

GETTING THEM WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG: TLA AND ILA EDUCATION FUND ACHIEVEMENTS

By Sandra Bishop

Raise your hand if you think Port Alberni is the forestry capital of Canada? How many of you would call Campbell River the forestry capital of the

high school experience. "Twenty years ago if we were asked, 'How many of your family and friends work in the forest industry,' pretty much every hand in

educate their students about the forest industry in British Columbia. Both associations achieve this by providing financial support to school programs through the TLA Forestry Education Fund or the ILA Donor Fund, which are supported from proceeds from the auctions at their annual conventions.

"I think there are a lot of people in school and in the province, for that matter, who don't know much about forestry and forest practices in BC," explains Jason Kerluck, Carihi Secondary's forestry program instructor. "It's so important, especially for those living within a logging and forestry community to know where our wood products come from and how they are made, and where the jobs are within our communities that are supporting our local and our provincial economies."

These two impassioned high school teachers are the change makers leading two distinguished Vancouver Island high school forestry programs which aim to ensure the next generation of forestry workers is being trained in the

Jules Tuinstra

Jules Tuinstra took the grade nine forestry class at Alberni District Secondary School (ADSS) and then took the Sustainable Resources Forestry class as a high school senior. Both classes provided hands-on, in-depth learning about forestry. After Jules graduated in 2013, he decided to find a career in the forest industry. After taking some Transport Canada approved marine training, Jules started as a boom man deck-handing, towing booms and stowing bundles in the Alberni Inlet. As he worked more, he had the opportunity to work on the dry land sort banding bundles. He now works in a full-time bucking position on a dry land sort in the Alberni Valley. He's working full-time, learning about the industry and building his forestry skill set. He credits the courses he took at ADSS for putting him on the forestry career path and helping him achieve his goals.

These high school programs focus on real-world projects that make them a transformational learning experience, which in many cases leads to students pursuing promising careers in forestry.

coast? The answers are obvious, right? You would think so, but you'd be wrong.

Alberni District Secondary School Teacher Ryan Dvorak acknowledges today there is a serious disconnect between people in rural communities and the forest industry. Dvorak recalls his

the room would go up." If he were to ask that question today to the students he teaches forestry to, there would be two hands up.

That is why the TLA and the ILA are committed to investing in forestry education by helping teachers from K – 12

