

Passport to Prosperity is an Ontario-wide initiative to promote the benefits of school-work partnerships, recruit employers to partner with schools, and provide resources to facilitate these partnerships, for the benefit of employers and high school students.

PASSPORT to Prosperity

Update

Winter 2008

Reviving Hospital Co-op Programs in Simcoe County

Hospitals in Ontario are facing a retiring workforce, a growing patient base, and a market south of the border that offers enticing incentives for healthcare professionals.

Many Ontario hospitals offer cooperative education placements to college students in a variety of health programs to attract them back to the hospital and keep them in the community once they've graduated. Based on the same principle, co-op programs, job shadowing, workplace tours and health care career fairs for high school students can attract high school students to health care fields before students make postsecondary training or education decisions.

However, the security requirements of Ontario's Privacy Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) have some hospital administrators concerned that high school students on site may create a potential privacy risk. Hospital administrators are stuck between a rock and a hard place; between the need to engage in early recruitment efforts and the need to meet patient privacy requirements.

Hospitals in Simcoe County were experiencing this dilemma when the local *Passport to Prosperity* provider, the Simcoe County Training Board, offered a "Breakfast with the Mayor" symposium to address the issue. Hospitals in the region had provided co-op programs to high school students in previous years, but concerns over PHIPA had brought many of those programs to a halt.

In May of 2007, representatives from the region's health care providers attended

the Breakfast with the Mayor and heard presentations from Dan Parle at the Mental Health Centre in Penetanguishene and a team from The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and Hamilton Health Sciences about successful cooperative education and other school-work programs. Attendees participated in a healthy question and answer session, with the team from Hamilton addressing the issue of patient privacy head-on.

As Paul Faguy, VP of Clinical Support & Hospital Services at Hamilton Health Sciences says, "We have to manage the privacy of our patients with all kinds of visitors every day, from people making deliveries to patients to the tradesperson who paints the walls. Encouraging the same level of privacy from our students is essentially the same process."

As a result of the symposium, at least one hospital is reintroducing high school work experience programs into their activities and other hospitals are in discussions to get back on track. For more information about offering school-work programs contact the Ontario Business Education Partnership to connect with the local *Passport to Prosperity* provider in your region. Visit www.obep.on.ca or call 1-888-672-7996.



Students practice kitchen skills under the watchful eye of their executive chef.

Passport to Prosperity and the Provincial Partnership Council

Passport to Prosperity is an Ontario-wide, employer-led initiative to increase employer participation in experiential learning opportunities for high school students, including cooperative education, job shadowing, mentoring, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, classroom talks, career fairs and workplace visits. The campaign is sponsored by the Provincial Partnership Council (PPC), a volunteer advisory committee of leaders from the private, public, and voluntary sectors. The PPC's goal is to ensure that every employer in Ontario understands and helps promote the benefits of engaging high school students in meaningful work experiences. *Passport to Prosperity* is about encouraging employers to engage young people in school-work opportunities while they're still in high school, as a cost-effective solution to recruiting, training and retaining young workers. School-work programs also help students explore career options and develop workplace skills and experience. The campaign is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and is implemented in local communities by business-education councils and local training boards.

Recognizing Champions: Profiling The Brantford Expositor

In the spring of 2007, the Provincial Partnership Council (PPC) recognized four Employer Champions for their outstanding commitment to providing school-work experiences to high school students. The PPC congratulates the 2007 Employer Champions: Brampton Fire and Emergency Services, The Expositor (Brantford), Frontenac Animal Hospital (Kingston) and The Holiday Inn (Cambridge). In this issue we profile The Expositor in Brantford, Ontario.

The Brantford Expositor is a 2007 Employer Champion. Their program provides meaningful opportunities to students and demonstrates that when given the chance, high school students can contribute to the vitality and profitability of an organization.

Journalists make **classroom visits** to talk about careers and opportunities in journalism.

Workplace Tours are offered in the busy newsroom.

The journalists **mentor** the students during their co-op placements. They also provide advice and guidance when the

students have gone on to postsecondary programs.

The Expositor offers **co-op placements** in three areas of the paper – journalism, graphic design/layout and photojournalism. Students contribute to the paper directly by producing a weekly page called “Campus”. It is entirely student-written and gives a unique perspective on the news. Students leave with work experience and professionally edited and published works for their portfolio.

Although school-work programs require a time commitment from the newspaper, the payoff is great. The Campus page attracts a younger reader, which is vital



A student and his supervisor review the work of journalism co-op students.

to increasing the paper's readership. The stories also appeal to an older audience, as students bring unexpected and interesting points of view to a story.

Jim Fleming, the community news editor and student supervisor, reminds other employers that co-op teachers are partners in the program. Employers need to work with teachers to get the right students for the program.

Jim encourages all employers to become involved in the co-op student selection process from the beginning, by interviewing students and setting the stage for a great experience for the employer and student.

Hands-On Learning - A School Tour Program

“I’m clear, you’re clear, we’re all clear.” That’s what you might hear from a high school student participating in Hamilton Health Sciences’ School Tour Program, prior to sending a simulated shock to a “patient” in cardiac arrest.

The School Tour Program is offered upon request at Hamilton Health Sciences to secondary school students, as a long-term recruitment strategy for the hospitals and as a support to the Ontario classroom curriculum. During the Tour, students learn about careers in health care. They hear about fundamental skills for all jobs in health care, such as communication, managing information, using numbers, thinking and solving problems. Personal management skills are also explored, reinforcing the importance of positive attitudes, responsibility, adaptability, continuous learning and working safely. Teamwork skills are also emphasized. In the Tour, jobs in all educational pathways are explored, such as direct entry following high school, certificate/license/special training, college and university. Students learn that health care can be a destination for everyone.

