

# ACE Mentor News

July 2008

ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida, Inc.

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## ACE Curriculum Exposes Students to Careers in Architecture, Construction and Engineering

The ACE Mentor program of Northeast Florida is an after-school mentoring program that has just completed its second year of operation. In the 2007-2008 school year, the program was offered at A. Philip Randolph Academies of Technology. The upcoming school year will see the mentoring program expand into Clay County at Orange Park High School.

Students spend 2 hours after school for 15 weeks working closely with local architects, engineers and construction managers. The students learn about career opportunities in the respective fields and apply what they have learned by working on a design project they select.

The program this past year added a session on sustainable design—teaching the students how to be “green” and think about energy conservation. **Mary Tapounni** of Breaking Ground Contracting and **Corie Baker** of JSA Architects as LEED APs were naturals to lead this portion of the curriculum. In addition to the classroom sessions, the students participated in a “hands on” exercise on layout and surveying with the assistance of Moore Surveying.

The students also participated in two day long field trips. The first field trip included a visit to Gate Precast, Elkins’ Student Union project at the University of North Florida, Haskell’s Blue Cross and Blue Shield campus, the offices of Reynolds Smith & Hills and finally to Belet’s Millwork workshop.

The second field trip was focused on encouraging the students to attend college. They visited the University of North Florida’s College of Computing, Engineering and Construction, and toured the building. Personnel from both Admissions and Financial Aid spoke to the students providing great information on what to do to navigate the college application process.

The students then visited the Student Union site a second time to see the progress of construction in 4 months.



*ACE students visiting Reynolds Smith & Hills structural engineer Donald Waller at work.*



Career Directions for Students in  
Architecture, Construction and Engineering

[www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org)



## STUDENT FINAL PRESENTATIONS DRAW DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Our students presented their projects to fellow students, mentors, parents, teachers and guests on May 23, 2008 at San Jose Country Club. The packed room was testament that the students were proud of what they accomplished.

Following the presentations, the Duval County Superintendent of Schools, **Lad Pratt-Dannals**, stopped by to talk with some of the students about the program and see the work the students produced.

Each of the student teams developed a building to be added to their school campus. Projects varied from a Teen Center to those that had a broader perspective with a Community Center.

The ACE National Executive Director, **Pamela Mullender**, was also in attendance to spread the message to all about the need of the construction industry to attract talent as baby boomers retire. Her remarks noted that the construction industry is second only to healthcare in employment in the United States.



*Duval County School Superintendent Lad Pratt-Dannals with ACE National Executive Director Pamela Mullender.*

## \$10,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY NORTHEAST FLORIDA AFFILIATE

On May 23, 2008, the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida awarded \$10,000 of scholarships to 4 ACE students from A Philip Randolph Academies of Technology. The local chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) provided \$6,000 of the scholarship funds.

**James Haire** was presented a scholarship for \$4,000 based on his exceptional participation in the program. **Karly Yoder**, **Jeffrey Suttle II** and **Zack Walker** each received \$2,000 scholarships.

In addition to ABC, the local sponsors who made the scholarship presentations possible are:

- Auld & White Constructors, LLC
- Coastal Electric Company
- Eisman & Russo
- Ellis & Associates
- Elkins Constructors, Inc.
- England-Thims & Miller, Inc.
- Ferber Roofing



*ACE Scholarship winner James Haire with ABC First Coast President Pilar Stevens and Northeast Florida Board Chair Denise Ramsey.*

- Florida Engineering Society
- Gate Precast
- Haskell
- HDR
- Marietta Sand Corporation
- NGI
- Rotary Club of Mandarin
- Summit Erectors, Inc.
- Taylor Engineering Inc.
- Tritt & Franson, P.A.



## ACE—A MENTOR'S PERSPECTIVE: BY EUGENE DAMASSO

As a first year mentor with the ACE program, I have frequently reflected on the significance, value, and need for a program such as ACE. On many levels, the experience of mentoring proves to be invaluable.

As a young architect, the program offered me a chance to look into my own past to see my development, and to also hopefully be a sign of a future for the students in the program. It offers me a chance to question my own journey and say "How did I get here?" The experience also reassures me that the path that I have taken has purpose and meaning.



ACE student Piero Carhuamaca hard at work.

In seeing that purpose and meaning, I know that being a mentor for the ACE program reaches into the workplace, the school, and even into the community. Mentoring is an opportunity to go beyond yourself, look the future in the face

and impact that future and those lives whom you mentor.

Through our weekly interactions, the students demonstrated true character. My group of students displayed consistent effort and showed true dedication to the program. One student faithfully attended the program even though he worked all day and had to come straight from work. Each Thursday he would arrive

after work ready to listen, learn, and contribute. Another student, although she attended another school, made the consistent effort to travel to our school specifically for the ACE program. The entire group showed integrity through open collaboration and teamwork to produce an excellent presentation at the end of the program.

In our fast-paced deadline-oriented profession, time is a valuable commodity not to be squandered. That is why our time needs to be invested in something worthwhile. For me, the young people who we mentor through ACE are certainly worthwhile.

In giving our time, we can provide the students the means and the tools to carry them through the next ten years, not only in their careers, but in their life. The students learn to respect each other's ideas and opinions and to work through problems as a team. They learn to step up and take responsibility for their work. They learn what type of work ethic it takes to be successful.

It is through this meaningful expenditure of our time that ACE offers a way to impact our future and the future of our industry.



ACE student Grace Dulaney presenting her group's bus shelter design.



ACE students visiting the Elkins Student Union jobsite trailer.

### CAN MY CHILD JOIN ACE IF HE/SHE DOESN'T ATTEND A PARTICIPATING SCHOOL?

The answer is maybe. If the student attends one of the high schools that has an earlier release time and has their own transportation, they are welcome to attend. The '07-'08 school year had one student from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts participate at A. Philip Randolph doing just that.

To be notified of the start of the program, contact **Denise Ramsey** at 904-791-4592 or [denise.ramsey@haskell.com](mailto:denise.ramsey@haskell.com).

## MORE MENTORS ARE NEEDED FOR OUR EXPANDING PROGRAM!

With our expansion to Orange Park High School next year, the Affiliate is in need of additional mentors.

People often ask what is involved in being a mentor. The answer is simple. First, you must take a mentor training class either at the Jacksonville Children's Commission if you are mentoring at A Philip Randolph, or at Kesler Mentoring Connection if you are mentoring at Orange Park High School. A background screening is completed in conjunction with the mentor training class.

Next, you attend a few organizational meetings to plan student activities, and to learn about mentoring tools and practices provided by ACE.

Finally, simply show up, participate, and share your enthusiasm for your profession! It is understood that not every mentor will make every session due to work commitments. But the students do look forward to meeting with you, and we hope that your attendance is a model for theirs.

Mentoring sessions are held once a week at school for 2 hours beginning 10 minutes after the school day ends. The mentoring "season" starts midway through the school year. A new mentor this past year, **Joanne Connell**, said she had as much fun mentoring as the kids did!

The schedule for the 2008-2009 school year will be finalized during summer break. We would love to find more mentors who are also members of ACE's national sponsors including: AIA, ABC, ASLA, IIDA and USGBC.

For more information on mentoring, contact **Denise Ramsey** at 904-791-4592 or [denise.ramsey@haskell.com](mailto:denise.ramsey@haskell.com).



*ACE Mentor Faith Mellor discussing interior design with students Mereno Scott, Ashley Ballinger and Jonathan Perkins.*



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