

PRESS RELEASE

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Summer Youth Program Winds Down

As school starts and the summer comes to an end, so must the "Hire YOUth" Summer Youth Employment Program. The program was implemented by the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance in their eight county area, with Hickman County included. It has been an 8 week work experience for eligible youth ages 14-24. "The program was a great success in Hickman County. Our goal was to place 50 youth in meaningful employment and we exceeded all expectations. We actually were able to place 62 youth" stated Hickman County Coordinator for the Summer Youth Employment Program, Alice Johnston.

Three of these youth were placed at Sole Support in Centerville for their summer employment experience, Josh Cobbage, Paige Pharris and Nick Whitehead. Aspiring to work in graphic design, Josh explained that while working this summer, "I've gotten to do lots of different things. Working on the 3D computer program in the milling operation is my favorite job I've done here." Paige adds that "I've learned to be more detail oriented in working at this job." Each student performed hands on tasks and were expected to work like all other employees. The program itself was designed to give the youth real world work experience and help they be more prepared for their future work experiences. "I learned that in some jobs, you have to be a jack of all trades," said Nick Whitehead of his many different tasks assigned to him over the summer. "We were very fortunate to get these three youth. We would definitely call them back when positions are available" Tamara James, Human Resources Director for Sole Support.

The economic impact for Hickman County alone has been significant. As of August 15th, \$62,404 had been paid out in payroll to the youth and staff of the program. Funding was provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

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