NxtUpTeens Brings Harrison and Rye Brook Students Together with Local Doctors for Career Exploration

PURCHASE, NY — September 30, 2026 — Fifteen high school students from Harrison and Rye Brook gathered in Purchase for a NxtUpTeens career exploration event that offered a firsthand look at the worlds of dentistry, entrepreneurship and business.

Students met with **Dr. Michael Graffeo and Dr. Jason Sauer**, who shared the personal and professional journeys that led them to careers in dentistry. The doctors discussed their education, experiences and the paths they took to establish their own practices, giving students insight into both the medical and business sides of the profession.

The conversation went beyond what it takes to become a dentist. Dr. Graffeo and Dr. Sauer spoke about starting and running a practice, building a successful career, overcoming challenges and making important decisions along the way.

Students were active participants throughout the evening, asking questions about the doctors' experiences, career choices and the lessons they learned while building their practices.

"I firmly believe that there are no insurmountable obstacles in life," Graffeo told the students. "If you persevere through adversity and tumultuous times, you will emerge as an unstoppable force."

Sauer encouraged students to pursue careers and goals that are meaningful to them.

"Do what you love, love what you do, and always keep your eye on your prize, no matter what roadblocks appear in front of you," Sauer said.

The event was organized by **NxtUpTeens**, a youth-focused organization founded by **Hailey and Derek Graffeo** to help teenagers explore potential careers by connecting them directly with professionals in a variety of fields.

NxtUpTeens provides students with opportunities to learn about careers through conversations with professionals who can share not only what they do, but also how they got there. The goal is to give teens a better

understanding of the education, choices, challenges and experiences that shape different career paths.

The Purchase event is part of the organization's broader mission of **helping teens connect to their futures** as they begin considering college, areas of study and future careers.

For more information, visit **www.nxtupteens.org**.