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For immediate release

(Fort Atkinson, WI) - The School District of Fort Atkinson's Pathways Program is a program that provides instruction and employment within a functional based curriculum for students ages 18-21. The goal of the program is to provide students with disabilities, transition focused services within a community-based environment. Pathways provides support and opportunities for young adults who are in the process of transitioning into their post-secondary life. Pathways works with individuals who need to continue working on their vocational, daily living, transition, and social communication skills, as well as self-advocacy. The program focuses on learning daily living skills such as budgeting, grocery shopping, cooking, and washing laundry, while then applying those skills through real-world experiences.

One of the components of the program is their car wash business. The car wash provides an opportunity for employment, as well as giving students an opportunity to make money. Students wash and detail staff vehicles twice a week. The money that is made each week goes towards weekly social outings. Social outings provide students with the opportunity to participate as a group in a fun recreational atmosphere in the community.

Pathways Program student Kevin Dietz-Patterson commented, "I enjoy having friends to do the car wash with. I have fun doing the car wash each week and going on social outings with my friends."

The car wash business teaches students how to budget money, while helping understand the concept of working and creating an allowance. Students fill out a weekly pay stub, and keep track of the hours that they have worked each month.

"Each day is something new. I enjoy the constant changing and learning of new tasks. Our car wash experience is a good way to prepare for an actual workplace one day." Student Nathaniel Toeller added.

To end the school year, students in the Pathways program had the experience of washing and detailing a Fort Atkinson police officer's squad car - Officer Dan Hefty. All 6 students who participated said that they enjoyed hearing the police siren, making the car shiny and clean for the officer, seeing the differences between a civilian car vs. a police car, taking a picture with the police car and officer, and doing something fun with friends on the last day of school. This was an amazing opportunity for students to be involved and give back to the Fort Atkinson community.