

2021

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The 2021 Lake County Summer Youth Employment Program recently wrapped up another exciting summer as more than 191 youth gained meaningful work experience while earning a paycheck. To qualify for employment, youth must be age 14 to 18 or age 14 to 22 with an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP). Funded by the Lake County Board, this program was offered in a hybrid format this year with an option for youth participants to participate in the traditional model working at a physical location or to participate in an online Work Readiness Bootcamp.

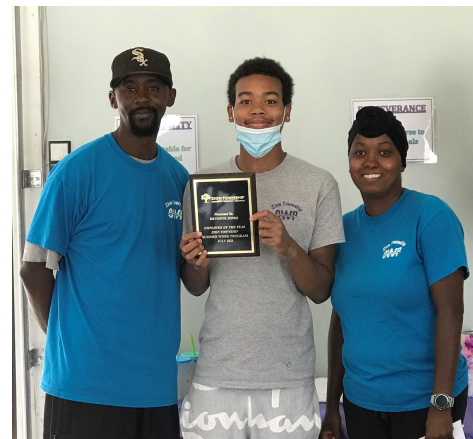
SYEP TRADITIONAL MODEL

85 student workers were placed at 10 sites, including a mix of nonprofit organizations, local municipalities, and private or community-based organizations throughout Lake County, starting July 6 and ending July 30. They worked in a variety of areas including office support, day camp programs, and indoor/outdoor maintenance. They earned \$9 per hour for 25 hours per week.

Zion Township hosted 17 young people. Student workers participated in team building activities designed to help them identify their strengths, balance their weaknesses and to work effectively in teams. 14 worked in a maintenance crew, while three were placed at the Zion-Benton Public Library. Tasks included cleaning and weeding parks, painting picnic tables, cleaning school lockers, and projects for seniors. Adriana Ortiz, Client Services Director, says that she intentionally keeps student workers active and varies tasks so that they don't become bored. She explained, "This year we focused on positivity and safety due to the hardships of the pandemic."

Each year, Zion recognizes a Youth Employee of the year. Devorite (center) received the award this year. His mentors Rod Henry (left) and Keayon Senter (right) reported that Devorite was often the first to start a work assignment and ensured that he and his peers had necessary equipment to complete each task.

Lions Math & Science Academy hosted 8 young people who assisted with a summer camp for 75 children. Student workers engaged with children during indoor activities, outdoor play, field trips, and meal time. One new task for student workers this year was to remind children to wear a face mask. Jimmy, who is entering 9th grade, said that his mother signed him up for the program.





At first Jimmy (pictured left) wished he could spend the summer playing video games and wasn't sure he wanted to participate. Everything changed, though, when he met the pre-K children in his group. He discovered that he loved working with young children.

Sadie, (pictured right in white shirt) who is entering 10th grade, worked with kindergarten students. This is her first job, and she is saving money earned for college. Alexa, (pictured right in blue shirt) who is entering 9th grade, says that the job was more challenging than she expected but that she drew upon the life experience that she had with younger siblings and cousins. Michele Obleton, (pictured right in center) Assistant Director, explained that her organization has served as a host site for youth workers for more than 10 years and says that the young people bring value to her organization while receiving valuable experience. "The diversity piece that they bring really works for us. They serve as role models for our campers."



WORK READINESS BOOTCAMP



The Work Readiness Bootcamp, an online course, ran for two weeks from July 12th to July 23rd. More than 100 high school students participated. Students could earn a stipend of up to \$500 for their active participation. The Bootcamp covered:

- Qualities that will make an employee stand out at work
- Common expectations from employers
- Tools that will help individuals land a job and keep

For many of the participants, this was their first exposure to work expectations. Workforce instructors focused on one core work value daily, following the Bring Your 'A' Game Anywhere curriculum.



Guest speakers were a highlight of the event. Marvin Bemby (pictured left), Executive Director of the John Maxwell Team, spoke to online Bootcamp participants and also visited the North Chicago work site. He shared stories of his own youth raised by a single parent in Detroit. During his interactive presentation, he challenged participants to make choices today that will have a positive impact on their lives. He closed out the presentation by responding to questions regarding his international experience and secrets to success.

