



# Success Stories: Helping Teens Help Themselves

Employment and Training Programs For Disadvantaged Youth in Minnesota

**"Now the Stars Are Within Our Reach"**

Original Artwork Prepared By *Gabrielle Aviva Eisenstadt*

Age 16

St. Paul, Minnesota

## John Lueck - (Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council)



John's small hometown does not offer many opportunities for career exploration. John is interested in auto mechanics, but found that local businesses were reluctant to give young people a chance to learn new technologies for maintenance and repair of trucks, cars and farm vehicles.

Through the Minnesota Youth Program, the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) helped John find a position as a mechanic's helper at J & K Discount Tire and Auto. PIC staff and John's worksite supervisor, Jim Polzine, worked together to help John develop both general workplace and industry-specific skills. John commented, "I love learning from Jim and the other owner, Kevin. They teach me well!"

Through his experience with the Minnesota Youth Program, John learned safety and technology for auto mechanics for the coming century. He learned respect for the automotive industry, gained knowledge of the industry, and learned a bit about himself. John also learned what it takes to run a business: sales, customer service, troubleshooting, communication skills, and providing quality workmanship. As Jim Polzine put it, "there's more to this business than turning your cap sideways and wrenching! Right now, there is a shortage of 75,000 certified mechanics in the United States. The Minnesota Youth Program allows young people to try out the job before spending money for school and then learning they don't really like the work!"

John was inspired to continue his education in auto mechanics at Southwest Minnesota Jackson College. John states that his work experience will put him head and shoulders above any competition in his chosen field while he attends school.



RECEIVED

FEB 08 2001

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY  
STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155

## Dana Eisfeldt - (Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council)

Dana lives in a small town nestled within a farming area of rural Southwest Minnesota, where there is little industry or opportunity to learn, or make a future... especially for teens. Teens are sometimes stereotyped as not having a strong work ethic, as well as lacking the technical skills and experience valued by today's employers.



As a high school student, Dana could not afford the time or money to drive to another town to seek job opportunities. Dana states that he had no idea how to explore his dream of sports writing in his community, or how to set a goal that he thought was "so different from what is commonly available here in town."

When applying for a janitor assistant position with Steve Smith, Head Custodian at Murray County High School and JoAnn Warnke, Job Training Specialist with Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC), Dana talked about his lifelong interest in sports and journalism as part of the career assessment given to all potential Minnesota Youth Program participants. Steve Smith was asked if there was "something we could work out" so that Dana could complete his custodial duties at the school and submit stories for the local newspapers at the same time. The "rest of the story?" Together, Dana, JoAnn and Steve made it happen! Several of Dana's sports articles have been published in local newspapers.



The Minnesota Youth Program gave Dana the opportunity to experience "walking the line," and learn about two distinctly different careers -- one fairly standard, the other a dream job -- at the same time. Dana commented, "I came to appreciate the work involved and the headaches of maintenance of an older high school building... but I also learned how to write sports articles and how nice it was to see my pieces in the paper. Thanks!"

## Erick Wallace - (Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council)



Erick Wallace, a senior at KMS High School in Kerkhoven, wanted a job where he could “really learn something.” He is a participant in the Work Experience program at KMS, which is coordinated by Tammy Lacey of the Little Crow Special Education Cooperative in Willmar. Students in this program must be employed; the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) in Montevideo often partners with KMS in this effort by providing employment opportunities through Minnesota Youth Program funding. Erick’s career interest lies in the trades, specifically in welding. The PIC located a job for Erick at Mike’s Welding in Kerkhoven, a small welding shop with a growing customer base.

While recognizing the need for cleaning and other shop maintenance, Erick was emphatic that he wanted to learn more about welding and metal working. The work site agreement and training plan were written so that Erick would have the opportunity to learn how to weld; operate a drill press, grinder, cutter, and forklift; maintain inventory; keep the tools in assigned cribs; and assist in shop maintenance. Safety rules and regulations were stressed at all times. Erick averaged about ten hours per week at this job, including a portion of the school day. He learned the tasks, and performed exceptionally well. So well, in fact, that once the Private Industry Council’s commitment was over, Mike’s Welding hired Erick as a part-time employee, and gave him a \$.60 per hour raise!

Erick plans to enroll in the welding program at Ridgewater College in Willmar next fall. He is the type of student who, according to instructor Joy Holbrook, recognizes what is important to know, and makes sure he learns it. He is currently putting extra effort into mastering his math skills, as he knows this is an important part of welding and other trades. He will do very well with his post-secondary education, and his experience with the Minnesota Youth Program will certainly have played an important part in his future career plans!



