

January 2007

**Special points of interest:**

- **What is this construction program?**
- **Personal accounts of the program?**
- **How to get enrolled in the program?**
- **What are the benefits of such a program?**

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EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES (EOP)

# Construction Update

**Is there a construction program in York Region?**

Yes, there is a Construction Program in York Region and it is held at Richmond Green Secondary School. This program assists students in becoming familiar with the skilled trades within the Construction Sector. Students in this program explore the different pathways into apprenticeships through various local unions. As the class visits these Unions and get specific certifications and information that will assist students in the future certifications include: Fall Prevention, WHMIS training, and First Aid.

The program consists of GLN4OK (Navigating the workplace), TCJ3OK (Construction Technology), TCJ3OB (Construction Coop Credit), and ILC (One course that students pick

and work on individually).

Our program is associated with Habitat for Humanity, as the students build sheds for this organization as a fundraiser. The class has also been involved with

Habitat housing project in which students helped build a home for community members. As this program interacts with other community projects, students have a chance to see what is available to them in the trades.



**A Thank you to our Community Partners**



As a class, we would like to take this the opportunity to thank Habitat for Humanity, Home Depot, and Rodeo Construction for their assistance this year. Without the contributions from these local companies our experience would not have been as

rewarding.

We had the material from Home Depot to assist us in learning the basics of framing construction for our sheds. These sheds were then donated to Habitat for Humanity.

We also worked for a number of weeks at the Habitat build site expanding our current skills and developing new essential skills needed to succeed in the Skilled Trades Construction Sector.

Our partners at Rodeo Fine Homes spent time with individual students and assisted us with individualized tasks at the job site.

All of these situations were invaluable to the class. We look forward to working and learning with you in the future.





*Students*

*can earn an*

*OSSD*

*while*

*Exploring*

*the*

*Skilled Trades.*



**Tools are an everyday part of our program**

## Tony Ahammadzai's Story

These past few weeks were really amazing for me. I was taught how to do things I haven't done in my life I learned how to drywall, how to do base boards, paint and much more. It was a really good experience for me. I was with a team of good people who loved to work together with no arguments. We worked with electricians, plumbers, drywallers and many more trades. There was a guy name Eric. He taught me a lot, like how to do things right when I was doing something wrong. He helped me to do it right because he was a professional in the construction field. The first day I went there I thought it was going to be so hard for us, but when we went there it was stuff that was both easy and hard. We had so much great people around us that

## Atiq Jafari's Story

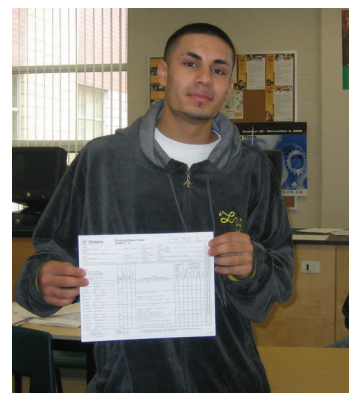
My main goal during Mr. Neale's construction program was to gain experience and see the ups and downs of working in the skilled trades. When I first arrived at the job site I made lots of mistakes. I am not ashamed of my mistakes, since I learned from those mistakes and will not make them again, I am getting better every day.

Building the sheds for Habitat for Humanity was a great experience. At first we did not know what to do, but now we can build sheds very easily. It was great to go with the class and build a shed for a customer and make them happy. Our class did a great job on the shed week (a week dedicated to constructing the sheds) because everyone was focused on the sheds checking if they were proper and straight. It was a great opportunity to work inside and outside of the school.

I would like to thank Habitat for

I thought everything was easy. I think this experience was a great opportunity for all the students in this course because it taught all of us a lot, even stuff that we had never heard of before. The best thing about it was that the days just flew by with ease because everyone had something to do and everyone was just doing what they were told. It was a life time experience working with great people who love to teach you what ever you wanted. That was the best part of it all. If I worked 40-60 hours a week I would become a professional in the construction field and I would start building my own house with high end companies. The only problem would be that I would get really tired and wouldn't be able to go out but if you're making great

money working 40-60 hours a week why not? It would help you out in the long run. Most of all I would like to thank my teacher Mr. Ryan Neale for taking his time to get us hooked up with Habitat For Humanity and I would like to thank them too for letting us work on their house. I would like to thank everyone who has helped the eight of us out.



