

Student Government Day- Sydney Harris- Board of Health

My assignment for Acushnet's Student Government Day was to become a part of the Board of Health. Knowing only a few things about what the Board of Health did, I knew the experience was going to benefit me in many ways. This field trip turned into much more than I thought it would.

After being inducted onto the Board of Health, I headed over to the Board of Health office with Mr. Medeiros and Mr. Urban. When first entering the office, the first thing I noticed were the numerous file cabinets around the whole room. I found it pretty amazing when I was told there was information about every single house in Acushnet. The two secretaries were the people who took care of all the paperwork and found all of the information that Mr. Medeiros or Mr. Urban needed. How much they both relied on the secretaries made me realized the importance of them.

The Board of Health is the people that take care of all the vaccines. The papers and forms that are handed out at schools for vaccinations are all taken care of by them. Mr. Medeiros showed us the refrigerator which was full of bottles of vaccines for approximately ten people per bottle. The fridge has to be maintained at a certain temperature or else the medicine may go bad. There were also huge boxes of the needles that have to be prepared before they hold the vaccinations. Even though it may seem like a little part of their job, it is very important because they're main focus in their job it to keep Acushnet healthy for all of its citizens.

We got the chance to then ask what the most difficult part of their job was. They answered that when they're inspecting buildings, people don't realize that they're only there to enforce the state's laws. People that own the property tend to tell inspectors that they are wrong and start many arguments. Owners don't realize the power that the Board of Health has. They

could just simply shut down a business over quarrels that people start.

Mr. Medeiros and Mr. Urban then took us out into Acushnet to inspect businesses. Our first job was to inspect the new seafood place on South Main Street, Surf and Turf. While there, I learned that one big error to look for is cross contaminations. The meat has to be in a certain order from poultry to fish to prevent cross contaminations, which is simply a mix between meats. Surf and Turf did not have that problem and I'm proud to say that it passed our inspection with flying colors. After leaving there, we headed off to P.J Keating. First, we met a few of the people, signed in, and then drove off outside to look around the site. Because it was so rainy out, we did not get to see the entire hole itself, so they agreed to show us all the way to the bottom some very nice Saturday in May. P.J Keating was a very well-maintained business that easily passed our inspection.

Being a part of Student Government Day on March 15, 2010, was definitely a very educational experience. I have learned that the Board of Health is of great importance to this community. I've found that all of the committees in Acushnet work together in one way or another. Each one is equal to the other and has just as much a part to the community. When we were told that we had inspired them to continue the tradition of Student Government Day every year, I felt greatly honored. I hope that all the eighth graders learn just as much as I have because of this event. I thank all of the people who set this special day up because it was certainly a memorable one.