Welcome Addition...

With the finishing touches almost complete Mohawk’s new front entrance is sure to be a popular backdrop for many a graduation photo this year.
From the Editor

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF MOHAWK MAGAZINE.

It’s definitely shaping up to be a busy year for Mohawk as I’m sure you’ll discover as you read the articles included in this edition.

In this issue we’ll give you a glimpse of what’s happening with the Alternate and Renewable Energies program at the STARRT campus. You’ll read about Mohawk graduate Rick Phillips who is putting the skills he learned in the renewable energies program to work for a local company whose business is selling and installing green energy products.

Brantford’s Health, Wellness and Fitness also takes centre stage in this issue with not one but two stories on the exciting things that that program and its students are doing as they get ready to graduate their first class this summer. You’ll read about Health, Wellness and Fitness Co-op student Joanne Smith who recently helped organize ArcelorMittal Dofasco’s annual Safety and Wellness Days for the steelmakers 5,000 employees. You’ll also hear about a new fitness program at Fennell that is giving students hands-on experience teaching fitness to students, staff and faculty.

If you’re a fan of trivia then you’ll definitely want to read about Mohawk alumnus and entrepreneur Dave Millard. Dave is the mastermind behind a new trivia game called OutSmart that puts a new twist on an old favourite. Dave’s board game is set to hit store shelves later this year and with Mohawk’s help he is also getting ready to launch an online version through Facebook.

And finally, for a glimpse at what Mohawk’s future might look like 10 years from now be sure to read about our Academic Plan. Consultation sessions for the Plan have already begun and will continue throughout the summer. This article will introduce you to the process and let you know who the College is consulting with.

If you like what you read in this magazine, let us know. If you have a suggestion on how to make it better, let us know that too. And if you have a story idea, we definitely want to hear it. Communications is a two-part process and we rely on our readers to make this publication better.
Mohawk College is set to pilot its iDeaFORGE software college-wide beginning on June 6. Developed by students with support from faculty and staff, iDeaFORGE is a web-based system that will open the lines of communication at Mohawk, and provide staff and students with a way of sharing innovative, actionable ideas on how to make the College better.

"iDeaFORGE has been built to capture constructive ideas on how to improve the college," says Pamela Hensley, Director, Research and Innovation with Mohawk College’s iDeaWORKS and the team leader for the iDeaFORGE project team. iDeaFORGE is one of 10 pilot projects that resulted from last year’s Simply the Best sessions at Mohawk. The pilot will run through the summer with the final version of the software ready for launch with the start of classes in September.

The purpose of iDeaFORGE is to capture and screen ideas that are actionable and will contribute to a better learning experience at the College, says Pamela. It’s not a complaints system, she adds.

The application will allow staff, faculty and students to submit ideas for a six-week period during each academic semester.

Idea submission is easy. Simply visit the iDeaFORGE website, register to create an account and follow the prompts to submit your idea. At the end of the six weeks, the ideas will be posted, and for two weeks only students, faculty, and staff will be able to vote for their favourite ideas. The idea with the most votes will get a presidential review.

There’s no cap on the number of ideas that can be submitted, but every idea submitted will go through a screening process that will assess, among other things, if the idea has been well thought out and includes enough detail and supporting arguments. Inappropriate suggestions won’t be posted, says Pamela.

"IF YOU SUBMIT AN IDEA AND IT DOESN’T MAKE IT, DON’T BE DISCOURAGED," SAYS PAMELA. "IDEAS CAN BE RESUBMITTED THE FOLLOWING SEMESTER."

iDeaForge is the latest project to come out of Mohawk’s iDeaWORKS (formerly the Mohawk Applied Research Centre). Devoted to turning concepts into reality, iDeaWORKS is where students, faculty, business, non-profit and government organizations connect, share and collaborate. iDeaWORKS was created to champion innovation at the college and in the community. Implementation of projects will be the responsibility of the area affected.

iDeaWORKS students work side-by-side with partners in industries such as healthcare to develop new products, services or processes. The students benefit from having access to the latest and greatest technology and from having the opportunity to work closely with the College’s external partners.

For more information about iDeaWORKS, or the iDeaFORGE project, contact Pamela at ext. 3232. ideaforge.mohawkcollege.ca
Mohawk College building reputation as Ontario’s leading college in health and technology

ACADEMIC PLAN WILL SPELL OUT PRIORITIES FOR NEXT 10 YEARS

The top ranked college in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area now aims to be best in Ontario for health and technology education.