Humanity for letting our class work on the house in Keswick. I thought it was going to be more difficult than it was. It was simple and easy if you followed all of the instructions. It was a valuable experience for the students in the class for our future. As the days passed, I realized that I was doing things that I never thought of doing by myself. I was getting used to the tools in the tech lab. Now I can make doors, windows, walls, trusses etc.

It was a great experience for me in this construction class. I appreciate Mr. Neale for what he taught with respect, I have not had a teacher like him before. I am happy that there are teachers like Mr. Neale because I have struggled in high school and he made me feel that I will become successful in life.



## Michael Smalling's Story

When I heard that we were going to do some volunteer work on a house in Keswick for Habitat for Humanity I was looking forward to it because I wanted to meet some new people that have the same interest as me. I thought that could maybe be useful to me after I finish high school and want to start my career in carpentry. To my surprise there weren't any real certified carpenter there that could take me on as an apprentice in a year or two. When we really started to work, it was great because all the tasks that the contractor gave me I never did before. The only problem I had was that the first week the contractor was rushing me to do things that I have never have done before and I didn't know how to do. It wasn't that much of a problem because I would just call Mr. Neale, and he would show me exactly what to do and how to do it. I think the experience and the pressure that the contractor (Will) gave me at the start was good for me in the long

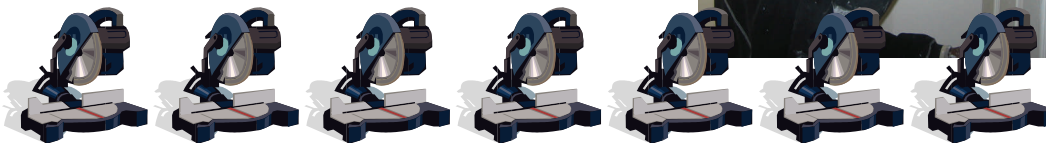
run because I know how to handle those situations when a contractor says I want this done how long are you going to take. Due to those tasks I know now how to handle the pressure when I am asked to do something I didn't have any knowledge about. I also loved it because the contractor kept me busy the whole time, so I didn't begin to slack and get lazy.

The amount of things I learned is ridiculous because I never thought in a million years I would have learned how to cut trim, cut quarter round, paint and master the hand drill in a month at Habitat, I knew I would have come back with some new skills but I never thought that I would have learned how to cut trim and quarter round. Before I learned about the angles I was TOTALLY lost and clueless on how it worked but Mr. Neale showed me how to cut 45 degree angles properly and in a couple hours I knew exactly how to cut my trim and quarter round

properly. This skill I believe was the most important thing I learned by far because I want to become a finished carpenter trimming quarter round are one of the jobs they do on the site.

To me working 50 hours a week wouldn't be bad as long as I am actively doing something because the days at Habitat flew by for me, but only because I was always doing something that I liked. The only problem is that I would be very tired and worn out my first week on the job because I wouldn't be used to be working the whole week

Michael Smalling Jr.



## Mohammad Jourj's Story

My experience at Habitat for Humanity was very helpful. When I got to Habitat for Humanity I learned many things. It was unbelievable that I could accomplish the tasks that were assigned to me. I never knew that I could put up a piece of drywall, or even frame a house. Habitat and the teacher were very helpful. He taught me how to do many things regarding the house. I'm happy to have such good teachers to show me how to build and what pathways I can take when I finish high school. When we first came to the house I thought it would take me several years to get all the tasks that where given to me done to expectations,

but surprisingly I got all the tasks done fairly quickly. When I get older I could use the skills I developed while working at Habitat for Humanity. These skills are very helpful because I can now go into a construction trade while having knowledge working with my hands and putting up houses. I appreciate my teachers help, and that they took their time teaching me how to get better, or even how to do some things. I also have to thank Mr. Neale for telling me what pathways I can take after high school and how to get my life together. I apologize for taking both my teachers time helping me with my success in the future. I

learned how to be honest and how teamwork is very important. I couldn't have asked for anything more.

