

# ENHANCING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT MOHAWK

## A Career Ready Fund Initiative

Newsletter – Second Edition



Team at St. Elizabeth's Village, Fitness Centre Opening.

## Expansion at St. Elizabeth's Village – The Clinic

The Massage Therapy Clinic has expanded its scope to include a fitness centre within retirement community St. Elizabeth's Village, in Hamilton. The Clinic allows students from Health, Wellness & Fitness and Massage Therapy

programs to work with real clients, within a professional, hands-on learning space. Guided by faculty, the students provide fitness assessments, personal training and group classes, along with massage therapy services under the direction

of Registered Massage Therapists to St. Elizabeth's Villa residents and the broader community.





Photography is one of the many services offered by students at The Collective.

## Students gain entrepreneurial experience—The Collective

Music, photography and broadcasting students at Mohawk College are finding portfolio-building opportunities thanks to The Collective, a Career Ready Fund-supported platform linking them to paid jobs in the community.

"Some students in The Collective are already freelancers but many are not. It's an opportunity for exposure in a low-risk environment with the college vouching for these students and raising awareness about what they can do."

– **Natalie Reid**  
Program coordinator  
at SURGE

The Collective launched in September 2018 and is overseen by Mohawk's entrepreneurial hub SURGE, which offers coaching, mentorship, networking opportunities, business planning advice, marketing assistance and financial and legal guidance for students and alumni starting and growing businesses.

"A lot of community members reach out to faculty in our media and music programs asking for students to freelance for them," said Natalie Reid, program coordinator at SURGE. Administrators and faculty brainstormed ideas and The Collective was born.

The Collective website features student biographies and links to websites for jazz trios, classical pianists, contemporary guitarists, wedding, commercial and portrait photographers, and videographers who can shoot event, corporate and instructional videos, documentaries, and music videos.

"I thought it was a great opportunity to get some experience and make some money," third-year Television Broadcasting student Jaron Kemp said of joining The Collective. "It's great for the community, too. At this point in my career, I'm not charging what a typical production company would charge but I still do great work."

The plan is to bring in more creative fields this year, including Radio Broadcasting and Graphic Design, says Reid. Other options include Advertising, Animation, Journalism and Public Relations.

"Student selection happens through faculty who recommend their top performers in terms of portfolio, professionalism, entrepreneurial drive and grades," said Reid. "Then we have an intake meeting with students to talk about expectations and what freelancing is all about."

All students who are accepted into The Collective are given SURGE training and support. "Some in The Collective are already freelancers but many are not. It's an opportunity for exposure in a low-risk environment with the college vouching for these students and raising awareness about what they can do," said Reid.

The experience The Collective makes possible can be a differentiator for Mohawk students, says Reid. Beyond the freelance gigs in their fields, it gives students exposure to negotiating and working with clients.

"It provides opportunities beyond classroom experience. We get great feedback from students."

For Kemp, 22, The Collective is helping him gain the experience and knowledge he needs to realize his goal to open his own business. "It's great that the college provides this platform to find me. Then it's up to me to secure the business and make the client happy enough to come back."





Students at work in The Agency.

"The Agency provided us a unique experience to prep us for the real world. It's also fun to work with actual clients and learn from those skills."

—Maddie George  
Advertising and Marketing  
Communications  
Management student

## Working with real world clients—The Agency

The Agency offers experiential learning within a student-powered hub of creative activity. Students in a range of business and creative programs, including Advertising, Public Relations, Marketing, Graphics, Broadcast Media, Software Development, Animation, Journalism and Photography, collaborate to create, manage and execute marketing,

communications and advertising campaigns for real-life clients, while enhancing their portfolios with career-ready experience.

All projects with clients – non-profits and startups in the greater Hamilton community – are integrated into the curriculum and students are marked on what they do. They work under close

faculty supervision and in a partnership with their clients.

The Agency, overseen by the McKeil School of Business, has become a highly successful best practice model at Mohawk College.



### The Office

The Office enables students from Business Accounting, Human Resources and Office Administration to get hands-on experience through working across Mohawk College.

Office Administration students offer administrative support to other micro-centres, and provide accessible document production. Business Accounting students offer the Tax Clinic, and Human Resources students design and conduct mock interviews with McMaster University Bachelor of Technology students.

The Universal Access Lab also falls under The Office, where students make Word, PowerPoint and Excel documents accessible. The Accessible Media Production program has also created the #a11yHAM Meetup Group to promote an accessible community in the greater Hamilton region.

A new Business Analytics Lab will afford students opportunities to support community members and tackle real-world analytics problems.



### The Writer's Room

The Writer's Room provides opportunities for students from Research & Reporting and Broadcasting Media programs to assess research and fact check scripts for industry clients to ensure that they are factually accurate. Multimedia students will participate in three industry Writer's Room projects.



