



Teens graduate from LIC watchmaker program

By Angy Altamirano | Thursday, June 12th, 2014 5:02 PM EDT [Leave a comment \(http://queenscourier.com/2014/teens-graduate-from-lic-watchmaker-program/#respond\)](http://queenscourier.com/2014/teens-graduate-from-lic-watchmaker-program/#respond)



THE COURIER/Photos by Angy Altamirano

Ayushi Pant, 18, was one of seven students who graduated from Tourneau's Watchmaker Program on June 12.

A group of city high school students is using time to their advantage.

Luxury watch retailer Tourneau (<http://www.tourneau.com/>) recognized seven students, the third group of kids to complete the company's Watchmaker Program, during a graduation ceremony Thursday at its headquarters within the Falchi Building (<http://falchibuilding.com/>) in Long Island City (<http://queenscourier.com/?s=%22Long+Island+City%22&x=28&y=6>).



(http://queenscourier.com/?attachment_id=180714)

During the eight-week "Art of Watchmaking" program, students are given the opportunity to learn the skills needed to possibly begin a career as professional watchmakers.

The Tourneau Watchmaker Program was started last year by Terry Irby, a third generation watchmaker and Tourneau's technical director. With more than 600 watches in need of repair coming into the western Queens site, an aging staff and the number of American watchmakers dropping almost 90 percent since the 1950s, Irby was keen to get the younger generation involved in the trade.

"Watchmaking is a skill that most often stays in families, because it takes a long time to learn," said Irby. "As a kid, I loved it – I couldn't wait to help my father. Now, my career is about passing those skills on. These students can take what they learn with them and support their families."

The company has since collaborated with Manhattan Comprehensive Night and Day School, which in partnership with Comprehensive Development Inc. (CDI) selects students at the school to take part in the program.

Before entering the program, each student is interviewed by Irby who tests their skill and gets a look at their interest in watchmaking. Once accepted, students learn the history and mechanics of watches, take apart watches, examine every piece and then reassemble watches and clocks.

"What we're looking for are real opportunities for students to be exposed to the world of work and hopefully learn some skills," said Margaret

Aylward, associate executive director for CDI. "The idea is that at least it hooks them in in a way that keeps them engaged and learning."

Two Queens students were among the graduates during the June 12 ceremony. Ayushi Pant, 18, who was born in Nepal and about four months ago moved to the United States and now lives in Jamaica, and 19-year-old Frank Kwarteng from Corona, both received diplomas and white lab coats for completing the program.

"I really feel blessed and really happy," Pant said. "I like taking things apart and putting them back. Patience is one of the most important things of being a watchmaker. I learned how to be patient, how to solve problems and not panic. This is how we're going to succeed in the end."

Some of the graduates will take the skills they learned and apply it to their future careers, while others will continue their work with Tourneau being accepted into full-time internships.

"I want to try to continue watchmaking and see how far I could go with it," Kwarteng said. "It's the best program. I learned a lot about watches and I never thought I would get into watches like this."



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The next group of students are expected to begin the Watchmaker Program in the fall.

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By Angy Altamirano | aaltamirano@queenscourier.com (<mailto:aa%6c%74am%69%72an%6f%71ueens%63%6furier.%63om>)

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