

# INTELLIGENT DESIGN

## Career Center students branch out into the real world with skills they learned in school

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COVENTRY—Two seniors at the Regional Career and Technical Center at Coventry High School have wasted no time in applying what they've learned in the classroom to the business world.

Graphic Design students Garrett Cole and Matt Colwell have each started a local business before receiving their high school diplomas.

Garrett enrolled in the graphic design program as a sophomore, where he learned how to screen print and use the programs needed for apparel design.

"I had a job at Papa Gino's and didn't like it; didn't like working for somebody," he explained. "I wanted to own my own business."

When his mom told him her friend was selling the North East Screen Printers business, he said he decided to lease out the space but keep the name.

The shop, located at 45 Noosneck Hill Road, West Greenwich, acts as a second home to Garrett after school and on the weekends.

He explained that he is the only person working there so far; his mom helps with the book-keeping.

Because of this, he has to spend as much time at the shop as it takes to create the T-shirts needed to fill the orders he gets.

When somebody orders T-shirts, he said it takes many steps before it's completed.

First, the correct mesh count for the screen has to be decided before the screen is cleaned and coated with emulsion.

The emulsion is sensitive to light so when it's exposed to light, wherever the image is on the screen, it will appear.

"Then you squeegee the ink; it falls through the screen where the image is and it goes onto the T-shirt, then you have to dry it," he said.

The length of the process all depends on the detail of the artwork and how many colors are included on the shirt.

Depending on the amount of shirts ordered and how many colors are included, the retail price varies from between \$9-

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Garrett Cole works on a screen before using it to print designs onto t-shirts. Cole and fellow graphic design student Matt Colwell have taken their skills making clothing into the business world.





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\$12 per shirt.

Matt, who's enrolled in the graphics design program with Garrett, also started his own business called Something Simple.

He works alongside Zack Diaz, who graduated last year from the high school.

Both men started their own clothing line; which they design and sell the numerous shirts and sweatshirts.

Last fall, Something Simple came out with a line of three T-shirts and one sweatshirt.

Crystal Violette, graphics design instructor, explained that Matt and Zack only design 30 shirts at a time before they switch "so everybody doesn't have the same thing."

They will be coming out with their second line on June 1, which will include three different tank tops and two T-shirts. All of their clothing can be purchased on their website.

She explained that Matt's idea for his business started in the classroom last year when he and Zack were discussing ways to earn a living.

"I told them as long as you're happy with what you're doing it won't feel like work," she said. "I love all my student as individuals. We talked about what companies look for and it was neat to see their first design get done here."

Although Something Simple uses a different company to print their shirts than Garrett's company, he explained that they've talked about partnering up with other items, like skateboards.

"I'm looking into printing skateboards so they'll be interested with that once I learn how to print the



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**The shirt designed and printed by Garrett Cole, which will be worn by competitors in this year's enviro-thon contest. Cole runs North East Screen Printing in Coventry.**

skateboards," Garrett said. "I've also been helping them find out how to embroider hats."

Violette said both students are going to become members of the advisory board for the program once they graduate.

She said every program at the career center has an advisory board consisting of former students, business owners and people who work in the field.

"I have to take their input and apply it to the program," she added. "I'm presenting to them during an advisory night, how everything is going, how we are with recruitment numbers, field trips, college prep and they give feedback on that."

Garrett said this is something he's always been interested in from the start and once he did his Capstone Project on it, he knew this would be his future.

"This is really what I want to do out of high school," he added. "I'm thinking of taking a couple business and graphic design classes out of school to keep up to date on the programs."