

Kids get tips on careers

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I attended an event this past week that was designed to introduce grade 8 students to the working world and possible future careers.

At that age, realistically a kid has no idea what they want to do in the future. Kids that age just don't take life or too much else for that matter, very seriously - and they shouldn't.

However the transition to high school in the fall is a point in life where even they start to realize that sooner or later school will end and you'll most likely have to get a job.

Before entering high school, the only career advice I got was from my grade 8 homeroom teacher who slammed a course selection sheet on my desk, yelled at us for a few minutes to tell us we were all idiots, then followed up by screaming if we made one wrong choice selecting a single class in grade nine, it would effect our entire lives because we couldn't go to university like her so our lives would be ruined forever.

That was not great advice from a teacher.

What impressed me the most about this event was there was no one telling these kids what they 'should do.' The event presented future opportunities without judging different jobs.

After the opening lecture, the kids were able to tour all the booths and demonstrations set up by universities, colleges, businesses and services.

It was a well rounded display of possible future careers designed to spark some interest in a kid who had not even entered high school.

While some kids gravitated towards a university or college booth, others took an interest in the tool belts at display showing how a career in the trades might be their best bet.

Even better, the information provided other possibilities related to a particular career.

At the Theatre Orangeville booth, they had a list of around 50 opportunities related to the theatre industry. You may not be an actor, but the list also contained careers listing everything from costume fashion designer to marketing and promotions.

In this day and age, and especially looking toward the future, a simple high school diploma won't qualify you to do much in life. You will have to be trained in something.

Over the past few decades there was an emphasis on getting a university education and other, more hands-on jobs were looked down on by many people.

Of course you will need a degree for certain things, however there has been shift in the past few years in the way students are being taught to plan for a career.

You may get a fancy degree in philosophy from a prestigious university, however, when you start looking for work, very few companies advertise for a position as company philosopher. A qualified electrician will always find work.

There is a looming shortage in the trades in the country and now many schools and career councillors are suggesting a push to

encourage students to seek training in the trades to ensure a good paying steady income.

I sat in on the opening lecture at this event at the speaker threw out a general question asking what these kids planned on doing after school.

One kid said he wanted to be a chiropractor. Seriously? I'm pretty sure he didn't come up with that by himself.

No little kid when asked what he wants to be when he grows up ever said 'I want to be an accountant.' Kids think bigger, although usually unrealistically.

The next kid said his aspiration was to be a Youtube gamer. That was definitely more in line for a kid that age.

A friend of mine was pushed into an engineering by his father. Engineering is a well respected career that has always been important in every society.

However, after completing his degree at a U.S. school, he returned home and got a job as a groundskeeper at a golf course ? where he remains 30 years later. And he loves his job.

Offering advice to your children is one thing. Pushing them somewhere they don't want to go is a different matter.

Everyone is going to find their path eventually and these kid s still have four years to go before having to make any real decisions.

At this time in their lives, they don't really take anything seriously. How seriously can you take life when your most exotic mode of transportation is a bicycle or a skateboard?

This well run event served to at least generate a spark of interest in finding a satisfying career in our future workforce.