

Women in the skilled trades: Imagine your future

Time to dispel a few myths



Heather Thompson, a student at Rainbow District School Board's Barrydowne College, is enrolled in a Level 1 Metal Fabricator and Welder course through the Dual Credit/School College Work Initiative at Cambrian College. Students earn credits that can be applied towards both their secondary school diploma and their post-secondary diploma, degree or apprenticeship certification.

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Do you enjoy a challenge? Do you want an exciting career? Do you want a career that pays well? Then look no further. A career in the trades is just for you.

It is time to dispel the myths about women in the trades.

Women in skilled trades and technology careers make up less than three per cent of the workforce, but that doesn't mean good jobs for women don't exist. In fact, the trades offer excellent pay, benefits, unlimited opportunity, flexibility, rewarding work and a creative outlet.

As of August 2011, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada reported that construction trade workers in north-eastern Ontario make between \$19 to \$40 or more an hour, depending on the type of work.

In today's workplace, mechanization and computerization have significantly decreased the physical demands of many trades. While there still is a physical

component to most trades, brute strength is no longer a requirement.

There are also a number of support networks for women in the skilled trades, including Women in Nuclear, the Canadian Association for Women in Construction and Women in Mining.

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Heather Thompson, studying Level 1 Metal Fabricator and Welder course through the Dual Credit/School College Work Initiative

Have we piqued your interest? What if you could get a head start on a career today?

Students in Rainbow Secondary Schools can earn credits that can be applied toward both their secondary school diploma and their post-secondary diploma or apprenticeship program.

Grade 11 and 12 students can participate in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). What's great about the program is it offers young women the opportunity to earn an

Ontario Secondary School Diploma while completing a work placement in a skilled trade and accumulate hours toward their apprenticeship.

Take Heather Thompson. She is currently working on a Level 1 Metal Fabricator and Welder Certificate through the Dual Credit program, with an eye to pursuing a career in welding after high school.

"In this trade, there is always something to do," Heather said. "I have always loved the hands-on aspect of it. I chose welding and it is probably the best decision I've made."

Because skilled trades are constantly in demand, pursuing a career in them offers young people something many other career paths do not, said Norm Blaseg, director of education for the Rainbow District School Board.

"These are the people who build our homes, maintain our vehicles, and provide services that add value to our lives," he said. "The skilled trades offer endless opportunities for young people who are interested in challenging careers."

To learn more, visit rainbowschools.ca, speak with a guidance counsellor at your area Rainbow secondary school, or call Sharon Orlak of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program at 705-688-0888.

Supplied by Rainbow District School Board



Imagine yourself in the trades

"I am a co-op student who hopes to one day be a licensed carpenter. I hope to continue my father's business and have my own crew."

- Amber Armstrong
Manitoulin Secondary School

"I am amazed by the trade and how all the little bolts, gaskets and blocks work together. After high school, I plan to continue my studies in Heavy Duty Equipment Technician at Cambrian College."

- Kaitlyn Castonguay
Barrydowne College
Rainbow District School Board

Women in the Trades

More women are joining the skilled trade workforce. Participate in OYAP to see which trade is right for you.

- Jump start a career in a trade while in secondary school.
- Register as an apprentice and accumulate hours.
- Earn Co-operative Education credits toward an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- Accelerate your career by eight to ten years.

For more information about the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, call your Rainbow Secondary School.

