Congratulations, Antwanette Ross, Student Recipient

Antwanette Ross

Antwanette Ross is a 2016 graduate of Woodland Hills High School and a resident of Braddock Borough in Allegheny County. Antwanette began working with her Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) counselor in her junior year in high school, and participated in a soft skills presentation co-facilitated by an OVR Early Reach coordinator, Pre-Employment Transition Services business services representative (PETS BSR) and her vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC). Following the presentation, Antwanette was identified by her VRC as an ideal candidate for the MY Work Initiative. An OVR program piloted in Pittsburgh, the MY Work Initiative links students interested in summer employment with municipalities that need seasonal talent.

Although Antwanette's long-term vocational goal is to pursue a career in the medical field, she wanted a summer job that would enable her to work in an office environment.

With the preparation and assistance of the OVR staff, Antwanette was hired at the Braddock Water Authority, where she filed, reviewed accounts, handled billing notices, and processed payments. She also mentored another MY Work Initiative co-worker. Antwanette feels this MY Work Initiative opportunity reinforced her desire to pursue a career in a service profession. Good customer service and organizational skills were among the transferrable skills she developed through this work experience.

Braddock Borough in Allegheny County has always looked for opportunities to build partnerships with community and government organizations that promote student involvement in the borough. Braddock was the first municipal partner to participate in the MY Work Initiative, and Borough Manager Deborah Brown championed the initiative with her colleagues in other boroughs. Her efforts resulted in several other municipalities participating in this pilot program. Through the MY Work Initiative, Braddock Borough provided local youth with summer employment that reinforced the soft skills necessary for success in the workforce.

In addition to providing a paid work experience, Braddock Borough also instructed student workers on how local government operates, as well as the importance of community service. Braddock Borough employed 10 students last summer in a variety of jobs, including administrative assistant and playground program assistant. Braddock Borough currently employs three students for the 2017 school year, and plans to employ more students this summer. Through this program, students gain valuable work experience and improve their team building, leadership, and communications skills that will benefit them throughout their professional careers.