

2022

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The 2022 Lake County Summer Youth Employment Program recently wrapped up another exciting summer as 165 youth gained meaningful work experience while earning a paycheck. Funded by the Lake County Board, this program was offered in a hybrid format this year with an option for youth participants to partake in the traditional model working at a physical location or to participate in an online Work Readiness Bootcamp.

SYEP TRADITIONAL MODEL

115 student workers were placed at 17 sites, including a mix of nonprofit organizations, local municipalities, and private or community-based organizations throughout Lake County. During this six-week program, students worked in a variety of areas including office support, day camp programs, and indoor/outdoor maintenance. They earned \$10 per hour for 25 hours per week.

The **City of North Chicago** hosted 12 SYEP students and also hosted an additional 12 students through their own Summer UP program. Students work in various city departments, including Public Works, Streets, Water, the Comptroller's Office, the Fire Department, and Economic & Community Development. During the first week, students listen to presentations about each department and then choose a work site. Willie, who is entering his Senior year of High School and has never held a job before, said that he learned about the summer opportunity from his mother. He decided to work for the Economic & Community Development department. He said that position intrigued him because he had never heard about the department prior to his internship. He also admitted that the idea of working in an air-conditioned office appealed to him. He found the staff to be welcoming and loved learning the intricacies of the job. He says that the paycheck provided him with a sense of empowerment and that has allowed him to save "for hard times or college."

Armando, who is entering his Senior year, worked with the Fire Department. He was involved in the Summer Program during his freshmen year, also, when he was involved with cleaning up the High School. He noted that both jobs involved clean up and says that this year he learned what members of the Fire Department are doing when they're not saving lives. He loves the fact that his mentors found ways for him to learn and thinks he might work for a Fire Department in the future.



Willie said that his job involved a lot of filing. "We have a file on every building in the city here."



Armando worked with Fire Fighters this year to check fire hydrants throughout the City of North Chicago.

The **Roberti Community House** hosted two SYEP students. Students were exposed to working and serving in their community. They contributed to helping community members develop a healthy lifestyle, serving fresh meals, and produce. Darlene will be entering her junior year. She learned about the Summer Youth Employment Program at school and decided to apply. She was randomly selected and placed at the Roberti Community House. Darlene was able to start working on day one, helping in the kitchen, packing lunches, and baking cookies that are sold at a café that was recently opened by the Roberti Community House. Darlene learned how to make a delicious peach coffee cake. She expressed that this work experience has been a great opportunity for her to gain valuable skills and meet new people. Darlene shared that this experience has helped her gain confidence in her role in working with students. She has been able to save money for college and is exploring a future career as an engineer.



Darlene said that she likes meeting new people. “There are a lot of new faces this year. It is nice to see the kids.”

Roger was interested in a summer work experience and applied for the Summer Youth Employment Program 2022. He had no experience with gardening. He was able to learn the skill and technique quickly and has extensive knowledge and about gardening. You can find Roger watering the garden, pulling weeds, or planting vegetables. He expressed that he is skilled at gardening. As an upcoming sophomore this year, Roger has gained valuable skills in leadership and being responsible. He shared that this would help him be successful throughout his education and future career. Roger was in charge of creating a detailed and documented systematic process for cleaning and preparing large buckets for the Communities House rescue food distribution. This process will be used by volunteers and staff because of Roger’s contribution.



Roger stated, “The staff is nice and genuinely cares about the workers and their well-being.”



Lake County Clerk’s office provided career awareness and job readiness skills for two youths during the Summer Youth Employment Program. Both participants will be attending high school this year. This work experience provided both youths the experience to work as a team and gain valuable communication and soft skills. They were able to adapt to the fast-paced environment right after the election and the youths were loading, unloading, and organizing equipment. After a few weeks, they were able to work in an office sorting, labeling, and working with signage. They were exposed to different county government offices throughout Lake County while participating in a scavenger hunt. This activity was rewarding for both students because they were working with college interns from the State’s Attorney’s office. Robin shared, “This is a very good experience for this age group, and she looks forward to the SYEP again next year.”

WORK READINESS BOOTCAMP

This two-week interactive online training focused on introducing high school students to the top industries within Lake County, careers within those industries, and soft skills and work skills needed to gain and secure a career within any industry they might pursue. In-demand industries and career exploration activities occurred from July 11 through July 22. Sessions were delivered twice daily in two-hour sessions to 50 high school students throughout Lake County. Participants had the opportunity to earn a stipend of up to \$500 for their active participation over the two weeks; more than 65% earned \$400 or more.

