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## Summer job market heats up

By Andrew J. Manuse/ Daily News Staff

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Whether it's that friendly young face at Spruce Pond Creamery in Franklin or her peer folding clothes at the Natick Mall, many MetroWest college and high school students will be gainfully employed this summer.

"My impression is the jobs that are out there went pretty fast," said Ted Welte, president of the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce in Framingham. "Most people have taken care of their summer employment situation."

At Spruce Pond Creamery, Bruce Bluestein employs mostly high schoolers and college students, though he also employs non-students on full-time schedules.

Bluestein, who makes and sells ice cream and organic pizza, said he'll have seven college students and eight to 13 high schoolers working for him this summer. But Bluestein said their jobs won't be finished when the autumn leaves begin to fall. He's open year-round and needs students' help year-round, he said.

At the Out Post Farm in Holliston, owner Adrian Collins hires about 10 to 20 high school and college students over the summer to help as farmhands. They too will be needed later in the year, he said.

"In the fall, we need as many as we can get harvesting corn, pumpkins, apples and turkeys," Collins said. "Farms rely heavily on high school and college kids, and we hire our fair share."

Collins said he starts students off at \$7.25 an hour. Their pay moves up after they show what they can do on the farm, he said.

Framingham resident Kevin Drake, a 20-year-old who studies business administration at Massachusetts Bay Community College in Wellesley, said he works full time as a farmhand at Out Post during the summer.

"I came in when I was 13 or 14 and they hired me," Drake said. "It was close by -- the only place within riding distance -- and it just kind of grew on me." Now, "it's a good way to earn money and pay for college," he said.

Older students still looking for summer work can try CollegeHelpers.com, which was founded by Fred Grant, a former director of campus life at Babson College in Wellesley. Grant's Web site recently listed office assistant, child care and tutoring positions as possible summer jobs for students.

"The market for summer jobs is actually great for both college and high school students," Grant said. Some "students are electing to go to school rather than work this summer, so the students who want to work have less competition in the marketplace."

Grant said this phenomenon was relatively new. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 16 percent of students chose to go to school during the summer in 1995, 27 percent chose to attend summer classes last summer. Grant said he expected the number of summer schoolers to stay the same or increase this year.

For high school and college students who do choose to work, there should be opportunities in the leisure and hospitality, retail and trade, professional and business services and financial activities sectors, Grant said.

The Peabody Hotel Group, which manages the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Hampton Inn, both in Natick, was recently looking for college students to work part time in a Holiday Inn the company just took over management of in Newton, according to Jamie Holmes, general manager for the Crowne Plaza Hotel.



Kevin Drake, a sophomore at MassBay Community College, works at Outpost Farm in Holliston. (Joseph Marcus photo)

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The company already employs five students in Natick who help with accounting, guest services, human resources and event planning, Holmes said. The students get paid the regular rate for these positions, he added, which can run between \$8.50 and \$9 an hour.

"It's not easy work. Sometimes it's hard and demanding, but it's healthy and appropriately managed and supervised," Holmes said. "Typically, we interview them and find out what they're going to get out of it."

For example, a student "can learn about event planning by physically setting one up," Holmes said.

Danforth Associates in Wellesley is looking for a student to do some filing at the personal finance firm for one day a week during the summer, said George Padula, president of the company.

"Our regular girl, a Wellesley College student, is home for the summer," Padula said. "There's a lot of small businesses that need somebody to do work one day a week."

The Natick Mall, which is owned by Chicago-based General Growth Properties Inc., has a similar internship program, called GGP Prodigies, according to Stephanie Gambino, senior marketing manager for the mall.

The mall is looking for one unpaid intern for the summer who will focus on marketing as the mall expands, Gambino said. The position would be for college credit, she said.



The mall's many retailers have posted several positions on the mall's Web site, Gambino said. In the retail world, the holiday shopping season is a busier time for part-time jobs, she said, but every store has openings at different times of the year, and some are part-time positions. For example, as of last week, Bath & Body Works, Banana Republic, Ann Taylor Loft and Aeropostale were looking for part-time help.

Salary.com quoted starting retail positions in Natick at about \$9 an hour, with an average of \$13 an hour.

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