

The Reality Store

The Reality Store is a project of the Bedford Professional Women's Organization. Each fall The Reality Store is held at Bedford Middle School, Forest Middle School and Staunton River Middle School.

This year, our Reality Stores will be held on Thursday, October 15 at Forest Middle School; Thursday, November 5, Staunton River Middle School and Friday, November 20 at Bedford Middle School.

The Reality Store is a project in which 8th grade students are asked to imagine what their lives will be like when they are 28 years old. They will consider what kind of job they'll have, will they be married or single, have children and if so, how many and a lot of other factors that affect income producing ability. Based on these initial responses the student is given a monthly salary and directed to each station in the "store", the first, of course, being taxes. Federal, State, FICA and Medicare taxes are withheld before the check is written. The check stub will show how much is withheld for taxes (about 30%) and this is explained to the student. This is when the "reality" sets in. As the student stops off at each station, the costs of items such as student loans, housing costs, transportation, food, child care and unexpected emergencies and selected luxuries are deducted from his or her salary. The goal of this project is to show the student how choices must be made in order to make a month's salary last. If the student runs out of money before completing the circuit, he or she will go bankrupt and have to re-evaluate their choices about the type of job choice they have made. The students will also have the choice of choosing the military as a career. A week before the actual event, a brochure is sent to the parents explaining what The Reality Store is all about and inviting them to come that day if they so desire.

Volunteers are always needed to make these events successful; if you would like to volunteer to help with one of these, please respond on this website with your name and telephone number and e-mail address and someone will be in touch with you to confirm your desire.