

## The Road to Employment

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2019, you did it! Through the school years there were ups and there were downs, and through it all you stuck to it. Good or bad, all your experiences have made you the person you are now, they have made you grow as a person. As you move through life there will always be more to learn! The building blocks you create will be left to others who will follow in your path. Be honest, curious, and willing to tell your story.

The road to employment has changed many times throughout the years, we have lost some opportunities to industrialization, and other jobs become obsolete as technology progresses. If you look back you will see amazing works by great people, and if you look forward you will see endless opportunities unfold before you. It often takes a look back into history to continue to move forward, keep moving and ask a lot of questions.

Whether you know where you are going just after high school, have a year left, or have no idea what you want to do, stay moving and find resources. Life is different for all of us and our opportunities have funny ways of showing up. I have a few stories myself of where life has taken me and how I ended up where I am now! I love this journey and I love every new thing I learn in my endless adventure!

One challenge for me in my early years was finding a job. There weren't many search engines for our local area in my youth, so I read books on how to build a good resume even though I had little paid experience. I used volunteer experience and great references. I was 16 when I got my first real tax paying job. I wanted to make all the money right away and expected that they would love me on the spot and put me in a trusted position. I look back and have a small chuckle, I remember how fast I learned that it is great to have confidence but I had to start on the lowest rung and work my way up the ladder. I was not always receptive to constructive criticism and feedback, but somewhere in there I retained some important information. I learned a few tips that helped me grow and I want to share them with you. They might sound common sense but they are sometimes overlooked:

- Build an honest and strong resume, update it often, and always have one with you
- Be humble and listen to people who have been doing the job longer than you
- Use online resources like Work Source, USA Jobs (government)
- Don't forget the old-fashioned way (newspapers, visit local businesses, mall customer service desk)
- Visit your local Chamber of Commerce, in person or on their website
- Show up early to interviews and come alone (it is okay to get a ride, but it does not look good walking into your interview with a friend)
- Turn off your phone, do not answer or look at it while talking to employers or during interviews
- Bring a pen and a pad of paper to write down things to remember
- Ask the interviewer questions and have some knowledge of the business, be honest if you don't know something
- Thank the interviewer for the interview

In particular, look for jobs that match your career path. If you want to be a chef or work in restaurant management, food service is a good choice. If you want to be a nurse or other health care professional, many nursing facilities will train and certify their employees. There are also various internships available. Information can be found at your local work resource office and local community college websites and announcement boards.

Whatever your choice, where ever you want to go, customer service and a willingness to serve, are great skills. Sometimes it takes time to find the job you will love. Some jobs may surprise you. No matter what you do or the career you choose, be willing to adjust, be yourself and always be part of the team!

Leanna Krotzer  
Director, District 2  
[lkrotzer@northmasonschoools.org](mailto:lkrotzer@northmasonschoools.org)