

## Summer Program Kickoff 2011

The NE MN Office of Job Training in Duluth renews its commitment to providing “earn and learn” situations for at risk youth and teen parents this summer. These programs offer classroom training and hands-on work experience in collaboration with local employers to prepare youth for on-the-job success. This year’s Summer Kickoff was held on June 22 at the Duluth Workforce Center where fun was had by all.

The day began with participants of the Summer Youth and Teen Parent Programs getting to know each other as Rita Olness led a game of social networking, get-to-know-you BINGO. This engaging activity required the students to ask appropriate get-to-know-you questions in BINGO fashion resulting in lots of laughs and tasty treats for the winners.

Once everyone was warmed up, they tackled important workplace topics including the importance of maintaining good attendance and punctuality, proper workplace dress/appearance and creating a good first impression with employers. The students enjoyed this activity as they were given the opportunity to share their first impressions of each other and Career Counselors, Lisa Lundborg, Rita Olness and Missy Lancour.

Guest speaker Linda Erdahl from the U of M Extension Office gave us some tips for eating well on a limited budget and fun food facts related to nutrition. The class made healthy strawberry shakes, trail mix and deviled eggs which complimented the lunch that was provided. She also presented information on food safety and proper hand washing techniques. Erdahl had a great hands-on activity which demonstrated the importance of proper hand washing and food handling too. Each student applied a special hand lotion used to represent germs and then washed their hands normally. Afterwards, the group inspected the residuals under a black light and made some eye opening discoveries about the importance of hand washing.

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training Summer Youth Kickoff in Duluth proved an educational and enjoyable learning experience for all. The class concluded with an exercise in completing timesheets, recapping the day’s topics and providing feedback about the day. Students said their overall learning experience was “fun” and “valuable”, explaining that the hands-on activities and humor kept them interested and involved. These weekly workplace classes enhance the on-the-job work experience with local employers and assist in the development of a quality workforce. Future classes will continue to expand on what employer’s value, workplace etiquette, career planning, completing employer applications, interview techniques and networking. Guest speakers will share information on techniques for positive communication, conflict resolution on the job, along with tips on budgeting and financial planning. In the end, the Summer Youth program offers a unique and valuable learning experience for kids by providing them the opportunity to learn young what it takes to succeed in the workplace.