

Mohawk College and Westdale Secondary partner with Hamilton

Alliance for Tiny Shelters

Mohawk College and Westdale Secondary dual credit construction students in Hamilton, together with the support of the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS), will be building a cabin to help unhoused people who are currently living rough or in makeshift tent encampments. This cabin will form part of the proposed tiny shelter community, that will help provide stability for people experiencing homelessness, providing warmth and safety while bringing together service agencies to support the individual needs of the residents. The team-taught dual credit in Construction began in September 2022.

"As we move away from the pandemic, students have been eager to re-engage and get involved with our community again" said David Kipp, Construction Technology Teacher at the school... "Developing this relationship with HATS came at an ideal time. The student and I are excited to be working with them and to see change that can happen in our community".

Marty Umanetz, an instructor at Mohawk College is the co-teacher on the project and helped to source materials for the cabin build. Amini cabin model created to scale has already been built by one of the students. HATS is planning to set up Hamilton's first tiny cabin community this winter! A GoFundMe campaign has raised more than \$8,000 to date to build the tiny cabins, as well as provide infrastructure and wrap-around services for residents.

Consultations with people living unhoused have provided valuable advice to ensure the needs of those experiencing homelessness are included in the program's design. The Tiny Shelters initiative takes the School College Work dual credit program to the next level by involving an authentic real-world work experience that serves a critical need. Students engaged in construction technology dual credits explore pathways to apprenticeship in construction which are in high demand in the Golden Horseshoe Region.

"This winter is predicted to be particularly cold, so we must do all we can to get the cabins on the ground Christmas," said Julia Kollek, Chair of HATS..."; And at Thanksgiving, those of us who have a home can feel grateful, while at the same time showing compassion for our neighbours around us who are less fortunate."

HATS engaged in productive conversations with a Hamilton property owner and once details are finalized, hope to have an announcement in early November about a potential location for the small community of tiny cabins. The lockable units would be approximately 100 square feet, with a bed, microwave, small fridge and heating inside. "It would be a private space where people could feel safe and heal," said Tom Cooper, Director of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, and a HATS Board member.

To make this happen, HATS is seeking donations from the community. Each cabin costs approximately \$5,000 to build and the hope is to raise enough funds to build 10 tiny shelters, along with a communal meeting space and washroom facilities.

And over the next few weeks, stories of individuals currently experiencing homelessness will be shared through the Hamilton Tiny Shelters social media accounts.

Article adapted from: *HATS Press Release*



Grad Reflections

A Story of determination

Bailey Simone lost a friend to suicide in grade nine. That shock led to what the 17-year-old describes as a lot of really poor decisions like skipping school, plummeting grades and defying her family.

"I was then diagnosed with bipolar, depression and PTSD," Bailey explains. "With the proper supports I had to learn how to deal with my issues. However, this didn't define me, it is a special part of my story."

Bailey's story continued when she nervously applied to join the School within a College (SWAC) program run by the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB at Georgian College in Barrie. In SWAC, high school students come to college to take both secondary and college credits in a flexible environment.

"I enjoy many things about this program," Bailey comments. "I like that I am treated like an adult and have been made accountable for my work and my learning. I have already been successful in one college course and am currently on my second one. This will give me an advantage when I start college."

SWAC teacher Rosa Bitonti has proudly supported Bailey's growth in the program. "School Within a College and the Dual Credit program was built for a student like Bailey," she says. "She is true testament that hard work, determination and perseverance can pay off and that there is hope on the other side. When Bailey arrived in September, she had concerns that she would be able to manage both high school and college courses, but she has done just that! She has thrived in the program and has experienced success at the college level."

The confidence instilled in Bailey through her experience in SWAC have led her to consider a career in health care in the future. "The SWAC program changed my life and gave me opportunities I am so grateful for. With the support of my family and staff, I am looking forward to my future education to become successful in life!"



Introduction of new General Education "Exploring Trades & Technology" Course

SLC is pleased to announce the introduction of a new General Education Course, "Exploring Trades and Technology" that was developed specifically with Dual Credit students in mind. Since the skilled trades and technology are an important and dynamic part of contemporary life, understanding how society is impacted by advancements in these fields can help us live better, more well-informed, and sustainable lives. In this course, students have an opportunity to further develop their problem-solving and innovation skills through engaging and practical projects. Topics of exploration could include, but not limited to, automotive, carpentry, welding, plumbing, and millwright.



Students Share How SWAC Impacted Their Lives

The SWAC program has definitely had a noticeable impact in my life, in quite a few ways. There is more than one solution to almost every problem, and the best way to solve a problem if it is with another person, is without conflict. It is even better if you can solve a problem with unwanted behavior from someone without even causing conflict or even mentioning it to them, just finding a way where the next time you deal with them, it works out in your favor.