



# GREETINGS FROM OUR DIRECTORS



Stuart Miller, Director of Education  
**Halton District School Board**

The Halton Skills Competition is clearly one of the highlights on the Halton District School Board calendar.

It brings students of all ages from all of our schools together in friendly competition showcasing the many technical skills they have acquired.

The pace of technical innovation and change in this 21st century is blistering. By attending, judging/coaching and participating you will witness the remarkable skills these young people have been honing over several years. In doing so they are well placed to eventually make a significant contribution to the Canadian economy and the fabric of our country.

I welcome you all in joining this 29th version of the Halton Skills at Georgetown District High School.

I want to thank all the parents, guardians, teacher coaches and staff who have guided these students along the way. I also acknowledge and thank all the organizers who have made this competition possible.

Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate all our young people who have put their heart and soul in preparing for the Skills competition! I wish you all luck in reaping the rewards of that work.

*Stuart Miller*  
Director of Education  
Halton District School Board



Paula Dawson, Director of Education  
**Halton Catholic District School Board**

On behalf of the Halton Catholic District School Board, it is my pleasure to welcome students, staff, and guests to the *Halton Skills Competition* at Georgetown District High School.

The *Halton Skills Competition* is an annual event that showcases the talents and creative abilities of our students! Our students are provided with the unique opportunity in our schools to learn, to create, and pursue their passions in the trades, while striving to fulfill their God-given potential.

The events highlighted through the *Halton Skills Competition* not only provide our students with another avenue to hone their skills, but the competition prepares our students for their post-secondary aspirations in today's technologically advanced world.

Year after year, this region-wide event could not be possible without the dedication and enthusiasm of our students, staff, parents, administration, and local businesses.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the teaching faculty and staff from the Halton Catholic District School Board and the Halton District School Board that represent the *Halton Skills Advisory Committee*.

Thank you for your commitment to this competition, and for all that you do to help our students succeed. Your dedication and unwavering support help to make this competition an exciting and rewarding experience for all those involved.

Best wishes to each and every one of our students as they continue to accomplish great things!

*Paula Dawson, Director of Education*  
Halton Catholic District School Board



# PRISCILLA (FOSTER) LADOUCEUR



Priscilla Ladouceur B.E.S., B.Arch., OAA, MRAIC. On the construction site of Garth Webb Secondary School, Oakville ON

Priscilla (Foster) Ladouceur, two-time gold medal winner in Ontario Skills Competitions in Architectural Design and Canadian Representative at SkillsUSA (VICA).

## HOW DID I GET INVOLVED?

The Skills competition was a goal to aspire to, instilled in me by my high school drafting teacher Mr. Axtmann. Mr. Axtmann believed that students' rise to expectation, and he had high expectations of all his students and encouraged us to study, practice and work hard with goals of excelling in competition.

My favourite classes at Acton District High School were Art and Math. It was a natural path for me to

combine the two paths in the direction of architecture. Computers were just starting to be used to replace manual drafting. We only had a couple in our classroom, which ran 'SoftPlan'. Everyone still used drafting tables covered with borco and a T square, or if you were lucky, a parallel bar. These probably sound more like gymnastic equipment than drafting tools to today's students! Mr Axtmann also taught automotive classes, and had made a stereo for our drafting classroom by placing a car stereo inside the drawer of a filing cabinet, so we could (discretely) listen to music while we worked.

In my grade 11 year, I was selected based on a class assignment, to compete in the Halton Skills Competition where I placed first in Architectural Drafting & Design. I recall the objective was to design and draw a set of drawings for a cottage with particular requirements for a client, within three hours. I went on to compete in the Skills Ontario Competition at Mohawk College, which was the only Canadian provincial Skills competition at the time. Placing first in the Architectural Drafting and Design event at this level resulted in me being whisked away at the age of 16 to Tulsa Oklahoma to represent Canada in Architectural Design at the VICA (SkillsUSA) competition.

It was my first time leaving Canada. I had also never used the imperial measuring system before, having learned everything about the world of architectural drafting using the metric system. Mr. Axtmann and I spent hours before the trip relearning all the standard construction material sizes in the imperial system. For example, I had learned that a standard stud was 38mm x 89mm. In the imperial system, a standard stud was called a 2x4, but was actually only 1.5x3.5 inches in dimension. This is what all my American competitors would have been learning from day one. I had to reprogram much of what I had learned and memorized.

## REPRESENTING CANADA

Tulsa was an amazing experience. I was amidst a sea of American Students. I placed 15th out of 45 competitors representing their individual states for my design and drawings of a medical centre, within the allotted 4 hour time limit. The group of Canadians who travelled together to each compete in their own skill, from welding to baking to cabinet making, were an amazing group of young people, and we had a lot of fun touring the area, even visiting the nearby state of Texas. We were a small group of young patriotic Canadians proudly wearing our red Skills Canada blazers!

During the competitions I knew I had a very limited amount of time to produce many drawings, so I had to focus and try not to be distracted by the massive auditorium I was in with so many onlookers, and work as efficiently as I could. I understood that to be able to

finish everything to a high standard was impossible within the time frame allowed. I recall deciding to complete a little bit of everything, and pick a few areas to really provide more detail so the judges were able to assess what I actually knew. It was very much about time management and strategy.

In grade 12, I was able to have a second chance to repeat my experience at the Halton & Ontario Skills Competitions, and represented Canada again at SkillsUSA in Louisville Kentucky, where I placed 9th.

