

ACE IT Students on the Fly

Fort St. John, BC

Bobbi-Jo Blayone from Fort St. John is a young adult who knows the pride of “firsts”. During her grade 12 year at North Peace Secondary School, Bobbi-Jo enrolled in the Aircraft Maintenance Engineering (AME) program at Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek. Today, she is the first person from her Mom’s family to graduate from secondary school and the first female to apprentice with her employer, North Caribou Air.

North Caribou Air is just one employer in the region that benefits from the ACE IT program by having young, quality employees like Bobbi-Jo as apprentices. “It makes no difference that she is female,” says North Caribou Air supervisor Nick Gunn. “She has what we call hands—some people have it, some people don’t.” Clearly Bobbi has hands and more. “She is a phenomenal person,” he says. “She is smart with a good work ethic.”

ACE IT stands for Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training. It is a dual credit program that enables secondary school students to get a head start on the school based, technical training part of an apprenticeship.

According to Bobbi-Jo, the ACE IT program helped her see a clear picture of herself in the future. Bobbi-Jo learned the importance of self-sufficiency at a young age. She was living on her own and supporting herself by the time she was just 16. “I’ve seen what happens when a person has no direction, no money and big dreams,” Bobbi says. “Many of my friends still don’t know what they’re doing after grad”. Now 17 years old, Bobbi-Jo explains that she is about a third of her way towards a great career of her choice. “By the time I reach my twenties I’ll be in a career that provides good money and the chance to move forward,” Bobbi says. “I’m already ahead of most people.”

School District #60 Peace River North, with the assistance of career educator Brian Campbell, has a long history of providing students with industry training. This year, the ACE IT program allowed the district to expand the programs and formalize industry quali-

fications to make their students more job-ready. In 2004/05, 50 students participated in industry training programs.

From the perspective of Northern Lights College’s senior AME instructor Lyndon Walker, the best part of the ACE IT program is that his students receive a skill that they can always count on. “These students leave secondary school with skills that can start them in a solid post secondary job,” Lyndon explains. “These are skills that can take them in many different directions.”

ACE IT was launched with seed funding of \$1.2 million from the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education and has so far received additional funding of \$2.3 million from the Industry Training Authority’s (ITA) budget. In the 2005/06 year, 37 school districts are projected to participate in the ACE IT program and deliver 24 industry training programs to over 1,950 BC secondary school students.

For more information contact:

Sandy Steward
ITA Director Client Interests
604.214.8713
ssteward@itabc.ca

Jessi Zielke
ITA ACE IT Administrator
604.922.7027
jzielke@itabc.ca

RIGHT Bobbie-Jo Blayone is at home with her airplanes

