The Day

July 31, 2015

Summer jobs program gets work for 400 young people

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Record donations of $64,000 from charitable organizations in the region have helped place about 400 young people in summer jobs locally, according to the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board.

The Summer Youth Employment Program, serving young people between 14 and 21 years old, is funded by the state and federal government in addition to donations from the Sea Research Foundation, People's United Community Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut Foundation and the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut.

Other donors include the Liberty Bank Foundation, Pfizer Community Grants, Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, Dime Bank Foundation, SBM Charitable Foundation and Windham Rotary.

"State funding has become more challenging over the years," said John Beauregard, executive director of the Franklin-based workforce board that runs four job centers in eastern Connecticut, in a statement. "The generosity of community partners has tremendously boosted the summer youth program."

The program places youths in a 33-town area in eastern Connecticut into jobs at about 140 public and private worksites. Library and museum aides, computer repair and assistance and medical records management are just a few of the jobs being filled.

EASTCONN, Norwich Youth and Family Services and New London's Office of Youth Affairs are managing the summer program.

"The program ... replaces idle time often associated to summer with productive and meaningful work experiences," said Rich Matters, the workforce board council chairman, in a statement. "This program has a positive and lasting impact in our community."

This year, the six-week program had about twice as many applicants as jobs available.

Young workers will continue in the program until mid-August, when many will be heading back to school.

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