Your Student, Mo



### The Construction Trades Include:

- Brick Mason
- Cement Mason
- Construction Craft Labourer
- Electrician
- Drywall Finisher & Plasterer
- General Carpenter
- Glazier and Metal Mechanic
- Painter/Decorator
- Plumber
- Powerline Worker
- Refrigeration/AC Mechanic
- Roofer
- Sheet Metal Worker





## Richie Bernard's Story

My experience at Habitat for Humanity was something I was not expecting, I thought I was just going there to help move stuff around or work under somebody to get them the tools they needed for the job. The day we all got there we were told that we're going to be painting, dry walling, and helping with the finishing touches. That was something I didn't expect. Another thing was that I learned that was when it comes to doing the finish touches on a house, like painting, base boards, dry walling and putting on the light fixtures and plumbing is the most annoying thing to do. When I was doing it I got bored and once in a while I got sleepy because when your painting you have to wait until it dries and some of the time there isn't anything else to do so your just standing around. All in all I think my experience with the Habitat for Humanity and Richmond Green SS has been the most incredible experience I have ever had.

I don't think this program was hard or easy. When we first

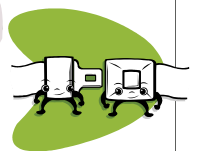
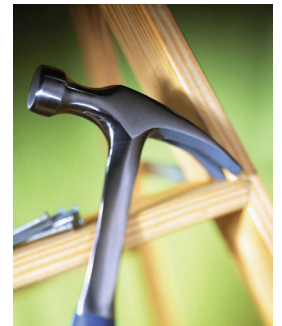
started at Richmond Green S.S. we all knew a bit of the basics of construction and building. When we started this program in September 2006 we learned new skills and from there we gained more experience about the construction field and how it works. It will help us out where ever we choose to go. We will take this knowledge with us.

Wow!!! It really depends on the day or the type of mood I'm in. When you're feeling sluggish or too tired to do any work the day will seem 3 to 6 hours longer. But if you come in with energy to work and lift stuff until you cannot lift any more your going to think you were there for only 3 hours. So it really depends on the mood your in or the type of energy you have.

I think it was a very valuable experience, to be able to work on a house and now I can say to someone "yes I helped out when this house was built". No one can take that from you in anyway possible. Being in this program was a great experience for me and to any other

student who will take this course in the present and future.

If I worked 40 to 60 hours a week I would be happy to know that I am be getting paid at the end of the week for the hard work I have done. I would also be very tired and might not be as enthusiastic as I was on the first day. But if I was working 30 to 40 hours a week, I would definitely be able to handle it. When I'm working I'm thinking about a goal I want to accomplish for example I want to buy a car or in the future a house that I want to start putting a down payment on. But I have to work to save the money to meet that goal's I want. Because in life you have to work to get something in life.



### Aaron Vilneff's Story

During the duration of this course I learned more than my fair share about construction due to the tireless efforts of the biggest and brightest teachers in York Region Mr. Ryan Neale and Mr. Tucker. Some of these learned skills are a very good asset to the general working world as a whole and to yourself in mental and spiritual growth.

While enrolled in this construction related program, we had a very beneficial organization we were working for called Habitat for Humanity. I found working for the ladies and gentlemen at Habitat for Humanity that are devoted to helping others that are financially challenged succeed is a fantastic cause. I was more than pleased to assist to the best of my

ability. Habitat for Humanity and its volunteers, as a whole deserve the utmost respect and gratitude given to them they truly are heroes.

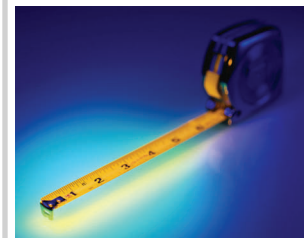
After my experiences at Habitat for Humanity and the duration of the course I learned a lot more of what I find to be vital work and essential living skills in general. Some of those new skills I learned were how to almost properly swing a hammer courtesy of the back pack avenger a.k.a. my buddy Mike.

The course was more than just that. I learned from a bunch of people from a many of different towns and upbringings that we might not always get along but we

all agree on getting stuff done as a team and I think team work and respect are two of the most vital skills a person can have in life.

