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# Teens battle adults for summer work

KATHRYN PRATER • KPRATER@LSJ.COM • MAY 19, 2009 • FROM LANSING STATE JOURNAL

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"You'd think there'd be a big shift toward people applying who have lost jobs and whatnot, but as far as I've seen, I haven't seen a huge increase in the numbers of those people," he said. "Most of our positions are seasonal in nature, so people who are laid off are looking for more permanent (jobs)."

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For the last seven or eight years, the makeup of the parks' summer staffs have remained fairly steady, he said, with about 75 percent made up of high school and college students.

"I kind of look for a nice mix," Collins said. "It is good to hire both students, and it's also good to have some older workers on staff that are able to cover those shifts when students go back to school."

Recent Michigan State University grad Chan Wakefield said he decided to return to Hawk Island for a second consecutive summer to work as a waterfront director after striking out several times while looking for a job in public relations.

"I applied for several different full-time positions that pertain to my degree. No one is hiring, especially recent college grads," said Wakefield, 22, who has a degree in communications and public relations.

The summer job will "buy me a couple more months to make some money and at the same time look for long-term employment or nonseasonal work," he said.

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Working: Eddie Ramirez Jr., 17, works with a crew raking and removing leaves at Potter Park Zoo. "I'm very blessed because it's hard out there now," said Ramirez, who left high school without a diploma.

(ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal)

### PROGRAM OFFERS 700 SUMMER JOBS

Capital Area Michigan Works is placing 700 local teens and young adults in summer jobs at nonprofits, businesses, schools, parks, community centers and other employers through its summer youth employment program.

Michigan Works will pay the wages for hundreds of 14- to 24-year-olds in the tri-county area who are at risk, which can include people who have low incomes, are pregnant teens or have learning disabilities, said Kate Tykocki, spokeswoman for Capital Area Michigan Works. The agency will pay the wages using funds from the American