



Jimmy's ambition to be the envy of his mates

Top of the South Trades Academy, Nelson and Marlborough

In 10 years time 17 year old Jimmy Simpson, a farm boy from remote Tapawera, has plans to restore his own old school "muscle car".

It'll be left handed drive, its model will be late a 1960s or early '70s Dodge Charger and Jimmy will be the envy of every male in the Nelson region. Jimmy is from a farming family in the community, about 25 minutes out of Tapawera. He enjoys the farm and respects the hard work which goes into it, but his dream is to be an automotive mechanic in Nelson.

Jimmy is in his final year at school and has his eyes set on a goal, but to achieve this, he knew he needed some direction and to meet people who could help him understand the industry he was interested in. He also knew that he had to complete his education. Jimmy attends the far-flung Tapawera Area School, an hour's drive from Nelson towards Buller and the West Coast.

After trying out two short courses at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) in 2013, he enrolled at TOTSTA this year. TOTSTA stands for Top of the South Trades Academy, which began with five visionary secondary school partners and NMIT.

TOTSTA offers vocational training for senior students who are exploring sector or industry pathways to tertiary training or employment.

Jimmy recognised that vocational training would help him fulfil his ambition to be a mechanic and to get there, the Vocational Pathways could help organise his choice of study and plan his pathway to work. Jimmy attends the Academy one day a week – and his dedication means he travels an hour and a half to get there - and the other four days he completes his studies at Tapawera.

Jimmy is enrolled at TOTSTA for a year to see "what the tertiary and work world looks like."

Shaaron Adams has been manager of the Trades Academy since the first 110 students flooded through the gates two years ago.

"We want the students to experience what tertiary training is about, succeed in that environment, build relationships with students from other schools and get a sense of the pathways open to them," Shaaron says.





*I want to create things that move.
My path is Red.*

"They have a foot in both worlds. They're still in the school environment but through the formal training and recognition at TOTSTA, they are working towards achieving their NCEA Level 2 with Vocational Pathways and are exploring and planning their next steps."

Since opening in 2012, TOTSTA now has 15 partners and nearly 300 students with participating schools extending from Motueka to Marlborough.

Shaaron Adams has tracked its impressive progress in just two years. "The time was right for TOTSTA. We now see an increase in female students along with a rise in Māori, Pacific and Asian students," she says. "Vocational Pathways has provided a framework and continuity and the certainty of ongoing direction for our students. They have a better line of sight from learning to work."

Jimmy is one of those students who've come to TOTSTA with a vocation in

mind although he had the choice of at least 12 different programmes.

"I enjoy the hands-on experience, I'm treated like an adult and I work in an environment where I can make my own decisions," Jimmy says. "I'm even able to cope with school better because I understand the importance of maths and English."

And it's given him the desire to "take a wreck and restore it."

His dad had given him an old Toyota Landcruiser and told him it was his if he could make it go. Jimmy rolled up his sleeves and became familiar with mechanic's tools and the patience and discipline of dismantling, repairing and putting back together. He quickly knew the world of cars was where he wanted to be. So there is one wreck at home but there's another in his mind's eye that he'll find and rebuild when he's completed his qualifications and is a successful mechanic serving the Nelson community.

More than 4,200 senior secondary schools students, from 264 schools are currently enrolled at a Trades Academy this year, in 22 Secondary-Tertiary Programmes throughout New Zealand.

For initial outcomes from these programmes, see the 'Youth Guarantee Monitoring Report: Impact of Trades Academies & Youth Guarantee Fees-Free Provision on Student Performance' to see the effect on outcomes for students <http://youthguarantee.net.nz/assets/assets/Youth-Guarantee-Monitoring-Report-one-page-for-YG-staff.pdf>