

# GUIDANCE GAZETTE

Mt. Vernon Township  
High School

mvths.org

April, 2010

## Tips for Teenagers—Getting Your First Part Time Job as a Teen

As a teenager, looking for your first part time job can seem like a daunting task. Let's face it, finding a job is hard to begin with. But when you haven't had any experience in a workplace, have never been through an interview, and don't know where to start in writing a resume, the task can seem impossible. Of course, your parents are probably no help; "It's simple," they say, "just ask the corner market; they'll give you a job!"

**So, how do you go about getting your first job?**

### Preparing for the Job Hunt

The most important steps in going to get your first job take place before you even head out the front door. You need to prepare for what you're about to do.

- ✓ **Put together a simple resume:** Many first time or part time job seekers don't believe they need a resume, or think that "well, I don't really have anything to put on a resume, so why bother?"

### Two reasons you should have a resume.

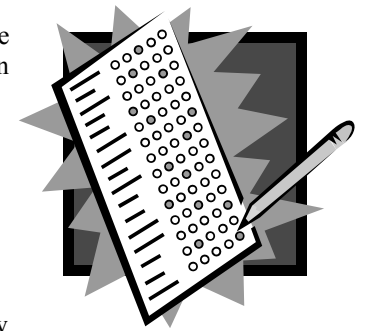
1. First, having a resume to give to the prospective employer shows you've put some effort into finding a job. This shows that you will put some effort into the job you do for them.
  2. Secondly, it allows you to showcase those things about you that you want the employer to remember. Having a printed resume sets you apart from the crowd. Even if you have no work experience, you can still give the employer an idea of who you are, and what your strengths are. If all you've done is baby-sit your kid brother, put it down in writing. Emphasize the skills you learned while baby-sitting, the challenges you overcame, and so on.
- ✓ **Appearance Matters!** Make sure when you head out the door, that you are well groomed and well dressed. You don't need to be in a suit, just make sure you look presentable. In other words, "make sure your Grandma would approve."
  - ✓ **Get a list of places to apply:** Of course, you can use sites that focus on part time jobs for teens like GrooveJob.com to find part time jobs in your area, but there are many other ways to find employers. You can get a list of places looking for people from a variety of sources. You can pick up a local newspaper, go to the library to look at help wanted listings, or walk through town looking for Help Wanted signs. But remember, not every business looking for an employee will have a "Help Wanted" sign in the front window. Put on your list of places anywhere that you think would be fun to work, and go get that job. Walking in and asking for a job isn't illegal, and it shows the manager that you are interested and ambitious if you ask for a job even when one isn't advertised.

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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 28; this is a test that colleges use for admission purposes. The Work Keys test will be given on April 29; 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](http://www.actstudent.org) for interactive sample questions in all ACT test areas.  
[www.edinformatics.com](http://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 21 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 28 and 29, 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, 2010. 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.

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**Summer Engineering Camp for Junior Girls:** Junior girls who are interested in a career in engineering may want to apply for the Lives Improve Through Engineering (LITE) summer camp. LITE will be held at Kettering University in Flint, Michigan July 18-30. Admission is highly competitive. Applications are available in the Guidance Office or you can download an application at [www.kettering.edu/lite](http://www.kettering.edu/lite).

### 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?

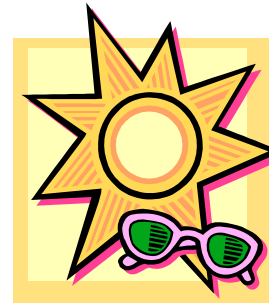
- ◆ **Mt. Vernon Elks Lodge 819 Rend Lake College Scholarship:** The recipient of this award must be a Jefferson County high school graduate who plans to enroll in a full-time program at Rend Lake College for the 2010-11 academic year. A grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale is required. Due April 9.
- ◆ **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 2010-11 school year. The amount of the scholarship will be based on tuition for two semesters at 16 credit hours per semester. Due April 23.
- ◆ **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 9.
- ◆ **Crosswalk Community Action Scholarship:** Seniors who meet income guidelines and plan to attend an Illinois college may apply for this award. Students must rank in the top half of their class. Due: April 8.
- ◆ **Illinois Sheriffs' Association Scholarship:** This \$500 scholarship must be used at a college within the state of Illinois. Due April 7.



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### 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 and are due by April 26.

### 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](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). Then go to the Prospective Student-Athlete page and click on "Registered Student Login."

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- ✓ **Prepare for "No":** Before you apply anywhere, prepare yourself for rejection. That's right. Nobody gets accepted every single place they apply. As a first time job seeker, you need to mentally prepare for someone to say, "No." There's nothing wrong with a store owner saying to you, "I'm sorry, we don't need anyone right now." However, there is a right and a wrong way to respond to an employer who says they don't need you. If you get a "No, I'm sorry," respond by saying, "Well, if you do need someone in the future, please give me a call. I'll leave you my resume. Thanks for your time." This shows the manager that you are serious about getting a job, and you have demonstrated the ability to follow up. Simply walking away from the store shows the manager that you weren't serious about the job to begin with. Stand up for yourself and demonstrate maturity. It goes a long way in presenting yourself.
- ✓ **Stand up straight and be mature:** Not to sound like your parents, or anything, but... Go to each of the employers on your list, walk in the door, and ask for that job. Keep your head up, maintain eye contact, have a firm handshake, and be confident. Employers look for certain qualities when a jobseeker walks in the door. Foremost of those qualities is the candidate's ability to communicate. If you are meek, shy, and unable to show the employer that you are serious about getting a job, you probably won't get one. When communicating to a manager, demonstrate that you are eager to get the job.
- ✓ **Follow Up:** This is probably the most important part of getting a job. Employers look for candidates who have the ability to follow up with customers, because it shows a willingness to get involved and be responsible. Always make a follow up call or get in touch with the potential employer. Usually, it's best to wait about a week to make a call, and when you do, make sure to get on the phone with the person who will be hiring. Don't rely on someone else to leave the right message for you.