

Youths Want Work: Mission Impossible

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places in the county offer a number of openings for youths who want to work each summer.

The city parks and recreation department has 19 youngsters aged 14 to 16 working at playgrounds, a day camp in Wagner Grove, Camp Sunshine for mentally retarded children, some boys in park maintenance, and some helping out in the office, in its annual "Work-rea-tion" program.

Dannettee Gilbert, summer playground supervisor, said the object of the program is "to give youths these ages an opportunity to 'have a job and work experience.'" Youngsters work a 19-hour week at \$1.25 an hour.

Miss Gilbert pointed out that applications were taken and hirings made last March. Some 100 youngsters signed up with 75 showing up for training sessions.

One of the brightest spots in the youth summer employment scene, reported Joyce Wallace, Neighborhood Youth Corps director, is this summer's NYC in-school program. This summer's total number of job slots — 310 — is the largest ever in NYC's history.

The week that the NUC summer program got underway, she said, President Nixon allotted more funding and 159 additional slots in the local program.

"I believe every NYC program in the nation was given supplemental slots this summer. Apparently the president thought it was worthwhile to put more money into and wanted to keep more kids off the streets.

"The \$153,000 budget of the summer NYC program will be a boost to the county's economy because most of the monies earned by students will eventually be spent locally."

A year-around youth employ-

ment organization funded jointly by federal and county governments, NYC provides jobs for youths from low-income families who need jobs to be able to stay in school. Minimum age for the summer program is 14; minimum age is 15 when school starts.

Warren (Skip) Littlefield, advertising director for the Santa Cruz Seaside Company, reports that it has 297 young people aged 16 to 20 employed as cashiers, ride operators, concessionaires and beach clean-up crews.

Summer employment started June 15 and ends Labor Day. About 80 per cent of those work part-time during the regular school year — on weekends, holidays, and vacations.

Cox said youths come into his office mainly want jobs and

work experience. Some are dependent upon full-time employment to support a family.

Young marrieds and students putting themselves through college are the most selective "with good reason" about the type of employment they will accept.

One of the main problems facing local young people is publicity given to a few young radicals in the community, Cox observed.

"It's hard for people to believe that some students want to work. Not all students, young people, are out to terrorize the established community, throw bombs, rip off private property. The young people who come to the youth employment service as well as ones looking on their own for jobs sincerely want

employment."

He continued that employment is and could be to even a greater degree a vital tool in bridging the communication and generation gaps in Santa Cruz.

Citing another handicap of young job seekers, Cox said, "Many employers will hire an older person over a young student because they do not want to train young people who may be leaving permanently when school starts. However, many young people during the summer are hoping to keep a job they find and work part-time when school starts. Work experience is essential for a young person's development."

Sandy Woliver, projects coordinator for Community Action Agency Manpower youth projects, says, "We still don't have the support of the local

businessmen but we are working on it. It's been relatively successful in Santa Cruz considering this. I worked with Bill Murphy, Watsonville mayor and president of its chamber of commerce. As a result it's been very successful there."

She said this is the second year the service has been located in the employment office locally, and pointed out that this is in some way detrimental to the service. Many employers have had a bad experience with the employment agency and do not like to go through the "hassle" sometimes involved.

On the whole, though, she pointed out, it has been a good idea "for it enables young people to get used to the idea of using agencies in the county to find jobs which helps them to be productive and responsible."

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