



From left, students Austin Giles and Bailey Fitch with teacher Phil Gagnon are about to test and adjust the manifold pressure on an old furnace.

High school success story

Ontario school celebrates six years of graduating licensed gas fitters

Over the past six years students at College Avenue Secondary School in Woodstock, Ontario have been given the opportunity to write their Gas Certification Level 3 licence in their own classroom under the guidance of their teacher, Phil Gagnon. As the only high school in Ontario designated as a training provider by the Ontario Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA), dozens of students have achieved their Certificate of Qualification over the years.

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This program is available to any student of the Thames Valley District School Board under the age of 21. By supplying the code books as well as all tools and a textbook, the school ensures that this opportunity is available to everyone, reported Gagnon.

Along with their gas certification,

students also received certification in fall arrest, confined spaces awareness, lock out/tag out, first aid/CPR, elevated platform training, propane in construction, electrical safety and WHIMIS.

On the job

The students receive workplace experience with area contractors through a double credit co-operative education course, ensuring that each student experiences a minimum of 180 hours working in the skilled trades. These students are registered under the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, guaranteeing that their hours will count towards their apprenticeship. As a measure of their success, these students are required to monitor their training using the Ontario Skills Passport.

As well, in providing as much real world experience as possible, many guest speakers are used throughout the course, said Gagnon. Representatives from Union Gas and local trade contractors provide insight into the day-to-day activities of a technician. TSSA inspectors are brought in to

explain their role in gas safety. As well, representatives from manufacturers are invited to provide industry specific training. Recent sessions included one on Gastite flexible gas piping and

another on ULC s636 venting systems.

“By providing a well-rounded trade specific education, we are ensuring that we can provide our students with the opportunity to explore a rewarding career in the heating industry, as well as to supply employers with young educated and trained employees for years to come,” said Gagnon. +

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