



CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE®

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"CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE®" is an electronic journal that showcases stories written and submitted by Ontario high school students who have participated in a Cooperative Education course. The stories describe the tasks that were completed, the challenges overcome and the benefits they derived from their Cooperative Education placements.

PLEASE NOTE: These stories are in the student's own words and the articles have not been edited in any way, to maintain the true spirit of "CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE®".

Thank you for taking the time to read these inspiring stories and we hope that you will encourage your students to share their stories for publication in our next edition!

THE CADMAN POWER EQUIPMENT EXPERIENCE

By: Cameron Veltman, Grade 12 Student, Valley Heights Secondary School, Grand Erie District School Board

My name is Cameron Veltman, and I am currently a 12th grade student at Valley Heights Secondary school. I started my Co-op placement on November 15th 2021 at Cadman Power Equipment Ltd. I was always interested in the trades every since I welded for the first time in grade 8 on a school trip at Valley Heights Secondary School. I am currently enrolled in SHSM (Specialist High Skills Majors) and I just finished a night school course which involved stick welding and I am also enrolled with the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship program. I'm going to continue on learning about welding in the future.



My first day at Cadman was a show around of the place and a breakdown of what they did and the procedures of how they do stuff and some health and safety then I started getting into the work. I started building booms and then about 2 weeks into work we started building carts, carts are the part that moves

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The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live.
~ Mortimer Adler

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... THE CADMAN POWER EQUIPMENT EXPERIENCE

the booms across the field to water the crops. Then I went back to booms for a bit. It was a really fun experience considering I was afraid at first but you have to take steps or else you won't get to where you want to be. I want to thank Cadman for bringing me into the manufacturing sector and all the people I have worked with.

I believe that whoever reads this that you should participate in Co-op because it gives you that work experience in the desired career you are studying. It shows you if you will like it or not, it gives you that chance to experience it and if you don't like it, it isn't too late to change career study because you are still in school. My future is pretty bright considering I would do whatever it takes to be successful either if I'm a welder or a professional disc golfer. Personally, I can't wait for what the future holds. All I know is that I will never give up.

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again."

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT PLACEMENT AT TERRY FOX ELEMENTARY

Submitted By: Sweny Saija: Grade 11 OYAP Student, Cairine Wilson Secondary School, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

My experience as an educational assistant at Terry Fox Elementary School was filled with joy, energy, and endless possibilities. Each day, I stepped into a colourful classroom buzzing with excitement and curiosity. The sound of laughter, the sight of eager faces, and the warmth of their innocence created an atmosphere that was both rewarding and inspiring. I was entrusted with the task of not only imparting knowledge but also nurturing young minds and instilling a love for learning that will stay with them throughout their lives.



In the classroom, I'd engaged the students through interactive and hands-on activities. I employed a variety of teaching strategies, from storytelling to games, to capturing their attention and making learning a fun-filled adventure. Patience and understanding were my guiding principles as I navigated the challenges and triumphs of guiding the young learners.

I celebrated their achievements, big and small, and provided a safe and supportive environment where they could express themselves freely. Witnessing their growth, from mastering basic skills to becoming more confident and independent thinkers, it filled my heart with pride and reaffirmed my passion for teaching at the elementary level.

Overall, I am grateful for being given an opportunity to be an educational assistant as a co-op placement. It is a journey that requires dedication, creativity, and a genuine love for children. Each day brings new surprises, and I am grateful for the opportunity to shape the next generation and guide them toward a future full of possibilities.

One learns by doing a thing; for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.
- Sophocles

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIAN AT POLITO FORD

By: Emma Fox, Grade 12 Student, Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Trillium Lakelands District School Board

My name is Emma Fox, and I am a grade 12 student at Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute in Lindsay, Ontario. I am in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program as an Automotive Service Technician and my placement is at Polito Ford in Lindsay, Ontario.

As I was entering my last year of high school, I had still not decided what I wanted to do after graduating. I had taken an automotive class in grade 11 and I enjoyed working on vehicles and trying out welding. I have always loved helping my dad whenever he worked on any of our vehicles at home so I thought the automotive service industry would interest me. However, I also knew that welding was a passion that I wanted to explore.

After speaking with Ms. Cossarin, my co-op teacher, we decided I should do my co-op in the automotive field and take a dual credit course in welding through Fleming College. I loved the dual credit program as it introduced me to different welding techniques. Meanwhile, at Polito Ford, I really enjoyed what I was doing and who I was working with. My duties included helping around the shop by sweeping, assisting the mechanics, emptying the garbage, and taking out recycling and scrap.

