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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Don Wood Foundation Awards \$712,000 to Support Manufacturing Career POD at Career Quest

AUBURN, IN - Feb. 19, 2025 – The J. Kruse Education Center (JKEC), a nonprofit redefining career education through innovative exploration programs, proudly announces the receipt of a \$712,000 grant from the Don Wood Foundation for the manufacturing career POD (Personal Opportunities for Different Skills). The funding will support the build-out of the manufacturing career POD, 1 of 16 immersive career exploration experiences at Career Quest, a state-of-the-art center where students can discover hundreds of career opportunities and participate in micro-apprenticeships in a single location. The POD is set to launch in 2025.

The manufacturing career POD will offer hands-on, interactive experiences designed to inspire and prepare students for careers in the manufacturing sector. “We are grateful to the DWF for providing this opportunity for individuals in Northeast Indiana. These experiences will be very impactful and beneficial to helping students discover and experience jobs that exist within the manufacturing pathway,” said Matthew Toth, executive director.

The Don Wood Foundation is committed to growing and strengthening the manufacturing sector in the Midwest region anchored in Northeast Indiana. By supporting Career Quest, The Don Wood Foundation is helping bridge the gap between education and workforce readiness.

“This manufacturing career POD experience will provide safe, hands-on exposure to a diverse array of careers in manufacturing,” said Laura Macknick, president and CEO, Don Wood Foundation. “This pathway also creates an opportunity for leadership enhancements through connections that can be established between students, programs, and businesses in need of employees.”

Community members who want to support or learn more about this initiative are encouraged to visit <https://jkruseeducation.org/> or follow J. Kruse Education Center on Facebook or Instagram for updates.

Founded in 2011, The J. Kruse Education Center was created as an opportunity to provide career exploration programs to individuals in Northeast Indiana. Recently, JKEC has worked with local schools, businesses, policymakers, and nonprofits to expand their programs and services including the Career Coaching Academy and Career Match. The Career Coaching Academy supports schools and students by providing individualized coaching sessions during school hours. Career Match is a digital app platform that allows students to see their coaching results, connect with their career coach, explore businesses and potential job opportunities, and use the proprietary smart match feature to zero in on careers that would best fit their unique talents and interests.

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