To earn a reputation for leadership and excellence in health and technology, Mohawk is building a plan to chart the college’s academic directions and priorities for the next 10 years. The academic plan will help guide Mohawk’s decisions on what, how and where students will learn in the decade ahead along with what capital, facilities and technology investments will be needed to support the college’s academic priorities.

To develop the academic plan, Mohawk is consulting throughout the spring and summer with business, industry, education and community partners, as well as students, alumni, faculty and staff. A draft academic plan will be presented to Mohawk’s Board of Governors by the end of the year.

“While Mohawk will remain responsive to the needs of our entire community, we also aim to make Mohawk the college of choice for students who want an exceptional education, and rewarding careers, in health and technology,” says Cheryl Jensen, Vice President Academic. “Building a reputation for health and technology leverages Mohawk’s long-standing academic strengths and partnerships and meets the growing demand among employers for highly skilled and future-ready graduates in these dynamic sectors of our economy.”

“Our academic plan will serve as Mohawk’s roadmap for the next decade and our blueprint for building a reputation as Ontario’s leading college for health and technology.”

On June 3, members of Mohawk’s Program Advisory Committees took part in one of many consultation sessions that will take place over the summer months. The sessions will gather input for the development of a 10-year Academic Plan that will be developed later this year.

Mohawk has created a website and a Facebook page to provide the latest information on the academic plan and solicit ideas from students, staff and college partners.

In the latest province-wide survey of college students, Mohawk ranked first among the six colleges in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area for overall student and graduate satisfaction, quality of programs and learning and quality of services and facilities.

Mohawk annually serves more than 16,000 full-time and apprenticeship students, 700 international students and 42,000 continuing education registrants. The largest renewal project in Mohawk’s history is currently underway at the Fennell Campus in Hamilton and follows a $27 million transformation of the college’s skilled trades campus.

Three reasons to cheer

Congratulations Keith Holloway for taking first place in cabinetmaking at the Ontario Technological Skills Competition. Keith is an Industrial Woodworking Technician student who represented Mohawk College in the annual skills competition in May.

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Students from Mohawk College’s Accounting program brought home silver medals from the first-ever Ontario College Case Competition sponsored by the Certified General Accountants of Ontario (CGA). Two teams of two students from Mohawk’s two-year Accounting program went up against 16 other teams from Ontario colleges for prizes that included up to $3,000 in scholarships. Mohawk Accounting students Daniel Kalcsa and Barry St. James won silver medals at the competition. Classmates Graeme Matheson and Stephanie Gunn won one of the three game contests. Both teams were coached by Mohawk professor Jo-Ann Lamore and the Accounting faculty.

Congratulations Debbie Calarco, Associate Registrar and Michelle Ball, Mohawk’s Director Student Engagement and Athletics. Debbie and Michelle are Mohawk’s newest graduates from the Bay Area Leadership program. Bay Area Leadership is a year-long program that develops an individual’s leadership abilities. The goals of the program are to improve networks in the community, provide opportunities for interaction and exchange of ideas, and enhance leadership participation and commitment in the community. Bay Area Leadership is run by Volunteer Hamilton and supported by the communities of Hamilton and Burlington.

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Former steelworker goes from blue collar to green collar with Mohawk’s help

MOHAWK HELPS TURN RECESSION INTO OPPORTUNITY

Rick Phillips was laid off in March 2009, ending a 13-year career in the steel industry. A casualty of the recession, Rick joined the thousands of workers that were cast off by their employers during the worst economic downturn in decades.

Two years later, the economy is slowly recovering and Rick has a new career working as installer for The Green Method, a local company that specializes in green energy products such as geothermal heating and cooling units, solar panels and solar hot air units. For Rick the recession became an opportunity to go back to school and launch a new career in the burgeoning green energy industry, something he’d always had an interest in.

Last summer he enrolled Mohawk College’s Alternate and Renewable Energies program, a nine-month program focused on giving students the skills needed to start a career in one of the province’s fastest growing industries.

“Renewable energy is the way of the future and I’ve always been interested in it and wanted to pursue it as a career,” says Rick. “The program at Mohawk gave me a good understanding of the technology, and now I’m installing this technology myself.”

