

## Authors Gives Teens Job-Quest Advantage

**Reporter: Melodie Henderson**

Sixteen years ago, Chino Hills residents Donald and Viola Wilkes were conducting job interviews when it became clear to them that one demographic in particular could use some guidance on the process, and they decided to do something about it.

"It was rare that any teen came in prepared," Mr. Wilkes said. The couple wrote "Teen Guide Job Search," a practical guide for youth on the hunt for employment. The book was self-published in 1991, and has just undergone its fifth revision, now published by iUniverse.

"We do the revisions because of changes in the job market, and marketing tools," Ms. Wilkes said. "The introduction of Internet use has changed the job market, including the application process. Even the dress code has changed; some places now require casual attire."

The book walks inexperienced job applicants through the process from beginning to end. Assuming that the reader is new to the job market, chapter one covers a very basic subject: Know What You Like and Dislike.

Other subjects include putting together a resume, exploring multiple employment sources, dressing for success, preparing for interviews, and job etiquette.

The material encourages teens to list their personal interests as a way to find potential jobs. "Probably 80 percent of people don't like what they are doing," Mr. Wilkes said.

"Your attitude comes through in everything you do. If you like what you are doing, you are more likely to stick with it."

One of the main obstacles teens face, the authors say, is lack of experience. But teens have more experience than they think, and just need to take a closer look at their interests and activities.

"If you are the president of your class, or junior varsity captain, that tells me you have leadership skills," Mr. Wilkes said.

Babysitting is another skill that can transfer to the job market.

"If someone left their child in your care, they trust you. It means you are a responsible person," Ms. Wilkes said.

The book is 104 pages and includes drawings, some of which were done by Mr. Wilkes' daughter. Sample resumes are included, as well as quiz style reviews of the chapters.

Earlier editions of the book have been used in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the Wilkes hope to market to other schools. "Chino Valley Unified is definitely one of the places we will be in touch with," said Ms. Wilkes.

The book contains as many don'ts as do's. One major no-no that the Wilkes see a lot of is bringing a buddy to the interview.

"Go to an interview by yourself, and definitely don't bring your parents in with you," Mr. Wilkes said. "Getting a job is one of the first steps toward independence. I want to know if there is a problem at work, I won't be dealing with your parent," he said.

Taking the first step to independence is an important one, the Wilkes believe, that shouldn't be jumped into blindly.

"Don't leave your job search up to chance. If you have a good tool out there, take advantage of that," Ms. Wilkes said.

Donald and Viola Wilkes also teach job search workshops, and have an adult version of their job search guide currently in revision.

"Teen Guide Job Search" can be purchased for \$12.95 at [www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com).

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