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SSTRIDE Club Visits Kiwanis

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Five students from Madison County Central School's SSTRIDE (Science Students Together Reaching Instructional Diversity and Excellence) program and visited the Kiwanis Club of Madison to talk about what the SSTRIDE Club means to them and how it will help them in their future endeavors. Penny Kuntz, a graduate of the SSTRIDE program, who is now the Outreach Program Sponsor for Madison County Central School, under the auspices of the FSU College of Medicine, accompanied the eighth graders and explained what the program is about...a way to give the students a more advanced education in the areas of science, health/medicine, and computer technology, with hands-on work in those areas, extra field trips, exposure to FSU professors who visit and work with them once a week, and accelerated study. The highly motivated students go through an application and interview process before they are accepted and inducted into the program. "The goal is to educate these kids," said Kuntz. "Then have them come back and work in Madison, giving back to the community." The program follows them through high school graduation, so that if any of the students choose to pursue a college degree in science, health or medicine, they will be well prepared for the challenge, perhaps even ahead of the game by then. Eighth grader Drew French said that being in the SSTRIDE program was a "dream come true" for him. The child of a computer-programmer father, he has been interested in science ever since he could remember. The science classes are fast-paced, and he believes they will open doors for him in the future. Issac Redding praised the advanced science classes where he has already learned dissection techniques and CPR. He has plans to go on to FSU. Chante Straws was proud of being in the SSTRIDE program. "Even though we're all different, we can come together to create great things," she said, adding that she was looking forward to expanding her knowledge through SSTRIDE. "I can't wait to see what I'll learn next!" Mishaila Berman became interested in SSTRIDE because her older sister was in the program. Berman, who plans a double major in animation and psychology, says she gets excited about learning science in a program that is "more than just reading textbooks, more than just field trips." Zaida Sanchez-Luna said that "If you enjoy or absolutely love science," the SSTRIDE program is the place to be. Her goal is to become a registered nurse. Currently, SSTRIDE has about 20 students in the Central School.



Greene Publishing, Inc. Photo by Lynette Norris, October 10, 2013

Members of the SSTRIDE program, along with their sponsors and coordinators, visited the Kiwanis Club of Madison to talk about what the program means to them. Front row, left to right: Zaida Sanchez-Luna and Drew French. Second row, left to right: Issac Redding, Chante Straws, Mishaila Berman and Penny Kuntz, MCCS Coordinator. Third row, left to right: Selena Phillips, FSU Coordinator, and Octavious Tookes, Safe Schools and Healthy Students Director for the Madison County School District.