

Daughter struggles to find work in trades

To the Editor,

I am the father of two teenage girls attending North Hastings High School. My oldest is in Grade 12 and like all students preparing for life after high school she is setting her sights on possible career paths and is actively looking for a co-op placement with some local contractors. I have told them how lucky they are to live in Canada where opportunities for employment aren't restricted by gender, in fact I have told them many times not to let anyone tell them they can't do something because they are girls. My daughters have grown up in a skilled trades environment with me being a millwright and their uncle an electrician, so I was pleased when my oldest decided she would like to be an electrician. My joy has turned to frustration when she came to me and told me that several places have turned her down based on the fact that she is a girl. In Canada, discrimination based on gender is against the law under the human rights code. I am aware that the trades can be a physically challenging industry, but it is no secret that being an electrician requires intelligence and intense studying prior to starting work over physical ability. In 2016 it is still clear that gender imbalance is an obstacle to be overcome. Shame on those that have turned her down. Although a little disappointed, she will not give up and I have every belief she will find a co-op opportunity. She is ready to work even harder than her male peers to show she can do the job and that no one will say to her that she can't do it because she is a girl.

Mike Zdanowski