All and all this is a very beneficial to any student that needs to gain some credits and is interested in not necessary the trades, but to excel in their career and in life as a person. To any inquiring student I would recommend this course and say to you the best of luck and remember it's what you make it so make this your good year and be successful.

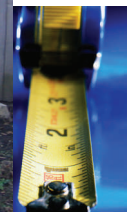
Aaron Vilneff



### Jason Vilneff's Story

I found that the exploring opportunities program to be very beneficial for myself. Being a student who does not like a traditional classroom setting it was much easier for me to stay on top of assignments, which was a challenge in previous years. We also had the opportunity to learn about different trades, specifically woodworking trades, that may give us a level base to start a career. In this class we also had the opportunity to work with and for Habitat for Humanity (a non profit organization building homes for people in need). This taught us some valuable skills like being on

time, prepared, positive, safe, and other important skills needed to be successful in the workplace. If we did not meet these requirements on a daily basis we would be fired. This was used as a tool to mimic a workplace experience for us. The classroom size was very small and we were working constantly with our peers. This alleviates the whole break the ice and meet everyone part of the year. Overall, I believe this is a great program for people who do not have success in a traditional school setting and I would recommend it highly to others.



*To apply just ask you Guidance Department to give you an Exploring Opportunities Program Application.*





## Jamie's Story

My experience at Habitat for Humanity was very helpful. I learned a lot while I helped build the sheds that we later gave to Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity makes houses and sells them for at a lower price. The only part that I found difficult was making trusses for the sheds and working with warped wood. Half of the trusses that we made did not fit onto the sheds, and adjustments had to be made to them for them to fit correctly. My teachers were happy to provide help to anyone who needed it. Whenever someone asked for help, help was given to them. After we put together the sheds we had to take them apart so we could load them at the back of a truck, to assemble again at the buyer's house. When we were at school the days would fly by with ease, and when we were fixing the house in Kes-

wick, the days went by slowly. I think this helped me and I will now have better knowledge of construction. The class went to Keswick to help finish a house that was almost finished. We all did a good job finishing this house. Everyone put in a big effort to get this house finished. Some of us were painting, others were framing, and some even put up drywall in the basement washroom. I learned a lot when I was working for Habitat for Humanity. I would help volunteer for Habitat for Humanity again. The experience was very beneficial to me. I look forward to gaining more knowledge in the construction field in the future.

Jamie



## Mr. Tucker's Comments

When I began teaching at Richmond Green I was told that I would be working with the Exploring Opportunities Program (EOP). I didn't know much about it, other than it was a specialized program for students to explore the construction trades. I was initially nervous but also excited about the possibilities this program offers students. A lot of my enjoyment of the course would depend on the type of students who would be in the class.

When we began in September I was introduced to the class and was surprised by the students wide of range skills and life experiences. Students came from different schools, each with a

unique view of the value of school. One commonality that all of the students had was they wanted to learn. They recognized that in order to be successful in life they need to have the skills to get them a job that they will enjoy doing. Over the semester this one area of common interest took this group of strangers and transformed them into a cooperative team capable of completing professional quality work.

I witnessed students mature in ways that other teachers may not have thought possible for these individuals. Students learned about helping each other with their independent learning credits, improving their English skills, practicing their public speaking and, overall moral support

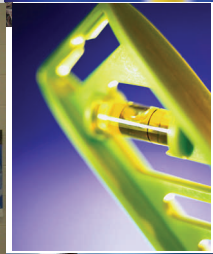
for each other.

Each of the students in this course should be tremendously proud of their accomplishments to date. As I am sure Mr. Neale would echo, I would have no problem in recommending any one of these students to a potential employer. I cannot say enough about the integrity, dedication and strength of character I have seen these students demonstrate in this program. I'm excited about where these students will go in life and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Chris Tucker



# Class Pictures







## Contact Information

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## Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the students, administrators, and colleagues who made this semester an extraordinary experience for me. I want to thank the eight of you that put hours of effort and heart into all of our projects. For every time that I taught you something you also taught me. A special Thank you to Mr. Chris Tucker, without your positive attitude and unlimited energy I don't think we would have made it. I would also like to thank Ms. Logue and Mrs. Schnapp for their support throughout this semester.

THANK YOU

Mr. Ryan Neale

