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Photo by Janis Jean Photography

## Colton Leslie: Jumpstarting His Career

Long-time *Seaside* readers may remember the three-part series on Saanich School Districts' reimagined carpentry program (March, May and July 2019). The STAC (Skills Training Apprenticeship Carpentry) program is still going strong with a new focus and project. Building a tiny home is very popular with a shift towards affordability, efficiency and eco-friendliness among new home buyers. The STAC students attend a five-month program, where they spend three days a week building the tiny home and work two days a week as a youth apprentice at a local job site. The integration of theory, hands-on practise and industry training in this program is a proven winning way to help students jumpstart their career.

Case in point is Colton Leslie. As part of the first tiny home program, Colton finished the STAC program and went directly to Camosun College in the summer of 2019 and successfully completed his Level 1 Carpentry. He was indentured as a Youth Apprentice with GT Mann Contracting and continued to work into the fall. He returned to Stelly's in February of 2020 to complete his courses for graduation and soon after, learning went online. This worked in Colton's favour as he was able to take his Level 2 Carpentry program at Camosun in June before he turned 18! Colton is registered to take his Level 3 and is on target to be a Red Seal Carpenter by the time he is 20! This spring we will be delighted to present Colton with his \$1,000 Youth Work in Trade Award as he is most deserving and exemplifies what it means to be a Youth Apprentice.

STAC teacher Brandon Heyer isn't surprised by Colton's success: "Colton was a model student. He is a hard worker, always willing to put in the time to take on any task given to him. He also has a real thirst for knowledge, and carried around a small notebook in his tool

belt to constantly take notes on what we were doing." Colton still keeps a notebook in his tool belt and it has been serving him well as he is always at the top of his class!

Tiny homes are a trend that is here to stay. With travel restrictions continuing into the spring and people spending more time with their immediate families, there has been a sustained interest in these mini mobile domiciles. Whether they are a primary residence, a she shed, home office or play house, people are looking for easy, economical ways to increase their living space.

This year we are thrilled that the students will be building another tiny home which will be for sale this spring. To watch the progress of the build you can see pictures on our website – [www.careered.sd63.bc.ca](http://www.careered.sd63.bc.ca) or follow us on Twitter or Instagram – @sd63careers. If you are interested in purchasing the tiny home (at left) please contact Brandon Heyer at [bheyer@saanichschools.ca](mailto:bheyer@saanichschools.ca). You are only limited by your imagination.