Chiara Caruthers (pictured right) a Talent Sourcing Specialist with Advocate Aurora Health spoke to the students about employer expectations and working in the healthcare field.



Additional guests spoke about winning workplace attributes and financial literacy. Speakers included Workforce Board member, Jennifer Harris, Waukegan Township Supervisor, Marc Jones, College of Lake County Apprenticeship Coordinator Dan Ortego, Benefits Advisor Carrie Espinosa, High School Teacher Andre Harris, Production Manager John Castillo, and Executive Director Terri Nielsen.

YOUTH SUMMIT

On July 29, 2021, Lake County Workforce Development and The Coalition to Reduce Recidivism collaborated to host the 2021 Youth Summit at the College of Lake County Grayslake Campus. 28 youth participating in the Summer Youth Employment Program accompanied by chaperones participated in four breakout sessions and a motivational panel discussion.

The four break-out sessions included:

- Financial Literacy – Professor Marcus Morgan
- Bettering Your Life– Detective Matt Thornton
- Healthy Relationships – Jheri Bevil
- Job Readiness – Dr. Pamela Walker

During the five-hour event, students enjoyed breakfast and lunch in the college cafeteria sponsored by Medline and ended the day with a tour of the campus. The event concluded with a panel discussion from leading community members who responded to an array of questions regarding careers, goals, and support for young people.



(panelists pictured above, left to right) IL State Senator Adriane Johnson - 30th District IL., Megan McKenna - Chief Executive Officer Boys & Girls Club of Lake County, Dwayne Springs - Founder Springs Prep. Academy, Waukegan H.S. Head Football Coach, State Rep. Rita Mayfield - 60th District, Carlos Smith - Crazy Riot Show creator/host, Elite Striders National Champs Drill Team, Candis Ridgeway - Pandemic Health Navigator, George Moore, Founder - Legacy Reentry Foundation, NFP – Moderator

CLOSING

“The hybrid model was a response to the pandemic and allows young people to participate at their comfort level,” said Jennifer Everett, Program Manager. “We saw growth among participants even in this short time frame. Offering options to participate both online and in person allowed us to reach more students.”

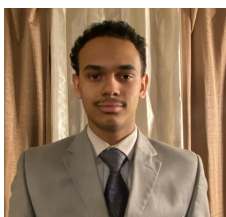
Application information for the next Summer Youth Employment Program will be posted on the Job Center website in February 2022.

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LAKE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: YEAR-ROUND SERVICES FOR YOUTH

Lake County Workforce Development qualifies individual jobseekers for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training grants available through the U.S. Department of Labor. Workforce Development has a team dedicated to working with young people ages 16 to 24 as they enter the workforce. This team works intensively with young people to set them on a career path at a critical time in their lives. While involved in customized training, youth participants have access to coaching in essential skills and assistance with transportation, supplies for schooling, etc. Participants may be matched with a paid work experience to build their portfolio and establish professional contacts. Participants can also be referred to a Job Center partner or community organization to meet any additional needs they might have. “One of the most important things we can do for young people is to teach them effective job search techniques and networking, since they will undoubtedly change jobs multiple times in this ever-changing market,” explained Jennifer Everett, Program Manager.

YOUTH SUCCESS STORIES



For three years after graduating from high school, **Brandon** held a variety of jobs but did not find a good career match. At the suggestion of his father, Brandon applied to Workforce Development where he qualified for WIOA training funds and immediately began working with a Career Specialist to select a career path. He completed four months of training as a computer technician, then was placed into an internship at the Lake County Health Department. where he had the opportunity to hone his skills. After completing his internship, the Health Department hired him full time as an **IT Technician**.



Like many new high school graduates, **Jasmine** wanted a great career. She tried a few semesters of college, but the coursework didn't fit her busy life. She found her career solution with Workforce Development. She completed 9 months of training in healthcare and finance and, most importantly, learned to conduct a productive job search. She had to use those skills when she was laid off from her first medical job. Jasmine is now working full time as a **Medical Coder** at a hospital.



Teshawn had a sport scholarship to college after he graduated, but an injury changed his plans. He began college classes locally and was looking for a part-time job when he connected with Workforce Development. His internship as a Payroll Service Specialist gave him exposure to finance and business marketing. Teshawn is working as a **Customer Care Representative** for a chemical company.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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