

LOCAL PEOPLE

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YMCA summer job graduation

A special graduation celebration was held for teens who successfully completed a six-week summer job placement program through the YMCA's Summer Jobs for Youth program. Students ranged in age from 15 to 18 and many came from Hamilton neighbourhoods where finding summer employment can be challenging.

Approximately 110 employers participated in this program from a variety of fields including recreation, business and youth leadership.

"We had a very successful year with approximately 245 youth placed," said Lily Lumsden, senior regional manager of employment and settlement services for the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford. The overwhelming majority of participants — 97 per cent — completed their placement and many attended the graduation celebration at the Hamilton Downtown Family YMCA.

"Working with kids this summer has changed me a lot as a person," said Kara Siroky, 15, of Hamilton, a junior

summer camp counsellor for the YMCA. "It has taught me to put others before myself when needed. My job has taught me to become nicer, because people appreciate it more than you would assume. It has taught me that I take a lot of things for granted, and that I should be thankful for what I have."

Siroky worked in an inner-city neighbourhood. "A majority of the kids that attended camp had a difficult home life. Whether the problems were with money or their family, there was something. Although the problems were still there when they got home, when they were at camp, it all went away."

Summer Jobs for Youth is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to help teens gain work experience and explore potential careers. "By doing so you have begun a new chapter in your life — your future," Lumsden told the students. "It is full of choices, opportunities and endless possibilities."

Special to The Hamilton Spectator



Jaime Bardwell, Haley Mullally and Sheena Wilson celebrate with cake after the YMCA Summer Jobs for Youth graduation at the Hamilton Downtown Family YMCA. Bardwell, 17, learned the restaurant business at PocoLoco. Mullally, 17, worked as a receptionist at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre and Wilson, 18, worked as a server assistant at Café Limoncello.



Gillian-Endrina Krasniqi, 18, of Hamilton worked as a Gap sales associate. Here she celebrates completing her job placement with Gillian Aitken, a YMCA youth worker.

Rose Senat, 18, of Hamilton shared her experiences working at YWCA childcare for the summer. "I could probably stay here and talk about the kids all day," said Senat, a guest speaker at the graduation celebration. "Being with kids was like watching America's Funniest Home Videos for seven hours straight."



Adam Yahye, 19, worked as a cook at Kelsey's. "I liked the fast pace," said Yahye of the restaurant business.

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

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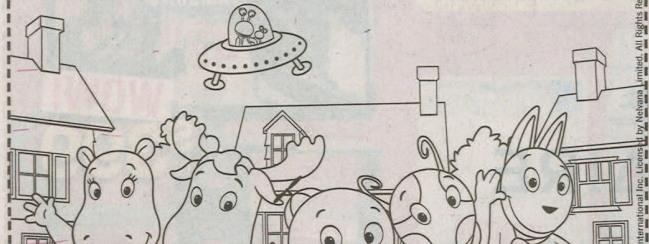
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