



Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

MEDIA RELEASE



1325 California Ave, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3Y6 ph: (519) 253-2481 fax: (519) 253-0620

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Construction Academy

New program includes variety of community partners

(Windsor, Ontario, Wednesday, April 19, 2017) – A new Construction Academy will provide Grade 11 and 12 students with a wide variety of modern building technology skills while they help break the cycle of poverty by contributing to the creation of affordable housing throughout Ontario.

Partnering with Habitat for Humanity, as well as the Windsor Construction Association, the Windsor Essex Homebuilders' Association, the Ontario Masonry Training Centre and St. Clair College, the WECDSB announced plans today for the new academy at St. Joseph's Catholic High School. It will also incorporate the masonry program at F.J. Brennan Catholic High School.

"Besides being an excellent way for students to learn a variety of skills that can lead to careers in any number of highly sought-after trades, they will be doing something meaningful for the betterment of communities right across the province," said Executive Superintendent of Innovation and Experiential Learning Dan Fister, "and that's in keeping with our mission as a faith-based education community."

Under the new academy model, students will spend part of their time learning in the construction technology lab at St. Joseph's, and part of their time in the masonry lab at F.J. Brennan, which was opened in 2015 in cooperation with the Canada Masonry Centre. They will earn college dual credits, gain advanced standing in programs at St. Clair College, have access to paid summer co-op opportunities, and participate in valuable experiential learning, including a plan which could see them partner with Habitat for Humanity to build pre-fabricated modules for the affordable ranch-style homes they build right across Ontario. Plans are also in the works with both the homebuilders' association and the construction association to determine other construction sector co-op placements.

"This is really a match made in heaven," said Pamela Breault, Operations Manager of Habitat for Humanity Windsor-Essex. "We'll be able to help even more people throughout Ontario achieve their dreams of home ownership, and students will receive invaluable hands-on experience, and the satisfaction of knowing they have helped someone less fortunate."

"Learning together in faith and service"

Through the new program, Grade 11 and 12 students will be able to:

- take construction technology courses in home building, masonry sciences and the associated trades of plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling at St. Joseph's, F.J .Brennan and dual credits at St. Clair College
- participate in a year-long work experience as part of the Habitat for Humanity construction crew for their home builds and housing projects within our community
- be registered as an apprentice and gain as many as 1,000 hours of work experience towards their apprenticeship which will ultimately shorten the time by at least a year to obtain journeyman certification
- graduate with a Special High Skills Major red seal OSSD diploma
- connect directly with potential employers given the wealth of education and work experience
- experience the gift of serving and building our community

Board Chair Barb Holland said she is especially pleased with the new partnership.

“A fundamental part of who we are as a Catholic school system involves reaching out and providing a hand up to the most vulnerable members of our community,” she said. “This new academy gives our students the opportunity to do just that while they learn how to create more meaningful, fulfilling lives for themselves.”

For further information contact:

Stephen Fields, Communications Coordinator
Cell: 226-347-0113, E-Mail: Stephen_fields@wecdsb.on.ca