

SAANICH SCHOOL DISTRICT
JUMPSTARTS **STUDENT CAREERS**

Taylor Orr

by Stu Rhodes

When Taylor Orr first contemplated taking apprenticeship training as part of her high school education, she had her sights set on becoming an automotive service technician. While taking an introductory auto shop class, she learned for certain that she was really good at working with her hands and she realized she'd never been as engaged in

her learning as in that auto class when theory and practise became a tangible reality for her. A gifted artist as well, she began to wonder if there was somewhere she might also be able to use her artistic creativity at the same time as engaging in the craftwork of a trade. When a friend suggested hairdressing to her, she initially rejected the idea but upon further consideration decided to give it a try.

Taylor recently completed the intensive 12-month Cosmetology/Hairdressing program offered by Saanich School District in partnership with Vancouver Island University and the Industry Training Authority of B.C., where she earned high school credits, trade certification and a university diploma from VIU, finishing near the top of her class. What's even more impressive is that her employer, Brett Lacey of Arq Salon, says: "Taylor is an amazing young lady with a dynamic and mature personality and excellent customer service skills." He went on to say: "She may very well have the potential to be the best new employee I've ever hired. She has all the attributes to create the 'perfect storm for success' in this industry."

Taylor was much more humble about how well she's doing, but was able to clearly articulate how participating in the hairdressing program has truly enriched her life. She has focus and passion and says she was "deeply moved by this rich learning experience."

"My creativity has totally evolved since starting the program. I always liked drawing but this is more like 3D sculpting with various

shapes and natural textures."

Having developed a renewed enthusiasm for learning, Taylor has embarked on an ambitious and personalized educational plan to continue working part-time at Arq Salon at the same time as she finishes her remaining graduation requirements at the Saanichton Individual Learning Centre (where the teaching salon, "Studio 63," is also located). This plan sits well with her mom, Diane Landega, who credits the program for "igniting a passion for creativity in Taylor and giving her a focus on a solid career pathway."

The program provides specific technical training in the art of hairdressing and transitions students into the workplace by helping them find a good fit at the right salon. Taylor acknowledges that Anastasia Antoniadis gave her the confidence to develop her skills and Colleen McNamee was instrumental in facilitating her placement at Arq Salon. She also appreciates the mentoring at the salon by the senior stylists.

When asked what she would say to other high school students about apprenticeship programs Taylor said: "It's the best possible thing you can do! You get a job, you get certification in your trade, and you won't have any debt as you embark upon your dream career!"

For more information on how to get involved as a student apprentice, or as an employer sponsor in this, or any other career program in Saanich School District, contact Garry Arsenault, 250-658-6679; Roger Pires, 250-655-2715; Wendy Walker, 250-514-0259; or Stu Rhodes, 250-415-9211. Visit <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers> to view the promotional video Jump Start Your Career. ✨

