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Youth sample the hospitality industry

Through Arapahoe/Douglas Youth in the Works! young adults receive hands-on training in the hospitality industry

Greenwood Village, Colo. --- Last week, more than 30 youth, ages 14 -21, gained hands-on insight into careers in the hospitality industry. Created by Arapahoe/Douglas Youth in the Works!, the Hospitality Career Development Institute challenged participants to create and execute an event plan.

Over the course of the week, students learned how to manage an event, from creating the food and marketing to coordinating staff and logistics. They learned what it took to put on a conference or a wedding and then they did it by managing their own completion ceremony.

“Our goal is to engage students in hands-on experience related to the hospitality industry,” said Kelly Folks, Program Manager for A/D Works! “Students learn what it takes to enter and be successful in this industry while recognizing career paths that lead to future growth.”

The program provided participants with physical and mental disabilities, pregnant and parenting, homeless, in the foster care system, have an offender history, or from low-income families, an opportunity to develop specific skills in the hospitality industry and possibly jump-start their career.

Mickayla Dickerson, age 14, found the program especially helpful. “Before the program started, I thought I might be interested in being an event planner when I grow up. I’ve now learned how to host and plan events and it has helped me decide that I want to be an event planner even more.”

Throughout the week, students spent time in the kitchen learning the secrets of fruit carving by making lemon mice and vegetable palm trees. They also learned techniques for decorating cakes, proper table settings and meal presentation. Students also had to brainstorm their event theme and learn what it takes to be a manager and take on a leadership role.

The program was free for participants and included a private Job Fair specific to the hospitality industry. As a result, at least five participants have follow up interviews scheduled this week. Businesses that attended this year’s fair included Ritz Carlton, Denver Hyatt, Design Works, Epicurean Catering, Elitch Gardens and the Denver Athletic Country Club.

The program would not be what it is without the help of community partners including the Colorado Convention Center, Grand Hyatt Regency Hotel, Performance Solutions, Emily Griffith Opportunity School, and Metropolitan State College.

For more details about A/D Youth in the Works! call 303-636-1260 or visit www.adworks.org, just click on Youth in the Works Logo.

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To download photos click on the following link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CA/>

Photo captions: Hard at work, Mickayla Dickerson and Micaih Roberts, age 14, create decorative icing roses for a cake during the A/D Youth in the Works! Hospitality Career Development Institute.

Fruit and vegetable carving was just one aspect of meal presentation learned at the A/D Youth in the Works! Hospitality Career Development Institute. Christina Trujillo, age 14, puts the finishing touches on her lemon mouse.