



EMPLOYER PROFILE

Homestead.com

Size: Small

Region: Suburban

Industry: Technology

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Overview

The Homestretch Program, developed by Homestead.com, provides students from East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City with paid internships at a Silicon Valley technology company. Interns in the eight-week program participate in job skill training and team building workshops as well as contribute real work to the organization. The interns are highly productive and introduce energy and fresh perspectives into the workplace. Homestead sees the program as a way of developing the future workforce while providing solutions to real business challenges today.

By the end of the internship, all interns are expected to develop final projects utilizing their newly acquired skills and highlighting the best aspects of their work experience. The company hosts a graduation for all Homestretch interns where the projects are showcased. Homestretch coordinators regularly follow up with students and parents during the school year by sponsoring college nights and quarterly check-ins and providing college prep materials and workshops.

Critical Success Factors

Below are several critical success factors for Homestead.com and its School-to-Career activities:

- Provide a meaningful work experience that connects with and adds relevance to students' education.
- Work in partnership with community-based groups and seek support from others in the corporate sector.
- Design your internship program to benefit both the intern and the hosting company.

Homestead.com's Path to Success

CEO Justin Kitch volunteered in East Palo Alto schools as an MBA student at Stanford and decided to continue the tradition of giving back when he created Homestead.com. Initiated in the summer of 2000, Homestead's Homestretch Internship Program reached out to high school juniors and seniors from underrepresented populations who demonstrated the desire to succeed in life. Students responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to gain practical work experience in the high-tech environment of Silicon Valley. The program became so successful that the company established a nonprofit called Homestretch with a full-time coordinator to handle administrative duties and enlist the participation of other technology companies.

Strategies/Activities

- Job shadowing
- Mentoring
- Quality, paid internships, particularly for underserved students
- Advocacy on behalf of School-to-Career and support for the involvement of other companies
- Scholarships