

# Instacart jobs pose benefits, challenges

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Many teens have a variety of part time jobs to earn extra income for things to buy; however, sometimes the job can actually cost money.

Senior Megan Mutch started her new job with the shopping service Instacart on Feb. 1. It was only her very first day on the job, when Mutch said things started to go wrong very quickly.

“My first time working I decided to do a double batch, which is two orders at the same store and then you deliver them to two different houses. I chose this one because you make more money and looking back I definitely shouldn’t have picked a double as my order because I didn’t know what I was doing,” Mutch said.

To become an Instacart shopper, candidates must complete a registration process and run through a background check. Then, shoppers are able to take deliveries by using the app on their phone to claim batches. They pick up the items around the specified store and scan the items’ barcodes into their phone. Each shopper is provided with a prepaid Instacart card that is used at checkout to complete

the transaction. The shoppers are paid through Instacart’s fixed rate plus tips that buyers can add after they deliver the groceries. After shopping for three hours, Mutch said that at the checkout she made the mistake of putting both orders on the same bill.

“The order was a large one in a store that I had never been to and when I finally checked out, I accidentally put the orders on the same tab. I then drove to the first house and realized that I probably shouldn’t have done that, so I texted Instacart support, and they said to go back and refund the items,” Mutch said. “I had to walk back in the store with all of these groceries and re-check them out. The first time around I had used the Instacart company card, so when I went to pay the second time my card got declined because I had already paid for the order.”

After having difficulty working through the process a second time, Mutch said that she spoke with support again, but after half an hour of being stuck at the register, she chose to pay for the order herself.

“After the card didn’t go through I texted support again and had them cancel the payment so I could check out again. It went through for the first person, but for the second person, my card kept getting declined. This lady came



Senior Lizzie Comesana collects groceries at Dierbergs on March 18. Comesana and her friends started working for Instacart this school year. (Photo illustration by Ruth Vogel)

up to me and told me that I needed to hurry up because I was being rude. I ended up paying with my own money just so I could get out of there,” Mutch said.

However, Mutch’s story is only one in a dozen. A related delivery service called Shipt requires a similar process for their workers such as senior Sophia Valenti who said that, for her, the job is a simple and easy task.

“The process is super straightforward for the shopper. First, I look on the app, and if there are any available orders close to me, I’ll claim the order. Once I start shopping, I text the person

I’m buying for,” Valenti said. “There’s a shopping list on the app that I go through and scan each item. Then, I use my prepaid Shipt card to pay for the order. Once I’ve checked out, I load the items in my car and drop them off on the front porch. I text the person to let them know the groceries are there, then I’m done.”

There are a number of other popular delivery services just like Shipt and Instacart. Jobs such as these often allow for lots of movement and flexibility. Some shoppers prefer to work on weekends like senior Lizzie Comesana who also works for Instacart.

“I’ll try to do four to six batches on [Sundays] because they have the most options since people are stocking up for the week. I don’t work much during the week,” Comesana said.

With the benefits of flexible hours and an easy learning curve, Mutch said that even after the initial slip up, she would recommend her job to others.

“The job has gone really smoothly since my first time; thankfully, I’ve gotten the hang of it. If anyone is considering it, I think that it’s worth it to sign up. The pay isn’t bad and it’s a good job for people with busy schedules,” Mutch said.



Parking attendant Katrina Owens guides student traffic on March 12. Owens monitors both dismissal after school and drop off in the morning. (Photo by Ruth Vogel)

## Parking lot patrol, student safety

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When walking through the parking lot into school each morning, each student starts their day receiving a warm welcome from parking attendant, Katrina Owens.

Owens, a graduate from Trammel Tech in Fort Worth, Texas and mother of five, works as the parking attendant from 7:15 a.m. to around 3:45 p.m. In the morning when her shift first begins, she directs the buses and cars to make sure students get across the parking lot safely. While Owens may look cold as you walk past her bundled up in many layers, she actually said she quite enjoys the cold and prefers it over the warm weather.

“I like the cold, so the cold really doesn’t bother me because in the cold you can put on layers. When it’s hot, you can only take off so much,” Owens said.

After the bell rings and students are in their classes, she closes the back gate at

8:30 a.m. and goes through the parking lot to make sure all the cars’ lights are turned off and their engines aren’t running. After she finishes her sweep of the parking lot, she goes to her heated shed and finds ways to pass the time. Owens then eats lunch inside after all of the students finish. She then goes back to her daily tasks of maintaining the parking lot and making sure no students leave the school without a pass. If a student does try to leave without a pass she will make sure they go to the front desk to get one. At 3 p.m. as school comes to a close for the day, she starts to get positioned to help direct the cars at dismissal. After directing the cars, Owens usually leaves school at around 3:45 p.m. to head home.

Owens said that her favorite part of her job is the students and that she gets many friendly “good mornings” back from them each day.

“I like to see all the students in the mornings and when they leave. Especially the quiet ones. I always find the quiet ones and I speak to them,” Owens said. “It’s fun to see and get to know them and they know they can come to me.”



## Checkpoint

The new parking lot structure stands outside of the upper parking lot after being installed last spring. It was created by students in the Geometry in Construction class for the use of parking attendant Katrina Owens. (Photo by Ruth Vogel)