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Dentist Guest Lectures in Forensic Class

NOVEMBER 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Following a guest lecture about forensic odontology on Wednesday, Oct. 25, at Poplar Bluff High School, local dentist Dr. Eric Blaich took the opportunity to provide career advice to students.

“Do something you like, don’t go for money,” said Blaich, who works for the Dental Arts Group, a family practice spanning three generations. “Look at whether that career field’s growing.”

The PBHS alumnus advised the juniors and seniors in Kathy Miller’s forensic science class to seek job shadow opportunities and internships so they may be able to “find out for free” what career field they are passionate about prior to choosing a major, if they are college-bound.

While he does not suggest that forensic odontology is a lucrative profession, Blaich discussed the integral role such a specialist can play during catastrophic events involving mass casualties. Forensic odontology is the identification of human remains based on dental records or the application of dental science in legal investigations

Teeth are the hardest structure in the body, Blaich pointed out. He noted that identifying an individual by his or her teeth may be used as a last resort if, for example, the person was a fire victim. “Teeth are kind of like snowflakes,” said Blaich, “every set is different.

While a dental record must legally be kept on file for five years, digital cloud storage allows archives to go back much further today, Blaich said. The oldest discovered filling dates back 13,000 years.

Earlier in the month, education consultant Bridget Jackson of the Missouri Department of Conservation visited Miller's class to introduce students to her cadaver dog, Addie.

Pictured: Senior Hunter Goble volunteers to have an impression made of his teeth.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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