



SYEP Digest

Summer Youth
Employment
Program

Central Area Michigan Works! Consortium

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Wrap Up

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Gratiot,
Isabella and
Montcalm
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Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

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The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) was a journey for many young adults this summer. Over three hundred and fifty (350) young adults between the ages 14-24 took advantage of this life changing employment opportunity. The enrolled adults were very fortunate to experience this historical event supported by President Obama's, American Recovery Reinvestment Act (AARA) of 2009. This act provided stimulus dollars which were used to employ youth, to jump start our economy, and to create millions of jobs.

There were over ninety (90) non-profit community based organizations, who employed these young adults in the SYEP. Fifty-five (55) of the worksites were composed of crews of young adults. Some of the crews were supervised by the non-profit organization and some were supervised by staff hired by the Gratiot-Isabella RESD, The youth worked at worksites in Gratiot, Isabella, and Montcalm Counties. With the economic crisis at hand and outstanding county unemployment rates, employment is scarce. These young adults were given the opportunity to work while gaining skills, training and job experience. The crew leaders and employers involved in this program were able to be mentors, which for most is a very rewarding experience.

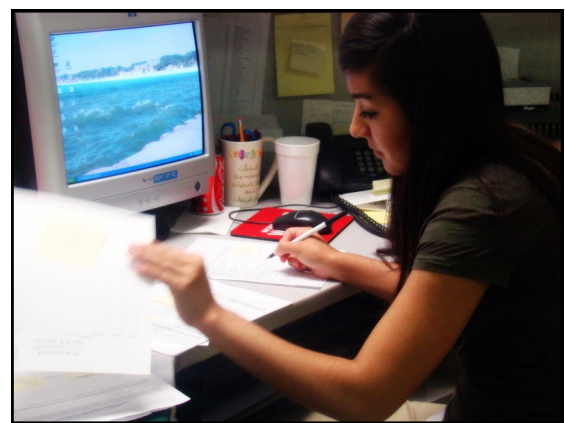
The SYEP had its very own media crew, this crew covered Gratiot, Isabella and Montcalm Counties. And, over the summer, the crew traveled to all the worksites and spoke with SYEP participants about their SYEP experience. During the visits, the crew took pictures, conducted written interviews, and video recorded interviews. The crew was very interested in what the participants learned from, gained from, and enjoyed while working over the summer. With the pictures and interviews taken at the worksites, the crew wrote weekly newsletters and made several informational videos. These newsletters and videos can be viewed on the following website: www.awholenewyouth.com.



Helsey Stratton cuddles a dog at the Montcalm County Animal Control.



The crew working for United Way gathered on the steps of the Wilcox Nursing Home. Also pictured are board member, Sue Wheeler, Co-executive directors, Sharen Fenton and Doug Yarnell, and City Manager of Alma, Phillip Moore.



Dale Moore unloading a truck at Habitat for Humanity Re-store in Mt. Pleasant .

Far Right, Michelle Flores is busy doing paperwork at EightCap of Montcalm County.

Wrapping It Up

This summer employment experience witnessed transformations of all types. The participating young adults found the SYEP to be beyond beneficial. On top of getting out of the house for the summer, many youth have gained a greater appreciation for independent living, by earning and managing their money. Participants told us, thanks to the SYEP they have been able to afford cars, apartments, purchase Ipods and phones, pay off some bills, and among many things, save some money.

For many of the participants, working for the SYEP was their first job. They were able to gain work experience in areas that are often hard to get into, such as maintenance, health care, and media. Employers don't always have availability for inexperienced workers, due to either financial reasons or lack of resources for training. With this work experience participants had the opportunity to learn new skills such as construction, cleaning, proper use of tools, computers, and many more.

After a summer of hard work, many received letters of recommendation from their employer. These letters of recommendation acknowledge the positive qualities, characteristics, and capabilities of the participant's ability for future employers.



Ryan Eastman scrubbing floors at Breckenridge High School.



Teddi Alexander washing tables at the Soup Kitchen in Mt. Pleasant



Jeremy Hollaway answers a phone call at the Gratiot County Court House.



Derek Yerke, SYEP participant takes a roll of shingles from Josh Borgerding, SYEP crew leader as he climbs to the roof.



Above, Terri Weston and her crew members clean flower beds in downtown Greenville for the Danish Festival.