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Jacqueline A. Pavek – Northfield News

Even if you've dreamed of a career all of your young life, how do you know you'll enjoy it? What if you spend years studying a field in college that you later find you don't enjoy or don't have the knack for?

Summer Sorenson, a senior at Rosemount High School, hopes to avoid that expensive and frustrating situation. She has spent a few days a week at Kitchen Concepts in Northfield through a mentorship program at her school. Sorenson has been shadowing Lindsey Knutson at the store.

Knutson said that her high school didn't have a program like that, but it might have helped her out.

"I went to school for business," she said. "I ended up being an office assistant and I hated it."

Knutson went back to school to do what she does now. She has done internships in the past and knows how difficult it is to find a position like that, so she's happy to help Sorenson on her path.

"It's nice to help out," she said. Plus, "it doesn't hurt to have somebody to bounce ideas off of."

Sorenson said that her interest in design began when she saw the projects her sister was working on for a design class. Then she began watching design shows on TV. Working with Knutson at Kitchen Concepts let her see the whole process that goes into designing a room — from visiting a client's home to planning the space in design software and making style choices based on a client's likes and dislikes.

She realized through working with Knutson that she is more interested in the layout aspect than in choosing the details like finishes on cabinets, so she might like to study architecture in college. That's valuable information for a soon-to-be high school grad.

"It's definitely worth it," said Sorenson. "I'm pretty positive on what I want to do now with my life."

She said that the program could save her money, too, since she has gotten a taste of the work ahead of her, rather than going to college without that firsthand experience.

By participating in the program, Sorenson gets out of school early. She doesn't have to attend the last two hours of the day so that she can work and meet with her mentor. She works 30 hours at her job in Bloomington in addition to the mentorship. Because of the shorter school day, she is able to stay on top of her homework, too.