

Brooks/VIU students win gold

Instructors proud of participants

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Regional High School Skills Canada competition in Campbell River had Powell River students coming out ahead in four of the areas in which they competed. All local winners are dual credit students at Brooks Secondary School/Vancouver Island University. Each of the instructors felt that the students were not only knowledgeable about their trades area, but ambassadors of the dual credit program in general.

Wes Irwin, welding instructor, said of gold-medal winner Melina Sparks, “We are so proud of her. She not only had the highest grades on the written tests in class, she is a self-starter. That will mean success for her in her future. The judges said they were impressed with her very professional skills and showed excellence and readiness for employment.” Melina has two older brothers who also came through the dual credit program and she plans to work with them after completing the program.

Telicia Hlatkey of the carpentry program had to prove her skills by building two connecting walls, one with a door and a window, then produce a layout for a set of stairs. “I knew I had a good chance because I could see that the others’ measurements were laid out wrong. I am stoked. It was an awesome feeling to win gold and a \$200 drill.”

Telicia, who hails from Gibsons, enjoyed the chance to meet other female students in the trades area. Following in her father’s footsteps, she plans to apprentice with him or other family members in the field. Chosen by instructor Gary Huculak for her superior grades, Telicia loves not only the layout part of the program, but the hands-on component. “I love being on the roof—it’s heart-pounding fun.”

Dan Light of the auto program selected Thomas Archibald to represent Powell River. “Thomas did us proud. He did such a good job and we’re looking forward to the challenge of the best of the best at the provincial level in April.”

Thomas enjoys being a dual credit student. Hoping to find employment in the auto field, he appreciates how specialized the work is in the program, preparing him for his success in the competition. “We had to do specific tasks thoroughly, demonstrating our skill and knowledge. It felt good to keep up the tradition of winning—it’s our sixth year in a row.”

Megan Vallier of the culinary program looked forward to the challenge of competition, knowing that taking this on looks good on a resumé. Well organized and calm, she felt very prepared. “We are timed throughout the process and two judges are circling, watching our every move. We are marked on cleanliness as well as taste and presentation.” Adding to the pressure is a “mystery ingredient” that needs to be incorporated into the dish. Megan was up to the challenge. Instructor Mike Austin reported, “Her dish was amazing. It was restaurant-ready—very professional. This will start Megan on her goal to achieve her Red Seal, then go overseas to get experience in the food industry.”

VIU administration Coordinator Sandy Elvy said, “We are very proud of the results our dual credit partnership between School District 47 and VIU is producing.” Brooks Principal Kathy Rothwell agreed. “Observing the skill and the tenacity of all the students who competed in the recent Skills Canada competition was an eye-opener.”



TRADE SKILLS: Pictured from left to right are Telicia Hlatkey (carpentry), Melina Sparks (welding), Megan Vallier (culinary arts) and Thomas Archibald (automotive), all students in the dual credit program hosted by Brooks Secondary School and Vancouver Island University. Each student won gold in their discipline at the Regional High School Skills Canada competition held recently in Campbell River.