When Rick graduated in February he immediately went to work for The Green Method. Company owner and president, Gaston Minetti says that finding qualified people like Rick isn’t easy. “A company like this needs a steady flow of green collar workers to satisfy the demand,” he says. “The technology is new and so is the market, so it’s difficult to find people with the experience.”

Posting jobs ads for geothermal installers often results in no applications, or at best he’ll get one application, says Gaston. Even finding gas fitters with geothermal experience is hard. Many aren’t familiar with the new technology.

“These guys are in demand. You need to have institutions that can provide the training.”

Three of Gaston’s seven employees are Mohawk grads, and with plans to grow again, that number could increase, he says, as the company is busy with a number of large contracts for geothermal installs within the Golden Horseshoe.

“I know this program. I know what they’re learning,” Gaston says. He helped design the curriculum for the Alternate and Renewable Energies program, working with the program’s coordinator Charles Honey.

Last week, Gaston and some of his employees spent a few days at the College’s EcoHouse installing a new geothermal heating and cooling unit that Gaston donated to the school. A working lab where students can gain experience installing green technologies in an actual home, the EcoHouse is a two-storey home built inside a lab at the STARRT campus.

It’s no accident that the EcoHouse resembles a giant dollhouse with a wall cutaway to provide a view of what’s going on inside. Mohawk’s Dean of Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships Piero Cherubini based the idea for the house on a dollhouse he’d once built for his daughter. He pitched the idea to some faculty during coffee one day and it grew from there.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...
The Eco House, located at the STARRT Campus, gives students hands-on experience installing eco-friendly services in a real home.

Construction on the home started last fall.

Piero estimates that more than 1,500 students, or nearly half of the students that attend STARRT, will use the house at some point in their studies. The house is built to accept all forms of renewable energy but it can also be used to teach traditional methods as well, so it’s a very versatile teaching tool.

“All of our renewable energy students will get in that house and receive hands-on training in geothermal, solar panel and wind power systems, but the home will also be useful to many other programs and apprentices,” he says.

He compares the house to the automotive programs where students work on actual cars. The house is just a larger version of the same concept.

“There’s no other place that I know of where you can see the system installed in a house,” says Gaston. “Here you can see a house with everything installed and working. That means students can better relate to it, they’re not just looking at piece of equipment in a shop.”

With the popularity of geothermal, solar and wind increasing the need for skilled workers who come equipped with the knowledge to work with this equipment is only going to increase, says Gaston.

“This is just the beginning. There is a lot of opportunity for people looking to enter this field.”

Katie Dillabough teaches fitness classes to Mohawk students, faculty and staff twice a week at the Fennell Campus.

Katie is running the first in a series of fitness classes for students, staff and faculty at the College. The half-hour sessions take place every Monday and Wednesday from 12:10 to 12:50 in the gym mezzanine at the Fennell Campus. Weather permitting the classes may also take place out of doors. The $25 fee buys seven classes, which is about $3.50 per class, just enough to cover the cost of operating the class.

For Katie it’s about getting experience.

“TO ME THE EXPERIENCE IS INVALUABLE, AND HOPEFULLY IT WILL HELP LEAD TO SOMETHING LATER ON,” SHE SAYS.

Katie’s classes are a great opportunity to take advantage of an affordable on-site fitness program while participating in a living lab for a Mohawk student, says Mary Hyde, Facilities Planning and Property Services Assistant, and the staff member that organized the classes after seeing a similar session run by Mohawk students at the McMaster Innovation Park.

Seeing the students in action gave Mary the idea to start something similar at the College. With the help of Dennis Campbell, the Coordinator for the Health, Wellness and Fitness program at the Brantford Campus, arrangements were made for a student to come to Fennell two days a week to run the classes.

“Mohawk doesn’t have a formal fitness program for staff and faculty,” she says. “Employees who want to participate in fitness activities can join one of the student programs or use the gym at the residence, but once spring comes the student programs disappear until the fall and the fitness centre operates at reduced hours. These classes are for everyone.”

With five classes behind them, the program appears to be a success, says Mary. The numbers are consistently high and to date more than 60 people have shown an interest in the program, and she expects that number to grow as more people become aware of it. She would like to see it grow to include other favourites like Yoga and Pilates, but this will only happen if enough people show interest, she adds.

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A living lab that can help you live better

ALL STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY WELCOME TO JOIN...

