

SUMMER JOB

Get a first-hand lesson in hospitality

By Anita Malhotra
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Craving a social, fun-filled summer in which you make lasting friendships? Enjoy working with the public?



"I've learned how to interact with people ... not to treat them just as customers, but as guests," says Liane Otkidychev, assistant manager of market research at Paramount Canada's Wonderland.

the entertainment industry in general," says Kris Williams, manager of public relations and special events.

If so, you might consider working at one of the GTA's amusement or entertainment parks.

Paramount Canada's Wonderland, the Canadian National Exhibition and Ontario Place all hire seasonal staff, most of them students. Some jobs require specific skills, certification or experience. Others don't require formal work experience, making them ideal for people looking for a first job.

Wonderland hires about 4,000 people -- mainly students -- each spring and summer. About 1,000 positions are in food services and 500 in attractions. Other areas include merchandise and games, entertainment, communications, health and safety, and security.

"We look for people who have a great personality, a good head on their shoulders -- common sense -- and a really great attitude in terms of working with people and in



Ontario Place

Most positions pay above minimum wage -- sample wages are \$7.25 for ride attendants and \$8 for ride operators -- and training is provided for entry-level positions.

"There are so many different areas that someone can work in where they can get valuable job experience," Williams says.

Liana Otkidychev, a 20-year-old nursing student, began working at Wonderland four years ago as a market research surveyor.

"I started off being shy," says Otkidychev, who has since moved up to assistant manager. "I've learned

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Paramount
Canada's
Wonderland

how to interact with people, how to care for people, not to treat them just as customers but as guests. I think that will help me in nursing."

The Canadian National Exhibition hires about 1,400 casual staff each summer, almost 90% of them students. About 550 work in the charity casino and 500 in the cleaning department.

Others work as ticket sellers, parking attendants, program attendants, costume characters and in a variety of other positions.

"We look for people who look like they're really keen," says Pat Trajanovski, the CNE's human resources consultant. "It's great to see on a student's resume that they've done some volunteer work or a paper-route or babysitting."

Some jobs pay minimum wage, but many positions pay in the \$7 to \$9 range. The CNE offers an orientation and training program.

"It's a great place to work," says 25-year-old Karen Simone, who started as a parking lot attendant when she was 16 and has worked at the CNE almost every summer since. She is now the CNE's visitor services co-ordinator.



Canadian
National
Exhibition

"It's a good stepping stone for someone to start, just to learn basic customer service and interact with the public," says Simone, who once met Donny Osmond when he parked in her lot. "It's almost addictive. It gets in your system and you just love being down here and making people happy."

At Ontario Place, students earn \$7.85 for low-skilled jobs and \$9.50 for those requiring technical skills or certification. Ontario Place offers its students an awards program, bursary program and after-work recreational program.

"Our employees really enjoy working here because they're working with people of their own age and with other students," says Susan Nitsopoulos, human resources assistant. "They develop friendships while they're here and they're almost sad to see the summer end."

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