

YouthBuild puts at-risk youth to work

By ADAM STEWART
Staff Reporter

Now in its second year, YouthBuild of Snohomish County is looking to recruit a new crew for a 10-month construction training program in Stanwood.

The program focuses on providing opportunities for low-income and at-risk young adults to earn their GED, develop trade skills and establish positive work habits, said Travis Green, program coordinator.

Only 18 to 24 year olds, who have not earned their GED or high school diploma, are unemployed and living in a low-income situation, are eligible to apply.

Green is also looking for serious and committed participants, interested in learning construction skills with a "personal investment in their own community."

Informational meetings are scheduled for Thursday, 6:30 p.m., at The Station, 8713 271st St. NW, and on Wednesday, July 28, 4 p.m., at the Stanwood-Camano Community Resource Center, 9620 271st St. NW.

"Attendance at a session is a mandatory first step to



PHOTO BY KRISTI PIHL

Young adults learn to build houses while earning their GEDs in YouthBuild.

program enrollment," said Green.

Along with construction training, participants will at-

ing upon completion of the course will be available.

People on the YouthBuild crew will also have the opportunity to attend construction management courses through Edmonds Community College for up to 20 college-level credits.

Not only does the program help participants gain their GED, said Green, it also provides them with employable skills and advanced construction education.

"We are focused on instilling valuable skills beyond just the construction trade," said Green. "Team building will be really big this year."

Free OSHA training and flagging certification will start this year's program.

From there, the crew will work collaboratively on construction sites with the Housing Hope self-help housing project in the Copper Station subdivision of Stanwood while pursuing their educational goals.

"YouthBuild is a kick start for young people who have fallen under difficult circumstances," said Green. "It's a chance for them to look back on an accomplishment and say 'Wow, I can do

it.'"

During the program, crew members will work on site on various projects for up to 14 hours per week.

The remainder of their time will be spent inside the classroom for GED training or construction training courses.

Participants receive a stipend for their hourly work on site.

In its first year, YouthBuild graduated eight members.

Green is looking to push that number past 40 for the upcoming program starting

in September.

"YouthBuild is focused on getting youth in Stanwood on the right career track," he said. "It's a positive thing."

The YouthBuild project is organized by the Workforce Development Council Snohomish County under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. For more information, contact Travis Green at 425-921-3493.

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