It’s not too late to make good on that New Year’s resolution and Katie Dillabough knows how to make it happen. Soon to be one of the first students to graduate from Mohawk’s Health, Wellness and Fitness program, Katie is fine-tuning her skills while helping students, staff and faculty fine tune their physiques.

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Health, Wellness and Fitness Program Coordinator Dennis Campbell says the classes are a good opportunity for the students to gain some hands-on experience doing what they’ve gone to school for. For Dennis, the fitness classes are the tip of the iceberg. He hopes to see them get more involved in health and wellness activities at the College.

“The students could provide a number of different services for staff and students, in addition to fitness classes,” he says. “I’ve been approached about running clinics and wellness workshops, and these are programs that our students would want to get involved in.”

Mohawk’s Health, Wellness and Fitness program will graduate its first class this summer. The program offers a two-year, non-coop and a three-year coop option for students.

All students, staff and faculty are welcome to join the classes. The fee is $25 for 8 sessions. If you’re interested in learning more about fitness classes contact Mary Hyde by email at mary.hyde@mohawkcollege.ca. If you want to learn more about the Health, Wellness and Fitness program contact Dennis Campbell at dennis.campbell@mohawkcollege.ca.
When it comes to health and wellness in the workplace few companies do it better than ArcelorMittal Dofasco, and for one Mohawk co-op student the company’s Safety and Wellness Days provided the perfect opportunity to learn from the best.

Joanne Smith is a co-op student in Mohawk’s three-year Health, Wellness and Fitness program. The Brantford-based program is preparing to graduate its first class of students who will leave the College with the skills needed to start a career in the growing field of health, fitness and wellness.

Joanne joined ArcelorMittal Dofasco as a co-op student in January. She was brought in to help organize the company’s Safety and Wellness Days that took place on 26th and 27th of April. The two-day event was open to all of the Hamilton-based steelmaker’s 5,200 employees, as well as retirees and family members.

Planning a safety and wellness event of this magnitude was an eye-opening experience, says Joanne. She’s spent the last few months contacting exhibitors, coordinating volunteers and arranging layouts. On top of that the company’s senior management team challenged the organizers to re-invigorate the event, which has been an annual tradition at the company for a number of years.

“It’s been a little of everything, and it’s really called on everything I’ve learned at Mohawk,” she says. “ArcelorMittal Dofasco has one of the most comprehensive health and wellness programs out there. Working here has given me exposure to the different aspects of such a program, and there are many different aspects to it.”

All of the steelmaker’s employees have access to on-site fitness centres, a recreation park complete with a driving range and mini-putt, and one of the best health and wellness programs available. Employees can take advantage of health screening to stay on top of important health indicators such as blood pressure and cholesterol.

On the 26th and 27th Joanne was joined by about 20 other Mohawk Health, Wellness and Fitness students who she recruited to run interactive programs for the Safety and Wellness Days event. The students were on site to do body composition testing, bio impedance analysis and waist circumference measurements. They’ll also ran an interactive game focused on good eating habits and an exhibit on the importance of portion control.

ArcelorMittal Dofasco’s Lifestyle Coordinator Lindsay Knight says promoting health and wellness in the workplace isn’t a new concept. Companies have been doing it to varying degrees for more than 30 years. But in recent years the industry has
Health, Wellness and Fitness student Kim DeHaan provides an ArcelorMittal Dofasco employee with a lifestyle assessment.

experienced some growth, she says. This is largely due to the increasing cost of healthcare plans, particularly in the U.S. where employer health care costs are much higher. In Canada, wellness programs are seen more as a perk used to attract and retain top talent, she adds.

And on the topic of top talent, Lindsay says she is impressed with the thoroughness of Mohawk’s Health, Fitness and Wellness program.

“I worked with co-op students from many different schools in the past, but Joanne has been really terrific,” she says. “She came to the job with in-depth knowledge, a good technical background and an understanding of the role.”

The growth in the health and wellness industry bodes well for students like Joanne who are just starting out in their careers, opening doors to new opportunities. Besides large corporations, graduates of Mohawk’s Health, Wellness and Fitness program can find themselves working for fitness centres, private health clubs, municipal recreation centres, amateur and professional sports teams, emergency services, professional health teams, or running their own business. The program includes a 3-year co-op and 2-year non co-op option for students.

Joanne enjoys the corporate environment but her interests go in many directions, she says. “I can see myself in more of an educational role, working closely with students.”

