

Late August 2022

This summer, 12 young adults participated in the inaugural **Work Ready Bainbridge** program, a collaboration between Bainbridge Youth Services (BYS) and the Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce (BICC). This new summer employment and workforce certification program connects local youth employees (ages 16-24) with employers and the local business and nonprofit community.

The program's goal is for young people to develop skills, work experience, and education so that they may understand what it means to work in a business setting successfully. This was done through paid, mentored employment and supplemented with soft skill workshops on strategic thinking, workplace communication, professionalism, and financial literacy. The workshops were sponsored by BYB.

One young person, Hannah Deets, had this to say about why they wanted to get involved with the Work Ready Bainbridge program:

The Work Ready Bainbridge program offers me “a good opportunity to not only support local businesses but to learn skills that I wouldn’t have gotten to develop without the help of the program...skills like financial literacy and strategic thinking.”

And another youth returning from their first year in college had this to say:

BYB has always done an incredible job of offering services, tutoring, and unique experiences for young adults. This was no different from the others. I knew I had to apply since this program matches students based on their skills and what they are passionate about....I wanted to work with a local organization that shares my enthusiasm for bringing people together to care for each other, and to give back to this community that has meant so much to me growing up here.

Upon completion of the Work Ready Bainbridge eight-week employment, each young person received a certificate with an official Work Ready qualification signed by the Bainbridge Island Chamber President, BYB Executive Director, and Bainbridge Island City Manager.

Here’s what participant Tia Preston had to say about her experience:

“The job that BYS matched me with was perfect because it allowed me to use the skills I have learned in my first year as a business and leadership major (in college). I know I have a lot to learn about how to apply those skills in a job, so I was excited to not only learn from the people I worked with in this job but also to be able to share what I've learned (in college) with them.”

Participating in the program to support young people with their professional development and experience, these 10 local organizations and businesses stepped up to hire and mentor local youth. Each employee was paid \$17/hour and offered a sponsored \$500 bonus upon completion of their employment, thus bringing the hourly wage to \$20/hour (based on 20 hours per week).

Bainbridge Community Foundation
Bainbridge Island Metro Park and Recreation District
KidiMu
Helpline House (2)
Scrappy Art Lab
Island Volunteer Caregivers
Wicklund Dental
City of Bainbridge Island (2)
Tour Bainbridge
Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce

Thank you to these businesses and organizations that participated in the first annual summer work experience program for local youth. And, of course, thank you to the 12 young adults who took the initiative to apply and participate in the work-ready program. It seems everybody, employers and employees, got something out of the experience.

Looking ahead to summer 2023, BYS and the Chamber plan to double the program’s employer enrollment and will be working to raise money to supplement the \$17/hour wage so that more small businesses and nonprofits can afford to participate.

For more information on Work Ready Bainbridge and to learn how you can get involved, please visit the Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce [website](#).