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Photo by Amanda Cribdon Photography

Isabella Tsui: Doing it All

Were you ever told as a young adult that you would have to choose between two of your interests? Or maybe they told you that your creative outlet wouldn't be lucrative enough, so you would need to be sure to have a job that would pay the bills? Isabella Tsui is showing others that you can do both, and that the skills she has learned in a trade will help her in computer science.

Isabella is a highly motivated, creative and smart young woman. She took advantage of the Vancouver Island University-Saanich School District Hairstyling program when she was in grade 12. Isabella recalls that her family initially had some concerns as they weren't sure how enrolling in a 10-month career program would affect her schooling, but after talking with her high school counsellor, her family was fully on board with her plan.

Having completed her required courses for graduation at Claremont, the hair program allowed Isabella to earn elective credits in a focused skilled area. Hairstyling is now a Red Seal trade and students in the Saanich School Program earn their Level 1 certification from the Industry Training Authority as well as Vancouver Island University certificate.

Isabella is no stranger to Studio 63, the teaching salon, as her mom started taking her for haircuts there when she was eight years old. She liked the atmosphere in the salon and the one-on-one instruction students receive from hair instructor Anastasia Antoniadis. Now, as a hairstylist, Isabella loves using her creativity to give her clients a hair makeover. She says: "it is not only the dramatic colour and cut transformations that I love but the subtle ones too. It's such an indescribable feeling when you are happy with the work you put out and others share the same sentiments."

Isabella was the top student in last year's hair program and during the summer was able to complete over 900 hours working in the hairdressing field to win a Youth Work In Trades award. She is continuing to work at Sahar's Hair Studio while she attends UVic to obtain her degree in computer science. One of Isabella's goals in taking the hair program was to "become more of a people person, and hairstyling really gets you to interact with others and you end up creating great relationships and networks."

Creating new networks and relationships and making clients happy are wonderful skills that will serve Isabella well in the computer science world.

The program is open to high school students and adults. If you would like more information on the program please contact Joel Danyluk at jdanyluk@saanichschools.ca. Studio 63 is open for business and you can make an appointment by calling 250-652-5381. Prices and protocols can be found at www.ilc.sd63.bc.ca and selecting the VIU SD63 Hairstyling Program under the programs tab.

