

DSB seeks to pair Island employers and students for summer jobs

by Alicia McCutcheon

MANITOULIN—The deadline is fast approaching to have your name on the list of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) Jobs for Youth program that pairs youth with employers on Manitoulin, providing the full cost of the summer wage for six weeks.

The Expositor spoke with Jobs for Youth leaders Amanda Sheppard and Danielle Shank about the successful program and the criteria for both students and employers. The leaders explained that the program is open to youths aged 15-18 who are considered disadvantaged due to certain barriers of employment, including: having residence in a high needs neighbourhood; having unemployed parents or parents on social assistance; have been, or are, in care of the Children's Aid Society; have been, or are, at risk of being in conflict of the law; have been, or are, at risk of dropping out of school; or require life/employment training and support.

Ms. Sheppard and Ms. Shank have been busy looking for new recruits to the program (students can only take part in the Jobs for Youth one time), both in terms of students and employers through knocking on doors, sending letters, placing ads in the newspaper and making announcements at Manitoulin Secondary School. While all their hard work has paid off, the window of opportunity to get involved will soon be closed, by this



Donna Moroso, Manitoulin Sudbury District Services Board director of Integrated Social Services, joined Jobs for Youth leaders Amanda Sheppard, left, and Danielle Shank, right, for a photo in front of a wall of Post-It notes of jobs and student applicants ready for the matching.

Friday, June 7, and their goal is to see as many people involved as possible.

The two criteria for employers, they note, is that they apply and be registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

"This year we have a lot of new employers," Ms. Sheppard explained. "We have upwards of 70 employers and 45 placements, but we're always looking for more."

"It makes it easier to match students with jobs if there's more," Ms. Shank added.

They note that there are no employers or employees from South Baymouth in their program so far.

The pair show off their office, yellow Post-It notes covering the walls—the

beginning of the match process. The girls have a large task ahead of them, breaking down the student applications in terms of skills and previous work experience, community and whether or not they have access to transportation, and then finding a suitable match from one of the employers.

Once a student has been accepted into the program, Ms. Shank and Ms. Sheppard will lead the youths through a three-day session which will include a first-aid and CPR course, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) course, as well as sessions on professionalism in the workplace. Transportation will be provided to and from the three-day forum. After this is com-

pleted, the students are then eligible to work 35 hours per week at \$10.25/hour for six weeks—fully covered by the DSB.

The Jobs for Youth leaders will visit each student every two weeks, talk with them and their employers and conduct surveys and make safety checks.

The program will culminate in a graduation day on August 22, complete with a barbecue, slideshow of a summer of hard work and a memory stick with the student's resume already on it, in parallel to the same program offered by the Waubetek Jobs for Youth students, who will have also completed the program through First Nations businesses.

The fifth year of Jobs for Youth, the leaders say they

are hoping to inject new life into the program and get people talking about it.

Donna Moroso, director of integrated social services with the DSB, says Jobs for Youth, funded by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, has seen a lot of progression in its five years and learned from previous mistakes.

Unfortunately, she said, the level of funding has remained the same throughout those five years, which is especially needed since the program is so beneficial for Manitoulin. "Last year we had 58 students, with only funding for 40. We need more funding," Ms. Moroso reiterated.

Exceeding the level of funding for the past two years, Ms. Moroso has approached the ministry to ask for the money needed to make it up, but was only successful once.

New to the program, the director added, is the choice of part-time hours. A student can have the job last into the fall, or even beyond, as long as they do not exceed the total hours.

For more information

and to download the application form, visit www.msdsb.net, click on 'Integrated Social Services' then 'Jobs for Youth.'