

## APPRENTICE STORY

# WILLIAM

## PROSTAR GEOCORP

INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY



SOFTWARE  
QUALITY ASSURANCE

“IN MY JOB, PEOPLE RESPECT MY INTELLIGENCE AND EXPECT ME TO GET MY JOB DONE. THERE’S A MUTUAL RESPECT, AND TRUST IS IMPLICIT. IT’S REFRESHING TO HAVE PEOPLE COUNT ON ME.”



William doesn't feel he fits the typical high school mold. But he loves science and technology and jumps at any opportunity to problem solve. Since he became an apprentice through CareerWise's modern youth-apprenticeship program in 2017, he has expanded his technical knowledge, is saving money for college and is building a solid skill set for the future.

## A FUTURE FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

William is a junior at Central High School in Grand Junction. When he found out about CareerWise's apprenticeship program, he liked the idea of getting paid to do something meaningful and start saving money for the future.

“I saw a chance to use the time I have now to get my feet wet in a professional environment,” he said. “Then if I want, I can apply for a job fresh out of high school with three years of experience.”

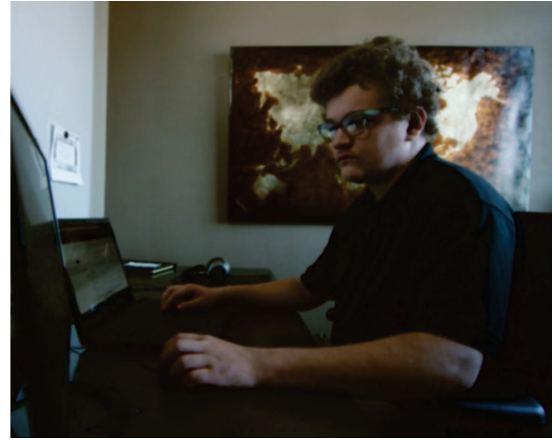
When William saw that ProStar GeoCorp was offering an apprenticeship, he applied. “I was hoping for this job. It seemed like a good idea to start learning business processes in the tech world.”

ProStar GeoCorp hired William to test software and write and update documentation. Just seven months into the job, William was excelling so quickly that the company added to his responsibilities, exposed him to working with geospatial technologies and even gave him a pay raise. The chance to grow and excel has boosted his confidence and he now sees a future full of possibilities.

William intends for his CareerWise apprenticeship to lead to a focused college experience. His eventual goal is to become a college professor, as he has an aptitude for “explaining stuff,” and a good mastery of technical subjects. But first he is set on gaining several years of real-world experience and learning as much as he can.

Right now, William is most passionate about the subject of neural networks: hardware and software systems modeled on the human brain. He is also drawn to entertainment and game coding, and his ProStar apprenticeship has sparked an interest in geospatial information technologies.

Whichever path his career takes, apprenticeship has reinforced William's interest in technology and is illuminating multiple paths to success. "So many jobs come from software that I could end up working on any number of things. Being a software tester is a good stepping stone."



## TAPPING INTO INNATE SKILLS

In addition to developing his technical capabilities, William is developing greater social and interpersonal communication skills. He enjoys interacting with his coworkers to complete projects, and appreciates how different his professional relationships are compared to relationships with his school peers.

"In my job, people respect my intelligence and expect me to get my job done," he said. "There's a mutual respect, and trust is implicit. It's refreshing to have people count on me."

William has been pleasantly surprised at how casual the work environment can be, while being simultaneously professional. He finds it easy to approach his coworkers about things going on in his life; one colleague even helped him with a big school project about neural networks. "They are supportive as people. I thought work was just about showing up, doing your job and leaving."

Finally, William is able to advocate for himself more. He acknowledges that in the past, he has not needed a lot of help and has always been a good student, always "on top of things." But as an apprentice he has learned to be more proactive in problem-solving situations—a skill that will prepare him for his future higher-education and career endeavors.

## APPRENTICES STAND OUT

William successfully balances a full schedule—working in the mornings, attending school in the afternoons and participating in jazz band. He believes the combined benefits of work-based learning, strengthening his resume and getting paid while building professional skills are highly appealing.

"Colleges are not looking for straight-A students. They are looking for students who stand out. Few people have done an apprenticeship—I'm doing it and my resume looks good."

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