### **Sarah Agnes - (Northwest Minnesota Private Industry Council/Workforce Council)**

Sarah Agnes is one of six children in a single-parent family. Sarah became involved in Northwest Minnesota Private Industry Council's "Campus Kinship" academic enrichment and work experience program. Through the encouragement and support provided by the PIC, Sarah graduated from high school and is presently a senior at Bemidji State University. She is majoring in social work. Her work experience varied from janitorial to a hospital position; each experience helped her learn more about herself and her goals, and helped shape her desire to pursue a career of service to others.

### **Michelle Olson - (Northwest Minnesota Private Industry Council/Workforce Council)**

Many adults remember their experience with youth employment and training programs as a significant turning point in their lives. Consider the example of Michelle Olson.

Michelle was the oldest child in a family of seven. While enrolled in the Private Industry Council's summer youth program from 1983 - 84, she worked at the McIntosh School and for the City of McIntosh. She graduated from high school in 1984.

Michelle remembers one year when her father was laid off from his job. She gave her family her earnings from the summer youth program. "The program taught me responsibility," she writes. "It was a great experience and I looked forward to the added responsibilities." Her reputation for a strong work ethic spread; Michelle was busy babysitting whenever she wasn't working.

Michelle is raising three children of her own now, and has worked at her present job for ten years.

### **Joel Sanchez III - (Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services)**

Joel has a reputation as a violent gang member. He has young Hispanic children idealize him. At 14 he has had a felony conviction for assault. Nothing seemed to work to change his path of self-destruction. In the fall of 1999 Joel was referred to the youth programs.

Since that time Joel has worked under a special Juvenile Justice grant that compliments the YouthBuild program in Willmar. He has made great strides towards living a "normal" life without the chemicals, violence and gangs. He helped work on "the House that Promises Built" a habitat home built during the MN State Fair. Working as a



crewmember during the month of August he was the only one to successfully complete the work experience.

Today, Joel works as a crewmember at a local elementary school in Willmar. He is showing the youth that it is possible to turn your life around, that every decision can mean a new path to follow. He is a visible role model for Hispanic youth in the area.

### **KaCee McKenzie - (Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services)**

I wanted a job because I felt like something was missing and I needed more to keep myself busy. So I earned a job at the Buffalo City Garage. I like the people there and have fun pretty much everyday. They treat me with respect. I wanted this job so I could set goals to buy things that I enjoy with the money I earn. It's better than volunteering plus I get to leave school early. My teacher Erin and other staff help me to stay positive and motivated to keep my job. My parents are also glad that I am working and I hope that they are proud of me. When I graduate I may go to college for computers, but it's too soon to tell. I'll take one day at a time for now.

### **Patrice Richardson - (Scott County Employment and Training)**

Patrice Richardson is an 18-year-old student from Shakopee, Minnesota. She needed 240 hours to complete her credits to graduate this year.

Patrice enrolled in the Scott County Summer Youth program with the intent on gaining academic credit through the cooperative effort of Scott County Employment & Training and the Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative's YouthBuild program.

Patrice had transportation issues – she lived in Shakopee and the worksite was in Chaska. She paid another student to pick her up and take her to school. This was important for Patrice to be there every day and get her diploma.

Patrice liked painting, team building activities, measuring, and the trips to the various higher education facilities. She did not like the fact that there were only 2 females; she felt left out.

She feels that the work experience helped her with:

- Learning to be more responsible
- To be a better worker
- Seeing that school is important (really important)
- Learning to be a team member
- Learning the importance of being on time
- Feeling better about herself

The skills she developed were timeliness, punctuality, measuring skills, accuracy and teamwork.

If Patrice had not been accepted into the YouthBuild program, she would have had to attend summer school, which would not have given her enough credits to graduate. She would have had to attend classes this fall.

Patrice is light in spirit. Not only did she graduate; but she will be attending MCTC this winter quarter. She is pursuing a career in Clinical Psychology after taking assessment tests at various higher education facilities she visited during the field trips. These assessments solidified her decision.

Patrice states that she would recommend the program to anyone needing the credits. "It was great working and learning at the same time." She will be using her earned money towards rent for her apartment while she attends college. She stated that the instructors were great and that it is the type of program that turns people's lives around.

### **Charles Dupree III - (Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.)**

Charles Dupree III has been a part of Rural Minnesota CEP's Youth Employment program for the past 2 years. Charlie has been unable to hear or speak since he suffered a serious illness as a young child. He uses American Sign Language to communicate throughout his every day activities. Charlie says this experience has helped him prepare for the real world, "I am becoming more ready for the working world. I know to budget my money, how to fill out an application, how to interview, and who to contact if I need an interpreter."



