

“Jobs for Youth” funded program drops to 7 spots in '16 from 58 in '15

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Island businesses, parents urged to complain to Premier Wynne

MANITOULIN— Many Manitoulin Island youths, and employers, could lose out next summer with the cancellation of the Jobs for Youth summer program administered through the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB).

The Jobs for Youth program provided disadvantaged youth (Manitoulin youth are labelled as such) aged 15 to 18 with the equivalent of eight weeks of full-time paid work (adult general minimum wage) with local employers. Manitoulin and LaCloche youths received the largest allocation, with 82 in the program in 2011-2012; 87 in 2012-2013; 71 in 2013-2014; 46 in 2014-2015 and 58 in 2015-2016.

In August the DSB received word from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, which funded the program, confirming the funding allocation, and stating that Cambrian College would be administering the program, now called Youth Job Connection, for the next two years—but with a drastic cut. The allocation for Manitoulin/LaCloche is now for seven youths, a reduction from 58 or an 88 percent cut in placements.

In response to this news, the DSB sent a letter to all of the employers that have taken part in the program, as well as its member municipalities, urging them to write a letter to the premier, which the DSB has done.

It states, in part, “The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB and its 18 member municipalities need to understand how the Ministry can reduce the

number of youth placements from 111 (the entire catchment area) in the summer placement component to 19 summer placements under the new Youth Job Connection. This represents an 83 percent reduction in the number of high risk youth obtaining summer jobs.”

“That means there will be 92 high risk youth who will not get an opportunity for a summer job in 2016 because of the change in the province’s programming for high risk youth,” the letter continues.

“Premier, we had requested a delegation at AMO (Association of Municipalities Ontario) to discuss this issue with Minister Moridi but did not receive any response to our request,” the letter goes on. “We are now asking for a meeting with you to discuss this drastic reduction in services in an area that was identified by the province as high risk. We will make ourselves available to meet at your convenience.”

The Expositor contacted Kelly O’Hare, co-proprietor of the Anchor Inn in Little Current, who has utilized the Jobs for Youth program on more than one occasion. “The program has enabled us to hire young people and give them an opportunity,” she began, adding that she was “very disappointed” to hear of the program change and cuts to allocation.

Past students have been hired through the Jobs for Youth program, trained, and then continued to have gainful employment with the Anchor until leaving for post-secondary education, Ms. O’Hare said.

In one case, a young man was hired through Jobs for Youth, “fell in love with the industry,” went on to post-secondary education and came back to work at the Anchor Inn as a fully-trained chef. “It really is a win-win,” Ms. O’Hare said of the former program.