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MichiganWorks! teams local teens with village for summer jobs

By: Deborah Klinger



The teens, from left, Ethan Kreigh, Dustin Stephens, Humerto Balli, and Justin Taylor, are practicing job skills that will benefit them in the future.

Thanks to some helping hands from the MichiganWorks! Summer Youth program, the Village of Paw Paw got a little free sprucing up this summer. Paw Paw's Public Service Director John Small

gave kudos to MichiganWorks!, saying its Summer Youth Work Program has been a great source of help for the village. This summer, seven area teenage boys reported for duty, ready to help the village tackle projects that regular staff doesn't always have time to do.

Those projects included:

- * painting and staining the Paul Kaiser Bridge at Briggs Pond
- * re-staining the Maple Lake Amphitheatre
- * power-washing the Maple Island bridge
- * painting sidewalks
- * clean-up work and painting in the village mechanics shop
- * painting the exteriors of two buildings and two generators
- * painting over graffiti on all bridges
- * general clean-up work at the village parks
- * mowing, trimming and painting at the Village's wastewater plant.

Besides earning a little pocket money, the youth workers are learning responsibility and job skills that will help prepare them for the future. For 15 year old Dustin Stephens, that means "learning how to get up first thing in the morning." He's hoping that his hard work will lead to a good job reference in the future.

The intrinsic value of a job well done is not lost on 17 year old worker Ethan Kreigh, who said "it feels good to get compliments on the work we've done."

"They all deserve a compliment," said Juan Vasquez, Supervisor of the youth work crew. "They've proven themselves to be dependable and teachable. They've learned how to trust their co-workers and work as a team.

"They've also learned to work well under pressure and to do their best at whatever job they're assigned - all good qualities they will hopefully take into their future careers," said Vasquez.