



## *News Release*

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### **Century Student Finds His Niche after Job Goes to China**

Before Cody Berg of Princeton was a Century College student, he was a cabinet maker who worked 60 to 80 hours a week, made a decent living and regarded his work peers as family.

Then the economy tanked, and Berg's employer informed most of the workers that their jobs had ended due to competition from China. A chain of stores that used to purchase locally-made custom cabinets would now be purchasing cheaper cabinets from a supplier in China.

"It was a shocker," said Berg, 33. "The news came in the middle of a super-busy week at the end of a long day. It was totally unexpected."

Berg looked for work for a year and then received a most welcome letter in the mail. Because his job was lost to foreign competition, Berg was eligible to receive college tuition money from the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, a federal program that is operated through each state to provide benefits and services

to workers who become unemployed due to the impact of international trade. The program gives people the opportunity to obtain the skills, resources and support they need to become reemployed.

Berg jumped at the chance to earn a college degree. Though his black clothes, tattoos and hair length say “heavy metal rocker,” he is actually a folk-music lover who writes poetry, reads widely and enjoys writing.

Berg began at Century in January 2010 for spring semester. And he loves it.

“I used to work in a shop with 45 other guys,” said Berg. “That was my world. Going to Century, and meeting the wide variety of people that teach here and go to school here, has brought out qualities in me that I didn’t know I had. I never experienced that kind of diversity.”

Berg is excited to explore his creativity and meet people who think differently and experience the world differently than he does. “My brain has been on fire since I started here,” said Berg. “I was hibernating for years. This is just an awesome experience.”

Berg has an hour-long commute to Century from his home in Princeton. He normally gets up at 3:45 a.m. to beat the traffic, do some homework on campus and make his 7:45 a.m. class. After a long day of classes, he returns home to his “garage gym” and lifts weights for an hour and a half. A certified personal trainer, he is devoted to working out as part of his continuing recovery program.

Berg is proud that he has been chemical-free for nine years. He may pursue a career in the world of chemical dependency recovery, and he chose Century because of its chemical dependency program.

“I had no idea I would enjoy college so much,” said Berg. “One of my favorite things is tutoring.”

Berg has been selected to be an in-class tutor for English Prof. Cullen Bailey Burns, and he is enjoying helping his peers improve their skills. “To help people at this level – I never knew I had it in me,” said

Berg. “I do have a passion for helping people, so this is a good fit for me. I believe in human beings’ potential for growth. You can never be fully content with where you are.”

Commented Prof. Burns, “Cody is an excellent writer who is also kind and helpful. As a tutor, he reaches out to other students and makes them feel comfortable. His confidence in his own ability has grown as he works with other students. Academically, the sky’s the limit for Cody.”

Berg has the words “overcome” and “vigilance” tattooed on his arms, in addition to a phoenix and a moth. He pointed out that the moth is drawn to the light and is symbolic of the search for truth in the light of the soul.

**Adult learners who are thinking about going to college for the first time or finishing their degrees can attend a free workshop at Century called “College 101 for Adult Learners.” The workshop will be held Tuesday, Dec. 7, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.; Wednesday, Dec. 8, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and Tuesday, Dec. 14, from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in Room W2270 on West Campus. For more information, please call Jill Aitchison, Century Adult Learner Advocate, at 651-779-3437, or email her at [jill.aitchison@century.edu](mailto:jill.aitchison@century.edu).**