Charlie has worked at the Champion Auto store in Fergus Falls, MN for the past two summers. His job consists of arranging and organizing inventory, cleaning, and creating appealing displays of automotive parts and accessories. His supervisor is Mark Morrissette. Mark has been a supervisor for several years and has had many youth come through his doors looking for employment opportunities. "I believe in being a mentor," he said. "I like to give kids the chance to prove themselves-- to prove they can do it."

Charlie challenged himself by arriving at work an hour or so before his assigned interpreter to see if he was able to interact successfully with his supervisor and

coworkers on his own. Charlie says, "I felt more awkward the summer of 1999. I was much more experienced and motivated to work the summer of 2000. I did not require a job coach much the summer of 2000." According to Mark, "things went just fine."

Mark had a challenge for himself, too. He strove to learn three new signs a day to help communicate tasks to Charlie. At times, Charlie had a smile on his face when Mark was trying one of his "new" signs out. What Mark signed and actually meant were two totally opposite tasks. Mark would find this out when the interpreter arrived for the day. According to Mark, "It was all part of the learning process for me."

Charlie was pleased to be a part of the Champion Auto team. He is a self-proclaimed perfectionist. "I like to put merchandise in numerical order," he said. He enjoyed his work at Champion because someday he'd like to be a race car driver or a pitman. He puts half of his earnings in savings and the other half in his checking account. At present, Charlie is attending Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Faribault, MN. He enjoys many activities like playing video games, lifting weights, watching movies, and playing football for the Academy's football team.

Charlie's mother is pleased to see the progress that Charlie has made these past couple of summers while working. "Charlie has come out of a shell this past summer. His self-esteem has increased greatly and he became more social this past summer," she stated.

Charlie is a young man with a bright future ahead of him. He has overcome many obstacles in his 18 years. Charlie's work experience at Champion has helped him in other aspects of the world of work, "I feel more experienced in all aspects of working. I know what to expect from myself as a worker and from my boss." Charlie is willing to take a given task and see that it gets completed in a timely and conscientious manner. He says he can see a box full of automotive parts sitting on the floor and visualize them arranged on the wall. He has a special smile on his face when he has completed a given task and his supervisor gives that nod of approval.

### **Little Falls Art Project - (Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.)**

Nine youth along with two supervisors restored a 1907 tobacco ad on the side of a building and created an original mural showing the harmful effects of smoking.

The mural is actually a repainting of, and addition to, the advertisement for Navy Blue Tobacco, located on the west side of the Hauer Electric Building on 1st Avenue SE. The idea conceived was to turn the fading ad into one that would be anti-smoking.

The students, working for the Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, spent seven weeks restoring the ad. They researched the site to find out about the

building and the Navy Tobacco Company. They used historical documents from museums, the library and Internet searches. Each youth kept a journal and wrote about the project. They incorporated math, writing, reading and teamwork everyday at the worksite. They also organized the dedication ceremony. In addition to painting the mural, the students designed the addition, power washed the wall, put on the primer, matched the original colors with new paint, and did some landscaping.



Part of the mural depicts the effects of smoking. It includes an image of a cigarette box with a surgeon general's warning. The box is surrounded by daffodils, the symbol of the American Cancer Society. It is a memorial to people who have died from smoking. A family is painted to look like smoke. The grandfather image has an oxygen tank beside him, and the parents seem to be leading the children toward the cigarette box.

"They are leading the kids into a life of smoking," said Stacy Duren, 16, one of the workers.

Beyond the family is an image of a setting sun, intended to symbolize death. In the foreground are a series of tombstones, representing each decade from the turn of the century. Each tombstone records the public's attitudes toward the dangers of smoking. Until the 1960s, the tombstones read "Asleep." In the 1960s they start to read "Awoke," in the 1990s they read "Aware."

The Freshwater Education District hired Frank Gosiak and Cindy Lamp to supervise the youth on the project. Mr. Gosiak is noted for other murals in the Little Falls area. Youth were able to earn credit for their work and learning. Their math and reading skills improved significantly. Frank Gosiak and Cindy Lamp are professional, intelligent and patient supervisors who involved the youth in all aspects of the renovation project. They created team spirit and self confidence within each of the youth. The more Frank and Cindy gave this team to do, the better they did.

The project and its successful completion gave Rural Minnesota CEP a great opportunity to showcase the value of our youth program.

