

NEWS

Senator Siplin Congratulates POPS Students at Graduation Summer Internship Ends With Job Offers

**PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release**

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ORLANDO – FL. The Professional Opportunities Program for Students (POPS) has completed its second summer internship program. Seventy 16 to 18 year old high school students in Orange, Seminole and Volusia counties were selected for an eight week paid internship. More than 40 employers provided on-the-job-training and mentoring services for these students.

On Saturday, August 7, 2004, fifty-nine students will be recognized for successfully completing the summer internship. The event will be held at the Lakeside Reception Hall (Firefighters Council of Central Florida), 1-3 p.m., 4005 North Orange Blossom Trail, Orlando. Parents, employers, and special guests will join in the celebration.

POPS is a 501c-3 non-profit organization that provides paid on-the-job training opportunities and educational and developmental skills for students between the ages of 16-18. POPS is the brainchild of Senator Gary Siplin, D19, who was very instrumental in getting the funds. The program mission is to motivate students who are identified as capable of graduating from high school, but are prohibited because of educational, personal, economical, or family problems.

It began as a summer employment program for Orange County High School students, but was expanded to a year round program and includes Seminole and Volusia County High School Students.

Senator Siplin stated, "I am very excited about the success of the POPS program. Seventy students were exposed to the workforce, many for the first time, and learned valuable work experience. Six of these students were hired by the participating employer to work part time and we anticipate more offers of employment. With additional funding, I would like to double the number of POPS students next year."

Students were paid by POPS at the rate of \$10 per hour and must be an active participant in the program for one year. Parents are required to attend a minimum of three meetings with their child's teachers. Additionally, students attend a financial management workshop and were required to contribute a minimum of \$50.00 each week to their household. They were

also required to open a checking or savings account, and provide a detailed summary of how they spent their first two paychecks. Students must obtain or show documentation of a library card in order to get their last paycheck.

Participating employers included Orange County Animal Services, Building Department, Fleet Management, Utilities Solid Waste Landfill, Community Action Department, Housing and Community Development, Center for Drug Free Community, Convention Center, Public Works Highway Construction, and Regional History Center, Ill Phase Haze, Inc., A.A. Ali, CPA, Carpet Systems Plus, Central Florida Police Athletic League, Century 21 American Homes, City of Orlando, City of Sanford Chamber of Commerce, First Care Chiropractic Center, Freedom School, Sanford, Goldsboro Community Center, Sanford, Goldsboro Front Porch, Sanford, Good Samaritan Nursing Home, Sanford, Hal Marston Community Center, Harry & Russell Café, Holden Heights Community Center, Holden Heights Front Porch, Jackson & Alexander Law Office, Sanford, John Ellis, PA, John H. Bridges Community Center, Mary McLeod Bethune Community Center, Daytona, Miracle of Love, New Creations & Designs, Newland Accounting & Tax Services, Northwest Community Center, Off the Chart Personal Fitness Studio, Oley's Homestyle Cuisine & Caribbean Dishes, Our Community Magazine, Prestige Wireless Communications, ShowTyme International Hair & More, Inc., Uptown Computer Unlimited, and Williams, Russell, & Johnson.

The POPS office is located at 2550 W. Colonial Drive, Suite 415, Orlando, 407-649-POPS (7677).

POPS Program Graduation

When: Saturday, August 7, 2004

Where: Lakeside Reception Hall
4005 North O.B.T.

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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