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PATHWAY PROGRAM SUCCESS: THREE SIGN-ON TO JOIN WHITFIELD COUNTY FIRE



From left: Jesse Araujo, Noe Sandoval, and Gabriel Nunez

Whitfield County, GA – The Whitfield County School System is finding success in the program that allows students to expedite career training and life skills.

On Thursday, May 4th, Jesse Araujo, Gabriel Nunez, and Noe Sandoval completed the First Responders Pathway Program through the Norwest Georgia College and Career Academy (NWGCCA), and will begin employment with the Whitfield County Fire Department (WCFD) upon graduation.

The First Responders Academy launched in January 2023 after months of preparation by NWGCCA and Whitfield County School administrators and the WCFD. The hands-on firefighting course is designed to train the recruit for a career in fire service using methods that enhance cognitive skills through field exercises and classroom learning. The curriculum was built to give the students the skills necessary to perform safely and effectively throughout their career.

“The best part of it is providing jobs to the youth,” said Fire Chief Ed O’Brien. “We’re keeping them local, in a good career, with long-term benefits, and they’ve got a great future set up to serve us here in our community.” WCFD Captains Keith Gray and Tyler Warnix were two of the program instructors. The program mission is to help the students with professional and personal development. “Watching them grow with this program was one of the most rewarding parts of it,” said Captain Gray.

The First Responders Pathway Program is a great asset to the community as it prepares students for careers in public safety. It helps to ensure that the WCFD has a pool of highly qualified candidates, and the academy’s commitment to provide training has resulted in a successful program that benefits everyone.

“The NWGCCA’s mission is workforce development,” said CEO of the NWGCCA, David Moeller.

“When implementing new programs, we look for two things: how the program will contribute to the talent pool our industry partners need, and how the program will provide our students with a viable career after graduation. The First Responder Academy in partnership with the Whitfield County Fire Department fit both of those categories, and will continue to push forward to develop training programs that are sustainable and will feed talent throughout Northwest Georgia.”

For more information on the First Responders Pathway Program please visit www.wcsga.net.