

**WASD**

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# INTERNSHIPS

## **KATIE RIDDLE**

**SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY**

- ➔ Hands-on experience
- ➔ Real-life applications
- ➔ Career-readiness



PROFILE

# KATIE RIDDLE

*Katie Riddle learns career skills as a Life Skills intern.*



Junior Katie Riddle enjoys helping others and is interested in a career in speech/language pathology. She chose to intern in Emily Emerson's Life Skills and Autistic Support classroom so that she could become comfortable with the students there.

Mrs. Emerson explains that her students have combinations of disabilities that require extensive communication, physical, and/or mobility supports to participate in school meaningfully.

"In my class, students learn the life skills required for supported or semi-independent living once they graduate from high school," Mrs. Emerson says.

Katie joins the class during the period when the students focus on vocational and practical living skills. Work-based activities include sorting, counting money, alphabetizing, and filing, while practical living skills focus on cooking and cleaning. Katie is paired with a different student each day.

Mrs. Emerson appreciates that Katie is gaining valuable experience working with students with disabilities while she is in high school. And she is grateful for Katie's participation, explaining that her students like Katie. "She is very approachable, and having peer-led activities is a win-win for my students and for Katie."

Katie says that being in Mrs. Emerson's classroom has taught her to adapt to new situations. "I now know each student and their personality, which enables me to help each of them succeed in the classroom."

"Katie fits in well with our students," Mrs. Emerson says. "She takes initiative and is not shy to interact."

Katie explains that she wasn't sure what to expect when she first arrived in Mrs. Emerson's classroom. She was surprised that some of the students are good at some things, while not so good at other tasks. She was also surprised to discover that being in Mrs. Emerson's room with her new friends has become a welcome break from the stress of her classroom schedule.

"It is relaxing to be in this classroom. It's a slower pace with no competition. We're all working together for each individual student to succeed," Katie says with a smile. "I enjoy interacting with the students and I can see myself doing something like this in the future."

Outside of school, Katie has been dancing ballet with the Berks Ballet Company since the sixth grade. Her favorite show is *The Nutcracker*.



## BUILDING CAREER-READINESS

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➔ **Hands-On Experience**

➔ **Real-Life Applications**

➔ **Career-Readiness**

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**"It is important for students to intern to gain insight into careers and opportunities that are steadily growing and redefining the workforce."**

**-Peter Beck**

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# ABOUT

## THE WYOMISSING AREA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Wyomissing Area Senior High School Internship Program is part of an initiative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education called Pennsylvania Career Readiness. The goals of the Internship Program, which has been in development for the last year, are to:

- provide students with the opportunity for career exploration and hands-on field experience before choosing a career or postsecondary area of concentration;
- give interns exposure to the professional expectations of the "working world";
- connect academic applications to practical skills; and
- meaningfully extend every academic department's existing curriculum.

For the 2019 spring session, ten student interns are working with mentors in internal placements throughout the school district. As teacher and Internship Coordinator Peter Beck explains, "This pilot year will provide valuable data and feedback to enhance the experience for next year's interns."

Internships expose students to real-world careers in their field of interest. "It is important for students to intern to gain insight into careers and opportunities that are steadily growing and redefining the workforce, such as computer science, STEM applications, mathematics, engineering, business, finance, and medicine, among many others," Mr. Beck comments. "If students can gain practical experience through a dynamic internship program, our hope is they'll be more prepared to enter the work force or a postsecondary academic setting."

Mr. Beck continues, "Conversely, if a student is undecided about their focus, this program affords them the opportunity to explore potential careers before committing money and time to a potentially fruitless endeavor."

In addition to hands-on work with a mentor, each student-intern is required to submit weekly experience journals, conduct two professional interviews, and review two relevant professional journals per semester. The assignments are not necessarily designed for writing, but more as an activity for further engagement in their selected field.

There are no academic prerequisites for participation. Students who are interested in participating should speak with their counselor.