



Program brings young workers to Red Bird

Numerous interns have been working in various area of Red Bird Mission this summer, gaining some valuable experience.

As part of the Prosper Appalachia's 10-week program, 27 interns, aged 16-24 are working in different areas around the Mission. Isaac Nolan has been planting, tilling and helping people with their gardens while working with Grow Appalachia. Shea Helton and Samantha Nolan have been doing proper sterilization of tools and filing paperwork in the Red Bird Dental Clinic. Others have been painting, filing and other various jobs.

Prosper Appalachia, a program involving multiple agencies, includes Clay, Bell, Leslie, Harlan and Lecher counties. Most of the interns at the Mission, however, have a previous connection either from a relative working here or through Red Bird Christian School.

"Many are in between college and high school," said RBCS principal Jennifer Wilder. "It's a good opportunity for our community."



Participants are paid \$10 an hour for up to 40 hours a week. The program lasts 10 weeks, and in addition to getting paid, interns receive OSHA training and some basic job training while working in their own communities without having to travel. Word about the program spread quickly, Mrs. Wilder said.

“The youths’ reactions were exciting,” she said. “So many were coming up to me and asking to be a part of it.”

The project has grown to include more participants thanks to input from multiple institutions including Berea College and the Brushy Fork Leadership Institute.

The program seeks to re-engage 16-24-year-olds in career or college by giving them real-life work experience with pay.

Interns ranked their preferences for placements available. Wilder said, we used the information given as we placed the interns. We wanted to give them a choice.

“Dental health is not my career path,” said Shea Helton, “but I wanted it more than the others because it deals with health care and I want to get into psychology.”

The new technology at the Red Bird Dental Clinic impressed Samantha Nolan.

“I learned about the 3D printer for dentures which is really cool,” she said. “I also did not know anything about the process of sterilization and did not realize how in depth it is.”

While there are two interns in the dental clinic, there are four in administration, five at the school, six in maintenance and Work Camp, and 10 in Community Outreach and Grow Appalachia (GA). Isaac Nolan is one of those with GA.

“We’ve planted, tilled, helped folks with their gardens,” he said. “I’ve learned how to use the tiller. And I learned that the tiller isn’t so good on rocks and grass.”

Payton Jones has been painting and organizing the Craft Store.

“This was my first choice (when signing up),” she said. “I have really enjoyed organizing things and getting it ready to open up.”

To support Red Bird Mission or Red Bird Christian School, click the donation link on our website, www.rbmission.org . You can also call 606-598-3155 for information about other Red Bird Mission programs or call 606-598-2416 for more information about the school.