## MY FINAL STANDINGS

- 1st (Gold Medal) x 2 in Architectural Drafting & Design in Halton 1990 & 1991
- 1st (Gold Medal) x 2 in Architectural Drafting & Design in Ontario/Canada 1990 & 1991
- Represented Canada in SkillsUSA (VICA) Architectural Drafting & Design in Tulsa Oklahoma (15th) & Louisville Kentucky (9th)

## AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Once it was time to apply to college or university, I had my eyes set on the University of Waterloo for Architecture. Their co-op program allowed me to alternate between school and work terms to allow me to pay for school, gain extremely valuable work experience and make professional contacts before graduating. I believe my experiences with the Halton Skills & Skills Canada competitions truly impressed the interviewees during my architecture admissions process which looks at students' grades, portfolio, interview process and a written test. At the time, only 62 students are admitted each year from approximately 1100 applicants.

I continue to work with HIEC (Halton Industry Education Council) with their Women Career Coaches and encourage young women to follow their passions and not be discouraged by professions in the Skills Trades. I also strongly believe in Co-op programs. Students entering the professional world after graduation with real work experience that they have gained during their education have an advantage. Co-op also allows students to 'test-drive' their jobs, or at least get an inside peek into the real world of the path they are on. For better or worse, you become more equipped to make the decision to stay on that path, or change course.

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE

With hard work, preparation and perseverance you can accomplish your goals, even if you're from a small school in a small town. I also decided it was worth the effort to work hard in order to do what you love.

It was scary to travel away from home and put myself out there at 16 years old. I was terrified of failing and disappointing my teacher and family. I also knew that I would always regret it if I didn't at least try. You will never regret trying. It is impossible to succeed without trying. Trying is the most important part.

The experience also taught me the importance of prioritizing tasks when you don't have the time available to do all that you wish. This extends to so many things with projects and life in general.

If you prepare yourself, you can have the confidence that you will do your best, and that is all you can do. So prepare and enjoy the experience.

### HOW THE EXPERIENCE SHAPED WHAT I AM DOING NOW

I graduated from the University of Waterloo Architecture program and am now practicing as a licensed Architect and part-owner of Hossack & Associates Architects. Throughout my university education, I was able to have many co-op working experiences at a variety of places including the government in Ottawa, a school board in Sudbury, architectural firms in Guelph, Mississauga and Toronto. A year after graduation, I returned to one of the practices I worked at as a co-op student, which I am now part owner of 17 years later.

I specialize in the design of schools and truly believe that the buildings in which students learn can shape their educational experience. I believe that the direction toward collaborative project based learning in schools is the way of the future, and that school buildings must support this. I believe in creating sunlight-filled schools that are happy spaces where people want to linger and socialize, as well as learn and create. I also believe that we have a huge responsibility for the built environment in creating functional pleasant buildings that use little energy and resources to lessen our impact on the earth.

### ADVICE FOR OTHER STUDENTS THINKING ABOUT COMPETING

Don't think twice, just do it. You can only gain from the experience. Step out of your comfort zone. You will not ever regret trying.

## ELEMENTARY FEATURE - 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY COMPETENCIES ON DISPLAY

Each spring more than 500 Grades 4 to 8 students from over forty elementary schools in Halton DSB and Halton Catholic DSB participate in elementary skills competitions. The technology challenges that students tackle are designed to offer teams an opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of science and technology, and math in an environment where collaboration, innovation and creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills are keys to success.



When teams are given challenges in Green Energy, Technology and Distance Challenge competitions they need to think critically to analyze the problem presented and interpret what they are being asked to achieve. Team members must effectively pool their skills and knowledge together to make informed judgements and decisions as they design their product and modify their design to improve its performance.

All elementary skills challenges require teams to be creative and innovative in their approach to addressing the complex problems presented. Students competing in robotics competitions must design robots that can successfully complete the challenges presented and the team must also be skilled at programming their robot to complete the tasks autonomously. More traditionally creative challenges include digital photography and TV/Video production but students must also think critically about the creative and innovative choices they are making to meet the challenge criteria and to distinguish themselves in their presentation.

Elementary Halton Skills competitions offer students an important opportunity to represent their school as they apply the critical thinking and technological problem skills that they have learned in the classroom. Skills challenges require students to develop their collaboration and communication skills as they work together solving meaningful, real-life, complex problems and teams to work efficiently to meet a very tight deadline successfully.

## SARAH SHORT



Sarah started in the hair industry as a co-op student at Red Lemon Hair Salon when she was 15

years old. She later enrolled in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) at Georgetown District High School and became a young apprentice working at Fringe Hair Salon. After graduating at the top of her class, Sarah became licensed and started her new career as a hair stylist. She focused on growing her career in the industry by taking advanced educational classes, learning new techniques, and always keeping on top of the latest trends. Sarah even got the opportunity to apply all of this education working as a Backstage Hairstylist for Toronto's World MasterCard Fashion Week.

After many years of growing her clientele, career, and expanding her experience, Sarah decided she wanted to help other young stylists become successful in the hair industry. She wanted to create a space that was a great learning environment for young assistants and stylists to help coach and grow people. That is when Sarah opened W Salon in March of 2016 in Georgetown, Ontario. W Salon is an "Eco-friendly, luxurious, yet down-to-earth" salon, a space where everyone can feel pampered, beautiful, and comfortable. W Salon received "Gold" for "Best Hair Salon" and "Best New Business" by "Halton Hills Readers Choice 2017." The Salon prides itself on the experience, motivation, and education of its stylists to elevate every client's look and keep their hair feeling healthy in a space that is contemporary and upbeat.

