

learning *curve*

The Centre for Skills Development & Training and Eden Oak team up to introduce students to the exciting world of home building

By Lawrence Farrell

Since 1988, The Centre for Skills Development & Training has been a leading provider of quality career and workforce development programs, products and services. Our areas of specialty include academic and language skills upgrading, career planning and development and pre-apprenticeship trades and technology training.

We believe that training should be a purposeful, positive and productive experience.

About the program:

The pre-apprenticeship construction program is primarily a residential framing program with a lot of added extras. The program consists of three important components:

1. A nine week intense in class training period
2. A nine week supervised on site training period
3. An 18 week monitored work placement period

In the first nine weeks of training the students instructed in the following:

- Health and Safety Training, WHMIS Training, First Aid and CPR Training and Fall Arrest Training
- Hand and Power Tool Training

- Framing: Floor, Wall, Ceiling and Roof
- Interior Finishes: Drywall, Taping, Finish Carpentry
- Exterior Finishes: Roofing, Siding, Soffit and Fascia
- Introduction to Basic Plumbing and Electrical
- Other Related Training: Blueprint Reading, The Ontario Building Code, Estimating Materials, Essential Job and interview Skills and Resume Preparation

In the second nine weeks of the program the students go on site to be involved in a Student Built House portion of the program. All students are involved in the main house, but it is at this time the students are able to choose to be placed with in another construction related trade. i.e. plumbing, roofing, electrical, brick laying, etc. Our main goal is to rotate the students through different construction trades to let them get a taste of more than just framing. After nine weeks, most students know what field they would like to pursue.

The final component of the program is to work with each individual student, helping them to find a work placement in the field of their choice.

Once this is done, the students are then monitored. The team stays in touch with the student to ensure that both the employer and employee are working effectively towards the same goal - a new and rewarding career and a highly skilled and valuable employee.

What sets The Centre apart

We don't only teach, we train! Teaching provides the knowledge that the students require, but training provides the students with the real life skills that employers are looking for. It is one thing to say that you know what a circular saw is, but it is another to say that you know how to confidently use the tool.

We train full scale. In our shops we have the luxury to do full scale layouts and builds of floor, wall and roof systems.

We believe that the students need to see the whole picture and not just a glimpse. We try to make the experiences as close to real life as possible for the students.

For example: when we layout and build a roof system, it is a full sized roof system. This way, when the students do roofing, they will install approximately 700 square feet of



Students are on site for the second half of the pre-apprentice construction program, getting first-hand experience from real professionals.

roofing materials.

Hands on is the most important teaching tool that we use at The Centre. It's not enough to just know, you have to know how.

Our instructors are focused on providing and training the future work force with the hands on experience that the construction industry is looking for in their new employees.

The beauty of the Student Build Program

The partnership with companies such as Eden Oak help to complete the "hands on" training philosophy that is so important to the success of the program here at The Centre.

Even though we try to provide the most realistic situations in the shop, there is nothing more valuable than being there, on site and in the middle of the construction.

Love it or hate it, there is no better teacher than reality itself. The students for most part love this portion of the program. All five senses come into play when you are on site and that's just something we can't give the students in class.

Training, practice and time is what makes the best the best. Here at The Centre we provide the training and practice. On site, the students

have been given the time to practice their skills. It will take more than nine weeks for the students to become the best of the best in their fields though the partnership with Eden Oak and The Centre has been a great stepping stone in the journey of the students. Or should I say "our future trades."

The builder

Eden Oak has been involved in the building of over 30 key communities across the GTA and prides itself in helping communities where they build. Offering one of their Spring Creek community homes for this project was natural for them. According to Vice President Bernie Torchia, "Canada has enjoyed wave after wave of immigrants over the last 50 years, many of which have chosen the construction industry as a career. As a result, we have failed to develop construction industry career opportunities for our children. The need exists today; all our kids need is the opportunity. This program gives our young adults exactly that; an opportunity for hand on experience on a real construction site with all the elements - even bad coffee."

You can visit Eden Oak online at www.edenoak.com.



Spring Creek homeowners Ned and Sladjana Kenjic.



Students Peter McConnell, Matt Hilts, Jeff Dickson, Brian Wood, Mitch Miedus, Steve Buganto, along with Lawrence Farrell of The Centre and Spring Creek homeowners Ned and Sladjana Kenjic.



(l-r) Spring Creek homeowners Ned and Sladjana Kenjic, Bernie Torchia, Vice President of Eden Oak, Lawrence Farrell - Lead Construction Instructor for "The Centre."