

## STUDIES SHOW FEW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES EMPLOYED



Many people in the Philadelphia area, even after having graduated from high school, are still unemployed and struggling in this kind of job market. For example, a 22 year old woman, Evelyn De Jesus, once went to the Mastbaum Vocational & Technical School, in which she graduated back in 2008. Upon graduating from Mastbaum, she went on to college at Penn State but simply could not afford it after one year in and eventually dropped out from college. De Jesus had high hopes of being a lawyer but it seems that now; she does not have much to be optimistic about. She is currently living in the North Philly area with her boyfriend and a 2 year old son, earning only about \$10 an hour while working at a daycare. Aside from paying the cost of living, which includes rent, bills and other expenses, she also has college loans that she has to pay back and she admits that she is having a hard time paying them back. She regrets her decision to drop out of college because she wonders what her life could have been like but she knew that she just could not afford it. De Jesus is not the only person struggling to find employment, even after receiving a high school diploma. Many people who have graduated high school between 2006 and 2011 have not had nearly as many opportunities as those who had graduated before them. Only 27 percent of recent high school graduates are employed with full-time jobs and many of them are actually unemployed, without even having a part-time position. Just about 90 percent of these individuals worked, on average, for about \$9.25 per hour, which is just a little over the minimum wage range. Many of these individuals are living in poverty and are having a hard time, struggling to make ends meet. The coauthor of the study, Carl Van Horn, says that it is quite sad how tough young people have it in this day and age, where they are starting their lives out and do not feel optimistic about the opportunities they will have before them. Van Horn says that many of these people believe that they have little to no chance at being successful and that the economy has lead them to feel very pessimistic about their own future. Prior to the recession, residents in the Philadelphia area could still find work, even if they were without a college degree, as the area is big on manufacturing and construction. However, due to the recession, these opportunities are simply not available to the younger generation of Philadelphians. Many of these younger individuals have regrets about not furthering their education to get further in the workplace but at the same time, have no idea how they could have afforded college after graduation.

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