

# Job Training

Two students with diverse needs at Magee Secondary School had the opportunity to participate in work experience this year. Although their work experience placements were very different their goals of gaining experience to eventually find paid employment to have a meaningful life are the same.



Anderson got involved in Job Training, a VSB Career Program. He said that they helped him decide what kind of jobs he was interested in by doing an “in take” interview. The work experience team asked him questions about his work interests and other activities he enjoys doing. After the interview he decided that he was interested in cars. The work experience facilitator placed him in his first choice which was a car dealership. Anderson was supported by a job coach that attended with him for the first week to help guide him along the way. His family also supported him through his work experience. Anderson said he learned to work as part of a team. He enjoyed washing cars and helping other staff shovel the snow out of the way of the cars in the winter. He learned how to adapt in different work environments and that helped him gain confidence. Work experience helped Anderson to obtain paid employment at the dealership for the summer. In the future, Anderson would like to work at McDonald’s. He said that he enjoyed work experience and Anderson encourages students to participate in the Job Training Program. Anderson is looking forward to having another work experience next year.

Another student at Magee Secondary also had the opportunity to participate in work experience. Her name is Morgan and like Anderson, she also went through a work experience intake interview. She was placed at White Spot as she was interested in working in a restaurant. She was supported by a job coach, her school, friends and family. She used a “cheat sheet” to help her remember the tasks she needed to complete at work. She also relied on her

watch to make sure she was on time. During work experience Morgan discovered that she was good with customers. She learned that she is capable of making adaptations to make work experience more successful. Morgan appreciated the support of the staff and the way she connected socially with them. Morgan said her goals are to have a typical working adult life so she is not bored and she wants to earn money. Work experience will give Morgan the opportunities to learn new skills and gain employment in the future. Morgan continues to explore employment opportunities through the TeenWork program.

TeenWork is a program for youth ages 15 to 19. It is a program for youth with disabilities and mental health challenges. This program helps youth find and retain paid employment as they move into adulthood. The only criteria are that the youth must be attending high school, motivated to attend regular meetings and wanting paid employment. TeenWork is a great program to help youth become ready for work, developing independence and self-confidence so that they can use these skills in the workplace.

Reference: <https://www.canassist.ca/EN/main/teenwork.html>

Although it might seem impossible for people with diverse needs to find work, there are many programs such as the VSB work experience program and TeenWork that support people with special needs to gain work experience. These opportunities may lead to paid employment to help youth and young adults in the future to be responsible for themselves and to have a typical adult working life. Morgan and Anderson are two great examples of how youth with disabilities can benefit from having work experience opportunities.

## Article written by Majd Alshareef.

Majd is a grade 12 student at Magee secondary school. Her work experience was to write an article based on her interviews of two students that had completed their own work experiences. She asked them what they learned, what helped them to be successful in work experience and what their future plans are in regards to employment. Majd learned about the TeenWork Program while doing her research for the article. She also learned that if given a time line she can manage her time more effectively. Majd doesn’t know what her next work experience will be, but she is hoping to find a job that involves art since she loves to draw.



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