



Letters: Giving jobs for teen yields good payback

By Carolyn Robbins

December 20, 2009, 5:00AM

Giving jobs for teens yields good payback

The Republican's editorial on teen joblessness was right on target, especially the last sentence that reads, "Teenagers have a lot to offer, and it's a real shame when young people who want to work can't find a job."

Teenagers are our future workforce. Therefore, our community must figure out a way to reach young adults allowing them to make the connection between work, education and becoming a productive member of our community. A job, even if part-time or in the summer, helps teens make that connection.

This recession creates joblessness for all age groups, but young people are more adversely affected than any other age group.

Only 15 of every 100 youth in Springfield found a job this past summer based on a recent study done by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. Youth who are not working not only lose spending money to cover some basic needs they also lose the ability to gain good work experience and work habits that help them become better workers later in life.

This past summer, stimulus dollars supported an additional 1,000 summer jobs for funding. Still several thousand youth were turned away because of limited funding. One way we can continue to increase the number of youth working in Hampden County is through the support of our local employers, and state and federal lawmakers.

As constituents, it is our responsibility to contact our lawmakers and ask them to support both summer and year-round initiatives, especially during these tough economic times. Employers also need to look more closely at their workplaces and become more creative in identifying work that youth can perform, especially in the summer. All of us need to work together on this teen employment challenge and show our young people that we care about their future.

--KATHRYN KIRBY

--Youth Employment Coordinator, Regional Employment Board

--Hampden County, Inc.

--Springfield