Many community based organizations joined together to make this project a success: the City of Little Falls, the Great River Region Arts Association, Smoke-Free, Kick-butts, Freshwater Educational District, RMCEP and the youth themselves.

## Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council

The Summer Youth Program at Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council truly is an integrated learning program. Program highlights this year included a Youth Service Team, and a Computer/Career Exploration Camp.

### Youth Service Team

One Youth Service Team was in operation this summer, providing youth with the opportunity to work together to complete the bike repair project in the St. Cloud Area and, in the end, walk away with valuable skills and a new-found sense of community pride.

There are 8 program components in a Youth Service Team: SCANS skills, academic enrichment, reflections/journaling, job specific skills, work maturity skills, safety/physical conditioning, career exploration, and team building.

Foundational to workplace learning was the acquisition and application of the SCANS Foundation Skills and Workplace Competencies. Our Workforce Development Council has selected 17 of these skills to receive our primary skill development focus. The crew leader documented levels of attainment of these skills on a SCANS Skills Resume that youth received in their Skills Portfolio at the completion of the program.

The team had an educational component built into the project. The educational component was tied to the community project, in this case, bike repair. The goal of academic enrichment is to establish a connection between learning and the work experience. As academic enrichment is contextually based, it is ongoing throughout each working day. The success of this component is assessed by the comparison of TABE scores on two alternate forms of the test. Results of pre-tests and post-tests for youth reflect a one year three month gain in total mathematics.

The work experience/community service activities and the academic enrichment experience included reflective components which encouraged youth to use higher order thinking skills and to make sense of and to bring meaning to the learning experience. Reflections were done individually and as a group. On the last working day of the week each youth were expected to share a journal entry that summarized their success with enhancing their work maturity skills and a discussion followed relating to the seventeen SCANS skills.

Job specific community service skills were developed by each youth and documented with a Job Specific Competency Certificate for their Skills Portfolio. The development of work maturity skills was foundational to the program. A 95% standard in the six work maturity skills of attendance, punctuality, appearance, positive attitude and behavior, task completion and interpersonal relations has been determined as the industry standard to secure and retain a job in private sector. Youth who achieved a 95% competence in all areas received a Work Maturity Skills certificate.

Team building activities occurred at least weekly, often focusing daily on this skill area. Additionally, Team Quest, a full day experience at the beginning of the program, offered youth the opportunity to learn essential teamwork skills to ensure the success of their summer experience. A strong emphasis was placed on safety and helping youth to understand the importance of this from an employer's perspective. Youth that had an injury-free summer with

no safety violations received a Safety Certificate for their Skills Portfolio. The team had an injury free summer. Physical conditioning necessary to prevent injuries and to prepare youth for required job specific tasks was built into the program.

Career Exploration included MCIS, BRIDGES, Choices CT, CAPS/COPS/COPES, School-To-Work Videos, and tours of industry and post-secondary institutions to help youth start their career exploration. The culmination of the summer for the Bike Repair Team was the Bike Sale, a much anticipated community event, where 34 refurbished bikes were offered for sale.

Other strategies used in the youth service team model related to Crime Prevention. A violence prevention emphasis began with a specialist providing training to the crew leader and crew members during the seven week youth service team program. The specialist worked with the team on learning new and critical skills in conflict resolution, anger management, and communication. He was called upon to work with the team as needed throughout the summer in situations necessitating intervention. The high quality of staff recruited to work with small groups of youth in the team model is also a carefully planned and strong crime prevention strategy.

Youth and parents involved in the program were asked to respond to key questions regarding program impact. They report building trust, ability not to give up, problem solving, respect, reasoning, built self-esteem, gained maturity, conflict resolution, anger management, responsibility, working harder, development of friendship, learning teamwork skills, wanting to be involved with their community, getting along better with their families, and positive changes in work attitudes. Youth were able to identify many new skills learned including: SCANS skills, responsibility, social skills, reasoning, work maturity skills, job specific skills, teamwork, time management, self management, communication, pre-employment skills, and problem solving. The vast majority stated it was a good program and suggested changes included more pay, keep Team Quest, more exposure to community, more options to the type of work, job shadowing, longer program, more problem solving with team members, bigger place, and longer breaks.

