

YouthWorks focus shines on Mercy

When it came time for Gov. Martin O'Malley to acknowledge Baltimore City's YouthWorks program, he did so at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, which this summer gave eight teens valuable job experience and sponsored the employment of another seven elsewhere.

"Congratulations to you who made the calls and polished your resumes," Gov. O'Malley said July 30. "At the end of the day, Sister Helen (Amos, R.S.M.) is going to look you in the eyes and say that this was a good experience."

Sister Helen is the executive chairwoman at Mercy, where the YouthWorks program was administered by Monica Marcum, director of volunteer services, and Marietta Kirk, her assistant.

"We became their advisors, their friends, their cheerleaders and their confidants," said Ms. Marcum, who then alluded to the construction of the Mary Catherine Bunting Center at Mercy. "I told the girls to look at the hole in the ground, which represents our commitment to the city. This isn't the end of their involvement here - it's the beginning because there are going to be jobs here for them."

Mercy Medical Center, which had hosted one student in three of the past five years, supplied a \$1,250 stipend to 15 participants in the city's YouthWorks program. The eight who worked at Mercy were involved in a five-week program that involved a 30-hour work week.

"I transported patients to different places in the hospital," said Kristen Clark, 17, who will be a junior at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. "If you smile at them, make them more comfortable, it might make their day go better."

Kristen hopes to become a pediatric nurse.