

# Coventry freshmen have more choices

## Kids can now choose courses in Career Center

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Prior to this year students at Coventry High School were not eligible to test the career and technical center waters until their sophomore year.

This year that policy changed. The Coventry High School and Career Center now offers what are called "exploratory" classes to freshmen who are interested in trying their interests in certain technical orientated fields. Carpentry, Health Careers and Culinary Arts are now among the courses that offer this exploratory program to freshman.

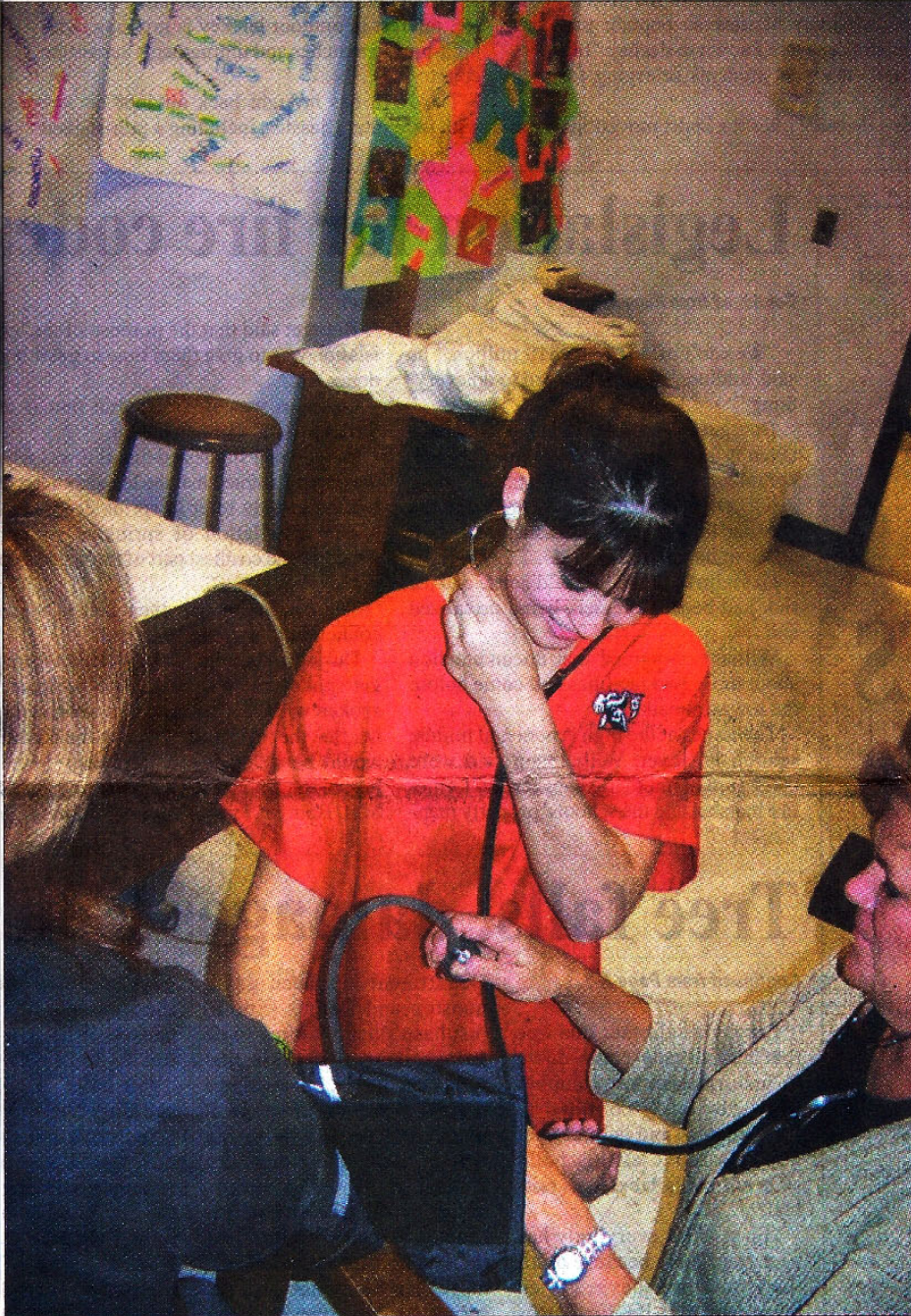
Lori Ferguson, director of the Coventry High School Career and Technical Center said that ninth grade students who choose these courses will be exposed to the various occupations within those careers as well as learn theory and application of basic skills. So far this year, she said, the career center is having a great response to the new courses. Each of the courses have basically filled up, she said, and the feed back that the faculty have received from participating students has also been quite positive.

"The students love it," Ferguson said. "They have told us that they are so impressed with the programs and that prior to their coming into the center, they really had no idea how extensive it was and that is basically the problem that we are having with many students in the school.

"Even though these opportunities are right here in their building, they don't realize it," she said. "Students who sign up for the exploratory culinary program, for example, think that they are coming in for some sort of a basic cooking class, they have no idea until they arrive, that they are getting so much more than that. Of course they will be cooking, but they are getting the background of the industry, the details of the job, the income and salary guidelines, and experience in the restaurant business through our facility here on site.

"It is much more extensive than I think the kids realize when they first sign up," she said.

The career center and the school did have to make some faculty modifications in order to accommodate the changes, but they did not have to hire any new teachers.



Jessica Selby • Daily Times

Lori Ferguson, left, who is the director of the Coventry High Career and Technical Center, said freshmen will now have the opportunity to take classes in the department. Currently, only sophomores, juniors and seniors have the ability to take career and tech classes.

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Ferguson said that they just alerted some of the school's existing teacher's schedules to accommodate the changes. A teacher from the school was shifted into the career center's carpentry program, one of the existing culinary teacher's in house responsibilities were shifted so that he could take on additional course loads and the health careers staff took on the load.

"We basically reallocated our existing resources to make for a better functioning system for our students and so far we have heard nothing but positive feed back from both our staff and our students," Ferguson said.

The wonderful part about all of the career program opportunities, Ferguson said, is that students who complete the three year programs at the school, typically all earn some sort of accomplishment at the end of the term. In the Health Care field, Ferguson said, the students take their state CNA exam. In the Culinary department, the students earn college credits that are transferable to Johnson and Whales as well as a state board exam. "Our goal is in sync with the president; to get our students college and career ready and the important thing for our students and their parents to realize is that the students that enroll in the career center still maintain all of the general education requirements in the basic curriculum, these technical education courses are just additional so it is not like



they are missing out on anything," she said. "In fact, it is just the opposite. They are getting all of these additional resources that they can use to build the start of either their way through college or into a career and now these opportunities are even becoming available to our ninth graders which had never happened before."

To learn more about the Coventry Career and Technical Center or the programs that are offered there, which includes the three previously mentioned courses as well as cosmetology, automotive, child development, electronics and computer technology and graphic communications, interested students or their parents should visit the school's website at [www.schools.coventryschools.net](http://www.schools.coventryschools.net) or call the school at 822-9499.