

# Students share knowledge, skills for display day

By Ken Kellar

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With another school year drawing to a close, students at Fort Frances High School got to flex their creative muscles and show off some newly developed skills to their classmates.

The co-operative education students held the annual "Co-op Display Day" held last Thursday in the high school cafeteria.

Fort High co-operative education teacher Sarah Arpin said that the day is all about showing off.

"Co-op Display Day is an opportunity for the students to showcase what they've been doing at their placement, or something that has really interested them about their placement," Arpin explained.

"Whether or not it's something about the actual specific job that they've been working with, or just a specific tool, it's their chance to share that with the students."

The display day is the culminating event of the months-long co-op class. Students take placements in workplaces to get an idea of specific careers or job opportunities they might want to pursue in the future.

Arpin noted a co-op is also an excellent opportunity for discovering jobs they might not have known about otherwise.

"Somebody goes to the dentists' office, and they've always thought they wanted to be a hygienist, and then they get in and say, 'No, I want to be the

orthodontist, I want to go farther,'" Arpin said.

"That happens a lot at the hospital. Most people just think doctor, nurse, maybe in the diagnostic imaging unit, but they don't think about a lot of the other jobs until they start doing their placements."

Arpin also acknowledged that a co-op can teach students that the dream job they thought they wanted isn't necessarily a good fit.

"We get a lot of students who are dead set on what they want to do, they get into the placement and they realize it's not what they want to do," she said.

"And I always tell them that's not a bad placement—that means that it was a great learning experience. Now you can open up your doors to new options, like, 'Let's figure this out, what do you want to do next?'"

For Grade 12 student Hannah McKee-George, her co-op placement wound up being exactly what she was hoping for.

"I wanted to go into ECE and I wanted a more firm grasp on what you actually do, so I decided to take a co-op," said McKee-George, who did her placement in Sarah Freeman-Kivimaki's Early Learning class at Robert Moore School.

"I really enjoyed it, and I got put into a really nice classroom."

McKee-George said the benefit of taking a co-op that aligns with what a student might want to do is the hands on experience of what might one day be a career.

"It gives you a firm grasp of what you're doing and how your future is going to be if you take it," she said.

"You kind of learn things, so if you do take it, you get that knowledge. It kind of just opens the doors of what you want."

Ryley Booth is a Grade 11 student at FFHS. He said his co-op in the Grade 10 Personal Fitness class at the high school helped teach him skills that he could use in his future career.

"I want to probably go into the paramedic field," Booth said.

"So having the experience of the fitness programs, if I'm ever in a case to help somebody, I'm already helping students here, so it's easy to switch back and forth between the two."

Arpin said that the display day isn't just an opportunity for co-op students to show off their knowledge to other students, it also helps to illustrate how much they've learned at their placement to themselves.

"They forget where they started with at the start of the semester," Arpin said.

"And when they start to come up with their display ideas, they start to reflect on everything that they really have learned throughout their placement. It's been a way for them to realize, 'Oh yeah, I did learn a lot,' because they've been in the placement now for three or four months."

With any luck, Arpin said, the co-op is also an opportunity that will pay off in terms of a direct job for students somewhere



Grade 12 student Hannah McKee-George stood with her co-op display documenting her time spent at Robert Moore School for "Co-op Display Day" at Fort Frances High School last Thursday. McKee-George did her placement in Ms. Kivimaki's Early Learning class and said she was surprised at how involved with the class she was during her co-op. In the fall McKee-George will be attending St. Lawrence College for Early Childhood Education.

—Ken Kellar photos

down the line.

"A lot of students do get jobs out of them," she said.

"Some of them it's just the networking for their resume, so it helps them when they go away to university or college. When they come back, they have that network kind of built

so that they can use them as a reference to hopefully come back to those placements, or come back to those jobs."

She also pointed out that there's even some historical evidence for the value of the co-op program.

"Actually a lot of people who

I now set placements up with were co-op students years ago at that placement," she said.

"So that's kind of cool too, that it's full circle, that they support the co-op program because they once were part of it."



Matt Barron showed off his display about his co-op placement at J.W. Walker. Many of the displays set up in the cafeteria had interactive components including games, draws and exercises.



FFHS student Riley Argue tested his lung capacity at Ryley Booth's co-op display in the cafeteria last Thursday. Booth, a Grade 11 student at FFHS, did his co-op in the Grade 10 Personal Fitness class at the high school, and his display about the principles of fitness drew a steady stream of students who wanted to try to register the highest lung volume.