### **Computer/Career Exploration Camp - (Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council)**

After researching skills WIA youth in this area need to acquire and what employers in the two county area request for skills, we learned the following: Some of the youth take jobs for one day to four weeks to do their career exploration. Most industries need employees to have some basic knowledge/skill in one to six of the most widely used computer programs. Many employees are fired or let go because of inability to get along with co-workers and/or employers, not coming to work on time\*or at all, and inadequate customer service. Based on these findings, we developed a training program to help alleviate these issues. We designed the Computer/Career Exploration program to encourage entry into unsubsidized employment which provides customer satisfaction to both the youth and their employers. To do this, five major components were developed. They were:

- **Career Exploration:** This was an opportunity to learn and use several different Internet sites for skill assessment and career exploration. We offered the Caps/Cops/Copes assessment tool. Youth participated in setting up and experiencing two job shadow sites in the occupations they chose. This enabled them to see what the jobs entailed before choosing them as their careers. By putting all this information together, they learned about themselves, started setting their own future employment goals, and have more motivation and vision toward longer term results.
- **Computer Training:** We offered computer training in seven different programs. These programs were specifically mentioned as most needed in the two county area. The students had the opportunity to learn these programs by completing projects that related to them and add their completed projects to their Skills Portfolio.
- **Customer Service:** We contracted with the area technical college to provide training on customer service skills, a key requirement in job retention.
- **Job Search Preparation/Work Readiness Skills:** Youth received training on resume writing, and completed their resume for their portfolio. Each completed a master application to use in their job search. Interviewing skills were taught and practiced with videotaping so they could see what they need to improve on as well as what they already do well. Attendance was monitored daily.
- **Job Search Portfolio:** Each participant completed a job search Skills Portfolio to aid them in their job search. Portfolio's contained all earned certificates, completed projects, resume and master application.

The objective of this four week intensive training program was to enable youth to pursue their occupational goals toward a satisfying career. A key strategy was to provide an opportunity for them to interact with adults / mentors who were interested in their progress and future. Staff involved in this program included a career planner, career exploration instructor, a job prep instructor, a college customer service instructor, and a computer trainer.

### **Computer Class 2000 - (Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc.)**

The Southeast Minnesota Private Industry Council has experimented with some very innovative youth programming, with excellent results. For example, the PIC has set up "Computer Class 2000" in Faribault as a component of the summer youth program. Students participating in Computer Class 2000 build desktop computers with donated components, including installing hardware and software. Applied learning modules (particularly in reading and math) help students improve their academic performance at the same time that they are having fun building the computers. Thus, they learn how to assemble and troubleshoot IBM-compatible personal computers, use integrated software packages, and attain youth employment competencies while setting and attaining other personal and academic goals.

One youth who participated in Computer Class 2000 has since gone into business for himself as a computer hardware and software consultant. He assists his customers in troubleshooting, upgrading and purchasing new hardware and software. After graduating from high school this spring, he plans to attend college to pursue a degree in computer technology.

Another youth in this program had always had an interest in comic books. After completing the program, he moved to Florida and obtained a job with Marvel Comics in their Preview Comics Division. He was responsible for enhancing the graphics of the comics using free-hand and computer-generated graphics. He has since decided to go on to school to obtain more training in the computer graphics field.

### **Cindy Evensen - (Washington County Workforce Center)**

“When I walked into my friend’s newly acquired flower shop, I instantly fell in love. Even though the shop was a decaying, unorganized mess and I knew nothing about the floral business, I saw the future a little TLC could bring to the sorry place. When the opportunity to buy it from him was offered to me, I jumped at the chance. I had just turned 21.”

“After the novelty of being my own boss wore off, I realized I couldn’t run my own business if I didn’t know anything about my product. I started checking into the floral programs a few of the technical colleges offered. The program which best fit my needs was at the Hennepin Technical College. The program teaches students how to run their own retail floral shop.”

“Once I found this program, I had to find a way to pay for it. I wasn’t making enough money at the shop to pay myself a wage, so I had no income. Because the state and federal financial aid offices consider most single, childless adults dependent on their parents until age 24, I could receive no financial aid.”

“Out of desperation, I called a women in business help line that referred me to the Washington County Workforce Center where I spoke with Marlys McGarvey. She listened to my problem and had Karen Ritter contact me. Of all the people I spoke with to find out how I could get help to educate myself for my business, these two women are the only people who took the time to listen and offer a solution to me.”

“With the help of Karen Ritter, the Washington County Workforce Center and the Title IIC Program, I will be able to achieve what most people dream about.”

“Thank you Karen, and the Washington County Workforce Center.”

