

## Real World Learning at Big Picture South Burlington

By Greg Young

Mike is a student in the Big Picture program at South Burlington High School. His passion is computers and every Tuesday and Thursday he attends his internship at Pragmatic Technologies Incorporated, a computer software company, where he is developing applications for Android based mobile devices. The other three days a week he spends at school where he works on independent projects, meets with his advisor, and participates in group discussions and workshops with the rest of the students in his advisory. Each quarter he presents his work at an exhibition in front of peers, teachers, and his parents, and then sets up his learning plan for the next quarter. These learning plans incorporate academic areas, and help him define the projects he will work on over the next quarter.

The Big Picture model began in Providence, RI in 1995, and has spread to over 70 schools around the country and around the world. This is the first year for the program in South Burlington High School. Linking Learning to Life

(LLL) has partnered with the South Burlington School District to coordinate the student internship part of the Big Picture experience for each student. In this way the program is linked to all of LLL's other internship and community based learning programs.



Currently the South Burlington Big Picture program serves 19 students with student interests as varied as fashion design to herpetology, and nursing. The program follows the mantra 'one student at a time' so no two students follow the same exact plan. By focusing on high standards and authentic assessment, the program seeks to develop a rigorous curriculum for each student.

## Dressing for success was never so easy!



If you were at the Innovation Jam on Monday, October 26, you probably saw many blue suit bags floating around the exhibition hall. These blue bags were a part of Linking Learning to Life's (LLL) free men's dress wear give-a-way.

Over 60 men – young and old – took advantage of this great opportunity to get some professional dress wear

to help them with their job search. These clothes were collected during the month of September as part of Men's Warehouse National Suit Drive.

"This event was very popular with the high school guys. They were trying stuff on and really getting into it. I saw a few taking pictures with their cell phones and sending them to their fathers to get a second opinion," states Megan Johnston, PILOT Program Coordinator at LLL. Staff

members were on hand to provide guidance about size, fit, and color. "It was great to see so many young people talking about appropriate interviewing clothes, which is something that we emphasize in our programs at LLL," says Lindsey Lathrop, Marketing and Development Coordinator of LLL.

Linking Learning to Life has received several requests to do the drive again next year, which speaks to the high need that job seekers have when it comes to appropriate interviewing clothes. Many people also approached LLL to ask about including women next time around – which is something that the organization will keep in mind if they decide to do the drive again.

With the unemployment rate wavering around 6.5%, events like the Innovation Jam are imperative to helping Vermonters get their foot in the door to some of the fastest growing companies in the Green Mountain State and at least this year, have an easy way to dress for success!