



Kids These Days: Summer Jobs

The summer job, for many, is a rite of passage. Whether it's to have extra pocket money, buy new clothes, or pay for school, summer jobs are often part of the transition into adulthood.

I remember my worst summer job. It was installing fiberglass insulation by hand in southern Ontario. On the hottest days I still had to wear extensive clothing to protect my skin and minimize the constant itching.... and I was so glad when the time came to return to school.

Some of our team members recently shared their own best and worst summer job memories with me.

At age 16, Garry got to spend his summer crawling inside oil refinery tanks and replacing the soaked straw filters. The hot, dirty work got him thinking that maybe his dad was right about finishing high school.

Vicky thought she struck gold with the opportunity to deliver mail in St. Albert. She envisioned a summer of glorious walks in the sunshine.... not thinking about the rain, thunderstorms, wind, mosquitos – and the sweating!

Kurt enjoyed working as a heavy equipment operator during the summers, but he does recall a fight with a faulty fuel pump. "I got soaked head to toe in diesel: it was in my eyes, my hair, and even somehow managed to soak my socks. I smelled like diesel for two months."

Annegret's tedious job was working at a textile factory in Germany on a production line, attaching labels to swim suits for 4.50 Deutsche Mark per hour. She was 16, it was 1969, and she could not bring herself to put on a swim suit or go swimming that summer.

For Lisa, working indoors in a small town library while the long, hot summer days passed outside was her definition of torture. But, worse than that, she researched sports history for the entire summer – and she hates sports!

But they weren't all bad memories.

Patrick says his best job ever was working at a wilderness adventure-camp for children in care: "Outdoors all summer, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding and lots and lots of fun!"

Vicky loved babysitting young children. "Getting paid to play and being reminded to see the world through the eyes of a child was wonderful," she said.

Andrea enjoyed her job as a groundskeeper at a seniors' complex. Not only did she get to work in the sunshine but she spent a lot of time with the seniors. "It made me realize I was entering the right career – I could meet lots of new people and see the efforts of my hard work."

Happily, these summer jobs and their influence put some fantastic people on the path toward a career with Child and Family Services.

Dr. David Rideout is a former teacher, principal, and school board superintendent. He is a father of two adult sons and the Regional Director of North Central Alberta Child and Family Services.

Feedback or comments are welcome and can be sent via email to david.rideout@gov.ab.ca