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Students look to the future at job fair The Simcoe Reformer

Daniel Pearce - SIMCOE REFORMER
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- INDEX**
- EDITORIAL**
- NEWS**
- SPORTS**
- EVENTS**
- SERVICES**
- ADVERTISING INFO**
- ARCHIVES**
- CONTACT US**
- OBITUARIES**
- CLASSIFIEDS**
- CYBERSAVER**
- CAREER ADS**
- PLACE AN AD**
- SUBSCRIBE ONLINE**

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They're only 15, but they're under pressure to decide at least the direction if not the exact career they'll undertake. With less than three years left of high school, Ontario's Grade 10 students need to think about career choices so they can make the right course decisions.

"We're so young and we don't know what we want to do yet," Mandy Babcock, 15, of Port Dover Composite School, said while attending a student job fair at The Aud on Tuesday. "If you don't know what you want to do, you have to take a bit of everything."

If you pick the wrong course, she noted, you have a limited time to drop out or you have to try to pick up the course you should have taken during another semester.

Babcock was one of more than 1,000 students, mainly Grade 10s, from across Haldimand and Norfolk who came to The Aud to get a better focus on their education by talking first-hand with people in more than 50 professions.

They wandered freely from exhibitor to exhibitor to hear about being a social worker, truck driver, massage therapist, or architect. They heard what the jobs involved, including wages, and what education is needed.

They climbed in and out of tractor-trailer cabs or jammed with Wray Anderson of iC SuperComputers on a guitar or keyboard hooked up to a computer. They could also record themselves on camera and rework their photo on a computer screen. In one case, a kid took his head off and put his eyeballs in his hands -- an image that might be used on an album cover or magazine advertisement.

"It's like a combination of a funhouse and the mall," Anderson said, who was there to let kids try out the latest computer technology used by creative professionals such as musicians, illustrators, and television producers.

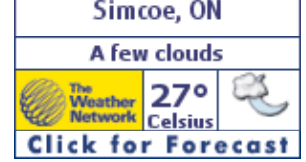
The event is helpful because kids are sometimes more likely to believe what someone other than a teacher or parent has to say, said Wanda Tiller, head of student services at Waterford

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District High School.

“It’s tough for kids,” added WDHS career studies teacher John Macdonald. “They’re overwhelmed, but they do need to think about the choices in life they have to make.”

Babcock said she’s unsure what she wants to do “but I’m interested in travel.” She talked with Simcoe travel agent Kate Smith-Stratford who explained how the Internet has changed the business and pointed out one of the perks of the profession: free trips.

The kids, Smith-Stratford told the Reformer, “are awesome. They’re very inquisitive. They asked more questions than I thought they would.”

Babcock said she will continue to do what most of her schoolmates do: simply choose the courses that interest her the most.

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[back](#)



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