

My Experiences and The Power of Partnership between Old Navy & YJC

Summer 2019 was when I first had experience with the Internship Model with the YJC. I had heard about it a few years before, but at the time Old Navy in North Riverside Mall was not a part of the program. That summer I was thrilled when my store was selected to be get interns. The whole experience was super fun and rewarding from start to finish. From the training sessions, hiring event at the high school, group interviews, the bowling meet & greet plus so much more. Then the best part was the intern interactions daily in the store. Selecting three very nervous teens that most managers would probably have passed on. Hiring for potential not experience is critical. If the candidates have a good heart, willing to try and learn new things they make the best associates. Not every intern is looking for a career in retail, however the life skills they learn and the experiences that they have at Old Navy. With that first batch of interns, I had two of them transferred with me to the new store across the street at Cermak Plaza, the other stayed and North Riverside where she became a lead and one of their top credit card performers. The two guys that came to Cermak were in their senior year of high school fall 2019, Tyrese and Jayveon. They blossomed at the new store and became much more confident in themselves in the work environment and their abilities to do the job. Learning new skills, Tyrese became a department lead even though he was still in high school. In 2021 after three amazing years working with them, these two fine young men found themselves going out of state to attend college. Old Navy helped them start their life journey to do great things. Cermak's 2021 interns Yared and Nayomy another two shy teens who grew into very strong brand associates over the summer internship program. At the end of the internship they knew that they really enjoyed working at Old Navy but with them entering college in the fall was concerned that the commute to Cermak Plaza from their home and new school was going to pose

challenging. So, I worked with the GM at Ford City to have them transfer to that location to ease their stress freshman year in college by lessening their commute to work. Those great associates are still working at that location but came back home to Cermak to help us with our last inventory. 2022 Spring Youth Job Center expanded into the direct hire This Way ONward program. Cermak's first direct hire this past Spring was Zaveran. Za was another really shy guy with a great heart wanting to learn and grow his skill set. Zaveran worked with us for several months really starting to catch his groove with customer service and OMNI, however in August he had made the decision that with school and his very busy football schedule that he needed to part ways with Old Navy. I do believe that his experience with us was good for him. Summer 2022 brought us more interns some great, some good and a couple not ready to commit to a job. But that is the whole purpose of the program giving the youth a chance to grow and explore their retail opportunities to expand on their potential. We transitioned three young ladies after this summer's internship was over. Unfortunately, Taleyah had decided a week later that they did not want to commute to work in the fall with school, another intern Olivia also decided the commute was not going to be good for her so I worked with the Oak Park GM to have Olivia transferred to that location. Now Cermak finds us with only one intern left Kimberly who is amazing. She is great with customers, standards and works well with all over her peers. I expect that Kim will have a career with Old Navy as long as she would like to. Now we found ourselves with a few openings, so Hester reached out to me with the names of a few candidates that are interested in direct hire. I interviewed the first candidate within a few days of her applying thought she was great. Reagan started with us this past Sunday. Hester reached out again, my Operations Manager interviewed them over the weekend. She felt that they were showed up very professional and

had good answers to the questions asked of them. Those two young people will be starting with me this weekend.

The great thing about the connection between the Youth Job Center and Old Navy helps bring potential talent opportunities. Being able to be a part of a young person's journey in their career and in their life is so fulfilling to me. It brings me great joy and pride to help people grow into the greatest human that they can be. Although I am not able to be at your meeting today, I wanted to share some of my thoughts and experiences that I have had with the connection with the Youth Job Center.

Juanita White

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