

St. Louis Youth Get More Than Just Jobs From Summer Job Program – *July 2015 at Computer Village*



11 hours ago • By [Jack Witthaus](#)

ST. LOUIS • He starts each morning with a bus ticket and a business goal.

Mahleek Dailey, 18, is the rider. He calls men “sir” and has a quiet, studious persona. At home, they call him “tech guy.”

During the week, he picks up the No. 74 Metro bus near North Kingshighway Boulevard, rides along West Florissant Avenue and walks several blocks to his job at Computer Village, in the basement of the Prince Hall Family Support Center on Newstead Avenue south of Interstate 70.

He got the job at the computer-help organization through [STL Youth Jobs](#) — a collaboration led by the **St. Louis mayor’s office, the Greater St. Louis Community Foundation, MERS Goodwill, the Incarnate Word Foundation and a host of other public and private stakeholders.** The job-finding group partners with employers around the St. Louis area to provide work opportunities to city youth during the summer.

The program aims to provide more than just income.

“It’s a unique situation,” Goodwill program coordinator Patrick McCulloch said. “Usually kids are just going to work at a restaurant, a small business, something like that. They’re just working.”

Participants with STL Youth Jobs are required to complete job readiness training before starting. In addition, participants are required to open up a bank account if they don’t have one. The bank then provides financial education to the youth.

Out of approximately 1,000 applications this year, 400 people were selected. Most are picked from high-crime neighborhoods. All youth can work up to 160 hours starting around June.

Participants are paid \$8 an hour, and wages are paid for by donations. The program is in its third year in the St. Louis area.

The types of jobs vary. Through the program last year, Dailey worked stocking shelves at a Goodwill. But this year, Dailey was among teens picked to learn IT and other skills at Computer Village, an organization that gives low-income people assistance learning about technology.

With about a dozen other classmates, Dailey helps out with a variety of issues throughout the morning and afternoon. He inspects CPUs. Fixes bugs. Gets computers running faster.

When he's not helping out, Dailey and his classmates take quizzes preparing them to become certified computer technicians. Mentors with the program give participants advice outside the job, too. Dailey hopes to someday start his own on-call computer help service.

"This is more than job experience for me," Dailey said.

So far, he has impressed staff at **Computer Village**. After work one day earlier this month, instructor **Meldon Quarells** apologized for having too many good things to say about the star pupil. He said Dailey has been attentive with the people he helps.

"He's outstanding," Quarells said.

Dailey's nearly completed the program-required hours. But the people at Computer Village don't want him to leave yet. They plan to **give him an internship for the rest of the summer**.

They hope Dailey could also help out Computer Village on Saturdays — if he's not too busy with classes at St. Louis Community College in Forest Park next semester.

Looks like the bus rides will continue.