## Garrett - (Carver County Workforce Service Center)

Garrett, a Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) participant worked at a local area nursing home as a recreational assistant this summer. When he started, Garrett had very low self-esteem/confidence, and not only was unsure of himself, but was rather withdrawn. Garrett's supervisor helped him to step outside of his comfort zone; and as he developed relationships with the residents he completely blossomed. The residents looked forward to seeing him there every day, Garrett developed a lot of self-confidence and started initiating real creative activities. For example, Garrett's mother runs a day care center, and he had the children draw pictures and bring them in to the residents at the nursing home. Garrett also brought in his family dog for the residents to visit with. Garrett developed better organizational skills, he came up with "Games by Garrett", and coordinated what games were to be played, by whom, and for how long. This work experience was so positive for Garrett and the residents that he is still a Minnesota Youth Participant and has continued working there during the school year.

## Hennepin County Training and Employment Assistance

Twenty-two Hennepin County youth received Governor's Awards for their outstanding performance in the Hennepin County Summer Youth Employment Program, operated by Twin Cities Tree Trust. Summer program participants receive Governor's Awards as public recognition of their contribution to the success of their individual work crews and the summer employment program as a whole. Participants were selected because their work exemplified the workplace skills (SCANS skills) emphasized to all program participants. Award nominations detail the qualities that distinguish these young workers. Those qualities include:

- a positive attitude about themselves, their work, and those they work with;
- the ability to lead by example, to encourage others, and to create a team environment;
- the habit of focusing on a job until it finished; and,
- the ability to work independently.



By learning essential workplace skills at the beginning of their working life, award winners will be better prepared for success on their next job and for the rest of their lives.

Hennepin County Governor's Award recipients were:

- Natasha Robinson of Maple Grove;
- Dan Kunde, Billy Pyne, Kong Vang, and Galina Chinikaylo of St. Louis Park;
- Darnell Powell, Midhasso Foge, Randy Thao, Zachery Redmond, Seiguwon Grupee,
- Mai Xiong, Richard Vang, Lucas McDaniels, Hamza Abdi, and Elizabeth Lo of Brooklyn Park;
- Nancy Winslow of Edina;
- Kyle Nyline of Champlin;
- Jesse Beaulieu and Dantjuan Taylor of Richfield;
- Inna Galaburdo and Teaony Letzau of Brooklyn Center; and
- Andrew Mehdizadah of Minnetonka.

### **Victoria Zackery - (City of Minneapolis Employment and Training)**



Victoria Zackery came to work at Northside Child Development Center in the Summer of 1986. She selected Northside as a work site after meeting with the Summer Youth monitor and expressing her interest in children and education.

Thirteen years later, Victoria is still an employee of Northside. She has been an aide, an assistant teacher, Head Teacher and is now the Manager of Parent Services at Northside, a job she has held for five years. Victoria supports parents at Northside with issues relating to the care of their children and acts as a resource for their many needs. One of the highlights of her job is providing parenting for Northside's youngest moms. Victoria is now the proud mother of an elementary school daughter and she and her husband are new homeowners in Minneapolis. She credits the Summer Youth Program for helping her set goals for herself and decide her future.

### **Twin Cities Tree Trust (Dakota County Workforce Services)**

#### **Letters from Parents....**

*"I have been pleased with the extreme pride that (my son) Jared has shown and expressed in regard to the work he has been involved in doing. He has been motivated on his own to get up and get ready, daily – looking forward to what he will be doing. He feels like he is a valuable member of a team, too. It must be well organized and the leaders must be 'neat' – I haven't heard of any complaints – a great program!! "*

*- Burnsville Parent*

*"What a wonderful honor for our daughter Rachel to receive the Governor's Award. She is still glowing from ear to ear. You have no idea what this has done to her self-esteem and confidence. A special thanks to her Crew Leader for helping her this summer. Your program is wonderful. We couldn't be more pleased."*

- Dean & Deborah Davis

*"I've been fortunate enough to have our foster children working with Tree Trust the last five summers. It has been an outstanding experience for each of our individual Special Needs kids. Their confidence, self esteem, and teamwork, as well as their bank accounts, soar! Not to mention their pride for themselves and their projects."*

- Mrs. Charles Ptaceh, Jr.

### **Cory Wehrman - (Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training)**

The morning sun streaks through the trees and peers out over the rugged skyline, dancing off the lakes, rivers, and streams like a feather in the wind. Dew drops drip down off leaves, flower petals and craggy rocks, congregating at the river bed, softly flowing with the water around the winding bends of Baptism River and through the wilderness of Tettegouche State Park in Silver Bay.

Sounds like a great vacation spot. But how would you like to that image to be the first thing you see when you arrive at work every day? That's just the enviable position in which Cory Wehrman of Silver Bay finds himself this summer.

