

## Chamber's Skilled Trade and Manufacturing scholarships awarded to St. Max students



Skilled trade and manufacturing jobs are essential occupations that are not often in the spotlight; but that's something the Aurora Chamber of Commerce has tried to change through the launch of their Skilled Trade & Manufacturing Scholarships.

The inaugural scholarships, which were announced by the Chamber earlier this year, were a tremendous success, says Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and were awarded to two Grade 12 students last week.

The presentations to Alexander Moll and Daniel Rolinsky took place last Monday at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School where both students attend. Moll received the Skilled Trade scholarship of \$5,000, while the same amount was awarded to Rolinsky in the Manufacturing category.

"We started this program because we wanted to do something for the Town's youth and we also wanted to shine a spotlight on these two areas - really important areas for economic growth here in Town," says Ms. Ferri. "We have a lot of manufacturing and lots of need for skilled trades. We thought this was a good way to shine a spotlight on these good and lucrative careers and we like to see our youth getting engaged in those careers."

It was clear through the application process that both students were actively engaged in the sectors of their choice.

Through the process, each applicant had to write essays outlining their accomplishments in the fields, as well as answer a series of questions, also in the essay format, about their interests, career goals, experiences, and how they've overcome challenges in related areas.

Rolinsky's long-term goal, he wrote, is to own multiple companies that "use the power of technology and innovation to make positive changes in the world." A particular focus for Daniel was to reduce pollution, specifically in the transportation sector, with a drive for zero-emission vehicles.

He also highlighted his work with the St. Max Robotics Team, Max Tech 4343, and his drive to create opportunities for more youth in under-represented communities to become involved in STEM fields - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

Moll, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of working with one's hands ? and the value he has gleaned from doing just that from a very early age.

He has always had a passion for helping his family with their projects, he shared, and these early experiences only served to strengthen his interest in pursuing a career as an electrician.

Taking on apprenticeships, he said the last three months learning in this way just bolstered his drive to pursue this and related career paths.

?We had a lot of great applicants and we were over 10 applicants because this was our first year,? says Ferri. ?We will have a fundraiser in September to support these scholarships and we hope to set up a fund that will go on in perpetuity where these would be offered every year. There might be [other sectors] we highlight down the road as well. We will look at what the trends are for the workforce and looking at what things are needed in the economic structure and look where we should be putting our money to support our youth.?

The September fundraiser is the inaugural Celebrity Sports Dinner & Auction on Thursday, September 28, from 5 ? 10 p.m. at the Royal Venetian Mansion.

Benefiting the Business Engaging Youth & Scholarship program, the event includes an autograph signing session with sports stars past and present, a cocktail reception for top sponsors, a gourmet meal, and silent and live auctions.

Auction items so far include golf and spa packages, autographed jerseys, authentic sports memorabilia and more.

Confirmed celebrities include Toronto Maple Leafs great Wendel Clark and NHL star Jeremy Roenick, with Master of Ceremonies duties falling to Ken Reid of Sportsnet.

For students who might want to take advantage of this scholarship opportunity in the 2023-2024 school year, Ferri advises that they ?take the time to put through a very thoughtful application.?

?What really resonated with us on the applications we received was people actually put a lot of time and thought into it and their passion and dedication to what their future goals were really came through on their applications.?

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