

A scoop of the real world with after-school jobs

Story and photos by Chris Kaufman/ ckaufman@appealdemocrat.com | Posted: Monday, October 5, 2015 8:51 pm

After-school jobs may not be as easy to land as they used to be, but they're still a part of the education and development of many young people.

In some cases, students take it more seriously than others. Dillon Hughes, for instance, is working three jobs to support his family while he goes to school.

The Sutter 17-year-old attends Feather River Academy in Yuba City — he recently moved from Oroville to change his circumstances. He is trying to help support his newborn son.

"I had troubles in Oroville, and I used to not like going to school, and now it's great," Hughes said. He feels comfortable in the school where, he said, teachers and staff are more supportive.

Hughes juggles a schedule that includes school, working at Decker Engineering Service, bucking hay bales, and cutting wood on the weekends.

Hughes' is an extreme situation, compared to most. He's like many teens in that he's trying to go to school and hold an after-school job (or, in this case, three of them). And many other students are looking for part-time work.

According to a U.S. Census Bureau and an American Community Survey of the Yuba City metro area, an estimated 5,243 males are 16-19 years old and 1,905 are in the labor force. An estimated 4,655 females are 16-19 years old and 1,891 are in the labor force.

Some schools have programs designed especially to help students prepare for the multitude of skills needed to land a job. Additionally, there are programs available at places like the Yuba and Sutter county One Stop offices that help both students and employers.

"We have a variety of services we offer them," said Jennie Archuleta, business workforce specialist with Sutter County One Stop's youth program.

"We offer workshops they can take part in to help their skills," she said. "Some of the new things we're doing for young people are developing entrepreneurial skills."

The workshops they offer include: job searching strategies, application preparation, resume development,



After School Jobs

Hailey Brandt, 17, right, of Yuba City, serves an ice cream sundae to Brooke Barr, 16, of Corning on Tuesday, September 29, 2015 at Brock's Ice Cream in Yuba City.

interview skills, resume preparation, tips on how to dress and employer expectations.

"The entrepreneurial skills are not just for people who want to start their own business," Archuleta said. "If you have that mindset, you'll be a better employee and be more marketable."

Archuleta said employers like Raley's, Brock's Ice Cream, Bishop's Pumpkin Farm, fast food restaurants and retail stores are all good places for young people to find work but even those jobs are competitive.

Work for credit

Across the street from the Sutter County One Stop is the Feather River Academy — several students there have landed jobs, which not only earn them money but count as credits toward graduation.

The school has a program that prepares students for success in the job market by offering a variety of job readiness skills.

"We paired up to provide education training and help our kids network in the community before they graduate," said Sara Clarke, instructional coach with the school. Clarke partners with Virginia Burns, intervention and prevention specialist, at the academy.

"Some kids got jobs before they graduated."

They organize programs that introduce students to the concepts of networking, cooperating and meeting prospective employers.

Last spring, Clarke and Burns sent students throughout the community to help get donations for an open house at the school.

"It was amazing to watch them flourish by cold calling businesses and getting them to donate," Clarke said. "They met with managers in Marysville and Yuba City and were able to get 30 businesses involved."

Clarke said about 250 members of the community showed up — a big success. She said watching the students get involved with setting up, preparing food and breaking down the event was exciting.

"All of our kids come from families that struggle, so many of them are involved in seasonal work, some construction and landscaping," said Burns, who has been with the Feather River Academy for three years.

Employing students

In addition to schools and organizations like One Stop helping young people prepare for work, there are employers who are always looking for students to employ.

Eric Claydon has owned Brock's Ice Cream Parlor since 2001 and in keeping with its long history, employs mostly young people at the Yuba City shop.

"My wife (Jeanne Claydon) was friends with Brock Smith and she worked here as a young person," said Claydon, referring to the founder, who opened the shop in 1966. "That's the way Brock ran it, and I wanted to keep it that way, too."

Claydon says it can be difficult finding good student employees, while keeping up with the labor laws and adapting to almost annual minimum wage increases.

"It has become a challenge training, now, because the culture has changed," he said. "I saw an article that said not having kids doing chores at a young age is a problem because they're not learning the discipline involved with doing a job the right way."

Hailey Brandt, 17, of Yuba City, an independent studies student from Abraham Lincoln School, has been working at Brock's for the past seven months and has grown from the experience.

"I've really learned patience and respect working here," said Brandt, who was born and raised in the area and frequented the ice cream shop as a child. "When I go to a restaurant now, I'm much more understanding to our server and what they have to do."

Brandt said her father encouraged her to get the job and wants to help her with money management.

"If it's not a necessity — like makeup or perfume — I'm paying for it," Brandt said.

Her father, Aaron Brandt of Marysville, remembers his own after-school experience. He started working with his father doing concrete at a very young age and wanted his daughter to learn the same work ethic.

"I had her go get a job so she can start learning what the value of a dollar is," said Brandt. "I'm very proud of her."

What has changed

It's not as easy as it used to be to get an after-school job. There are more rules.

"It can be difficult for the under-18 crowd because changes in labor laws make it more restrictive in terms of the number of hours per day and week they're allowed to work," said Jennie Archuleta, business workforce specialist with Sutter County One Stop's youth program. "Every year, we see more companies raise the minimum age of employment."

Students wanting to get a job are required to keep their grades above a certain level in order to obtain a work permit, which can be issued by their school. School requirements vary by district and campus.

Employers hiring youth must have a permit to employ kids, which is issued by the Labor Department and can be inspected by officials from the school and labor department.