Mohawk Broadcasting Television and Journalism students win national award

STUDENTS LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE AND PRODUCE AWARD-WINNING WORK.

Mohawk College Broadcasting -- Television and Communications Media and Journalism students have won a prestigious national award from the Broadcast Educators Association of Canada (BEAC).

The Mohawk team has won the video studio newscast category in the BEAC’s national annual awards competition open to all college and university students. The award, the first for Mohawk, was presented during the BEAC’s national conference in Victoria on May 26 – 29.

The 42 students were recognized for their work on Ignite News during the fall and winter semesters. As part of their program curriculum, second-year students are responsible for all aspects of the 20-minute newscast, from ENG reporting and writing to studio production, graphics and visual animations. The newscast is produced live in Mohawk’s high definition studio at the Fennell Campus, broadcast on closed circuit monitors at the college and streamed online at ignitenews.mohawkcollege.ca. Three teams of students each produce a weekly newscast.

“Our students do more than study broadcasting and journalism; they learn from experience and produce award-winning work,” says Rick Court, Dean of Business, Media and Entertainment. “Congratulations to all the students and a special thanks to professors Tracey Kadish and Kurt Muller for coaching and mentoring our award-winning team.”

Comments from the six-member judging panel of industry professionals included:

• Overall very solid newscast, time went by very quickly, quite impressed that it only felt like a 10 minute cast, great pacing.
• Truly enjoyed the cast, on-air talent did very well.
• Really impressive, great graphics, over-all impressive.
• Enjoyed the entire cast, great when you feel it should have been longer – good stories.
• Graphics, sound done very well for a live cast, truly enjoyed it, relevant stories, great on-air talent.

The Broadcast Educators Association of Canada is a national organization dedicated to the professional development of faculty and administrators in Radio, Television, Broadcast Journalism and New Media programs in provincially accredited colleges and universities in Canada.
Prepare to be “OutSmarted”

Every family has one, that person who knows everything, that human encyclopedia that can call up obscure facts at will and dominate the game table every time you play Trivial Pursuit on New Year's Eve. But what if there was a game that levelled the playing field—a game where it doesn’t matter if you know that the “pound” key on your keyboard is called an “octothorpe”. Thanks to some Mohawk grads, some faculty, and a bunch of students, that game-changer is just around the corner.

Dave Millard graduated from Mohawk in 1993 from Advertising and Graphic Design. In 2007 he had an idea. He came up with a game that instead of having only one correct answer for every question, each question would have at least six correct answers. For example, “Name the colours of the spectrum?” Each player must then write down between one and six of the available answers (depending on the roll of the die) and the player (or group of players) with the most correct answers gets the point, with the game’s eventual winner, having the most points earned over the course of the game.

That’s about as far as he got at the time. Life got busy and Dave shelved the idea with the intent of developing it further on some rainy day. That day came unexpectedly in 2009 when he was laid off from his job with a marketing agency. Out of work and with time to spare Dave decided to take another look at his trivia game idea.

With the help of a few friends Dave built on his original idea and created OutSmart, a trivia game that increases the odds of every player winning the game because no one person has the monopoly on the answers.

“This is the only game where knowing all the correct answers does not guarantee you’ll win,” says Dave.

He took the prototype to sports bars and wherever else he could think of to get people to try it, and discovered that his formula seemed to work. The response to the game was overwhelmingly positive, he says, and that’s was enough to convince him that the idea was worth developing. All he needed were people who were willing to back him.

He founded a company called Innovation Concepts Inc. and turned to a trivia expert, someone who’d been one of the original developers of Trivial Pursuit. After 15 minutes of playing, the developer was sold and Dave had a supporter for his game.

Up to this point, OutSmart was developed as a board game, one that you could pack in your car and take to the cottage or bring out for family game night. But Dave wanted something that would appeal to the growing online gaming crowd as well, something that could be used on a variety of platforms and that would be accessible from popular social media like Facebook.

That’s when he decided to turn to Mohawk for help. In the spring of 2010 he pitched the idea to some folks at the College’s applied research institute, now called iDeaWORKS. One of those people was Brian Minaji, a faculty member in the Software Development program and a Mohawk grad from 1986 Computer Systems Technology.

They were excited about it, says Dave, but didn’t have the resources to commit to it at the time. A few months later, Dave partnered with Jean-Paul Rehr and Heather Viana of Kanu Inc. to take the game online. In the fall of 2010, Jean-Paul and Brian got together to discuss how Mohawk could help. iDeaWORKS now had access to funding through the FedDev program that could propel the project.

