

Child and Youth Study Career Profiles: Lee Anne is a Youth Group Home Manager

The role of a Youth Care Support Worker within a residential youth setting is to support youth within their home environment, temporary as it may be. Lee Anne is the Manager of Edwards House, a youth facility for boys. If you have a BA in Child and Youth Study, a desire to make a difference and want to have a positive influence in the lives of youth, Lee Anne says, "There are chances for advancement and there are definitely jobs in this field."

Lee Anne says the youth courses at the Mount taught her a lot about how to relate to youth and how to approach various topics with them. She says that the combination of knowledge and her practical experience prepared her well for her work with youth as well as helping her to break into the youth care field. In addition to a BA in Child and Youth Study, Lee Anne obtained other essential certifications as part of her degree, including Non-violent Crisis Intervention, Suicide Prevention and advanced CPR/First Aid. She did her final practicum placement with the Regional Independent Students Association and three months later she was offered a position on staff as a Youth Support Worker. Within four years of graduating, she became manager of Edwards House.

Residents of Edward's House are between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one and must be attending a school-based program. "We understand that not every youth can do regular high school, so we try to get them into a program that accommodates their needs because we want them to be successful!" Some residents may have suffered some form of abuse, family crisis or involvement with the law and for one reason or another they are unable to live at home so youth workers strive to create a home-like environment. Working on behalf of the youth residents, Lee Anne is often in contact with probation officers, therapists, psychologists, school/program staff, social workers, Income Assistance workers, and Community Services staff. Residents usually go to school during the day and have study time and free time in the evening. They have major chore days twice a week to keep their home in order. Weekends are not structured, but there is a curfew, just like a typical home environment. Lee Anne and her staff provide residents with important life skills training as well as helping them with school so the youth are prepared to make the transition to living on their own when they graduate and leave the house.

Lee Anne says there are definitely challenges in her job and she stresses the importance of being calm and understanding and letting youth know you are there for them.

As to choosing a career, Lee Anne says, "When I first went into Child and Youth Study, I thought I was going to be a teacher and that's the only thing you could do...or be a daycare teacher. That's it! ... but there's so much more! So, be open-minded... listen to everything you're being taught and look at every aspect because it's a wide-open field."