Polito Ford hired me to work in the service department after school every day. As my co-op placement was nearing the end Ms. Cossarin asked if I had thought about signing up as an OYAP apprentice. To be honest, I had not even thought about it as I was still undecided on what to do after I graduated. After many discussions with Ms. Cossarin and my parents, I decided to sign a Registered Training Agreement. Working towards becoming an Automotive Service Technician allows me to work on vehicles and allows me some opportunities to weld.

My advice to anyone who is unsure of what career choice they want to make is to do a co-op in the field they are interested in pursuing. Taking the dual credit course was extremely beneficial to me as well because it taught me skills that would help me in my chosen career.



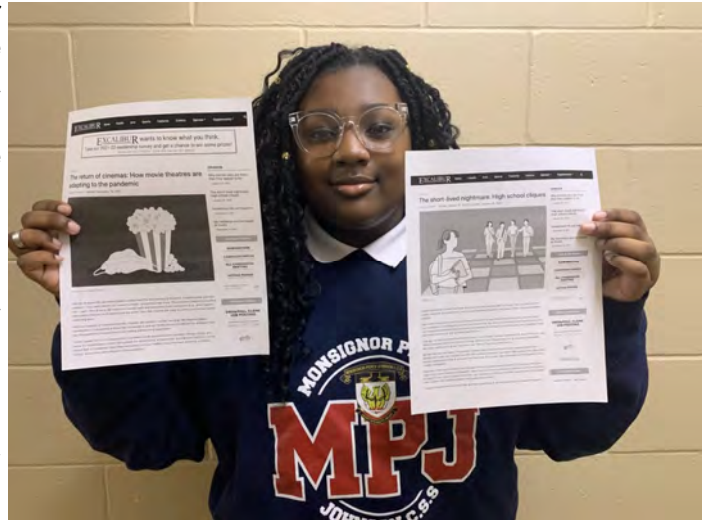
*"The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives."
~ Robert M. Hutchins*

MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AT EXCALIBUR PUBLICATIONS

By: Kellissa Greene, Grade 11 Co-op/SHSM Student, Monsignor Percy Johnson Catholic Secondary School, Toronto Catholic District School Board

I had the opportunity to have a co-op placement at Excalibur Publications, to help me gain a better understanding of one of the career paths I would like to join. I'm currently a Business Specialist High Skills Major student. In the future I hope to major in accounting and have a minor in reportage writing/journalism.

This Co-op experience has given me a better understanding of the journalism field. My Editor In-Chief, Sarah, gave me a breakdown of the pitching process, the interview process, and the writing process. The Copy Editor, Jonathan, showed me their editing process and things to pay attention to when writing. He allowed me to edit articles with him until I got a good idea of what was acceptable and what was not.



Sarah had allowed me to work on an article she had gotten the interviews/ emails for. With her guidance, I was able to finish it and it's now published on their site.



Sarah and Jonathan then allowed me to write my own feature. I was to gather resources from other Canadian articles, emails, and interviews. By the end of that week, with their help, I had published another article.

My teachers at school were extremely supportive, especially my SHSM and Co-op teacher. Having had this Co-op placement has impacted me tremendously, it's solidified my plans for journalism, and empowered me to believe in my writing. I no longer look at what I have, I look at what I have the potential to do.

Thank you to:

Excalibur Publications — Thank you for allowing me to have my Co-op placement at your Publication. Thank you for the welcoming hands and the kindness you have shown me. I could never thank you enough for all the experience this opportunity has granted me.

Ms. Corvinelli — your support and help finding this placement is greatly appreciated. I have gained so much from this opportunity that will go towards my future.

Mrs. D'Addio — Thank you for the encouragement and support you offered me and thank you for sharing my work with the principal.

*"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows."
~ Sydney J. Harris*

MY SUMMER CO-OP AT ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTHCARE HAMILTON

By: Maliha Ahmed, Grade 11 Co-op/SHSM Student, Bishop Ryan Catholic High School, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

My name is Maliha Ahmed, and I'm going into grade 12 in September 2023. I'm a student at Bishop Ryan Catholic High School, and I'm taking part in a summer Co-op at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. My placement is related to the healthcare sector and is a pathway I would like to consider for my future career. I'm a SHSM student who is using these opportunities to further explore my post-secondary pathway. For the future, I'm considering a career as a nurse and later specializing in becoming a labour and delivery nurse. During my placement at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton's 5MG unit, I assisted in stocking nurse servers, med carts, and blood carts, as well as doing recreational activities with patients. This helped me grow my interpersonal skills and confidence when speaking to patients and co-workers. I learned to be organized and patient while doing my work to achieve the best results. This placement provided insight into what nurses do and the environment in which they work, which has helped shape my decision to work in the medical field.



