

Too Old to Run a Lemonade Stand?

by Nancy King, Development Director

There comes a time in every young person's life when they are too old to run a lemonade stand, but not yet ready to compete in the job market. Parents feel the frustration when teens hang around the house all summer, playing video games and watching movies, instead of doing something more productive. What is a parent to do with these transition-age youth?

There are many benefits for teens who get their first job during high school. Teens who work get exposed to new skills, like handling cash and interacting with customers. They also learn responsibility and gain experience that they can use on college and scholarship applications. Holding a job creates opportunities for youth to meet new people and build a social network of their own.

There is a skills gap that stands between many youth and employment. For instance, few teens have written a resume or know how to dress for a job interview. No one has talked to them about the appropriate ways to interact with co-workers or speak to a manager. And once they get that job, how do they manage their income and what goals do they set for their futures?

Southeast Health Group is now offering **Vocational Training for Transition-age Youth, ages 14-18,**



to prepare them to enter the world of formal employment. The 10-week class meets one hour a week to master skills necessary to be successful in the working world. Students will be instructed in how to present themselves as a professional, how to set goals, good communication, resume writing, interviewing and marketing. During the last two weeks of class, students will have the opportunity to test their skills as an intern at the T-shirt Palace in Rocky Ford. To be eligible for the vocational training program, youth must be active clients of Southeast Health Group and meet the age requirements.

Sarah Voigts, La Junta-native and

member of the Youth and Family Services Team, is heading up the Transitional Age Vocational Program. "I am super excited about this new program!" said Voigts. "I enjoy teaching life skills and helping teens learn about adult responsibilities. This program is designed to help them gain independence, find their strengths, and set life goals."

Voigts is now accepting referrals for her second 10-week class. For more information about the Transition Age Vocational Training program, call **1-800-511-5446**, or go to www.southeasthealthgroup.org.