

**THE REAL DEAL**  
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**PRESS**

# All ACES for Area High Schoolers

*Extracurricular energies of Cleveland, Warrensville students culminate in dazzling designs*



Area students presented their ACE projects before mentors and peers on April 24 and April 30, 2019 at Cuyahoga Community College's Jerry Sue Thornton Center.

**By R. T. Andrews**  
EDITOR

It truly does take a community to raise children. Watching a dozen or so high school teams in competition on two recent late afternoon programs last month drove home the point emphatically.

The competition was not on fields or courts. It was in the imagination and spirit of the more than 150 students who participated this past year in Cleveland's ACE mentorship program, an effort to introduce high school students to the worlds of architecture, construction, and engineering.

Students, their mentors, families, and friends, gathered on two days last month to share

and discuss their solutions to some of our area's infrastructure challenges. Several high school teams accepted the challenge to move pedestrians safely over the downtown shoreway to connect downtown to the Science Museum, Rock Hall and First Energy Stadium. Their ideas were spectacular as they combined aesthetics, energy conservation and renewal, efficiencies, safety concerns, and various other practicalities. Their models were, in short, anything but pedestrian.

Some audience members were undoubtedly taken back to their own childhoods filled with [Legos](#) and building blocks, or, perhaps if of a certain age, [erector sets](#) and [tinker toys](#).

But these presentations

were far more sophisticated, embracing expansive modern designs, scale models, computer renderings, animation, and much more.

Each team, as a part of its project, had to address issues of site prep, scheduling, and cost estimating. One student drew real world laughs when he suggested that a particular task "would not cost not that much", while pegging the expense at a mere \$98 million.

There were a number of fascinating takeaways from the presentations. One was the chance to see the city through the eyes of its young. The team from New Tech East, for example, said that Cleveland needed the shoreway bridge "to stay relevant."

Another was how, despite the prevailing one-dimensional racialized frame of much public discourse, city schools remain a crucial intercultural space. One hundred years ago, the voices of students would have reflected an abundance of middle and eastern European accents. Today, the symphony of accents is infused with a mix of Caribbean, Central and South American accents.

And of course, the student mix is thoroughly integrated in terms of gender, with more hairstyles than even Vidal Sassoon could imagine.

Not to be overlooked is the squadron of volunteers that undergird the ACE mentorship program. These include the

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students' teachers and scores of working professionals in architecture, engineering, and construction. They were present as cheerleaders, coaches, and reactor panel members for student feedback.

Behind the scenes is [a larger set of supporters](#) who mentor the students one-on-one, provide exposure to career pathways, and who have helped to raise the nearly one million

dollars that as of this year has been given to program alumni to support their collegiate ambitions.

Local participating high schools include Cleveland's Collinwood, Ginn Academy, James F. Rhodes, John Hay, John Marshall, Max Hayes, New Tech East, New Tech West, High Tech, and Lincoln West, along with first ring suburban Warrensville

Heights.

Warrensville has enjoyed special success in this program, and this year will be joined by New Tech East in the [final presentation and scholarship award night on May 9](#).

End note: a few days after the presentations, [the architect Bob Madison shared episodes and perspectives from his life at the City Club Friday Forum](#).

Madison, now 95, was Ohio's first licensed African American architect, and founded the state's first black architectural firm in Ohio in 1954. Among other reminiscences, he shared the wonderful classic education he received at East Tech HS at the onset of WW II. The company he founded still operates in town today and is one of the state's oldest professional services firms.



Case Western Reserve University 2019 Diversity Award winners pictured last month with CWRU senior leaders include Heather Burton, PhD; Erin Phelps; Shemariah Arki, EdD; Vice President for Student Affairs Lou Stark; Margot James Copeland; University President Barbara R. Snyder; Victor Ruiz; Vice President for Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Marilyn S. Mobley, PhD; Ibtesam Ghazy; and Emily Pentzer, PhD.



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### MEDIA WATCH

Tuesday, May 7, 7:30a [5 min.] • *Real Deal Press* editor R. T. Andrews debuts on WOJU 95.9/ FM, offering quick takes on the latest news. Mobile livestream available [here](#).

Fri. May 10, 11a • "We The People" WKYC-TV. Host Tiffany Tarpley with guest Tonya Perkins, founder of Bessie's Place, which provides services and housing for young women who have aged out of foster care.

Sat. May 11, 1-2p • "It's About Justice". Host Meryl Johnson, state board of education member. Hon. Marcia Fudge, guest. WRU-W/91.1FM. Livestream [www.wruw.org](http://www.wruw.org)