## Renovations in the community –The Workshop

The Workshop has partnered with CityHousing to give Skilled Trades students the opportunity to participate in renovating two subsidized housing units, under the supervision of faculty and working with local contractors.

The building renovation class is divided into groups of six that began taking turns working on the job site in the fall. The goal is to be finished the two units at the end of the semester.

"We are really renovating the entire homes. We are tearing up the old floors, demolishing the walls down to the framing, and taking out the old kitchen. We are relaying floors, rebuilding walls, putting in new cabinets and doing drywall and painting," said Kate O'Hearn, a second-year Construction

"This is real building. Some students in my class have been doing renovations but myself and some other classmates have never done it before. This is the first real hands-on experience for me."

– **Kate O'Hearn**  
Second year Construction Engineering Technician-Building Renovation student

Engineering Technician-Building Renovation student.

Her program covers all aspects of residential building, from the foundation to the roof. The program includes hands-on shop classes to apply learning from theory classes. The on-site renovations offered by this Career Ready Fund-sponsored micro-

centre provide a deeper experience on a live construction site and requires team work, meeting deadlines, and responsibility. Students get to see construction scheduling in action and how subtrades work together.

The students also get the satisfaction of making a home liveable and safe, says O'Hearn. A load-bearing beam in the basement of one unit had to be moved because it was constructed incorrectly.

"The experience is invaluable," said O'Hearn, who aims to be a homebuilder and to open her own small business one day. "This is real building. Some students in my class have been doing renovations but myself and some other classmates have never done it before. This is the first real hands-on experience for me."

And for O'Hearn, it's a way to give back. The renovated townhouses will be a wonderful home for families, she says. "I want to do something to help people and make an impact."



Students in the Creative Team class at Hamilton Public Library.

**Bottom left:** Students in Health, Safety and Nutrition course at Eva Rothwell Centre.

**Bottom right:** Students in the Human Service group Dynamics travelled to the Crux for team building.

## Building skills with City School

City School by Mohawk brings postsecondary educational opportunities into high-priority neighbourhoods throughout the City of Hamilton. City School allows residents within these communities, who are often faced with barriers to education and employment, to gain access to Mohawk College courses on a tuition-free basis.

The Career Ready Fund has enhanced learning opportunities for City School students by supporting a number of field trips for experiential learning and skills building, as well as providing equipment and technology that boosts their engagement and supports their success.







Photo by Sarah Currie

## Sharing the love of music—The Sound Booth

Mohawk College Applied Music students are sharing their talent and love of music with community members who want to learn an instrument, take voice lessons or learn music theory.

Once called Tuesday Night Music School, The Sound Booth pairs second- and third-year students with local residents who want to learn bass, piano, guitar, drums, or some of the brass and woodwind instruments.

"This gives Mohawk students experience in teaching," said Mark Ucci, The Sound Booth's faculty supervisor and a guitar and ensemble professor at Mohawk. "It's field training for them and gives them resume experience."

The one-on-one half-hour lessons are offered weekly throughout the

semester, culminating in a recital. Community members are asked to pay only a \$100 administration fee, making music lessons possible for some who might not otherwise be able to afford them.

The students offer lessons to all ages – current pupils range from six years old to retirees – and all levels of musical ability. Some have never picked up an instrument before, others are learning a second instrument or coming back to it after years away.

Pupils must provide their own instruments, though pianos and drums are available for the lessons in Mohawk's music rooms.

The student coaches are evaluated on their teaching based on the progress of their pupils and must display responsibility, time management

and professionalism in interactions, says Ucci.

He knows of only a couple of similar programs in North America.

"There are lots of intangibles students learn. Many of them haven't taught before. I'm here to give them advice or answer questions. It's really about learning to deal with different people, their personalities and their learning styles."

Teaching is a skill all its own, says Ucci, and many working musicians supplement their incomes by offering music lessons.

"That makes this program extremely valuable to our students."





Photo by Sarah Currie

## Future technicians in action —The Garage

Automotive classrooms that are teaching labs during the week are turned into real-life shops on weekends for students in Mohawk College's Motive Power program. The Garage brings together students learning to be automotive service technicians with customers needing maintenance on their vehicles.

Services offered include oil changes, bumper-to-bumper inspections, and tire changes or rotations and all work is done under the supervision of faculty, who are licensed automotive service technicians.

The Garage gives Mohawk community members quality work for their vehicles at discounted rates, while providing students with invaluable experiential learning.

"Many of the vehicles in the shops that students learn on are brand new," said faculty member Chris Pinard. "With The Garage, they see vehicles that have been on the road, so it's definitely a valuable experience for them. This is the second-most expensive item that people purchase, so students get a feel for the kind of pressure it is to work on a customer's vehicle."

Sixteen students worked on 32 cars over four weekends in October and November and the plan is to open The Garage again in March and April, said Pinard.

