New Castle County, Wilmington nonprofit receive support to reduce youth unemployment

By NICK CIOLINO • November 13, 2018
NEW CASTLE COUNTY

Wilmington nonprofit West End Neighborhood House and New Castle County are expanding their career programs for area youth.

For the second year in a row, West End and the county are receiving a $250,000 grant from Citi Foundation as part of an initiative to reduce unemployment among people ages 16-24.

The dollars will further fund programs offering paid work experience to kids in Wilmington and countywide. This includes West End’s summer work program at Bright Spot Farms.

West End Director of Development Wes Davis says youth in that program learn how to grow vegetables and flowers which they sell at local farmers markets.

“They sell the product that they grow. So it teaches them customer service skills, it teaches them a little bit about inventory, marketing. So it’s a much more comprehensive experience than just job training in one particular area,” said Davis.

He adds kids returning from last year's program will have the opportunity to take on supervisory roles.

“So we’re going to offer them a more advanced soft skills component, along with some entrepreneurial training and some college prep resources,” said Davis.

After participating kids take a youth career assessment, West End and the county’s work programs offer a list of paid entry-level opportunities with area nonprofits.

Davis says this year’s grant dollars will fund paid work experiences for more than 150 young people.