During my time working on this placement, I felt both excited and nervous because of the new things I had to learn and try. I've come to the conclusion that I want to work in the medical industry someday. I learned a lot of new things during my placement, including the various healthcare professions one might encounter in a hospital and the services they offer. I gained knowledge of occupational therapists, dieticians, and other professionals who work in hospitals. My time at Co-op has both confirmed my career choice and shown me other medical-related careers I might want to investigate. Overall, the experience greatly influenced my decision regarding my career path.

The Co-op placement on 5MG has reaffirmed my decisions as well as the courses that I picked. My choice to take the Grade 12 Healthcare course was amazing in terms of familiarizing myself with what I learned on site at Co-op. I have made sure that I have taken the right courses for my final year and met the requirements needed to apply for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. During my stay at 5MG, I was able to network with multiple healthcare professionals and gain insight from their jobs. They helped me understand the scope of practice for different healthcare professionals as well as the network of services that are provided to patients. In conclusion, my time in Co-op helped guide my decision to pursue a career in medicine and has helped me gain experience.



*"Wisdom.... comes not from age, but from education and learning."
~ Anton Chekhov*

MY CO-OP EXPERIENCE AT POPE FRANCIS CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By: Mary-Ann Yokhana, Grade 11 Co-op Student, Holy Cross Catholic Academy, York Catholic District School Board

My name is Mary-Ann Yokhana and I am a grade 11 student attending Holy Cross Catholic Academy in Woodbridge, Ontario. June 19th, 2023, marked the end of my co-op experience at Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School, where I had the incredible opportunity to work in a grade 5 classroom. Over the course of four accomplished months, I was given the pleasure of working side-by-side with one of York Catholic District School Board's most brilliant teachers. Looking back at the past few months, I am filled with a mix of emotions -- gratitude, growth, and a sense of accomplishment.



From the very first day, I was warmly welcomed with open arms by the students, staff, and my admirable supervisor/mentor. The placement experience was enriching as it provided me with firsthand exposure to the dynamics of a faith-based educational environment. I witnessed how the values of compassion, kindness and respect were integrated into every aspect of the school day, creating a nurturing and inclusive atmosphere for both students and teachers. Throughout my time at Pope Francis CES, I had a wide range of tasks to complete. I assisted the classroom teacher (my supervisor) in preparing lesson materials, grading assessments, and providing one-on-one support to students who required extra assistance. I also had the opportunity to lead group activities and teach a couple of small lessons. These responsibilities allowed me to deepen my understanding of the curriculum, enhance my communication skills and develop my leadership abilities.

Undoubtedly, there were challenges that I endured along the way. One of the main hurdles I was faced with was finding effective strategies to engage all the students, considering their diverse learning styles and abilities. I quickly learned the importance of differentiation and implementing various teaching techniques to ensure each student had an equal opportunity to learn and succeed. I began to develop a sense of creativity when brainstorming ideas on how to get the students as engaged as possible. I often played brain-teasing games with the students and even handed out prizes to students who worked efficiently throughout the school day. Occasionally, I would create "clubs" for the students to work to get into by showing acts of kindness, responsibility or initiative in which they would be rewarded with a good like ice cream or lollipops. This idea pushed the students to be kind to one another and try their absolute best in their work. Overcoming this challenge not only improved my instructional skills but also taught me the value of flexibility and adaptability in an educational setting.

Reflecting on my co-op experience, I can confidently say that the benefits derived from this placement are immeasurable. Firstly, I developed a deep appreciation for the power of community and collaboration. The sense of unity among the school staff, students and families fostered a supportive learning environment that extended beyond the classroom walls. Secondly, I witnessed firsthand the profound impact a teacher can have on a child's life. Seeing the

Continued on next page...

... MY CO-OP EXPERIENCE AT POPE FRANCIS CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

students grow academically, socially, and spiritually was incredibly rewarding and it reaffirmed my passion for pursuing a career in education.