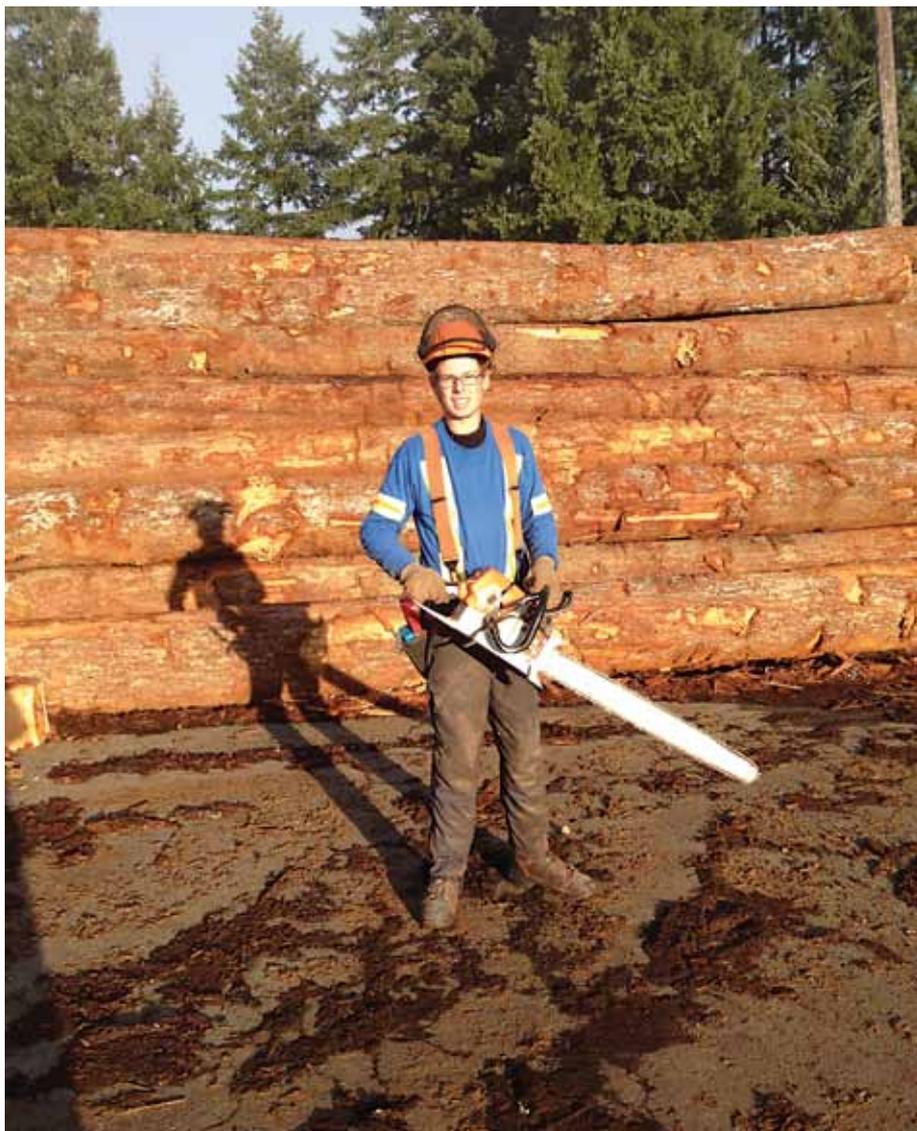


Photo: Courtesy of ADSS

communities where they will be needed.

The overriding challenge facing BC's forest industry is replacing an aging workforce. It's a challenge that is made more difficult by an industry that was in decline for a number of years.

TLA Education Committee Chair Dave McNaught is vocal about the serious need to bring youth into the forest industry. "In this day and age with attrition and retirements going on there's 4,700 people needed to fill forestry jobs over the next 10 years on the coast. The forest industry offers young people a long-term stable career."

The TLA's Brenda Martin couldn't agree more. Martin is also co-chair of the Festival of Forestry, an organization whose goal is to educate K - 12 teachers about the forest industry by conducting forestry tours and providing them with relevant teaching resources. "Coastal communities are trying to retain their young people and keep their communities vibrant. Forestry is one way this can happen. If teachers are able to educate young people about the industry and what it offers—well-paying, secure jobs in their community that allow them to make a good wage and live locally—



Photos: Strategic Natural Resource Consultants

Eighteen-year-old Ira Ellingsen is a product of Carihi's initial forestry class, which launched three years ago. Ira says he might have considered a career in forestry without the high school program, but he wouldn't have had that jumpstart. "Just coming out of high school, it opened the door for me," said Ellingsen. He is now an assistant field technician at Strategic Natural Resource Consultants in Campbell River.

that's an important piece."

But the first step is raising awareness

about the industry and the benefits of working in it. By starting at the grade 9 level with project-based learning, Dvorak is able to build an interest in forestry for the senior program in Grades 11 and 12.

"In Grade 12 students are looking at forestry as a career," Dvorak emphasizes. "They learn hands-on how forestry actually works and gain some entry level skills around tree planting, silviculture planning, engineering, compass work, block layout, running deflection lines, and we even do one week of heavy equipment training. I get the kids out on hoe chucks, excavators, and we teach them how the machines work and how to maintain them. That's always a highlight!"

Dvorak believes forestry also offers an opportunity for students to look at a career where they can make a difference in the world. "Many students gravitate towards careers in the environmental sciences and we argue that forestry is THE most important environmental science, responsible for 60 per cent of the land base. Our students gain an understanding of what the industry really is, not the hyperbole or propaganda they read in the newspaper, magazines or online."

Dvorak's colleague in Campbell River, Jason Kerluck, echoes this philosophy and reiterates the results of students

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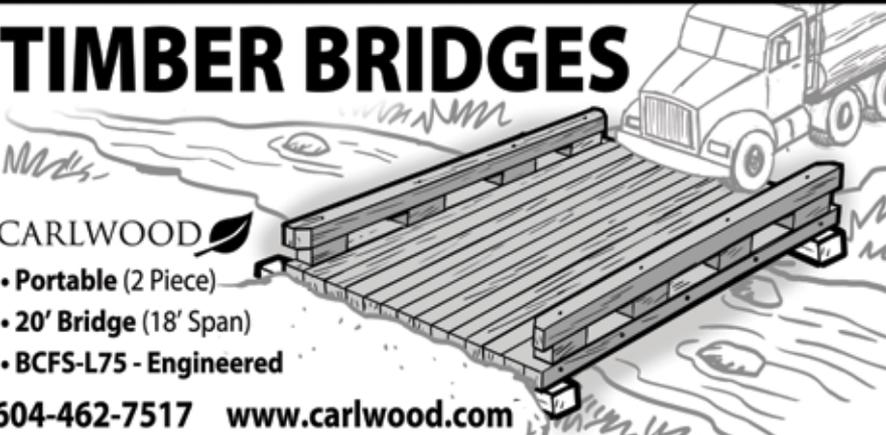
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working on collaborative hands-on projects where they become engaged and fully motivated. "I wanted to make it the type of class where students could

"It's an awesome job. Being outdoors is the best part and second best is flying in helicopters and going on boats all the time. When I work in the office," he

along with them out in the bush and in the office to see how they did things and that's when I realized I really do want to do this."

