

## **Building Valuable Work Skills at Cathedral**

By Mario Fidanza

Imagine a classroom where your son or daughter not only learns important information, but also acquires a wide range of construction skills. This educational setting is a new initiative being offered to the students of Cathedral. This is a classroom where everyone is excited to be there.

Cathedral has implemented an innovative, brand new course geared toward those students who have difficulty in the traditional classroom. These students want to learn; it's an intrinsic part of human behaviour. The key is to keep students actively stimulated and engaged. Many studies have shown that students learn best from experience, and many classrooms explore how best to teach through experience. Cathedral takes it one giant step further. This new classroom smells and sounds different from most. Power tools stand in for books and at the end of class, students clean up sawdust and construction debris, not their desks.

In this program, students don't just learn how to use tools. They learn how to put them to use in the construction of a wide range of projects.

This exciting full-day 4-credit course consists of two components: Construction Craft Worker Apprenticeship Level 1 and New House Construction. The Construction Craft Worker Apprenticeship is an excellent introductory program for students who want real world experience in a skilled trade.

At the Mancinelli Apprentice Training Centre in Winona, students receive nine weeks of instruction, practice and certification in:

- Chainsaw Safety
- Compaction
- Concrete Cutting and Coring
- Confined Space
- Cutting and Burning
- Emergency First Aid and CPR Basic Level
- Fall Arrest
- Forklift Operator
- Health and Safety Level 1
- Powered Elevated Work Platform
- Propane Safety
- Skid Steer Loader Operator
- Traffic Control and WHMIS

Marz Homes of Stoney Creek gives Cathedral students the opportunity to put their newly learned skills to the test. In the New House Construction component, students will work closely with all subcontractors and sub-trades in the construction of a new house.

Students are not only actively engaged in a skilled trade, but they also learn other life skills such as communication, professionalism, problem solving and safety.

Students often ask, “Why do I have to know this anyway?” However, when the action of learning how to effectively use a high-powered drill results in a house, the reason for the experience is crystal clear and powerful. Students quickly understand that they can have an important impact on their community and the world. With such clear goals, students are more likely to finish the course and graduate.

Students also learn the very important lesson that every piece is part of the whole, from the nuts and bolts to the skilled worker who puts them together. Self-worth blossoms from being a critical part in the creation of a meaningful tangible product: someone’s home. Pride in a job well done is the ultimate reward. In short, they are empowered, not just with a trade and life skills but also with the personal satisfaction of making a contribution to the creation of a project.

Cathedral recognizes the challenges facing our students in this competitive world and is committed to providing them with innovative programs that put them on a successful pathway to the future. This new course exposes students to a variety of trades through which they can network and continually make contacts, aiding in post-secondary employment. Excited, actively engaged students become excited, successful adults, Cathedral’s number one goal.

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