

Work ethic initiative helps prepare teens for workforce



By LORRIE WOYCIK

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It isn't easy being a teenager looking for work just be able to have some spending money, save for post-graduation education, or even for living expenses.

Without any experience, or with two dozen applicants for the same job, how can young people get their foot in the door?

The Northwest Indiana Workforce Board is encouraging both schools and business owners to support the Work Ethic Initiative so that the youth in our area have the qualities needed to hear the words, "you're hired." Both parents and educators should be encouraging students to work toward receiving a work ethic certificate by developing the skills needed to be successful in any job. Such things as a positive attitude, working well with others, arriving on time, following directions, good management of time and listening skills, proper dress, being honest and dependable, and most importantly, realizing the

need to pass a drug test and background check with flying colors.

According to board member, Mike Baird, there is 100 percent participation in Porter County schools, but unless students understand the importance of taking the time to go through Work Ethic seminar, it has little value for them. And employers can add a plus to our kids by hiring young people who have proven their worthiness through this program, which, in turn, is a plus for everyone when it builds a more efficient workforce in our community. Whether you are a homeowner in need of assistance cleaning out the garage, painting the house, washing cars, shopping, caregiving, or technology needs, or if you are an employer needing a receptionist, cashier, filing help, shredding or packaging, please say yes to hiring youth who are eager to work.

Jon Groth, Principal of the Porter County Career and

Technical Center, noted that they are often called by community members to recommend students for various jobs. The students he or his staff members would suggest fulfill the points for work ethic. Our communities can only remain strong and self-sufficient if we invest in our future adults, and the more they are involved in the continuous development of Northwest Indiana, will keep us climbing high.

There are so many men and women who were kids growing up in our area and they have gone on to extol the pride of our commitment to excellence. One of those outstanding young men recently taught us all how important every child is, no matter who they are or where they are from. Dr. John Ruge graduated from Valparaiso High School in 1975, and went on to become a surgeon. When he and his fellow physicians learned about the West African child who had an extra spine and set of legs attached to her neck, Dr. Ruge was the leader in

bringing the baby to the U.S. and performing the very complicated surgery, so that Dominique will have the opportunity to go home and live a normal life.

This former Valpo student gives credit to his hometown, and especially his biology teacher, Wes Maiers, for giving him the groundwork to develop his talents. Wow! I pray we can always live up to those standards.

Dr. Ruge's mom, Ingrid Anderson, still lives in Valpo, as does his sister, Carol Spaulding, and I'm sure they are even prouder of him, and more thankful for his abilities than anyone else. Dr. Ruge, you may never know it, but you are my pet person of the week for the loving care you have shown a little lady, and for giving a high five to your upbringing. God continue to bless your work — and thank you.

I hope you are all proud of living here and are smiling, and I hope you have a great day because you deserve it. Thanks for reading. Fly your flag.