

JOBS ON TAP FOR STUDENTS

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High school students, Simone Carrière and Evan Anderson always look forward to Day 2 on their timetable. Day 2 is the day that they, along with other students throughout the district, go to McMath Secondary School and take the Plumbing Apprenticeship Program.

Carrière, a grade 11 McMath student, has always been interested in working with her hands. In her spare time, she enjoys being challenged by complex puzzles and being the family expert at assembling things.. Her love of tools makes her stand out from her friends, although her friends think it's cool to be outside of the box. Carrière's mother, who always wanted to be in the trades, but never had the opportunity, is thrilled that she's in the program. The program's teacher, Michael Sharkey welcomes both male and female students in the program. Having Carrière in the class has a "moderating and a calming affect" on the group. Sharkey describes Carrière as "mentally tough with a strong learning spirit".

Anderson, a grade 12 McRoberts student attributes his interest in plumbing to his father, who also works in the trade. Anderson is an academically successful student with a varied background that includes an avid interest in theatre and French Immersion. Anderson loves the atmosphere of the plumbing class and the hands-on opportunities. He likes how situations in plumbing are never the same due to ever-changing situations, demands and products. Sharkey credits Anderson's strong science background and good study skills for his success in the program. Sharkey describes Anderson as having a "good work ethic and being able to see into a job."

Both Carrière and Anderson hope to travel after graduation, but expect to continue on with their apprenticeship in Plumbing. The idea of starting their own company appeals to both of them.

Sharkey has a unique situation in which he works full time for the Richmond School District. His time is split evenly between teaching the plumbing apprenticeship program and working for the school board maintenance as a plumber. He sees it as an ideal situation and the students say that he "keeps it real" as he is still involved in the field. In fact, on his days while working with maintenance, Sharkey often bumps into the students at their home schools.

The Plumbing Apprenticeship program, hosted at McMath Secondary, is in partnership with the Piping Industry Apprenticeship Board and offers the technical training for Level One Plumbing. Students from all over the district are eligible to apply to the program.

See Carriere, Anderson and the rest of the apprenticeship students show off their skills at the upcoming 5th Annual Career Options Fair, held at Cambie Secondary School on Thursday, February 28, 2008. The event is open to the general public from 3-8pm and admission is free.