Wehrman, 14, is employed at Tettegouche State Park as a maintenance worker. Phil Leversedge, Wehrman's supervisor, sees tremendous opportunity for the Silver Bay freshman in his job. "I started in the same position working with a (youth employment) program at a state park 25 years ago." Leversedge said. He is now manager at Tettegouche, overseeing maintenance and conservation projects for the entire park.

Leversedge also appreciated the way Wehrman went about his job. "It's great to have kids with positive attitudes working here. The biggest thing you can learn at a job like this is work ethic and Cory has that."

Cory has gained quite a bit of resource management experience by working with a crew planting trees. He has learned about park management when he had the chance to help build some gates near the campsites. "I've learned a lot about working with people," he said.

Aside from a paper route, this is his first full-time job, so he's witnessed first-hand the requirements of the working world.

So, the next time you see a breathtaking sunrise peek over the treetops on the north shore, remember that Cory Wehrman is setting out for another day on the job and another day to gain valuable work experience that will help him for the rest of his life.

"I'm used to working," Wehrman said. "I'll be a lot more prepared for college and a career now."

### **Abiodum (Tayo) Adefoye - (St. Paul Workforce Council/Center for Employment and Training)**

Abiodum (Tayo) Adefoye is a 20 year old student at Century College and a resident of Saint Paul. Tayo was a participant in the summer youth employment program through the Center for Employment and Training (CET) from 1997 - 2000. During that time he has worked as a camp counselor at Youthcare/Camp Sunrise. As a participant through CET, Tayo has showed a great deal of leadership in working with youth. His ability and experience was recognized when he was hired full-time by Youthcare.

Currently, Tayo is working part-time at Sunray Library as a library clerk. He hopes to complete his training of computer networking in 2001. Tayo has come a long way since he first signed up with CET. He has made the most of his opportunity, and CET is proud to share in his success.

### **Mary Lee - (St. Paul Workforce Council/Center for Employment and Training)**

I was a freshman at Open School. I wanted a job that would give me an opportunity to learn and get experience for the future. I talked to my counselor at school about finding a part-time job. Then I called the CET office and talked to a job counselor about what I needed to do to join the program. After I was accepted I was placed at St. Paul Open School. I was an office assistant. I translated, answered phone calls, sent faxes, and made copies and answered questions from the students.

From there on I worked with YES! Saint Paul (Youth Employment Services) through the CET program.

I have worked with CET on and off the last 3 to 4 years. The program has helped me a lot. I've learned different techniques of: How to write a resume, how to fill out an application properly, how to properly interview employers, how to be on time when going to an interview, how to dress appropriately when going to an interview and to be enthusiastic when performing assigned tasks.

## **Jason Young - (South Central WorkForce Council)**

Jason is an exceptional young man with an incredible work ethic. Jason was a senior at Lake Crystal Welcome Memorial High School last school year. Jason was living in Madelia and participated in the summer youth employment program. Jason proved to be a good worker at that time too.

He lived in Vernon Center with his foster parents, Willie and Michelle Neegard. The Neegards have a catering business and Jason had had experience helping them with catering jobs. From that experience, Jason developed an interest in working in food service. When Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) first met with Jason to explore work situations he was asked what he wanted to do for a work experience. He answered, "work at Applebees".



During the summer of 1999, Jason participated in a work evaluation program administered by MRCI. While participating in that program, Jason was able to sample several work situations. That was his first experience working at Applebees. This was a week long situation and Jason was hooked. He knew that this was the job for him and this is what he wanted to explore as a more extended work experience. MVAC staff contacted Applebees to see if they would work with our program to give Jason a more in-depth work experience. They agreed and Jason became a dependable, reliable and loyal employee on January 24, 2000.

On a recent visit to monitor Jason's work experience in Applebee's, MVAC staff asked if there would be any room for Jason to work there when he graduated from high school. At that time Applebee employees were pretty sure that Jason would be able to become an Applebees employee, and he was, indeed, hired.

## **John Dean - (Anoka County Workforce Center, Blaine)**

John Dean is a seventeen-year-old junior at Coon Rapids Senior High who has been a part of Anoka County's youth programs for the past three summers. The first two summers John worked as part of a Park Crew in Coon Rapids working on projects throughout the city building picnic structures and repairing playground areas. John went from a shy and quiet young person to a strong leader on the team. He demonstrated an excellent work ethic and showed other young people in the program those skills through his quiet, yet strong leadership style of "leadership by example."

