

SAANICH SCHOOL DISTRICT
JUMPSTARTS STUDENT CAREERS

Jordan Blake

by Stu Rhodes

with how things work since before he started kindergarten. Instead of the usual toys, I would often buy him used appliances to take apart and put back together. He loved it."

Once at Stelly's, Jordan soon found his way into a power mechanics class and then into the auto classes with teacher Alan Sukut, who Jordan credits for really turning him on to auto mechanics. "Mr. Sukut ran an open shop where we could bring in our own cars and experiment with different drive train modifications and performance enhancements. This was key in developing my interest in racing drift cars."

As Jordan's interest and skills developed, he realized the logical next step was to participate in the Auto Service Technician program available to high school students as part of the trades training partnership between Saanich School District and Camosun College. Not only did this program provide essential technical training, it also helped Jordan earn 32 grade 12 course credits toward graduation.

Jordan excelled in his studies while at Camosun and was invited to participate in the Regional Skills Canada competition. As he put it: "Thanks to my training at Camosun I was well prepared for the competition." Jordan clinched the Gold in the Regionals allowing him to advance to the Provincials where he claimed top honours again! He advanced to the National Skills Canada event held at B.C. Place in Vancouver.

"Being part of Team B.C. was an amazing experience and really helped prepare me for more my current job with Suburban Motors." Jordan loves it at Suburban where he is presently working as a Lube Tech with aspirations of getting signed as an apprentice Auto Service Technician as soon as he completes his probationary period. He is impressed with the professional atmosphere and collegiality in the

By his own admission, Jordan Blake "didn't know a thing about mechanics" when he entered grade nine at Stelly's Secondary. On the other hand, according to his mom, Caroline Marchessault: "He has been fascinated

Suburban service centre. His shop supervisors, Rob Sohlstrom and Derrick Stark, are impressed with Jordan too and appreciate his work ethic and enthusiasm. "This sort of programming allows us to get keen young workers and train them the way we want," says Sohlstrom.

Before graduating and landing his current job with Suburban, Jordan worked on a part-time basis for Grant Cornwell of Grant's Small Motors. Grant was equally impressed with Jordan and was sorry to see him leave, but wishes him well on his new journey. Jordan is particularly grateful for the learning opportunities he got while working at Grant's: "Grant would just throw me right into it and I had to really think and problem solve how to fix the motors. It was a great confidence builder."

Caroline, Jordan's mom, also credits the Skills Canada competitions for helping build his confidence, and for adding a level of maturity. Both are very appreciative for the opportunities and support afforded to them by the Saanich School District. "More parents should encourage their children to explore the trades and support that decision," says Caroline. "Having a trade ticket just opens so many doors these days."

When asked what he would say to other youth, Jordan enthuses: "Whatever you're good at; whatever your passion is; just do it! I had no mechanical experience when I started high school and look at me now! I'm working at a Ford dealership!"

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:

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View the promotional YouTube video, "Jump Start Your Career" at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers>. 

