

Objectives:

1. Contact Jesse for transcripts of today's and last week's RAP presentations (Petoskey SHRM and TC Networks Northwest)
2. Keith will provide SHRM overview and TC overview
3. Contact Evelyn for pictures

Notes/ updates about objectives:

1. Was given the transcript and read through the SHRM meeting. Was told that the second meeting I'd be looking at didn't end up happening. (J- 11/20)
2. Read through overviews that were sent, it all feels very much like the same/similar information to weeks past.
3. Have not yet received images from Evelyn. Her drive was being worked on, and then received out of office email, still waiting to hear back as of 11/27
4. Link to AI prompts: <https://chat.openai.com/share/02fd3da2-228a-4a47-b227-44b8f6395b12> (I feel like the language used by AI is too fluffy)

Draft writing:

Recently, Pesto Academy representatives have been sharing their experiences with building their apprenticeship program for software programming. The educational program is a collaborative effort between The Pesto Group, Northwest Michigan Works!, and the U.S. Department of Labor. Students, businesses, and local community leaders who have an interest in STEM fields are all people who can benefit from the Pesto Academy program.

Students benefit from this not only for its educational value but its financial one as well. It was not that long ago that if you wanted to get into certain fields of work you had to start by becoming a highly valued unpaid intern. Nowadays, doing an unpaid internship to start working in a desired field isn't sustainable for students. Many will go into college with the hope that getting a higher education in that field will give them a head start when finding work, only to be met with having to take whatever jobs they can find, regardless of the field, just to pay off student loans. Even lucky students who find work in their desired field to pay off student loans may face the frustration or disappointment that all that class work may not have prepared them for what a company's actual desires are in a workplace. Pesto Academy eliminates all those issues by not only paying for the education but also providing hands-on work with experienced mentors. Beyond that, the students are all paid for their work and taught the value of the skills they develop.

The financial gain doesn't stop at the students. Businesses invest a lot of money and time into training new employees. Even the most experienced new hire has to learn the company dynamic and expectations. Investing those kinds of resources into students you don't know is a risk. When students learn from first-hand experience, they learn what things don't work, they learn how to ask the right questions for the right help, and perhaps most importantly they learn the soft skills needed in a programming workplace. No amount of job training e-learnings can teach someone effective team communication or patience when you can't find that single character error that is causing your code to fail. So hiring a student who has gone through this program means you are investing less time and money (two of the most important business resources) on these highly adaptable new hires.

All of this is just the beginning. Right now Pesto Academy is at capacity with its current mentor-to-student ratio. Pesto Academy may be a trailblazer in the state of Michigan for this kind of program, but by no means is it the end of the potential for it. This type of education is needed for students and businesses

in all fields of STEM and beyond. Community leaders can spend years building great ways to help their local area thrive. Much of that starts with making education more accessible and helping local businesses generate success. The success of Pesto Academy has the potential not only to influence its own students and stakeholders but also to generate change in the community. If there were a program like this for every field of work that has financial or education barriers to entry then we could see unimaginable growth. People who were previously only scraping by to make ends meet could develop a meaningful career that supports the life they want. Businesses could shape a talent pool in their favor and may even be able to skip the hiring ad altogether. On a big enough scale, this process could entirely reshape an economy.