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Summer work experience creates career pathway for USD student

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Labor provided 23-year-old Emily Sanford with a summer internship at Southeast Job Link in Yankton that not only complimented her studies at the University of South Dakota, but lead to part-time employment while she finishes her Elementary Education degree.

Sanford was among 756 young people, ages 14-24, who benefited from \$2.9 million in federal stimulus funds South Dakota received for job-training opportunities through the Summer Youth Work Experience program. The program helped them establish work histories, gain references, acquire new skills and build good work habits.

Sanford is a single mother working to complete her education so she can fulfill her career goals. In her internship, she worked as a training specialist at Southeast Job Link on several different projects.

Sanford assisted with the instruction of the GED, English as a Second Language, and Adult Education and Literacy classes. She even developed some new curriculum for those programs.

“It’s great being able to help people enhance their lives,” said Sanford. “Education is the right field for me.”

Teaching at the alternative schools in Vermillion and Jefferson was also part of her duties. Sanford said this was challenging, but a good chance to learn techniques in the education field, especially working with children.

Teresa Szakats (ZAHK'-ahs), a supervisor at Southeast Job Link, continually praises Sanford’s hard work ethic and enthusiasm. Szakats hired her as part-time instructor of the adult education class when the internship concluded Aug. 31.

“I am very excited to get started and love the independence of the job,” said Sanford.