

Rough & Tough Rough & Tough

Volume 1
Gratiot,
Isabella and
Montcalm
Issue 5

“We wish it grew on trees, but it takes hard work to make money.” This week the Summer Youth Employment Program Media Crew learned that not all work is easy, and in the real world money is not just handed out. Sometimes you have to do backbreaking manual labor, work in all weather conditions, and sometimes the job just stinks, literally. Our focus this week is on some of the “dirtier” jobs that our program participants are doing. And sorry folks, Mike Rowe (Host of Discovery Channel’s “Dirty Jobs”) was not available for an appearance.

Being a part of the SYEP Media Crew rarely involves getting dirty, but this week we were in for a treat. We visited the Gratiot County Fair for Youth. Besides dodging cow pies, we got some excellent video coverage in the rain. By the end of our trip, we were soaked and slightly smelly. However; the youth were getting some good hands on experience, and even the chance to see many animals up close.

Another stop we made was at the Isabella County Waste Water Treatment Plant. As soon as we stepped foot outside our van, it hit us. The stench, that is. We learned how all of water in the county comes to the plant, and gets treated and cleaned, and then re-dispersed to local water towers. You have to have a strong stomach to work at a job like that, but one of our youth was finding that he really liked what was involved in the job, and is even considering pursuing something along those lines for his future.

All in all it was an eventful week. Those are a few of the rough and tough jobs in the SYEP. Some jobs are a little dirty, but the reward at the end makes it all worth while.



SYEP participants clearing the trails at Reeds Park.



Participants at the Gratiot County Fair for Youth shoveling walkways for fairgoers.

Gratiot County

This week the Media Crew went to the Gratiot County Fair for Youth and visited the St. Louis Housing Commission. At the fair we talked to Mike Woodcock, who supervises SYEP youth. “This is our third week at the fair,” said Woodcock. “We will be working here through the end of September. We do fairground maintenance, painting, and gardening.” The work the participants have been doing has made a world of difference in making the fair look clean and presentable to the public.

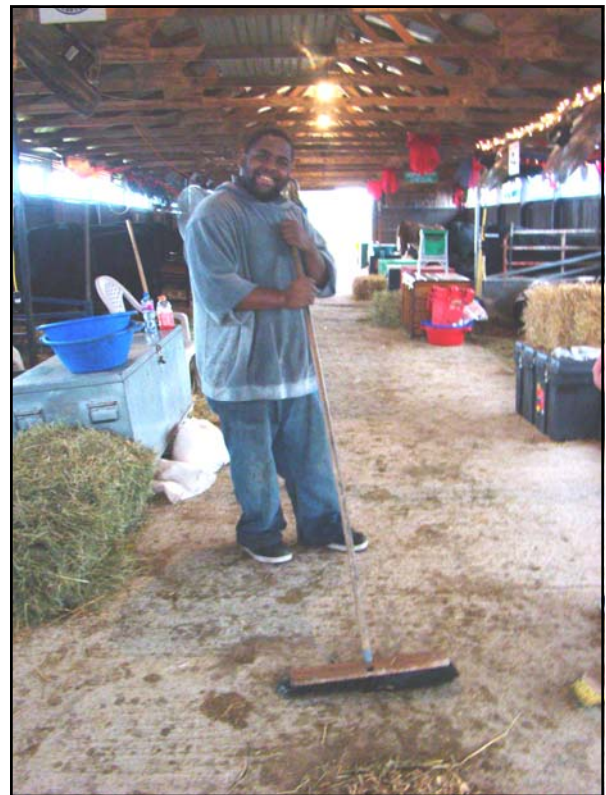
Wes Johnson, a summer youth employee working at the fair said “This is my first job experience. I hope I can use it to get a job, I like this program, I would like to see it again next year.” Wes is a positive person to work with, and his motto is ‘work can be fun, or you can not want to do it’. His positive attitude is motivation for his whole crew.

At the St. Louis housing commission we talked to Kerry Marsh, the executive director of the housing commission. “We like the program. The employees do a great deal for us and do a good job,” said Marsh. “They do general cleaning, yard work, and they do work orders too.”

Lucas Ward an employee under her supervision said, “I learned how to drive a tractor and plan ahead for my checks a lot more. I would like to learn new skills like plumbing and electrical wiring.” These skills would be very beneficial for Ward’s future. Since Lucas is new to the area, he has made some new friends within the crew at the St. Louis Housing commission.



Lucas Ward cleans the parking lot at the St. Louis Housing Commission.



Wes Johnson of Gratiot County works at the Gratiot County Fair Grounds. Picking up trash, painting, and other odds and ends.



Mike Woodcock of Gratiot County supervises the summer youth while they work to clean up the fair grounds in Gratiot County.

Montcalm County

This week in Montcalm County the Media Crew visited the Spectrum Health United Memorial Hospital in Greenville and the Carson City Hospital. In Carson City, we spoke with Larry King, the SYEP supervisor at the hospital worksite. When asked about the SYEP participants job duties, King said, "The employees paint and do grounds work with me," among the changes King has noticed, "They are a lot more talkative now." The grounds were looking really great and everything was freshly painted when we arrived. The participants had paint splatters and traces of yellow paint on them, letting us know they had been hard at work.

Joseph Barnard, a summer youth employee at the Spectrum Health United Memorial Hospital said, "I hope to gain work experience. You can use hospital experience for anything, I don't know what I want to do when I am older but I was a janitor before this." One interesting story Barnard told us, he and the other maintenance crew, helped stop someone breaking into cars in the hospital parking lot. We found out, the SYEP has their very own hero.



Joseph Barnard, working at Spectrum Health United Memorial Hospital in Greenville.

"I hope to gain work experience. You can use hospital experience for anything."

**-Joseph Barnard
SYEP participant**



Angela just got done painting guardrails yellow at the Carson City Hospital.



Larry King, of Carson City Hospital, supervises SYEP participants.

Isabella County

This week in Isabella County SYEP Media Crew went to the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Union Township. Unknown to most, this is a place where raw sewage flows and is then processed into usable water. We talked to Mike Dearing the Waste Water Superintendent.

“We process about a million gallons of waste water a day,” said Dearing. When asked about the program he said, “I like the Summer Youth Program. I think the workers will gain a lot from this experience.”

Cory Leiter, is the summer youth employee at the plant. “I sweep and paint and do lawn care. I hope to gain experience to put on my resume,” Leiter says he likes the program a lot and wants to see it next year. “I want to go to college to be a welder,” Leiter said. Having the Waste Water Treatment Plant write will help him go far in his future.



The Waste Water Treatment Plant in Mount Pleasant.



Mike Dearing, of Isabella County, working at his desk at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.



Cory Leiter is working at the Isabella County Waste Water Treatment Plant in Mount Pleasant. Corey does lawn care, painting, and other miscellaneous projects.

The SYEP Digest is brought to you courtesy of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Media Crew, consisting of Adam Helms, Tim Marr, Cassondra Martyn, Callie Maxwell, Charleigh Poindexter, Victoria Rodriguez and Meghyn Stevens. We are working hard daily serving Gratiot, Isabella, and Montcalm Counties, and the Central Area Michigan Works! Consortium. Our focus is to bring light to the youth whose lives are transformed by the SYEP, and show how a little career readiness goes a long way.

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