

SAANICH SCHOOL DISTRICT
JUMPSTARTS **STUDENT CAREERS**

Gary Powell

by Stu Rhodes

young people like him with such a keen interest in woodworking."

Gary certainly is a "keener:" he just recently completed his level two joinery/cabinetmaking technical training as the culminating activity of his high school graduation program from Stelly's Secondary in the Saanich School District. This is no small feat for a high school student. Gary admits it was a little intimidating at first when he realized he was the youngest student in the class and many of his classmates were over 30 years old. But he did it, and is justifiably proud of his accomplishments, as is his mom, Jarilee Powell. Jarilee confessed that she'd had concerns about Gary's academic abilities earlier on, but the joinery program gave him a platform for success, building his confidence and motivation. "He is successful, he has confidence now, and he has a future," she said. She is particularly grateful for the many, varied programs available in Saanich and for the dedication shown by Gary's teachers.

Gary was first introduced to woodworking at Bayside Middle School and continued to follow his passion when he got to Stelly's. Inspired by his wood shop teacher, Brent Birney, Gary set his sights on pursuing a career as a cabinetmaker and he applied for a part-time job at HCK to advance his skills and experience. He successfully completed the level one technical training at Camosun College during the summer between grade 11 and 12 and continued to work part time at HCK. As graduation time

"Steady Eddie" is how one might describe Garry Powell! He seems to be the kind of person everyone can count on. He is consistent and reliable where he works at Harbour City Kitchens (HCK). His boss, Craig Bryden, says: "It's great to have kids like Gary coming up through the ranks. It's tough to find

draw near he applied to attend BCIT to participate in the next level of technical training, thereby taking full advantage of the youth incentive programs offered by Industry Training Authority of BC. These programs allow youth to participate in regular apprenticeship training opportunities while still enrolled at high school.

"I just couldn't see myself doing some sort of desk job. I love working with my hands and this seemed like a perfect fit." He loves the fast pace at HCK but admits he gets equally excited about new challenges and learning how to carry out new processes or operate new machinery. He credits Craig Bryden and Bob Emel of HCK with helping to inspire him: "I've been working here for almost three years now, and they always helped me by providing short shifts after school or on the weekends and holidays so I could gain more experience." HCK is no stranger to helping students get a leg up in the industry, having employed at least 20 different students over the past 10 years.

Gary loves the sense of accomplishment he gets from his work and loves new challenges. One particularly fun challenge he undertook was competing in the Skills Canada Regional competition, and he highly recommends this to any other trade students. He advises students to take lots of relevant courses, saying that the appropriate Apprenticeship and Workplace Math, Chemistry, Woodwork, and Drafting all helped him in his chosen path. He also offered this advice to students: "Think very carefully about your educational pathway and choose something that really works for you. The trades have a lot to offer!"

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; Stu Rhodes, 250-415-9211; Kathy Stefani, 250-704-4956; Patti Jordanne, 250-744-4782; or Colleen McNamee, 250-589-7535. View the promotional YouTube video, "Jump Start Your Career" at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers>. ✨

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