Students create inspection sheets and work orders, log and track parts in a mock inventory system, and communicate the work needed and completed to customers.

"It was a really cool experience and, in the trades, experience is a big factor. It's a big advantage to do this in a workplace environment rather than a classroom. It's the best of both worlds to get this while in school."

— **Dakota Rose**  
Motive Power student

"It was all in the students' hands. They took it the whole way," said Pinard.

Participants get a certificate, along with a crucial leg up on their resumes, says Sajanpreet Singh, a second-year Motive Power student who worked in The Garage.

"I had never done an oil change by myself before. It's an awesome program. This is something most people don't have a chance to do."

To be chosen, students had to have a 75 per cent average in their course work and have attendance in good standing. Dakota Rose feels lucky to have been among the first group working in The Garage and hopes to have the chance to do so again.

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Mohawk's Motive Power program, offered at both the Fennell and Stoney Creek campuses, has an enrollment of about 500 students in regular and fast-track programs. Another 600 are working on apprenticeships through the college.





Photo by Maddy Darling

The small group returned home to make plans and this second trip will bring them to life.

Eleven Mohawk building students and two faculty members will return to demolish and renovate the kitchen and build new cabinets. They will also build book shelves and book cases and make a space for students to sit down and read.

"Right now, they just store books wherever they can," said Hyland.

The goal is also to do some painting and organize a storage room.

"The school is not very big, so any room not utilized is a problem. We will build some open shelving so they can get organized," said Hyland.

The Mohawk team definitely has a big challenge ahead, he says. They have just five days to get it all done. Hyland will arrive a few days early to coordinate materials and tools, some of which are being donated. The college's team will travel only with essential tools and items they think may be hard to secure in Jamaica.

"The people were so gracious to us when we were there. We had nothing but love from anyone. The community is amazing," said Hyland. The entire adventure will be documented by two photography students.

This experiential learning opportunity is connected with the Global Experience general education elective. Students earn credit by participating in service learning, international travel and self-reflection.

For O'Hearn, 19, her return to Jamaica is a chance to continue what she hopes will be a life of volunteering. "We are all in on this. It's personal. We know these people and we feel an obligation to help," she said. "This has lit a flame under me. This is a perfect example of what I want to do in my life."

## Global Experience—Jamaica

Bowden Hill Primary school near Kingston, Jamaica is a special place to Rochelle Reid, Mohawk's director of student life and general manager of the David Braley Athletics & Recreation Centre. Her mother attended the small school at the top of a large hill.

When the local education ministry decided to close the school, the community rallied behind it and Reid orchestrated help to arrive from Mohawk.

"It's very personal to her and she has made it all happen. That makes this trip special," said second year Construction Engineering Technician-Building Renovation student Kate O'Hearn, who is one of 13 students heading to Bowden Hill in February to tackle projects at the school.

Phase 1 of the trip happened in November and included Computer Networking and Computer Software students who took laptops and projectors and helped teach the school's teachers learn the technology.

Cabinetry professor Darren Hyland, O'Hearn and another building student also went to the school on that

"This has lit a flame under me. This is a perfect example of what I want to do in my life."

– Kate O'Hearn  
Second year Construction  
Engineering Technician-  
Building Renovation student

first trip to talk to school staff, take measurements, and draw up plans for building projects to improve the school.

"We talked to staff and teachers about what they needed. They were so open and welcoming and so grateful for any help we could give them," said O'Hearn.

"There are doors falling off the hinges, the kitchen is a mess," said Hyland. "There are two dedicated women who serve meals every day in terrible conditions. We want to do what we can to help."





Photo by Jozef Duijvestein

## Global Experience – Greece

A dozen students from Child and Youth Care, Social Service Worker and Photography, alongside faculty and staff, volunteered at the Ritsona Refugee Camp in Chalkida, Greece last fall as part of a service learning trip.



Photo by Christine Spenuk

The Mohawk Global Experience team handed out items to residents at the distribution centre, helped families with their clothing needs at the Ritsona "Shop," helped residents in the laundry facilities, and interacted with women and children in the "Female Friendly" space.

Formerly an air force base, the Ritsona Refugee Camp was funded by the United Arab Emirates and the Red Cross to address the influx of asylum seekers that began entering Greece in 2015.

Global Experience is supported by the Career Ready Fund, providing participants with a three-credit General Education elective course and a certificate, along with a life-changing adventure. The Greece trip was showcased live during the Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFT) conference, which is hosted by the Centre for Teaching & Learning.



## Upcoming Global Experience: India

Autism and Behavioural Science students at Mohawk College will work with teachers and their students with autism in northern India in April.

The Global Experience excursion to the Sorem school in Chandigarh, India, a partnership with Global Autism, will also include Photography students who will document the initiative.

The students, faculty and staff who are taking part are meeting regularly to prepare for their trip and coordinate fundraising initiatives.