



Syrians finding career opportunities in GTA after college reacts to bricklayer shortage

News provided by

Skilled Trades College of Canada

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VAUGHAN, ON, Feb. 28, 2018 /CNW/ - Five Syrians are among the 10 students looking to kickstart their careers in the shortage-hit bricklaying trade through education and practical learning at the Skilled Trades College of Canada.

The College, which has graduated more than 5,000 students in electrical, plumbing and general contracting in 10 years, recognized the high demand for bricklayers in the residential construction industry last March. That's when it started a plan of action and later created a curriculum, launching the eight-week Residential Bricklaying Program last month in a 3,000-sq.-ft. lab space as well as classroom facilities.

The College opens its doors to media on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; lunch, noon-12:30, 231 Rowntree Dairy Rd., Vaughan) to talk about the new program.

"Getting into this program is offering me a great opportunity for my new life here in Canada," says Salah Dib, who was a construction labourer in Syria, during a break in bricklaying class. "I'm excited to be learning new skills to help me build a new career."

[According to the Government of Canada's Department of Employment](#), there will be 4,100 job openings for bricklayers in the 2015-2024 period with only 3,500 new job seekers expected to fill them.

Richard Lyall, president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) – an association that represents more than 200 residential builders across the GTA – says that bricklayers represent the trade that is most in demand.

"Getting bricklayers on site has been a source of frustration for our members because there is a bricklayer shortage in the GTA," Lyall says. "The delays in bricklaying are one of the main stumbling blocks for finishing new homes."

Ralph Cerasuolo, director for the College, says: "We're starting with 10 students this term, and we hope to graduate another 30 by the end of the year. By 2020, we plan to train and educate more than 200 per year."

Mike Di Donato, operations manager for the College, adds: "We're happy to be part of the solution to educate and train bricklayers, help the industry and get new immigrants, refugees and underworked individuals into lucrative jobs. Our graduates can then support their families, get new-home buyers into their new homes more quickly and ultimately help boost the economy's economic engine – construction."

About the College

The Skilled Trades College of Canada is a MAESD-approved private career college that has served the GTA for 10 years with campuses in Vaughan and Mississauga. It is an industry leader in electrical, plumbing, general contracting and construction safety training, graduating more than 5,000 students in that time. The College recently launched the new Residential Bricklaying Program, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an Ontario government agency, in partnership with Human Endeavour, a Vaughan-based non-profit dedicated to providing opportunity to residents and new immigrants.