



News Release

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING WEEK BEING CELEBRATED

BRANTFORD (Nov. 16, 2010) – The benefits of experiential, or workplace, learning for students and employers will be celebrated next week.

Jeremy Alting is just one of many success stories. The Grade 12 Valley Heights Secondary School student discovered he is a hands-on learner. He is excelling in the school's co-op program, working as a mechanic's assistant at Blue Star Ford in Simcoe. "I like figuring out things and working with my hands better than being in a classroom," says Jeremy, who will be the first person in his family to graduate from high school.

Corey Stanley, a Grade 11 student from Grand Erie Learning Alternatives, shares a similar passion. Corey is currently doing a co-op placement at Brantford Honda's service department, learning automotive skills.

Then there's James Farry, a Dunnville Secondary School student doing a co-op at the Shared Harvest Community Farm in Dunnville. He is learning about organic farming and sustainable development.

The value of workplace learning like this is being celebrated across Ontario during **Experiential Learning Week**, being marked Nov. 22 to 26. Activities are taking place across Ontario under the theme "Thinking Beyond the Classroom" to recognize employers who give their time, expertise and guidance to students.

"The purpose of the week is to promote experiential learning and to give those involved, especially employers, some well-deserved credit," said Jaymie Nelson, Passport to Prosperity co-ordinator for the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie.

As part of **Experiential Learning Week**, the Workforce Planning Board, School College Work Initiative and community partners are holding a one-day Passport to Prosperity event to promote occupations in the helping professions to Grade 8 male students. **Service, Strength, Support: Males in Human Services** is being held in Simcoe, Thursday, Nov. 25 at Simcoe's Hambleton Hall.

Students receive a number of benefits from workplace learning, including gaining hands-on experience, exposure to the work world and a chance to try out an occupation they're interested in. Experiential learning has also been shown to build student confidence and increase graduation rates. There are also benefits to employers, many of whom see workplace learning as a positive way to support their community and a method to find future employees.

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board and the Grand Erie District School Board both offer a wide variety of experiential learning opportunities for students.

The Workforce Planning Board (www.workforceplanningboard.org) is one of 21 non-profit organizations in Ontario that play a leadership role in labour force planning.