

GUIDANCE GAZETTE

Mt. Vernon Township
High School

mvths.org

April, 2009

Tips for Teenagers—Getting a Summer Job

Summer jobs help teenagers explore career choices, learn money management, and develop teamwork and other responsible skills. With proper preparation, a positive attitude, and knowledge of the summer job market, teenagers can land a job that leads to even better opportunities.

Getting a summer job starts long before filling out applications. Because teens have little previous work history, prospective employers examine grades and extracurricular activities when deciding whom to hire.

The first step toward finding a summer job is knowing where to look. The best jobs for teens are businesses that need extra summer help. Golf courses, ice cream parlors, movie theaters, and pools are all good choices. Fast food restaurants, libraries, animal shelters, and telemarketing firms continually need help, and starting a summer job there may mean continuing to work during the school year.

Another option is to start your own summer business. Mowing lawns, doing housework, and babysitting are all great opportunities for teens. Advertise your services, set a fair price, and describe exactly what you provide so you do not disappoint customers. When working for yourself, you must have the self-discipline to be on time, be a good worker, and learn how to do better. The more you please your customers, the more likely they are to call you again.

If you are more interested in getting experience than a paycheck, volunteer opportunities are a great way to work during the summer. Animal shelters, veterinarians, hospitals, day care centers, youth programs, libraries, and senior care centers are only a few places that look for volunteers. This allows you to explore different types of jobs, and you can list volunteering on future applications or resumes. Some volunteer jobs even become paying jobs if you are a great employee!

When deciding where you'd like to work, remember that being an employee is making a commitment. You should pick jobs you are interested in, ones that won't be boring or annoying after a few days. Hobbies, interests, and skills can all lead to fun job opportunities if you know where to look.

The next step is filling out applications. Apply early for the best jobs, because many teens will be trying to get the same job and employers want to fill positions as soon as possible. The longer you can work, the better your chances of being hired: employers don't like to hire someone who needs time off for other commitments. If you can work during evenings or weekends, or if you can continue to work during school, you may have an edge over your competition.

Fill out the form completely with your best handwriting and watch for careless errors. Include clubs, honors, and activities that are related to the job. Many applications include an assessment test that evaluates different situations including theft, integrity, punctuality, and teamwork. These tests are an important part of the application and you should answer each question honestly.

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News for Juniors

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Juniors in the state of Illinois are required to take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), and it is made up of two kinds of tests. The ACT test will be given on April 22; this is a test that colleges use for admission purposes. The Work Keys test will be given on April 23; this type of test is used by businesses for hiring future employees. Schools use the combined scores of ACT + Work Keys (called PSAE score) to measure student achievement.

The ACT test consists of questions in English, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing. The Work Keys test consists of applied math and reading for information. (An additional science test will be given.) Proper preparation before these tests can reduce stress/test anxiety. Juniors will review sample questions in their English, math, social studies, and science classes, plus review test-taking strategies. Students are also urged to spend additional study time preparing on their own using the preparation booklet that was given to each student. The resources listed below can also be useful:

⇒ **On the Web:** www.actstudent.org for interactive sample questions in all ACT test areas.
www.edinformatics.com for sample questions in all tested areas.

⇒ **In the School Library:** Check out ACT study guide books (ie: *ACT for Dummies*).

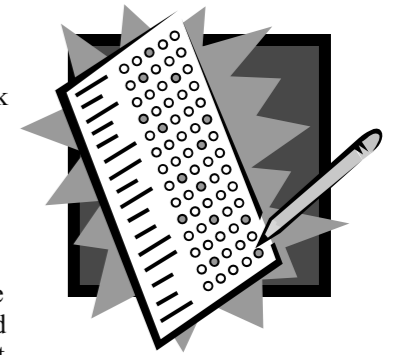
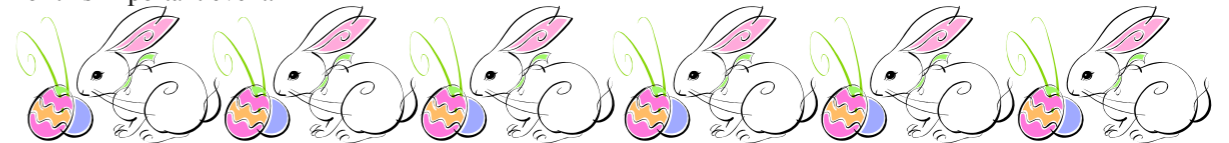
Juniors will be asked to report to their PSAE testing room on April 17 for a preliminary session. They will become familiar with "standardized testing procedures" and learn what they need for the test (#2 pencils and a calculator). Students will complete a registration folder including the following:

- 1) An "interest inventory." The results of this activity show career possibilities that a student may want to investigate as he/she makes post-high school plans.
- 2) High school code. This important number (**143080**) permits ACT to send the student's ACT score to the high school. Please note, however, that high schools cannot place this score on the transcript without a student's written permission.
- 3) College/university codes. Students will be asked to select codes for colleges/universities to which the ACT score can be directly sent. If a student fails to write in the high school code or a college/university code, then the student will have to pay an additional fee to have those scores sent at a later time.

On April 22 and 23, juniors will report at 8:20 a.m. to their assigned room for testing.

Test results will be reported in parts. The ACT test scores are mailed to the student by the end of May. The over-all PSAE scores are mailed to the school, and will be given to students in the fall, 2009. It is important to note that the overall PSAE score, by law, will be placed on a student's transcript, therefore showing that the student has completed the state requirement for graduation.

