



# TEENWORK

Summer 2025 Newsletter



## About TeenWork

By: Darlyn Castro

For three decades, KUB's TeenWork program has opened doors for more than 550 students, providing valuable experiences and helping high school juniors develop essential skills to succeed in the real world.

Students participated in monthly workshops focused on resume writing, interview skills, time management, mental wellness, professional attire, and team building. After completing the workshops, TeenWorkers were eligible to apply for a paid summer internship with KUB or one of its select TeenWork business partners. Throughout the internship, each student is paired with a mentor who provides guidance and support as they take on meaningful projects and gain insight into daily operations.

KUB's TeenWork program was established in 1995 by former KUB Commissioner and legendary basketball coach, Clifford H. Ross. The program was originally created to provide juniors at Austin-East Magnet High School with the necessary skills to function and thrive in a work environment. Since then, the program expanded to include Central, Fulton, and South-Doyle High Schools. Business partners also expanded to include the Knoxville Chamber, Covenant Health, West Knox Utility District, and First Utility District, giving students opportunities beyond KUB. This year, TeenWorkers had the unique opportunity to complete their summer internships at Zoo Knoxville, KUB's newest business partner for the TeenWork program!

## TeenWork Class of 2025

### AUSTIN-EAST MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

Damon Alston, West Knox Utility District



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity I've had so far in the program has been learning about the wide range of careers available in the utility industry.

Caliyah Gamble, KUB Procurement



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I like to dance and cheer outside of school.

Montasia Arnold, KUB System Operations



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** One of the best opportunities Teenwork has given me is the chance to network.

Yves Hakizimana, Covenant Health



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I enjoy playing soccer and being with my friends outside of school.

Taylor Cobb, Covenant Health



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity has been getting early exposure to my future career by working at Covenant Health Hospital.

Jarvis Henderson, KUB Underground Construction



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I like to play video games during my free time.

Leekori Curry, KUB System Operations



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I like to play basketball during my free time.

Faith Imani, Covenant Health



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity I've received through TeenWork is the chance to intern in the career field I want to pursue in the future.

Omega Daugherty, Zoo Knoxville



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity I've had through this program has been making new connections.

Tylee Jackson, KUB Facilities



**Would you consider pursuing a career in the field you were placed in?** Yes, I would love to pursue a career in the field I was placed in. I want to learn more about KUB's Facilities Department.

Jeremiah Dean, KUB Overhead Construction



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I like to go on walks with my dog and play basketball.

A'Zariah Miles, Covenant Health



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I am a member of Knoxville's National Achievers Society, Project GRAD, Project Excellence, and more!

**AUSTIN-EAST MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL (cont.)**

**Tyler Scott**, KUB System Operations



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I like to play video games and play baseball during my free time.

**Neela Smith**, Covenant Health



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** I've appreciated the opportunity to intern with Covenant Health. This internship will help me decide if I want to pursue a career in the medical field.

**Isaiah Stephens**, First Utility District



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** During my free time, I like to play video games and basketball. I also enjoy fishing, making music, and hanging out with friends.

**Jermysa Stripling**, KUB Overhead Construction



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity I've had in this program has been the chance to experience what a real job is like while gaining a deeper understanding of the field I am in.

**CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**Darlyn Castro**, KUB Communications



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity has been my summer internship with the Communications Department! I've enjoyed working in a positive environment, and it's taught me how the people who surround you can make a difference where you work.

**Octavio Corrales**, KUB Water Systems Engineering



**Would you consider pursuing a career in the field you were placed in?** I would like to enter a career field like the one I was placed in.

**Barrett Lemons**, KUB Electric Systems Engineering



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** One of the best opportunities I've had is the engineering project I've worked on during my summer internship.

**Kervelin Lopez Ortiz**, Covenant Health



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** As a first-generation Mexican American, the KUB TeenWork program opened up doors I didn't know existed and helped me grow in ways I'll always be grateful for. I learned how to carry myself in a professional setting and felt supported by people who believed in me.

**Gabriel Ownby**, KUB Customer Service



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** I've enjoyed learning what it takes to maintain customer satisfaction while interning with KUB's Customer Service Department.

**FULTON HIGH SCHOOL**

**Jennah Clay**, Knoxville Chamber



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I love to spend time outdoors with my friends and family. I am also a part of the Environmental and Community Leaders Fellowship (ECLF) program.

**Connor Earnest**, KUB Gas Systems Engineering



**Would you consider pursuing a career in the field you were placed in?** Gas Systems Engineering has proven to be a complex and fascinating field, and I may consider pursuing a career in it in the future.

