

# Spotlight on Student Success

## Dan Twardesky

### Connections for Life



Dan in the LHS' Network Operations Center

Dan Twardesky continues to walk the halls of LHS, but he doesn't get asked for a hall pass anymore. In June 2013, he graduated from Lakewood High School and West Shore Career-Technical District, but even before he graduated, he began working in the Information Technology Department of the Lakewood City Schools. On any given day, he can be seen in multiple LCS buildings programming switches for wireless access points, running wiring in buildings, or addressing other networking issues.

As a student in West Shore's Networking/Cisco program, Dan acquired the skills and knowledge to pass the highly regarded Cisco Certified Network Associate exam. Last spring, he and Matt Kerrigan won the Ohio's 2013 Cisco NetRiders IT/Networking Competition, and then went on to place 10<sup>th</sup> in national competition. With this award and the Cisco credential under his belt, he became a highly employable West Shore graduate.

It has been a smooth transition for Dan into the working world. The equipment he works with is the same that he trained on in the Cisco classroom. He credits the Cisco curriculum and Ms. Chevalier for giving him the real-world practical experience to hit the ground running. The hands-on, learn-by-doing teaching style helped cement the concepts. Dan plans to continue his education, but for now, he is saving his money and knows this work experience is a good mark on his resume.

Joe Rodgers, Dan's supervisor, is extremely pleased with his contributions: "We were hiring summer interns and Ms. Chevalier suggested Dan. He has a strong work ethic and is someone who can work independently, which is rare to find at his age. He is willing to take on any job and not afraid to ask questions. After the summer internship was over, I knew we could continue to use his skills so I'm pleased we are able to keep him."

**Dan's advice to students:** "Have fun! Do what you like. Find something you like to do and your job won't feel like work. I get to do what I like so I enjoy myself and I get paid for it! Sign up for competitions. It's a great way to test your skills and if you do well it is a nice add to a resume"



Dan and Matt Kerrigan proudly showing their 10th in the Nation NetRiders Certificates