

ICI Homes hosts tour: Volusia students learn about home building



Middle school students from DeLand tour homes at Plantation Bay on Friday.

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ORMOND BEACH - A group of middle school students wearing yellow construction hats took stock of a model townhome here and shot their hands up with questions.

For many of the students from Southwestern Middle School in DeLand, it was their first visit to a model home during a field trip to ICI Homes' Plantation Bay community in Ormond Beach on Friday.

A team of homebuilders from Daytona Beach-based ICI Homes patiently answered questions about the cost of building homes and career opportunities for home construction.

"Every construction project is about team work," ICI Homes Construction Manager Tim MacFarlane told the students. "Everything you do in home construction touches someone else's life."

The field trip was part of a new effort by Food Brings Hope, a Daytona Beach charity that provides enrichment opportunities and after-school programs to 14 Volusia County schools.

This year the nonprofit established an after-school program at Southwestern Middle.



Mamie Oatis, the school's principal, said she reached out to Food Brings Hope founder Forough Hosseini to explore opportunities for exposing her students to potential career paths and ICI Homes was a great start because of the relationship with the nonprofit.

Hosseini is executive vice president of information systems at ICI Homes, which she co-founded with her husband Mori Hosseini, the company's chairman and CEO. "This is an eye opener for them," Oatis said. "If your parents aren't homeowners then you might not think you can own a home either and that's the case with a lot of these students."



ICI Homes has built thousands of homes and created some of the largest master development communities in Florida. ICI Homes today is the largest locally based homebuilder in the Volusia-Flagler area.

"If we can show students what goes into building homes that helps us plant seeds and if we can do that, we've done our job," ICI Homes Operations Manager Lenny Sanclemente said.

During the field trip, students were able to see all of the stages of home construction, from the foundation to the finished product. They also received career advice and had the opportunity to participate in a scavenger hunt that took place inside the model homes.

Program coordinator Briana Thompson said this was the first time a Food Brings Hope program has taken students on a field trip to an ICI Homes community.

Seventh-grader Raven Ball said the trip to Plantation Bay was one of her favorite field trips this year.

"We've learned a lot about how teamwork is important for building things," Raven said.