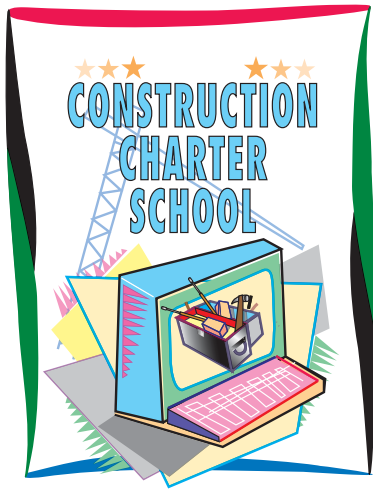


"ACE"-ING THE TEST

NEVADA'S CONSTRUCTION CHARTER SCHOOL GETS ITS PROGRAM OFF THE GROUND



The Academy for Career Education (ACE) in Reno, Nev., has successfully completed its fledgling year as a charter school. ACE is a school founded on a unique approach to education, one that combines a traditional curriculum with construction disciplines. With the support provided by the Nevada Chapter AGC, whose members have volunteered their time both in and out of the classroom, the foundation for a successful charter school program has been laid.

Craig Willcut of United Construction Company, Reno, Nev., Nevada Chapter treasurer and former president of ACE's Board of Directors says, "The academy shows students what construction is all about—that it is not just pounding nails—while giving them an opportunity to gain skills relevant to the industry."

The Academy for Career Education is a tuition free, construction trades/engineering, charter high school for 10th through 12th grade students. ACE offers students an opportunity to engage in an integrated academic curriculum and take specific construction/engineering courses.

BEGINNING A JOURNEY

ACE has a unique relationship with the construction community, whose members work with the academy so that students gain experience needed for future employment. Nevada Chapter general contractors, engineers, and architects provide instruction and assistance when needed on the jobsite while serving as mentors for the students.



Mark Sullivan, AGC Nevada Chapter local government affairs representative, says, "Our philosophy is that education is not a destination, it is a journey. And, by helping students integrate into the construction community, we expand their education while representing ACE as a high-caliber institution."

In conjunction with the Nevada Chapter, ACE students participate in an apprenticeship program as a way to maintain its symbiotic relationship with members of the construction industry. AGC uses the apprenticeship program and others, such as leadership training, to foster the relationship between ACE and the construction community.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Also, students themselves are utilizing their acquired knowledge and skills to give back to the community. Last spring, ACE partnered with the Nevada Chapter in the adoption of Mt. Rose Elementary School. ACE students volunteered for the Mt. Rose career day, helped young students build toolboxes, gave tours of the jobsite, and worked with the children on a fence behind the house.

Other students join community agencies to help with special projects. While working with the Center for Independent Living to build ramps, widen doorways, and install grab bars, students are able to engage in service-oriented projects and hone their construction skills. One project included partnering with a neighborhood advisory group and helping elderly homeowners repair damaged property.

ACE Students built a 1,400 square-foot home that sold for \$182,000.

Students can even be found building dugouts and playground equipment in local neighborhoods.

The hands-on approach of the apprenticeship and community service programs are viable means of educating students who often have had trouble in schools with traditional curricula. Working with AGC, the academy focuses on bringing knowledge from the classroom and applying it to construction.

BUILDING A FUTURE

Students are responsible for building a \$180,000 single-family residence during the school year; and when the house is sold, the profits are used to fund the same project the following year. While the construction of a single-family home is no small feat, both students and faculty have received recognition and awards for their outstanding efforts.

Many ACE students graduate with a Nevada High School diploma composed of 22.5 credits. These credits consist of English, math, social studies, science, computer literacy, PE, and health, as well as various electives focusing on construction, drafting, and business management/career skills. Students also have the opportunity to graduate in advanced construction by earning 25 credits at a local community college. Of those credits, 12 go directly towards a Bachelor of Tech-



Ed Horan, ACE Building Trades teacher, was awarded the NACTE SkillsUSA/VICA Advisor of the Year for Nevada and is currently nominated for that award in ACTE Region.

nology degree in construction sciences at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Projects and houses are waiting to be built by ACE's future students, and with AGC and community support, ACE is heading towards a successful future. As stated in the yearbook, "A foundation has been laid and now the world will watch the walls go up." The growing charter school is headed in the right direction, and the construction community will indeed watch it grow and develop.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Nevada ACE Students won a gold medal in teamwork at the Nevada Skills USA/VICA event.

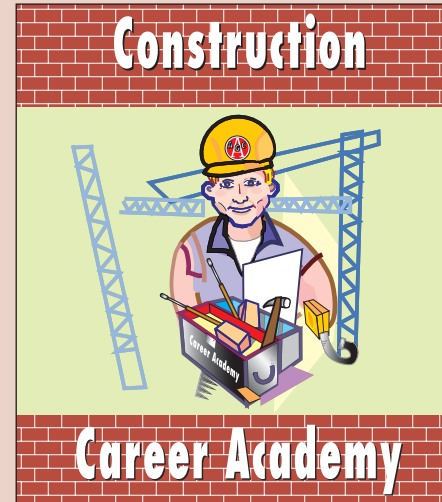
BUILDING SAN DIEGO CONSTRUCTION TECH ACADEMY GAINS MOMENTUM IN ITS SECOND YEAR

After three years of planning and hard work by the AGC San Diego Chapter, Construction Tech Academy (CTA) opened its doors to students on September 3, 2002. During the summer of 2002, the AGC San Diego Chapter, its member firms, and other associations worked to renovate 50 percent of

Kearny High School in San Diego, Calif., to become the CTA campus. Now, class has been in session for well over a year, and parents, teachers, and students are enjoying not only the facility itself, but also the success of the academy.

FUNDING THE FUTURE

CTA has a tremendous amount of financial support from the AGC San Diego Chapter and its members, a personal benefactor, and a grant from Bill Gates. Because of these financial contributions, CTA is fortunate to have a new state-of-the-art facility, complete with the luxury of bus transportation for the students. While AGC San Diego Chapter served as



the "general contractor," none of the renovations would have been possible without the generosity of the San Diego construction industry and its willingness to volunteer time and effort.

Jim Ryan, the AGC San Diego Chapter executive vice president, says, "Construction is a worthwhile career, and CTA gives students an organized and focused means by which to get in the industry. In order to make CTA a successful program, it is necessary to step up to the plate financially."

FROM JUNIOR HIGH TO THE UNIVERSITY

The AGC San Diego Chapter is currently developing a system to fund CTA indefinitely. CTA is a good move for students in search of a solid education foundation that leads to a career down the line. "AGC San Diego Chapter can take interested students from Junior High School through college," Ryan says. "We are not just promoting construction; we are giving students the opportunity to learn and forge their own career path." Some students go right to work, while others enroll in apprenticeship programs that require a high school degree in the state of California or a collegiate program. Whatever the path, CTA has not only provided them with the knowledge base needed to succeed but also with hands-on work construction experience.

By nurturing student interest in construction and providing a place to learn, AGC San Diego Chapter hopes to challenge and educate the youth of California and convince them that construction is indeed a noble endeavor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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