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## An eye-opening experience Sixth graders learn about college life thru IU tour

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Jennings **County** sixth graders were treated to a trip that might very well have changed the decision of many students as to whether or not they would attend college.

Each year, the **Jennings County** Economic Development Commission's Workforce Development division, takes every sixth grader in the **county** to Indiana University where they experience a tour of the college. "We hope to open the children's minds as to what careers are available to them," explained Trish Speer, workforce development director who accompanied each group to the campus.

"We want to introduce them to the idea of college and we hope that helps them make a more informed decision as to what they want to do when they grow up."

The students visit different buildings on the campus and even have lunch in the same cafeteria as the college students. Many times **Jennings County** students attending IU will join the sixth graders to talk about what it is really like to go to college.

After lunch, the students have the opportunity to walk onto the floor of Assembly Hall and take a tour of that building as well. They are on the campus for about four hours. The students are asked to fill out questionnaires about the trip and whether the trip helped them to decide if they wanted to attend college some day.

"I already wanted to attend college, but not IU," explained Naomie Peterson, a Scipio sixth grader. "I want to go to Purdue University because I want to do agriculture. If I didn't want to do that, I would attend IU."

A fellow classmate said she wouldn't change anything about the trip.

"The trip opened my mind to think about college," said Kaleshia Cook-Laine. "It was really helpful."



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A tour guide introduces Indiana University to sixth grade students from St. Mary's Catholic School of North Vernon.—Submitted Photos by Trish Speer



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Brush Creek's Jamie Baez, Abby Ayers, Alondra Bueno, Emily Perez, Emily Hall, Brooklyn Walters and Emma Diekhoff celebrate IU's 1975-76 national championship. Behind them are statues of Bobby Wilkerson, Kent Benson, Scott May, Quinn Bucker, Jim Crews and Tom Abernathy from that undefeated national championship season.

For Brush Creek Elementary School sixth grader Tatum Brown, the trip was an eye-opening experience. "This trip made me realize that going to college is important for your future, but it can also be fun," Tatum noted.

"I had planned on going to college, but now I want to go even more after this trip," another student, Keiton Miller, revealed.

Not only do all the sixth graders get to take the IU trip, but the **Jennings County** EDC sponsors a trip for all the eighth graders. The older students get to visit IUPUC for a tour. **Jennings County** High School students interested in attending Purdue University also have the opportunity to visit that campus on a day trip that is sponsored by the EDC as well.

A total of 339 sixth graders participated in the IU trip that began on April 4 with Graham Creek Elementary School and ended on April 13 with Scipio Elementary School being the final group to tour.

The trips are sponsored by the **Jennings County** EDC, the **Jennings County Community Foundation** and the **Jennings County** School Corporation.