From a business perspective, being a strong supporter of the Carihi program allows Strategic to see employees grow from a young age and develop their passion for the industry over time.

learn about forestry within BC and build employment skills so that if they did want to go into forestry they would have some really good options and connections and skills to make them employable."

Both teachers credit the TLA with providing the leadership and financial support that ensures these innovative programs succeed. Last year, the TLA sponsored a crew bus for the Carihi Secondary program. "Having that bus allows us to get to places, out to areas that show different types of trees, different landscapes. Within our afternoon or morning we can go to T-Mar Industries to look at harvesting equipment. We can go to the nursery and see how they're producing seedlings. We can experience it all," said Kerluck.

These high school programs focus on real-world projects that make them a transformational learning experience, which in many cases leads to students pursuing promising careers in forestry. "We look at soils, we look at some of the policies within forest management practices and people in those careers come in to talk to us so students can make connections with people in the industry and industry makes connection with our students," Kerluck explains.

Eighteen-year-old Ira Ellingsen is a product of Carihi's initial forestry class, which launched three years ago. "I might have considered a career in forestry without my high school program, but I wouldn't have had that jumpstart. I wouldn't have had the extra knowledge beforehand. Just coming out of high school, it opened the door for me."

Ellingsen is now an assistant field technician at Strategic Natural Resource Consultants in Campbell River. He spends his days working on laying out cut blocks with RFTs and RPFs, mapping and conducting field work, and running deflection lines.

quips, "that's a grumpy day."

In high school Ellingsen remembers visiting active logging sites "which was mostly my favourite part, just going around and looking at all the different stuff they were doing on different logging slopes in different settings. That was pretty fun. We got to see things from the planning stages to the sorting and scaling operations at the end."

Ellingsen spent one week at Strategic where he shadowed several different forestry professionals doing their daily work, which resulted in a seminal moment for the young teen. "I got to go

Strategic recognized Ellingsen's passion for the industry. "I think Ira's still unsure of which area he will pursue," comments Ellingsen's supervisor Aaron Nelson, Timber Development & Engineering Manager, "but we're working with him to help him make that choice. Either way what he got out of school and his experience with us is going to set him up with a really good foundation, whether he decides to go on the planning side or the heavy equipment operating side of the industry."

From a business perspective, being a strong supporter of the Carihi program allows Strategic to see some employees grow from "a super young age, with a passion for the industry and see them through the high school program and hopefully, see them go even further to the degrees. At the end, when they've graduated we try to hire them full time."

In the Interior, the ILA has long been



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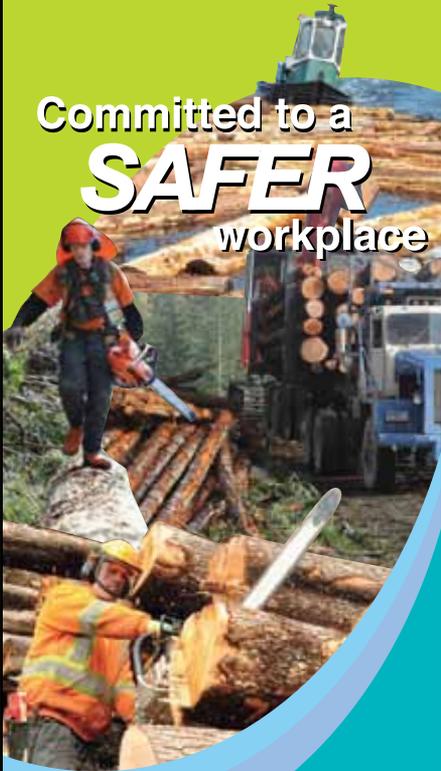
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Photo: Tree Frog Creative Communications

The funds the ILA donate to Canadian Women in Timber allow the women to travel to classrooms and teach students about forestry. Here three children take part in the interactive displays in the Forestry Van.

focused on targeting young minds for forestry education. By providing financial support to the Canadian Women in Timber they are able to do classroom visits to educate young people with a variety of forestry education materials and

ILA General Manager Wayne Lintott.

All these educators and industry representatives agree there's one major lesson learned from the challenges facing the forest industry. "We have to do more," affirms Nelson. "We need young

Through funding from our ILA Donor Fund, the Canadian Women in Timber have been able to develop an activity book for younger children, a forest education book geared to older children and timely industry facts for teachers.

take the ILA Forestry Education Van to visit schools throughout the region.

"Through funding from our Donor Fund, the Canadian Women in Timber have been able to develop an activity book for younger children, a forest education book geared to older children and timely industry facts for teachers," notes

people to know we're cutting down trees but in a sustainable way. We have the richest growing sites in the world and trees grow way faster here. We're also planting twice as many new ones as we're harvesting."

That means there's a bright future for forestry and for young British Columbians who want to be a part of one of the greenest workforces on earth.🌲