



Students graduate SMOC summer jobs program

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For seven weeks this summer, the South Middlesex Opportunity Council's (SMOC) 2013 Summer Jobs for Youth placed 16 teenagers in 10 different internships, both at SMOC and the United Way's Pearl Street Cupboard and Café in Framingham.

Most of the teens were from SMOC programs including Serenity House, a residence for women in recovery and their children; Pathways Shelter, a family shelter; and the ESL program. Prior to their job placement, the teens participated in a series of job readiness training workshops, including customer service, getting along with supervisors and coworkers, conflict management and interviewing skills. Mass Bay Community College and American Consumer Credit Counseling presented informational workshops to the students around accessing higher education and budgeting.

The students excelled at their internships and received high praise and constructive feedback from their site supervisors. They also gained valuable information in the workshops that will help when entering the workforce, whether they are currently seeking a job, waiting until after high school graduation, or after they earn a college degree.

The summer jobs program held a graduation celebration this week, where each student gave a brief overview about what they learned from the program and placement. All of the teens talked about how meaningful and educational the program was for them. Two of the participants have been hired by SMOC, two are returning to high school, and one will be attending college. The others will continue to work with SMOC to secure permanent employment, utilizing their newly gained job readiness skills and work experience.

Students who attended this week's Summer Jobs for Youth graduation include: Angelique Ortiz, Johnnie Evans and Aiysha McCarthy, all of Framingham, Nicole Diliddo of Shrewsbury, George Dancause of Leominster, Jolanda Gendraw and Jessenia Nunez of Boston, Intira Palanukorn, Bushra Khan and Lobna Khan, all of Natick, and Amber Lerro and Amy Iacovelli of Hopkinton. Stefany Ohannesian and Wanda Oyola served as program instructors.