

What It's Like To Work at the Summit Children's Residence Center

Kyle Hassell, Caitlin Bottari, Dylan Keane & Lonnie Lynch share what it's like to work with students on both the Academic & Residential side of Summit School.

UPPER NYACK, NY, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kyle Hassell, Vocational Assistant and Senior Childcare, has been at [Summit School](#) for 20+ years. On campus, Kyle assists in managing student dorm life - he is tasked with coordinating group activities and community meetings between students and staff that are safe and conducive to a positive environment.



Because students typically come in with strong negative experiences in their educational history,

“

I have a yearning to welcome everyone, laugh with everyone and accept as many new personalities into my universe as I can.”

Dylan Keane

Kyle’s work is particularly trying. But the time he spends helping young adults and children find comfort in living at Summit translates into his work trying to instill these students with a keen sense of understanding of the modern workforce. When he takes students on-site at work facilities, offices, and warehouses, he tries to instill within them values to consider when it comes to choosing a career, including commitment and fulfillment, and he takes a [person-to-person approach](#).

“Every student here should expect the truth out of me. Most don't like it but learn to respect me for it, because they're able to correct their mistakes before it's too late. I'm all about preparing students for life after high school, and it all starts with honestly critiquing their performance and behaviors... Much of our population feels different or not normal and have always been treated as such, at home and in school. At Summit we address those issues head on with education and tons of therapy. In the end it gives our students a sense of normality.”

Kyle recognizes that the experiences students have had as children and young adults have made

them wary of entering a school and future career where the environment may not be rewarding for them. And he has found that by teaching students the value in community, he can teach students the true value of work and education.

Caitlin Bottari, Childcare Worker and Support Staff, has been at Summit for seven years. She has noticed that students come in with varying levels of willingness to attend and adjust to life on campus.

“Each child comes to the summit for different reasons. Some children can come in and it takes a long time for them to attend [class] because they haven't been in a school setting for months or years. Then you can have a student that comes in and attends school right away but struggles in other ways beside school, like socially. Each case is different.”

While the challenge of taking on students from varying backgrounds forces staff to adjust their onboarding procedures from person-to-person, Caitlin says residential life addresses students with any number of needs:

“[Residential programs help students attend school](#) in many ways. Some students that attend need the structure provided by living on campus, some have reasons that make living at home difficult and have been skipping school.”

Both Caitlin and Kyle have found from their time at Nyack that walking students through a pipeline from acquainting them to residential life, to attending school, to vocational training and community building, students are able to develop healthy habits and relationships with others that translate to everyday life.

Another Childcare Worker and Support Staff, Dylan Keane, began at Summit School 9 years ago. She summarizes the student experience of living on campus as follows,

“Our goal, or at least mine, when I'm 'warming up' with a new resident is to create some sort of new behavior - a new outlook . Setting new goals is important, focusing on the future rather than living in the past. The real world is full of difficult situations - I think living in a residential, especially one like ours, provides this huge cushion of support... at the same time... My kids have a role, they know they are important here, have jobs and are valued, respected AND held accountable. I think residential living creates an awesome balance of support and routine along with accountability and feeling fulfilled on their ends.”

Having worked with some students and parents who have kept in contact with her for nearly a decade now, Dylan sees the long term impact she has had as her reason to continue working at the Summit.

Lonnie Lynch is a Childcare Worker and Support Staff that joined Summit School in 2007. Originally planning to leave within a couple years so that he could more directly apply his college

education toward his work, he has stayed because of how much he enjoys helping students and spending time with colleagues, and he likes to work outside of the violence he is used to seeing in the city of New York - he gets fulfillment out of having the chance to share his experiences with kids and witness how his guidance has helped them improve.

Lonnie tries to explain to students that Summit is here to help them get where they need to be for adulthood. Lonnie has had the benefit of seeing all sides of Summit from students going to school, going to after-school activities, and coming back home to the college. Working in tandem with Kyle Hassell on the resident and after-school side of Summit, he feels he gets to know students on a deeper level than anyone solely in the school.

“We’re spending 16 hours a day with particular kids... the relationship you build might let you be able to say something outside of the box that the social worker can’t say...”

When Lonnie first came to Summit, he saw that students typically had jobs at the local malls and would leave for work after school and not come back until 11PM or so. Now they work more with students after school to help them correct their habits rather than seeing students off to work until late after school. Today, the staff in resident life and social workers in school work together at all times to take student needs on each other’s shoulders, taking time to be there when they can for each and every student and constantly adjusting to life’s hurdles.

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The Summit School at Nyack

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