

By Noelani Montero August 12, 2013

Bronx Teens Earn Cash and Learn Skills at Summer Job Program

THE BRONX – Instead of relaxing at the beach and relaxing with friends this summer, Eva Daisy is filing papers and answering phones.

The 16-year-old Bronx resident got a job with Phipps Community Development Center through a citywide program designed to give teens access to summer work. She's making \$7.25 an hour and hopes to save enough money to purchase a convertible when she turns 18.

"It's a good experience," said Daisy, who is working as an assistant and will start her senior year at Grace Dodge Career and Technical Education High School in The Bronx this fall. "I'm learning a lot of things."

Daisy is one of more than 35,000 New Yorkers ages 14 to 24 – including more than 8,300 in The Bronx – who got a job through the city-funded Summer Youth Employment Program this year. Participants make minimum wage and work 25 hours per week for up to seven weeks at companies, government agencies and nonprofits, earning both cash and valuable experience, program leaders said.

"These jobs mean more than new skills, extra money and future job references," Jeanne Mullgrav, commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development, said in a statement.

"A study conducted by NYU of the Summer Youth Employment Program showed that participating youth had better attendance and made more academic effort in the following school year. Other studies have shown that summer jobs are associated with better high school graduation rates and higher lifetime earnings."

While the Summer Youth participants working at Phipps Community Development Center mostly performed clerical work, the teens at the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club's center in The Bronx focused on community service.

"Basically we're here to get paid to better ourselves for the future," said 15-year-old Himayet Chowdhury, a Bronx resident and student at High School for Environmental Studies who is working at Kips Bay this summer.

"Being here, I got time to research and create goals for myself."

Chowdhury, who aspires to be a computer engineer, is participating in a "Scarves for Seniors" service project, helping to knit scarves and stuffed animals for residents of the Rebekah Rehab & Extended Care Center in Unionport.

Iyonce Jackson, 15, a Roosevelt Island resident who is starting her junior year at the Bronx Preparatory Charter School this fall, also worked at Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club. She hopes to become a photographer and is saving her summer earnings to buy a Cannon Rebel T3i camera.

"It's taught me to take my goals more seriously," she said. "You're learning that your dreams don't work unless you do."