With funding secured, Brian began assembling the team. Allan Jude of NearSourceIT, a 2006 Mohawk grad in the Network Engineering & Security Analysis program, and part-time Mohawk faculty would be the technical lead. Brian and Allan led the Mohawk side of the project, along with newly minted Software Engineering grad Andrew Saudino, and Lloyd Waddell, a Co-op student in the Software Development program. The Mohawk team worked with the Kanu team to design the game software and the Mohawk team began development on the software in January.

To get more students involved, the team came up with an idea to ask students to submit questions as part of a contest to generate content for the game. Co-op student Jory Ohayon from the Graphic Design program created the poster that was put up at all campuses to generate interest. The contest was a success with Mohawk students submitting more than 1,500 questions, of which more than 900 were approved for the game. The winning students, those with the most approved questions were announced in mid-May.

“Mohawk built the motor and the transmission. Now we’re looking for Kanu to assist in putting the customized car body onto it,” says Dave.

Once the game is dressed up and ready to go, it will be launched on Facebook and Twitter, which will hopefully happen within a few months. A smartphone version is also planned. Regional versions of the game will be created so people who play in other countries will not only get it in their language but also with questions that are specific to them. The board game version will be available this Fall and is being distributed in Canada by Kroeger.
Special needs pilot program a success

PILOT COULD LEAD TO NEW PROGRAM AT MOHAWK

As a six-week pilot program to introduce local high school students with special needs to life at college comes to an end, everyone involved hopes that the tremendous success of the program will lead to something more permanent.

School in the city’s west end spend a few hours a day, two days a week at the Fennell campus. It was an opportunity for the Westdale students to experience college life and to use college facilities including the gym and library. It was also an opportunity for one Mohawk grad to get valuable experience working with the students.

Through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities’ Summer Experience Program, Emily Ecker, a training specialist with Mohawk’s Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, was able to get a grant to hire a recent graduate from the Social Service Worker program to be the liaison with Westdale and to work with the students while on campus.

“We saw it as a great opportunity for our students to get some hands-on experience working with students with special needs,” says Emily. “It was also an opportunity to give the Westdale students a chance to experience a little bit of college life.”

“At first we weren’t sure how well the program would be received, but it has been a tremendous success,” she adds. “The feedback from our students and from Westdale has been very positive and we’ve had other schools express an interest in the program as a result.”

Emily went on to say, “I’d especially like to thank the Library, Student Life and the Athletics department for the use of their spaces.”

Chad Quackenbush is the Mohawk grad that was hired to work with the students. For Chad the experience has exceeded all of his expectations.

“I really enjoy working with the students. It’s very fulfilling,” he says. “Because of this program I’ve gained experience working with youth that have a wide range of intellectual challenges including autism and Down’s syndrome.”

It’s been an eye-opening experience for Chad, who entered the Social Service Worker program thinking he would go on to work with veterans of the war in Afghanistan. Before coming to Mohawk Chad served as an army engineer in the Canadian Forces. A severe knee injury ended his five-year career just two weeks shy of a scheduled deployment to Afghanistan. Those five years heavily influenced his choice for a new career, he says.

Counseling veterans is still something Chad feels passionate about, but the opportunity to work with the Westdale students has shown that he has a knack for working with youth too, he says. Chad is hopeful that the program will continue and that he will continue to be a part of it.

Emily also hopes the program will continue, only in a much more expanded form.

Mohawk has applied to the Ministry for approval to offer a Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) program in Hamilton. CICE is a two-year, post-secondary program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. CICE students would have the opportunity to expand their academic skills with programs modified to suit their needs. They also get the college experience which can help them better integrate with society as they leave the school system, she notes.

“CICE could also provide employment opportunities for Mohawk grads,” says Emily. “Students enrolled in the program are supported by learning specialists who attend classes with them and provide the extra attention the student needs without disrupting the class. Those learning specialists could come from many of our Human Services programs.”

Other colleges offer the CICE program and it’s been very successful. Emily hopes the program will get Ministry approval this summer so it can be offered starting September 2012.

“The success of the Westdale program shows that we’re capable of offering this type of programming, and the feedback we’ve received from Westdale and others in the school board show that there’s a need for this in Hamilton,” says Emily.