

ACE Mentor News

August 2015

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ACE MAKES AN IMPACT FOR ALL INVOLVED

Celebrating 10 years!

Since our establishment in 2006, the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida, a 501(c)(3) organization, has realized tremendous success in our local communities. The program's mission is to engage, excite and enlighten high school students to pursue careers in the integrated construction industry through mentoring; and to support their continued advancement in the industry through scholarships and grants. In 2014-2015, the program included three local high schools – Lee High School, Middleburg High School, and Orange Park High School in both Duval and Clay Counties. Additionally, we added a team of Homeschool students which met at the offices of two of our supporters, Auld & White Constructors and TLC Engineering for Architecture.

The multifaceted program includes college advice, field trips, and hands-on projects. With oversight from mentors, teams of students design a hypothetical project in response to a Request for Proposal and present the project to a "Selection Committee" – teachers, students, mentors, parents, and industry professionals – at a year-end event. In addition to our traditional program, this was our third year having a National Competition team from Orange Park High School. We are proud to say that our National Competition team was one of three finalists selected from across the country to present their project in Washington, D.C. this year.

We had an extremely successful year with approximately 73 students and 48 mentors working together to create the exciting projects that were presented at our End-of-Year Presentations and Scholarship Awards luncheon on May 15, 2015. We were able to award \$15,500 in scholarships for our students this year, thanks to the generosity of our professional and private donors. Since our establishment in 2006, we have awarded over \$130,000 in scholarships to deserving seniors choosing to pursue careers in the industry.

We thank all of our students, parents, teachers, mentors, and Board Members for an amazing year and look forward to expanding our program and reaching more students in the local community in the years to come. The diligence and dedication our students have for the program gives us great hope for the future of the Architecture, Construction and Engineering industries.

Brooke Robbins Receives AIA Honor



Pictured above, Tom Duke, AIA Jacksonville President; Brooke Robbins; and Jennifer Suharmadji, AIA Jacksonville Secretary and ACE Mentor

Brooke Robbins, Chair of the Northeast Florida Affiliate, received an honor award and certificate of appreciation from the American Institute of Architects Jacksonville chapter on May 29, 2015. This award is given to recognize an individual citizen, a community organization, a governmental agency or a local company or corporation who has made a significant effort contributing to the advancement of architecture, the arts or the environment within the community.



ACE MENTOR PROGRAM
ARCHITECTURE • CONSTRUCTION • ENGINEERING
Career Directions for Students in
Architecture, Construction and Engineering



To track our events, find out about volunteer opportunities and our overall successes, please visit our website at <http://acementor.org/599>. You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn groups under ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida.

ACE MENTOR PROGRAM OF NE FLORIDA

Joe De Marco Named *ENR* Outstanding Mentor and Orange Park High School National Team Selected as a Finalist in National Design Competition in D.C.

Joseph A. De Marco, Mechanical Engineer, Engineering Manager with Fishman & Tobin, LLC and a long-time mentor for the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida affiliate, was named one of five 2015 ACE – *ENR* Outstanding Mentors.

Joe and the Northeast Florida affiliate were in the most unusual situation of being doubly honored this year. Joe's team was one of the three finalists for the Ninth Annual Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT), ACE Mentor Program of America National Design Competition for their "Harmony Springs Health Clinic" entry. The team of aspiring architects, engineers and construction managers was selected out of a record 46 entries from across the country. Competing teams were from Chicago, Illinois and Frederick, Maryland. In preparation for the national presentation, the team presented before the Clay County School Board on April 16, 2015.

Only one of the team members was allowed to present in the competition, and on April 27, 2015, Brian Reed represented Orange Park High School's Team Mark-O for the competition finals in Washington, D.C. