

Businessman offers internship to Fas Trac

JOSH O'LEARY • IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN • DECEMBER 14, 2010

Comments (3) Recommend (1) Print this page E-mail this article Share

1 | 2 Next Page

In her first few days of work inside a downtown Iowa City jewelry store, Stephanie Reyes has learned a bit of everything, from answering the phones to restocking merchandise to cleaning diamond rings.

"It's really fun," said the 18-year-old City High senior last week at M.C. Ginsberg, an upscale shop on Washington Street. "I like the atmosphere, and I really like the people here. They make me feel welcome."

Helping teenagers -- specifically minority students -- feel welcome in downtown Iowa City is the goal for store owner Mark Ginsberg, who is partnering with Fas Trac, a local youth program, to establish an internship program he hopes other businesses will one day embrace.

Although downtown Iowa City serves as a commercial and cultural hub for many, Fas Trac director Henri Harper says minority teens don't

Five airlines nonstop to NINE cities

Atlanta • Chicago • Dallas-Ft. Worth
Denver • Detroit • Las Vegas
Memphis • Minneapolis/St. Paul • Orlando
Las Vegas starts 10/14. Ft. Myers scheduled to start Feb. 2011.

 **Easier.**
qcairport.com

always have that same investment, seeing the area more as a place for wealthy white people to work and shop.

"They don't see downtown as a place where they belong," Harper said.

That disconnect can lead to conflict, Harper says. For instance, many students spend stretches of time downtown each afternoon waiting for their city bus connections at the Old Capitol stops, which Harper says has led to incidents of disruptive behavior and run-ins with business owners.

Ginsberg and Harper are starting with a preliminary three-month internship agreement, in which one Fas Trac member, Reyes, will work about five hours a week, for which Ginsberg will contribute \$10 an hour to the Fas Trac program. Reyes says the money raised from the internship will help fund a trip to Spain this spring with her honors Spanish class.

Harper hopes to find similar internship opportunities for teens at other downtown businesses, and in doing so, help the kids with whom he works recognize "this is their downtown also."

"So when they are downtown, they'll feel like, 'This is where I live also and people downtown here are connected to us; it's not just a lot of rich white people down here that don't care about us,'" Harper said.

1 | 2 Next Page

- Story comments: What we allow and what we don't...
- Tired of anonymous comments? Join/read our real-name-only forum...

3 Comments >>
Read and share your thoughts on this story.



City High senior Stephanie Reyes, 18, dusts, answers phones, cleans jewelry and restocks merchandise as part of the Fas Trac program Wednesday at M.C. Ginsberg. (Press-Citizen / Benjamin Roberts)

Related Stories

- Ginsberg to host reception

Related Topics

- Places - Iowa City, IA
- Life - Family, Teenagers

Contextual linking provided by Topix

More News Headlines

- Visiting prof rules health care reform 'valid' (19)
- Coralville nail salon charged with violating safety, sanitary rules
- Press-Citizen names new GM (8)
- Student debt a concern at UI (14)

Latest Headlines

- Coralville nail salon charged with violating safety, sanitary rules
- Iowa House appoints Jacoby to top post (1)
- Today's paper delivery running late (3)
- Financial aid officers lament lack of state grant aid for needy students (3)
- Run for the Schools making record donation to schools

Most Commented Articles

- Another downtown bar, 808, closes (154)
- DJK arrested on multiple drug charges (97)
- Branstad: Gronstal is 'dictator' for marriage view (71)
- Markus wants to add franchises in downtown Iowa City (73)
- Last dance for One-Eyed Jakes (69)
- A sad day for women's rights (110)
- Branstad: Gronstal 'dictator' on marriage (68)
- Dvorsky criticizes Branstad's comments (56)