This summer John was enrolled in the year-round youth program opportunities available through WIA. John currently is working at Coon Rapids Middle School working with the custodial crew working on both indoor and outdoor maintenance tasks. It is there that John's hard work has been noticed by the lead custodian at the school who has now referred him to the head of the School District Custodial staff. Once John

attains his drivers license, an expense that the Anoka County Youth Program will help with, he will have the opportunity to apply to be a student substitute for the entire school district. After graduation next year, John hopes to attain full-time employment through the school district or through the City of Coon Rapids Parks and Recreation. With the excellent evaluations and strong referrals from the county, city and school district, we know that John will be very successful!

Academically John has also worked hard. For the past three summers John has been a part of Anoka County's Academic Enrichment courses that run for six weeks during the summer. Each summer, even though personally challenged with a learning disability, John has done an excellent job showing improvement in both his English and math skills. Now, during the school year, in addition to his general classes at Coon Rapids High School, John is taking morning courses at Anoka-Hennepin Technical College to prepare him to be an EMT. Once he is 21 years old, John hopes to attain his EMT certification and pursue a career in this field.

John is a perfect example of how a young person can achieve success through hard work and perseverance!

### **Jeremy - (Ramsey County Workforce Development)**

Working with videos/television/computers are popular career dreams for many youth and Jeremy is already well on his way to making his dream career a reality, thanks in part to the Ramsey County Workforce Development Youth Programs.



Ramsey County helped Jeremy connect with the high school cable communications department, paid his wage as a cable production assistant and kept tabs on school progress while he was developing his cable/video skills. As part of his job duties, Jeremy covered many of the high school activities including varsity sporting events and concerts. "There is something different to do everyday. It is a great experience to be using the computers, camera and editing rooms."

School completion is essential to the program, and Jeremy was aware of his responsibilities for class work. Taking advantage of elective classes such as photography enhance his camera skills and push him to create better shots. Jeremy also plans to take advantage of post secondary options programs and take some college level courses before graduation.

While working at this job part-time, Jeremy also volunteered at CTV 15. CTV has since hired Jeremy as a part-time Engineering Assistant.

## Minnesota Success Stories

---

### For Additional Information on Youth Programs in Minnesota, Please Contact:

Kay Tracy, Director  
Office of Youth Development  
Minnesota Department of Economic Security  
390 North Robert St.  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101  
(651)296-6064  
Email: Ktracy@ngwmail.des.state.mn.us

Peggie Hicks, Specialist  
Office of Youth Development  
Minnesota Department of Economic Security  
390 North Robert St.  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(651)297-2437  
Email: Phicks@ngwmail.des.state.mn.us

### For Additional Information About Individual Success Stories, Please Contact:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council <i>John Leuck</i> <i>Dana Eisfeldt</i> <i>Erick Wallace</i>	Anne Olson	(320)269-5561
Northwest Minnesota Private Industry Council/Workforce Council <i>Sarah Agnes</i> <i>Michelle Olson</i>	Betty Halvorson	(218)796-5144
Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services <i>Joel Sanchez III</i> <i>KaCee McKenzie</i>	Natalie Kuehl	(612)271-3706
Scott County Employment & Training <i>Patrice Richardson</i>	Beth Olson	(952)496-8528
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. <i>Charles Dupree III</i> <i>Little Falls Art Project</i>	Terry Janes	(218)846-7400
Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council <i>Computer/Career Exploration Camp</i> <i>Youth Service Team</i>	Kathy Zavala	(320)202-2100
Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc. <i>Computer Class 2000</i>	Randy Johnson	(507)292-5189
Washington County Workforce Center <i>Cindy Evenson</i>	Karen Ritter	(651)430-6851
Carver County Workforce Service Center <i>Andy Kottke</i> <i>Garrett</i>	Tamara Carlson	(612)361-1718
Hennepin County Training and Employment Assistance	Charles Hanson	(612)348-2016
City of Minneapolis Employment and Training <i>Victoria Zackery</i>	Catherine Christian	(612)673-3936

## Minnesota Success Stories

---

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Dakota County Workforce Services Twin Cities Tree Trust <i>Letters from Parents</i>	Norm Champ	(612)920-9326
Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training <i>Cory Wehrman</i>	Ray Garmaker	(218)742-9171
St. Paul Workforce Center / Center for Employment and Training <i>Abiodun (Tayo) Adefoye</i> <i>Mary Lee</i>	Robert Lowe	(651)228-3247
South Central WorkForce Council <i>Jason Young</i>	Sandy Oppegard	(507)389-6723
Anoka County WorkForce Center <i>John Dean</i>	Rick Johnson	(763)783-4809
Ramsey County WorkForce Development <i>Jeremy</i>	Annette Johnson	(651)604-3587

---