



CSC youth work crew leader Peter Lohonyay shows Ashley DeVries how to apply plaster on sheetrock. DeVries is a member of the youth work crew team who worked on the old Toledo Fire Hall. Youth work crew members receive training and learn job skills while earning minimum wage. (Photos by Monique Cohen)

## Constructing their future

CSC program gives youth a chance to learn work and life skills firsthand

By Monique Cohen  
Of the News-Times

Seventeen-year-old Ashley DeVries is getting a head start on her career in the construction trade as a member of a youth work crew through the Community Services Consortium (CSC).

DeVries, along with crewmembers Frank Aguilar, 18, and Remington Iverson, 17, recently worked on refurbishing the old Toledo Fire Hall, under the direction of crew leader Peter Lohonyay. They learned how to hang and tape sheetrock and how to plaster and texture it. Next they'll begin painting.

"By the time they're done, and if the economy picks up - because you're looking at about a year - they should be well-trained and ready to enter the job market at entry-level positions. We train local to stay local," Lohonyay said. "It's an important thing. With the kind of industries we have around here and the potential for growth, if we train locally then maybe we can keep our young people local. That's one of our goals."

Lohonyay is also a vocational education instructor with the Career Technical Education program at Toledo High School. DeVries was a student in his class for about three years where she first learned how to hang sheetrock.

"We're trying to help the people that need the most amount of help and that are ready for help," he said.



Frank Aguilar and Remington Iverson, members of the CSC youth work crew, are on the manlift installing sheetrock on the ceiling of

### CSC

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The program offered through CSC is open to youth ages 14 to 24 years, and once accepted, they learn a trade while earning minimum wage for up to 320 hours. Youth can be in or out of school but must be working toward a goal, such as a high school diploma or GED.

"They receive job training, they learn professionalism, all of the work readiness skills, and they're learning specific job skills that are transferable to just about any job," said Diana "Dee" Teem, CSC workforce and education program advisor.

The program is supported through federal, state and local government funding and private foundations. Community Services Consortium serves Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties. Grant and stimulus dollars through the Oregon

Youth Conservation Corps help fund Lohonyay's crew, as well as \$15,000 from the Lincoln County Economic Development Grant.

Teem is impressed with Lohonyay's work with the teens. "He holds the kids accountable, and he teaches them well, but he does it in a really positive way, using positive youth development

techniques so that they're understanding the responsibility level and how to keep their job," she said. "But he's doing it in a way that he's teaching them so they're absorbing it."

The crew's next project is to develop a "pocket park" next to the old firehall, which is owned by the Port of Toledo. They will also build and install a solar powered greenhouse at the Toledo Skate Park.

"It's been a phenomenal partnership building experience between the fund from the county, the support from the City of Toledo, and the Port of Toledo and the school district," Teem said.

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#### Summer work crews

CSC will be accepting applications soon for their summer youth work crews for ages 14 through 24 years. Applications are available at Community Services Consortium, 120 SE Avery St., Newport. Call 541-265-8505 or go online at [www.csc.gen.or.us](http://www.csc.gen.or.us) for more information.