Edge Factor is a career exploration tool that was used to investigate industries, careers, and soft skills. The focus is Inspiration, Exploration, Preparation, and Connection. Each day participants learned about different industries, careers, and work skills through inspiring videos, virtual workplace tours, and discussions. Participants were able to enter the S.T.E.A.M. Challenge presented by Edge Factor for the chance to win a gift card. All participants can access Edge Factor to continue their exploration beyond the two-week session.



Guest speakers were a highlight of Bootcamp. **Trey Baker** is an upcoming sophomore at DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, majoring in Organizational Leadership and Political Science. He is a Multicultural Scholar and plays college basketball. He is a Special Advisor to the Obama Foundation, My Brother's Keeper Alliance, and M.B.K. Chicago Action, Lake County Juvenile Justice Coordinator, and Chairmen for the Lake County Juvenile Justice Council's Youth Committee. He spoke to the participants about the topic of skill vs. will. He challenged the participants to self-reflect on their skill vs. will, motivational 'WHY' for their actions, and set goals. Trey left a lasting impression on many participants with his impactful words.



Marcus Jackson, Outreach Coordinator for the International Union of Operating Engineers (I.U.O.E.) Local 150 Apprenticeship spoke to participants about various careers within the Operating Engineering Union, apprenticeship program, and essential work skills employers seek. Marcus shared his personal story of pursuing college and how he made his way into the I.U.O.E., which reinforced the concept that there are many options after high school to consider. Marcus's primary responsibilities include creating comprehensive outreach programs while working with the A.S.I.P. Marcus is a member of the Youth Task Force. In October, he will become a Lake County Workforce Development Board member.

"What I enjoyed about boot camp was the breakout rooms and getting to have conversation with new people. I really enjoyed our guest speakers personally. I enjoyed the spark activities because it gave me a good chance to learn more about everyone else. I found information on job search and resumes/ interview very valuable, that information is very practical in a real-world setting. My biggest takeaway from Bootcamp is that every job requires its own particular set of soft skills, but communication is key in the vast majority." Joshua Maldonado Jr.

CLOSING

"We have a dynamic team that was able to effectively onboard over 100 young people and coordinate or deliver programming in person and online," said Jennifer Everett, Program Manager. "I was particularly excited about the new content and Edge factor tool that we used in the Bootcamp. We raised career awareness in a tight time frame." Application information for the next Summer Youth Employment Program will be posted on the Job Center website in February 2023.

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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. "In this past year, we've seen tremendous success with young people who have had an opportunity to participate in a work experience or internship. They gained transferable skills while increasing their network. Mentorship is a vital element in this service," explained Jennifer Everett, Program Manager.

YOUTH SUCCESS STORIES



After **Jodin** graduated from high school, he worked a variety of labor jobs but was ready for a career. He contacted Workforce Development and participated in job readiness activities including resume assistance financial literacy and leadership development. Then, he was connected with a paid work experience at the Lake County's Treasurer's Office. During his six-month internship, he was exposed to different roles in the office while receiving on-the-job training, coaching, and mentoring. After successful completion of the internship, Jodin was hired permanently as a Real Estate Tax Information/ Collections Specialist at the Lake County Treasurer's office.



After **Skylynn** graduated from high school, she went through personal challenges that left her homeless. The only jobs that she could secure were factory positions through temporary agencies. Then, she connected with Lake County Workforce Development. She was funded for transportation costs and a six-month work experience. When Skylynn told her Career Specialist that she wanted to complete a degree, Workforce Development funded her for training at the College of Lake County. Skylynn earned her Associate in Business Administration in 2022 and is scheduled to begin coursework at Lake Forest College in Fall 2022 where she is guaranteed over 30K in merit-based scholarships.



Jose is a military veteran who recently connected with Workforce Development professionals. He qualified for tuition assistance and selected an electrical and heating/air conditioning program. His training was delayed, though, while he completed a month of Army Reserve training. Jose earned two certificates in National Electric Code Program and Residential & Commercial HVAC Technician/Electrician while also completing an internship. He was hired full-time as a Utility Worker for Lake County Public Works in January 2022.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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