

## High School Interns: Lockheed Martin's Next Generation

by Aero Communications — POSTED ON APRIL 18, 2016



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Lockheed Martin Skunk Works® is the only aerospace company in the Antelope Valley to offer a high school internship program, and a diverse one at that. High school internships are available to students in the Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD) during fall and spring semesters, and available to outlying schools, such as Rosamond High School, during summer. The interns are learning skills they couldn't learn anywhere else in several fields such as fabrications, conceptual design, and production operations.

For students to be chosen as interns, they had to turn in a resume and go through an interview process to see if they were the best choice, just like a real job. Students were interviewed by Kevin Kelly, the program director, and two other intern supervisors. The students chosen were then placed where they were a best fit, based on the answers they gave in their interview and their personal preference.

Aaron Erickson, conceptual design intern, describes the internship program as an “unrivaled opportunity.” He’s right; there is no other program like this one, and students know that. They learn an array of skills such as how to code and how to work with composites.

Students intern at Lockheed Martin for a variety of reasons, whether it's because they have no idea what they want to do, like Jenifer Goddard, they learned from a sibling to explore options, like Hovan Kirpichyan, or just want to get a head start on their future, like Aaron Erickson. Through this opportunity they all gain one thing: an unforgettable experience.

Interning at Lockheed Martin opens a student's eyes to new career paths. The program is exploratory, which means that students aren't tethered to one field. Jenifer Goddard, currently a fabrications intern, is an excellent example of the encouragement to explore.

Goddard began interning at Lockheed Martin the second semester of her junior year (she's now a senior) as a conceptual design intern. As her first semester of interning came to a close, she asked Kevin Kelly if she could intern in the programming department, opening up a whole new position for future students, like Audrey Armijo.

Audrey Armijo is the current programming intern, who spends her days learning to code. When asked if she already knew how to code, Armijo explained how she wasn't familiar with coding then went on to compare it to, "Spartan boot camp with computers." She describes the internship program as an opportunity to learn hands on skills and see what it's like in the real world.

Kevin Kelly said having an opportunity like this, "would've helped [him] understand the real world." According to Kelly, Lockheed Martin's internship program gives students the chance to explore the workplace. This is exactly why Environment, Safety and Health (ESH) intern Hovan Kirpichyan wanted to intern with Lockheed.

"It lets you see what direction you'll take your life and what career path you'd like to choose," said Kirpichyan, who has seen firsthand what happens when you jump into a career path blind folded. With the internship program, students determine whether they would like doing their dream job, or even discover their real dream job.

The internship program is a valuable and rewarding opportunity that more students should experience. It's extremely unique and perfect for exploring careers. Armijo, Goddard and Kirpichyan all prove that students can learn something new and put those new skills to use. Interns aren't made extraordinary because of the program. The interns are what make the program extraordinary.

If you have questions about the internship program at the Skunk Works, please contact [Kevin Kelly](#).