We encourage parents to discuss this test information with their student, and encourage proper preparation for this important event.



High School Graduation Requirements

All students graduating from Mt. Vernon High School must take and pass the Illinois constitution test, and the federal constitution test. If any senior has yet to complete this requirement, he or she should see their counselor *immediately*.

CONSUMER ALERT

With college costs soaring, how are students and parents supposed to determine which of the available scholarship search companies are a legitimate way to seek financial assistance?

According to the Federal Trade Commission, legitimate companies will advertise that they can get students lists of scholarships in exchange for an advance fee, or there are scholarship search engines on the World Wide Web. The key: legitimate companies never guarantee or promise scholarship or grants.

To steer clear of scholarship fraud, the FTC recommends that a student *spends time* searching for scholarship opportunities, not money. Nobody can guarantee that a student will win a scholarship; if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you are suspicious of an offer, it is usually with good reason.

Scholarship Opportunities: All applications available in Guidance.

What's New?

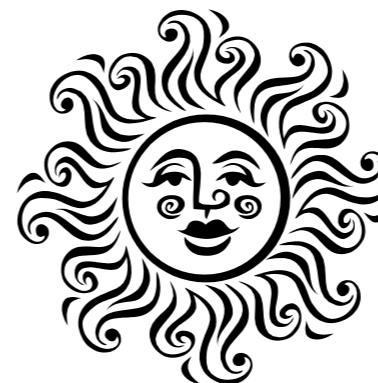
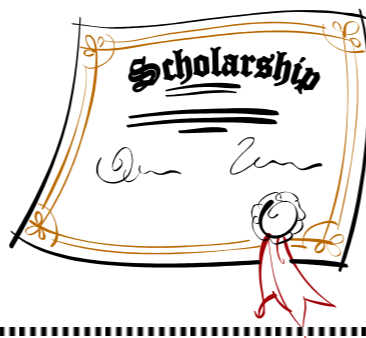
- ◆ **Mt. Vernon Elks Lodge 819 Rend Lake College Scholarship:** The recipient of this award must be a Jefferson County high school graduate who plans to enroll in a full-time program at Rend Lake College for the 2009-10 academic year. A grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale is required. Due April 14.
- ◆ **Mt. Vernon Junior Woman's Club Scholarship:** This scholarship is for seniors who will be enrolled as a full-time student at Rend Lake College for the 2009-10 school year. The amount of the scholarship will be based on tuition for two semesters at 16 credit hours per semester. Due April 14.
- ◆ **Mt. Vernon Rotary Lumbattis Award:** The Mt. Vernon Rotary Club recognizes one student each year to honor the memory of Meryl Lumbattis. Mr. Lumbattis was a Mt. Vernon Rotarian who lived Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self." Due April 17.
- ◆ **Will to Win Scholarship:** Eligible students are seniors with asthma who have achieved a level of excellence in one of the following: performing arts, community service, athletics, visual arts, or science. Applicants must have at least a 3.5 GPA. Due April 20.

What's Due in April?

Crosswalk Community Action Agency Scholarship—April 1

Free Parenting Education

Free parenting education classes are offered several times throughout the year. The spring class begins on April 6 and will run for seven weeks. Classes are held at Catholic Social Services, 219 Withers Drive in Mt. Vernon and are held from 4:00-6:00 p.m. For information and/or registration please call Diane Kroetz at 244-0344, ext. 221.



Summer School Plans

Any student who has failed a class that is required for high school graduation may want to consider attending summer school this summer. Specific information about dates and times will be available soon; listen to the school announcements. Students who are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity should see their counselor for sign-up procedures.

Summer Camp Scholarship Opportunity

The Mt. Vernon Junior Women's Club will be sponsoring scholarships to help students defray the cost of various camps during the summer. Applications are available in the Guidance Office. Completed applications are due by April 14.

Attention College-Bound Student Athletes

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulates many college athletics programs. The NCAA Clearinghouse certifies eligibility for freshmen athletes who wish to participate in Division I or Division II sports in college. It would be wise for juniors who are interested in collegiate athletics to become familiar with the registration process through the NCAA website: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Then go to the Prospective Student-Athlete page and click on "Registered Student Login."

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Some employers ask for a resume. Include your full name, address, and telephone number, and list your honors, awards, and other achievements along with previous jobs and volunteer experience. Include your expected graduation date, grade point average, and any extra skills you have. Finally, include references such as a school counselor, teacher, minister, or other adult who has known you for years and could tell about the type of person you are. Ask everyone's permission to ensure they don't mind being listed as references.

Some employers will want to interview you immediately, so you should always be dressed nicely and prepared to talk with them even if you're just picking up or turning in an application. Answer their questions honestly, and speak clearly without slang. Dress in clean, neat clothes, preferably dress slacks or a modest skirt with a plain shirt. Do not wear a lot of makeup or jewelry, and tie back loose hair. You need to demonstrate that you can dress for success.

One of the most important things you bring to an interview is your attitude. Most employers will ask why you want the job, and showing your enthusiasm with a smile helps them understand how you feel about the work. At the end of the interview, always thank them and shake hands even if they say you're not quite right for the position. You never know when they might change their mind!

Getting a first job is never easy, especially for teenagers with no work history and very little experience. Many seasonal businesses are willing to hire teens, however, if they demonstrate responsibility, a good work ethic, and enthusiasm. With good grades, early applications, proper dress, and a realistic outlook, teens can land summer jobs that not only provide steady income, but also pave the way to better job opportunities next summer.

Taken from eSSORTMENT.com