

SAANICH SCHOOL DISTRICT
JUMPSTARTS **STUDENT CAREERS**

Dustin Dugstad

by Stu Rhodes

he extended his hand to me and introduced himself. As he pumped my arm he said, "I'm Nels Dugstad. You saved my son's life." Well I wasn't about to disagree with him at that precise moment but, for the record, I'd now like to say his son Dustin saved his own life. We just threw him the rope.

The alleged rescue happened almost 4 years ago when Dustin was struggling to stay in school, much less pass any of his academic subjects. As he said to me, "To be honest, I really didn't like school. I wasn't interested in things like 'the history of New England'. I couldn't relate to it so I couldn't focus."

What made Dustin start to focus? He applied for the Saanich regional carpentry program, and at first, he wasn't really in love with it either. But at least he could relate to it. It made sense, and for the first time he had a real opportunity to apply the math he was learning. He enjoyed the physical work and the tangible learning activities.


Dustin didn't find the carpentry curriculum easy but he worked hard at it because he could see the application and relevance. When he finished the program he was fortunate to land a position as a first year apprentice with Campbell Construction. Dustin loves working for Campbell and especially likes the way they build mentorship into their training model. "You get to see who the leaders are in the company and

Sitting with a colleague in a local restaurant I happened to look up and see a rather imposing, angry looking man heading across the floor directly to me. The expression on his face was wrought with emotion and just when I was about to duck under the table

it inspires you to do better. I see myself becoming a young leader in the company."

After experiencing limited success in conventional modes of the public school system Dustin has now risen to all-star status. He recently completed his level-three technical training near the top of his class and has his sights set on his Red Seal when he finishes level-four next year. His father attributes the Saanich trade-training program with not only helping Dustin become a great tradesman. He said, "Dustin is a great human being. This program has given him the pride, and confidence, and sense of being to take on the world! He is a somebody now, and he knows it."

Dustin credits the Saanich career counselors for helping him find his path and is especially grateful for the support from his Claremont teacher, Garry Arseneault, who advocated for him and stressed that for Dustin literature was probably less important than tool skills and worksite savvy. When asked about his future Dustin says he is going to be working hard to become a foreman for Campbell Construction. "More students should try the trades. Even if it's hard at the beginning, they should stick with it, because it gets better."

Contact Stu Rhodes 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. 250 415-9211. View the promotional YouTube video, "Jump Start Your Career" at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers>. 



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