

For immediate release

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### **Youth apprentices gain valuable experience and receive \$1000**

**Comox Valley, B.C.** – A number of Comox Valley students recently received a \$1000 award from the Ministry of Education (MOE) for being part of the Youth Work in Trades program offered through the ministry, Industry Training Authority (ITA) and Comox Valley Schools Youth Programs for Trades.

Many of these students started their trades paths in Comox Valley Schools by taking shop classes or being part of an ITA Youth Trades Sampler program in Grade 11. During their Grade 12 year, students typically take a Trades Foundation Program at North Island College where the ITA, ministry and school district sponsor their tuition. Some students also take the direct apprenticeship route going straight to industry after taking the district Trades Samplers programs.

Students can start the work-based training of their trade apprenticeship while they are still in high school and can earn 16 credits towards their high school diploma and 480 hours towards their trade credential. Students who have met the Youth Work in Trades Award criteria receive \$1000.

“This is an amazing opportunity for students in the valley who are interested in going into the trades” says Steve Claassen, School District 71 careers coordinator for trades & ADST, “We have a very strong careers department that supports these students at our schools.”

There are a number of career fields that students can learn and gain experience in while taking the trades samplers. This allows students to gain a variety of skills and to find out what they might enjoy doing for work in the future.

From a student’s point of view, Cale Hart and Koosha Habibi, both Vanier grads, took the Construction Trades Sampler during Grade 11, then the Train in Trades Plumbing & Pipefitting Foundation Program at NIC during their Grade 12 year. Both are elated about the start to their careers. “We are on a path to success here in the valley,” said Cale Hart, a first-year apprentice at Ridgeline Mechanical. Both students are starting their level 2 technical training at NIC in plumbing and pipefitting. “I’m very fortunate to be learning and working at a first-year apprentice now at Plateau Plumbing,” said Habibi.

Owen Teichroeb, a Highland graduate, completed the Carpentry Foundation program at North Island College during the second half of his Grade 12 year and immediately started as a full-time apprentice with Cameron Contracting. “Ever since I started, Cameron Construction makes me feel at home as a young apprentice,” said Teichroeb.

Cole Barker, on the other hand, took the Transportation Trades Sampler in Grade 11 and went directly from his work experience as part of the sampler to an apprenticeship as a grade 12 with North Island Tractor, “They have been great to me ever since I started my apprenticeship with them,” said Barker.

These are just a few of the more than 150 Youth Work in Trades awards that have been given out by Murray Shold, youth work in trades coordinator for Comox Valley Schools, “We are fortunate that our local companies have been very supportive of our students over the years,” says Murray.

Comox Valley Schools offers three trades samplers in semester 2 for Grade 11 and 12 students consisting of transportation, metal and construction. Interested students should visit the careers office at their school.

By 2027, there are expected to be up to 1 million job openings in B.C. — almost half of these jobs require technical or trades training. By starting trades training early, students can gain the skills needed to land a great job, even before they graduate.

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Learn More: <https://youth.itabc.ca/educators/youth-programs/work/> & <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/career-programs/>

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**BACKGROUNDER**

All pictures courtesy of SD 71's district careers coordinator for trades, Steve Claassen



Cole Barker, Heavy Duty apprentice at North Island Tractor receiving his \$1000 award from Murray Shold, Youth Work in Trades coordinator.



Murray Shold Youth Work in Trades coordinator with carpentry apprentice Owen Teichroeb on the jobsite with Cameron Contracting receiving \$1000 award.



Cale Hart, Murray Shold, Koosha Habibi. Both Cale and Koosha started their level 2 plumbing apprenticeship Monday, March 14th at North Island College Comox Campus.