



OFFICE OF MAYOR LUKE RAVENSTAHL
CITY OF PITTSBURGH

PRESS RELEASE

MAYOR ADOPTS 'TOMORROW IS TODAY' PLAN TO PREPARE YOUTHS FOR FUTURE CAREERS

(PITTSBURGH) April 20 - Mayor Luke Ravenstahl today kicked-off Imagine! Career Week by adopting a four-point action plan that focuses on preparing kids now for tomorrow's careers through workforce readiness programs. As part of the plan, called "Tomorrow is Today," the Mayor challenged area employers to get into the schools and expose students to career opportunities by signing onto the Pittsburgh Regional Compact.

"Preparing our youths for 21st-Century jobs to grow our economy is the most important investment we can make to ensure that Pittsburgh's Renaissance continues," Ravenstahl said. "Even in this economic downturn, there are jobs waiting to be filled right here, and we must do a better job of connecting people to jobs and jobs to people."

Last fall, the Mayor asked the City's department of personnel to work with the areas top 25 employers in order to better understand their workforce demands. All employers delivered the same message: youths need more workforce preparation.

"The message we heard loud and clear was that our young people have a lack of understanding when it comes to what is expected of them in the work world – fitting into their employers' culture, understanding the kinds of conduct, dress, and work ethic needed to succeed in a career," Ravenstahl said.

The Mayor continued, "On top of that, nearly all employers said that they can't find qualified workers, yet many young people say they can't find jobs. This paradox can only be addressed by getting the message to our youths that 'Tomorrow is Today.' We need to help our youths understand that the actions they take today will define their successes down the road."

The Mayor's action plan includes a historic collaboration with regional workforce development consortiums that will open the City's doors to extensive job-shadowing and internship opportunities; get City employees into the schools to expose kids to careers in public service; and weave in workforce readiness curriculum into the City's existing youth programs.

As first point of his plan, the Mayor signed onto the Pittsburgh Regional Compact, and called on regional employers to do the same. By signing the Compact, employers pledge to work with educators to prepare middle and high schoolers for the careers of tomorrow. It is free and the Compact's staff members help to develop the employer-educator partnership once the pledge is made.

"The City is an employer with unique and courageous careers including police officers, firefighters, paramedics, civil engineers and information technology experts," Ravenstahl said. "Today, I commit the City to help students more fully understand these careers so that they know how to prepare themselves for work in public service. I encourage all employers in the City to participate in the Pittsburgh Regional Compact now as a way to help build their own workforces of the future."

Secondly, the City will become an active member of the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board's "E4," Educators and Employers Engaged for Excellence program, which encourages employers to work with educators to provide "real-world" learning to youths through job shadowing.

Next, the Mayor pledged to incorporate YouthWorks', Inc. JumpStart Success program into his Pittsburgh Summer Youth Employment Program (PSYEP). Success staff will help students define their career goals and teach them the interview skills and conduct necessary to succeed in the working world. Now, students will leave the six-week PSYEP with money in their pockets and a certificate that ensures they know how to conduct themselves in a professional work environment.

Lastly, the Mayor announced that the City will nearly double the amount of youths hired in the youth employment program, and fulfill his aforementioned pledges to better prepare youths for tomorrow's jobs.

"Thanks to President Obama's commitment to our youths, I am thrilled to announce that we will put more than 500 young people to work this summer," Ravenstahl said. "On top of that our youths will be more exposed to the 'real-world' work environment by splitting their time between conservation work in parks and Green Up sites, and in public and private office internships."

Applications for PSYEP will be available on the City's website the first week of June.

April 20 – 24, 2009 is the third annual Imagine! Career Week, a coordinated series of events that focuses on preparing our region's youth for 21st-Century careers. The week brings together young people, parents, educators, employers and youth-serving agencies that are focused on career education. To learn more about Imagine! Career Week and the Pittsburgh Regional Compact, log onto www.pittsburghregionalcompact.org.

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