

Learning skills leads to construction jobs for youth

by Heidi Riley

For over 20 years, **Youth in Trades**, a program coordinated by the **Construction Association of PEI**, has been a stepping stone to employment in the construction industry.

“This program has been very valuable to the trades sector, and to the people who have had the opportunity to take part in it,” says **Sam Sanderson**, Executive Director, Construction Association of PEI.

This year, the program was held in two locations. In Summerside, Program Facilitator **Lisa Finkle**, Coordinator **Emily Schurman**, and program participants worked on Earthship PEI, a house in Hope River made of recycled materials.

The Charlottetown crew constructed a 12 x 16 foot storage shed at Castle Building Supplies.

“Thanks go out to the great folks at Castle Building Supplies for donating the materials for the build and allowing us to do it on their property,” says Sam.

“I am a big supporter of the program,” says **Tim McHatten**, owner of Castle Building Supplies. “The students get great training, and they learn all they need to know to get started in this field.”

“We have actually employed some people from this program, and we still have them on staff,” says Tim. “We were happy to donate the supplies for this project, and I hope it works out great for everybody.”



Participants of the Youth In Trades program in Charlottetown built a 12' x 16' storage shed on the premises of Castle Building Supplies. From left: Sandy Doucette, Program Facilitator, Sam Sanderson, Construction Association of PEI, Corey Doucette, Castle Building Supplies, and the program participants.

About Youth in Trades

“This program is awesome,” says **Sandy Doucette**, Charlottetown Program Facilitator. “Participants get eight weeks in the classroom, including resumé development, mock interviews, and making sure everyone is ready to work.”

The classroom time includes CPR, WHMIS and fall protection training, tours of job sites, guest speakers, and a day at the Holland College Electrical, Plumbing, and Carpentry programs. Participants also get 16 weeks of work experience to explore the trade of their choice. “All that exposure gives participants a better idea of what area of the trades they would like to pursue,” says Sandy.

“Our goal is that everyone is employed by the end of the program, and it looks like they all will have jobs,” says Sam.

Skills learned

- team work
- measuring, levelling, and materials estimating
- following a blueprint
- carpentry skills and operating power tools

Requirements to enter the program

Participants must be 16 to 30 years of age, out of school and unemployed, and interested in working in a trade. They do not need previous experience in construction.

The Skills Link Program is part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy and is funded by Service Canada.

For more information, call **Janet O'Donnell**, Program Coordinator, at **902-368-3303**.



Program offers new graduates a path to a career in their field of study

by Heidi Riley

The **Career Pathways** program helps post-secondary graduates get career-related work experience.

The objective of the program is to help youth acquire advanced employment skills and find their place in a rapidly changing labor market.

“The program is an added incentive for employers to hire an individual and minimizes the financial risk of taking a new grad under their wing,” says **Barb Goss**, Career Practitioner, Career Development Services, Charlottetown.

“It's an opportunity for graduates lacking work experience to get their foot in the door. We often hear from college and university graduates who are frustrated because they are not being selected for positions due to lack of experience.”

Since the program started in 2013, about 80 graduates have used the program on PEI. Over 85 percent of participants were still employed at the end of the subsidy.

One participant's story

“Within the last year, the City of Charlottetown has taken on three participants from the Career Pathways program, and they have gained very valuable work experience,” says Barb.

The three positions are Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Urban Forestry Technician, and Sustainability Outreach Coordinator. “These are really valuable work opportunities for the graduates,” says Barb.

Nic Cahill was hired in the position of Energy Efficiency Coordinator in September 2015. After the 22-week program ended, he remained an employee of the city and continues to work on a contract basis.

Nic is a graduate of the Holland College Energy Systems Engineering Technology program. After graduation, he worked for a brief period of time as a solar panel installer, and then applied to a job posting with the City of Charlottetown.

On the job, Nic tackles energy saving projects for the city. He does energy audits, and identifies and documents energy saving opportunities such as installing LED lighting, heat pumps, control systems, insulation and ventilation, HVAC equipment, and solar and geothermal power.

“I have gained so much knowledge and experience on the job,” says Nic. “On PEI, energy conservation is in its infancy, so it is really nice to play a part in its development.”

An employer's comments

Ramona Doyle is the Sustainability Officer with the City of Charlottetown and supervises Nic's work. “Having access to the funding available through the Career Pathways program showed us the value of the position, and encouraged us to continue the position beyond the end of the wage subsidy period,” says Ramona.

“It has been great watching Nic progress in the short time he has been here. He had great technical skills in his area, and now he has learned how to navigate the system, and to use taxpayers' dollars more efficiently to improve our quality of life.”



Nic Cahill, participant in the Career Pathways program, with his supervisor Ramona Doyle, Sustainability Officer for the City of Charlottetown.

“He is an independent worker, and he is very driven to do a great job.”

For more information on eligibility for the **Career Pathways** program, contact the Program Coordinators in your area:

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Visit www.cdspei.ca



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