

## PLUMBING PROGRAM HAS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

### Plumbing Jobs await Plumbing Students

*(published in the Richmond Review, February 24, 2007)*



Taylor Woodcock always knew he would end up in the trades because he loves working with his hands, loves the fact that things are different all the time and knows of the wealth of opportunities available.

Woodcock is currently enrolled in the debut year of the Richmond School District's Plumbing Apprenticeship Program located at McMath Secondary School. This unique program allows students to gain high school credits, as well as credit for their Level One Technical Training in plumbing.

The program is taught by certified Red Seal plumber, Michael Sharkey. Sharkey, who has been in the business of plumbing for the last 15 years decided to make a career change into teaching. Hearing that the school district was starting up a plumbing program, Sharkey saw it as an opportunity to make a difference by "providing a positive learning experience" for students wanting to get into the industry.

Sharkey says that Woodcock is part of a good group of students who started last September as "raw – they virtually with no experience or tools". This was indeed a challenge for a first year teacher, but Sharkey loves a challenge and says that the year is going well.

Sharkey is using a modified version of the University of Alberta curriculum. The program is about 50% theory and 50% hands on. While Woodcock says that the theory part is challenging, he understands that it is useful and likes the fact that he is able to put into practice what he is learning – "it makes sense and I see the point of it".

The "Plumbing Intensive House" is currently the focus of the students' hands on work experience. Within the classroom students are busy working on fitting the piping and installing fixtures in a two story structure they built. The upper floor is being outfitted as two bathrooms and the lower floor contains two laundry rooms and two kitchens.

A modified version of the "Plumbing Intensive House" will be at the **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Career Options Fair** held at Cambie Secondary School on Thursday, March 1. From 3:00 – 8:00, on-lookers will have the opportunity to see the house built (by Carpentry apprenticeship students) and then watch Woodcock and his fellow plumbing apprenticeship students outfit it with pipes and fixtures. Those who attend the fair will also have the opportunity to participate in a number of hands-on activities. All Richmond parents and students are welcome to the event – admission is free.