In conclusion, my Co-op experience at Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School has been a transformative journey. The opportunity to work in a grade 5 classroom, the tasks I completed, the challenges I overcame and the invaluable benefits I gained have all contributed to my personal and professional growth. I leave this placement with a renewed sense of purpose, armed with knowledge, skills, and a heart filled with gratitude for the enriching experience.

“An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't. It's knowing where to go to find out what you need to know; and it's knowing how to use the information you get”.
~ William Feather



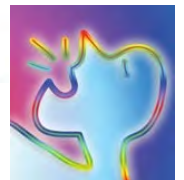
CRITERIA: CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE©

“**Capturing the Student Voice©**” is an electronic journal that includes success stories written by students from across Ontario who participated in the Cooperative Education program and other forms of Experiential Learning (OYAP, SHSM, etc.) in their high school. These stories describe their placement experience, the tasks they had to complete, challenges overcome and the benefits they derived. Thank you for taking the time to read these inspiring stories and maybe even share yours!

Do you have a student who would like to share their success at a placement? We are looking for stories in the following areas:

- ⇒ Dual-Credit and Co-op
- ⇒ Successful OYAP / Co-op
- ⇒ Successful SHSM / Co-op
- ⇒ Successful Special Ed. Co-op (non-earning credits)
- ⇒ Successful Co-op

The
Spirit of
COOPeration



Criteria:

1. Submit student(s) story(ies) by May 31st (annually) via email to OCEA@rogers.com;
2. Ensure the article is no more than 350 words in length;
3. Teachers' are asked to edit student articles for grammar, spelling, sentence structure, etc.
4. Submit one picture of the student at their placement (high-resolution (300 dpi) jpg format)
5. Complete and submit the [Photo and Model Release Agreement Form](#).

MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AT BLVD CONSTRUCTION INC.

By: Noellé Bowdidge, Grade 11 Co-op/SHSM Student, St. Mary Secondary School, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

I am Noellé Bowdidge who was in grade 11 now going into 12 for the upcoming school year at St. Mary Secondary School. I have been working with Blvd Construction Inc. for my co-op as a SHSM student that falls under the construction category. My career goals are very much clear to me as I do not want to be stuck in an office all day looking over foundation plans for the rest of my life. Do not get me wrong there were times where I thought it was fun but that was before I had to repeatedly do these tasks at least 50 plus times.

At my co-op position I have learned many new tasks, even a few I did not even know existed. For example, buildings need all diverse types of footings and trenches to keep the building safe and secure. The company to which I have had the pleasure of working with this summer is the core to a whole project. Without them there is no start and with no start there will be no beginning to a project. In other words, they are the first to see and be on the project so that the company who works on it after then has a base to work off for the building to come.



The knowledge I have gained from this was an understanding of how to do pricing for the cost of a project; finding forming areas which is the framing before they pour concrete; to finding concrete volume. To then finding the lengths/height of walls so I could find the forming are. As well as finding the amount of wood needed for piers which are there for needed support on ground that is not suitable to hold a building. I learned how to calculate and find how much rebar will be needed in projects. I also learned how to use the online version of doing this because it is good to know how to do both ways one manually the other automatic. To add to what I have learned here is how rebar is made and the different bar shapes such as a "z" bar which is used for the connection of the slab and reinforcing footing beam and so much more. If I were to explain all that I learned, you would be here reading this culminating for hours on end.

I am extremely grateful for getting to experience firsthand a real job in the construction field that is not working in retail, torturing, or doing a newspaper route. I am forever thankful to the knowledge learned from this co-op and enjoyed it 60% of the time. Although there were times when I enjoyed what I was doing I cannot say I would want to do this for the rest of my life. I feel if I end up working a job like this, I will go a little crazy with boredom. The eight hours a day of sitting in an office was mentally draining as I would look out the window and wish I were out there.

What I would genuinely like to be doing with my time in the future is to design homes, buildings, or organize a work site like what my dad does. My father is a construction project director meaning he oversees the whole operation of the project. For example, he oversees the planning/delivery of a project as well as sorts out what needs to happen when it needs to happen. I would also be content with being an electrician as in construction class I was extremely good at it. I liked the feeling I would get each project I did and each time it worked first try as I had followed the directions perfectly. Although it was even more satisfying getting it correct on my first try without even asking for help and just figuring it out by using my own knowledge was also gratifying. So, to answer the question would I become a professional in what I had done for my co-op? Well, I very well

Continued on next page...

...MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AT BLVD CONSTRUCTION INC.

could be although I very much will not as I cannot live with doing something each day that I do not have a passion for. Once I was told and shown what I needed to complete it was simple after doing it twice although the job varies from its complexity based on the engineering's designs. The man who runs Blvd Construction Inc. explained to me that to do our job properly we must look at the engineering's design to understand the engineers' thoughts which an odd case is extremely difficult.

This co-op has shown me things that I enjoy and things I do not. In a result giving me the ability to find jobs that I can do in this field that are more of a correct fit for me. This will not change any of my courses that I am currently chosen to take as this co-op job was not the exact job I wanted to work. Although every day I sit here I regret dropping Grade 12 physics for next year and not dropping data instead because I am more likely to need physics over data for what I want to get into.

Izzy, who is the owner's son, has expressed to me that it would be wise I get physics back into my timetable for Grade 12 which I will consider doing as I did exceptionally good in Grade 11 physics. The only reason I had dropped it in the first place is because if I do not need it, I was told by everyone who did it not to bother taking it.

To conclude, this co-op of was a fantastic way to get an experience with this work field and truly does help you get a grasp of what you want for your future to come.

MY OYAP PLACEMENT AT ATRE DRAIN & PLUMBING

By: Xavier Markland, Grade 11 Co-op/OYAP Student, Rick Hansen Secondary School, Peel District School Board

When I first started high school at Rick Hansen SS, Peel DSB in 2019, I felt lost because I wasn't your typical student who aspired to become a lawyer or doctor or any other academic type of profession a parent would want their child to do. I have always had a passion for hands-on work and the idea of building or fixing something that is useful has always appealed to me.

So fast forward to Gr. 11 my Co-op teacher, Ms. Vavaroutsos helped me explore my passion for hands-on work by helping me get a jump start into the trades through OYAP with Atre Drain & Plumbing. The owner Alex Bondarev was very supportive and through his mentorship and guidance I was able to learn and develop basic industry skills. Despite making several mistakes on the job, I gained valuable insight into what skill sets are required to become a Plumber in the future. Building relationships in the workplace and networking with individuals that have industry experience is invaluable. This experience helped me clarify my career goals of becoming a Plumber and motivated me to try my best to improve my skills on the job.

As a result of my participation in OYAP in Grade 11, I was accepted into the Grade 12 Accelerated OYAP Level 1 Plumbing Program at Sheridan College. This unique program has allowed me to further develop my hands-on experience in the industry with the same employer and has enhanced my learning of plumbing concepts which is highly valued by employers. I am so grateful for the OYAP program because it has not only shaped me into the person I am today, but it has also given me a head start into a fulfilling career as a Plumber.

My advice to grade 9s and 10s who might be like I was at that age, and don't have a clue about what they want to do in the future, try Co-op because it allows you to explore your career interests and if you are lucky enough it might just help you find your future dream job.



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CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE®

A newsletter published for the members of the Ontario Cooperative Education Association

LA VOIX DES ÉLÈVES®

Un bulletin d'information pour les membres de l'Association de l'éducation coopérative de l'Ontario

OCEA MISSION STATEMENT "Facilitating and supporting the exchange of ideas among Experiential Learning Professionals"

The Ontario Cooperative Education Association (OCEA) is a not-for-profit professional organization of Ontario Cooperative Education and Experiential Learning Professionals. It strives to provide the leadership and vision needed for optimal professional development of its members. The Association also develops and facilitates access to information, resources and other supports relevant to OCEA members and other Experiential Learning Professionals in the province of Ontario, while supporting excellence in the education of all students in Ontario.

ÉNONCÉ DE MISSION DE L'AÉCO « Aider et encourager l'échange d'idées entre les professionnels de l'apprentissage par l'expérience »

L'Association de l'éducation coopérative de l'Ontario (AÉCO) est une association professionnelle, sans but lucratif, qui regroupe des professionnels de l'éducation coopérative et autres formes d'apprentissage par l'expérience. Elle s'efforce de fournir un leadership et une vision nécessaires au développement professionnel optimal de ses membres. De plus, l'association contribue au développement de ressources, en facilite l'accès, et fournit des renseignements actuels et pratiques à ses membres et aux autres professionnels de l'apprentissage par l'expérience en Ontario, tout en soutenant l'excellence en éducation de tous les élèves de la province.

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