Many students find that the highlight of the half-day tour is the skills caravan. Students practice technical health care skills in a simulated environment. Students rotate through the teacher-chosen learning centres, which include defibrillation, intubation, vascular access therapy, wound care, nutritional care, surgical set-up, infection control, casting limbs, and vital signs.



Students participate in the skills caravan at Hamilton Health Sciences.

“There are staff shortages across the health care sector. Our School Tour Program is one tool that lets students have some fun while learning about career opportunities in health care,” says Romaine Murchison, Manager, Clinical Practice and Education at Hamilton Health Sciences and coordinator of the program.

“The Tour may also spark interest from the students in cooperative education placements at our hospitals.”

Those co-op placements expose students to an even more realistic working experience at Hamilton Health Sciences while they earn credits toward their high school diploma.

Experiential Learning is Transformational

Five students shared their inspiring stories about their experiential learning experiences at the Employer Resource Forum held in Toronto in April. They spoke to an engaged crowd about how their school-work programs influenced their attitudes, ambitions and self-perceptions.

Carlton Reid, a student working with the maintenance department at the Ontario Science Centre through the Ontario Public Service Learn and Work program, spoke about the value of his experiences.

"I never knew how to try until my supervisor showed me how to work a little harder and that I could do it," Carlton shared. When given the opportunity and responsibility to perform in a work environment, Carlton found his stride and learned self-confidence.

Chris Lewis and Lisa Demarco enrolled in the Specialist High Skills Major in Manufacturing because they wanted to gain hands-on experience in this sector. Chris and Lisa were then able to become members of the first Canadian team to win a gold medal at the *FIRST* Robotics Competition in Richmond, Virginia. The process was guided by employer mentors who shepherded the students through the challenges of teamwork and learning new skills.

"You have to be focussed and you have to be motivated," Lisa shared.

Chris said he really valued the tricks-of-the-trade and feels like he can use them in his future career. "The skills I've learned are invaluable," said Chris.



Students tell their stories at the Employer Resource Forum

Kevin Ziegert is a youth apprentice machinist through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. He learned practical skills such as measurement, building according to designs, and interview skills. As a deaf student, Kevin faced particular challenges during interviews. He encountered some employers who were initially closed-minded. They didn't look at his skills, but only saw his deafness. Once he was given a chance, he showed them he was capable, and delivered products of the same calibre as other employees.

Kevin advises employers, "Don't judge a book by its cover. Give it a week. After that week, then make your decision."

Jennifer Howell felt that co-op was so valuable to her education that she changed schools in order to get the best experience possible. As a blind student, Jennifer's vision resource teacher suggested she attend a school where she could work with other visually impaired students and co-workers. While she was working as an education assistant for younger students in her own school, she knew she was doing good work. However, she needed more of a challenge with a placement that did not cater to all her needs. In her second co-op placement, Jennifer worked as an in-school mentor in four different schools in her community.

When asked what she learned from co-op, Jennifer said that knowing her visually impaired students succeed in their goals gives her a sense that she can also accomplish anything she sets her mind to. "I've gained a lot of independence and the kids I work with are great. It's been a really rewarding experience," she said.

There is no denying the tremendous potential shown by the students on this panel. To start offering school-work programs in your organization, please visit www.obep.on.ca or phone 1-888-672-7996.



The Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, addresses the Employer Resource Forum.

Words of Wisdom

On April 26, 2007, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, spoke at the *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Resource Forum at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto.

A passionate supporter of the *Passport to Prosperity* initiative, the minister offered words of encouragement and congratulations to students, teachers and employers. The minister encouraged all employers to involve their organizations in school-work programs for the success of our students and the province.

"I want to thank the employers of Ontario for having a vision and participating in school-work programs," said Minister Wynne. "Workplace learning is a very important part of education in this province. It's a winning partnership for students, educators and business."

Involved employers are poised to change the lives of students and to propel their businesses into a bright future.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities are working to make it as easy as possible to connect employers with students.

Cooperative education is a required component of the new Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programming being offered in Ontario.

To learn more about Ontario's new strategies to help young people be successful in school, visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/>.

Nominate a Champion

The Provincial Partnership Council is now accepting nominations for the 2008 *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Champion Awards. The award recognizes Ontario employers who are dedicated to providing experiential learning opportunities such as mentoring, job shadowing, classroom talks, worksite visits and participation in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and cooperative education to Ontario's high school students.

"Ontario's workforce is aging and some sectors are already experiencing worker shortages," said Ian Cunningham, Provincial Partnership Council Awards Chair. "Forward-thinking employers deserve recognition for their smart business practices, their community involvement and the impact they have on our future workforce. If that sounds like a company or organization you know or are a part of, we want to know about it."

Anyone can nominate an employer that demonstrates commitment and dedication to offering high school students experiential learning. Nomination forms can be completed online at www.obep.on.ca.

The deadline for nominations is February 12, 2008.

Join The Campaign

For more information about *Passport to Prosperity*, please call 1-800-387-5514 or visit the Ministry of Education website at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

For information on providing a school-work opportunity to a high school student in your community, please contact the Ontario Business Education Partnership (OBEP) at 1-888-672-7996 or visit www.obep.on.ca.

OBEP is a province-wide network of 26 business-education councils and local training boards, facilitating partnerships with employers and schools in local communities.

The Provincial Partnership Council and the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign are supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Partners include the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario, Junior Achievement, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade, Landscape Ontario, and TVOntario.

Share Your Success Stories

Do you have a story to share about a school-work program? We want to hear about it! Send your story to chrystal.boudreau@avantsc.ca to have it considered for one of our upcoming *Passport to Prosperity* Update newsletters.

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