**Jesus Flores**, KUB Transportation



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** I've enjoyed the opportunity to shadow professionals in my field of interest and build valuable connections.

**Roza Elena Gonzalez Rodriguez**, KUB Communications



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I love playing games, drawing, and taking small walks around the neighborhood with my family. I'm on my high school's soccer team and Emerald Youth's club soccer team.

**Neh'Asia Hill**, Zoo Knoxville



**What do you like to do in your free time, or what activities are you involved in outside of school?** I like to play basketball during my free time. I'm the student body president for the Class of 2026 at my school.

**SOUTH DOYLE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Channing Kilgore**, Covenant Health



**What has been the best opportunity you've received through the TeenWork Program?** The best opportunity I've had through the program has been the summer internship. I've enjoyed working in a professional setting doing something I love.

**Tristan Sewell**, KUB Information Services



**Would you consider pursuing a career in the field you were placed in?** I would absolutely consider a career within the Information Services Department. I've enjoyed the calm environment and daily tasks.

**Elianni Stewart**, KUB Human Resources



**Would you consider pursuing a career in the field you were placed in?** Absolutely! I love the environment of the Human Resources Department. Through this program, I have solidified what I plan on doing in the future!

**Additional students who completed the spring sessions:**

**Larrione Winton**, Austin-East Magnet



**Saarvin Patel**, Central



**Additional students who completed the spring sessions:**

**Larry Mattix**, Fulton



**Yordam Milla**, South-Doyle





## 30 Years of Empowering Youth

By: Darlyn Castro

The KUB TeenWork program is proudly celebrating 30 years of empowering high school juniors to dream big, work hard, and discover their potential. TeenWork goes beyond spring workshops and summer internships. It lays the foundation for students' future success.

Through spring workshops, students from four local high schools come together to learn essential skills like professionalism, teamwork, and public speaking. With so many students involved, everyone brings different opinions, personalities, and life experiences, but like puzzle pieces, these differences fit together to form something stronger.

Each session builds confidence and helps students better understand themselves and others. Personality-based activities like the "True Colors" workshop provide insight into how

people who think and act differently can work effectively together. The sessions allow students to practice public speaking in fun ways such as delivering a 60-second speech on a random topic, like making a sandwich.

With the support of dedicated mentors, TeenWorkers learn the importance of responsibility, a skill they will carry with them for life. For some TeenWorkers, the summer internship may be their first job ever. For others with prior work experience, it's a chance to explore a new career field and reflect on whether it's the right fit. The most rewarding part of KUB's TeenWork program is that not only do students see their growth, but mentors and peers get to see how much each student has grown as a person. Through TeenWork, KUB helps students build skills and confidence needed to guide them throughout their future careers.



## Fun Facts in 1995 – 30 years ago

- Pixar's release of Toy Story, the first fully computer-animated feature film, revolutionized the animation industry.
- Michael Jordan returned to the NBA after a brief retirement, rejoining the Chicago Bulls and leading them to three more championships.
- The most popular song of 1995 was 'Gangsta's Paradise' by Coolio featuring L.V.
- In 1995, the first reported sightings of the creature known as El Chupacabra took place in Puerto Rico.



# TeenWork Mentor Quotes

## ABBY WEAVER, Zoo Knoxville

"Mentorship is important to me because it's a way to open doors for others that might have otherwise stayed closed. It's about creating and sharing opportunities, not just advice, in order to make sure the next generation feels seen, supported, and capable of more than they imagined. Every conversation, question, and moment of growth reminds me that mentorship is a two-way street. It fuels growth, connection, and a lasting impact on both sides."



## ROBERT TAYLOR, KUB Customer Service

"I see mentorship as a way to help someone uncover the potential they may not yet recognize within themselves. It's about offering perspective, challenging them to grow, and encouraging them to view their journey through a new lens. I value the professional relationships that form, the real-world experience gained, and the skills developed along the way. My hope is that one day I might even call that person a co-worker."



## LAKYRA HILL, KUB Gas Systems Engineering

"I enjoy seeing hope in other people. As Steven Spielberg once said, the delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

## SHEROLA GERMAN, Covenant Health

"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."

## AMY KENNEDY, KUB Human Resources



"Giving TeenWorkers exposure to a positive work environment where they can contribute their talents, enhance their skills, and have a sense of ownership and belonging is invaluable to a person just beginning their career. It is amazing to know that you have had an impact on someone's dreams, goals, and first professional experiences."