapted by numerous programs around the country, and our annual Innovation Project is a model for the involvement of the business community in the day to day management of classroom projects.

## **All About Hosting a Career Exploration Visit**

A Career Exploration Visit consists of 1) a welcome and orientation to the company, 2) a walking tour, 3) time for interviews with individual employees, and 4) opportunities for hands-on learning.

Your commitment as a Career Exploration Visit host company:

Group Size:	15, 20 or 30 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students (16 and 17 years old)
Total Time:	10 am to Noon (2 hours, plus optional time during lunch)
Employee Involvement:	1 to 3 for the orientation talk and tour (1 hour) 5 to 15 for individual career exploration interviews (1 hour)

### **Typical Agenda**

#### **1) Welcome and Orientation (approx. 30 min.)**

A company representative will greet the group, gathers students in a conference room or other appropriate space, introduce any senior level staff who are present, then paint the big picture of the organization (its mission, products, markets, etc.) and engage the students in a discussion and Q&A session about the company based on what they already know from their research and what they are interested in learning more about.



#### **2) Walking Tour (approx. 30 min.)**

One of the purposes of a walking tour is for students to get a physical feel for the workplace, to see how different people/departments contribute to the delivery of products or services, and to meet a variety of people who perform the many functions needed to make the business a success.

#### **3) Individual Career Explorations and Hands-on Learning Activities (approx. 60 min.)**

Teams of two to four students will meet with individual host employees preferably in their work areas. Students will spend time in a structured conversation, asking questions, taking notes, and responding to host questions. To assure this time is well-spent, students will come prepared with a list of interview questions (that we will share with you in advance).



Students learn by doing, so we hope that students will also be given an opportunity for a brief hands-on learning experience under the supervision of their host employee. This will be defined in advance with the host company in full compliance with all safety and confidentiality requirements and any other company-specific factors.

#### **Optional: Lunch and Debrief (approx. 30 min.)**

Lunch will be on-site (if facilities are available) or close to the host company's location. We encourage host employees to join us, though this is optional.

### **Contact Information**

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