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SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Who is going to work for you in 10 years?

Industry Education Council
OF HAMILTON

'We need people in the Trade'

According to the Construction Sector Council, roughly, 317,000 new construction workers will be needed in Canada by 2017 to replace retirees. In Hamilton, construction is one of the 10 sectors that the Hamilton Training Advisory Board has identified as promising. Most specifically there will be abundant work for special trade contractors.

Training and getting youth into apprenticeship, therefore, is critical. Several employers acknowledge this fact and take advantage of The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) to build a pool of young motivated workers. This helps fill current and future vacancies, while at the same time giving high school students the chance to explore their passion for the industry. Students who participate have the benefit of being registered with the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities as apprentices.

The plumbing and heating contractor, Besseling Mechanical Inc. is one of the workplaces that have partnered with Boards of Education to provide students with opportunities for learning and apprenticeship training. Robert Besseling and his partners Cameron Besseling and Phil Besseling have embraced this idea and have given students the chance to be part of their team as co-op and OYAP students for the last 10 years.

Mentored to enter the trade by his family since he was 12 years old, Robert believes that involving young people at an early age is important because of the nature of the sector. 'You don't just jump into construction. You can't just come out of high school and say I love it. If



Robert, one of the owners of Besseling Mechanical Inc. and Clyde, Journeyman, with OYAP students Matthew and John.

you are going to make a career out of it, you have to see and feel it first.' He sees OYAP as a great opportunity to attract young people to the trade and help meet the needs of the skilled trade shortage. In this regard, Besseling Mechanical has already been reaping what they sow as they already have hired some of their OYAP students as apprentices and also as summer workers.

Clyde Dumoulin, a journeyman at Besseling Mechanical, agrees that the program is 'good for shaping and molding' future workers. Even if the students they train discover that the trade is not for them, Clyde and Robert are not disappointed. They see the process of discovery as advantageous for the sector, because they get to keep the people who love the trade.

The students get a real-life experience, arriving at the job at 7:00 AM and handling physical tasks in often difficult weather conditions. Historically, contractors turned to the hard working farming communities to find their workforce. Robert said 'kids these days don't have that rough start' and OYAP fills this gap by preparing the students to the working conditions the sector demands. John Idzikowski and Matthew D'Amico, OYAP students at Besseling Mechanical, confirm this stating that the experience is helping them adjust both physically and emotionally.

Robert believes that employers in the construction sector, who are not involved in OYAP, are missing out on a lot. There is much to be gained as the students have the safety certification training and their safety insurance is covered by the Ministry of Education. Both of this makes OYAP a cost effective opportunity for employers to assess students before committing to an apprenticeship. Robert sum it up 'It is a win-win situation and worth the venture. More employers should be involved if they want to get the guys that will grow with them.'

Are you inspired by Besseling Mechanical and the way they train their potential future workforce? If you are in the construction, motive power, industrial or service sectors, OYAP is an option you should consider. Contact IEC to find out more about how to get involved. We will help you make the appropriate connections, customize your involvement and promote your opportunities at www.employerregistry.ca, the online community dedicated to connecting local employers with tomorrow's workforce.

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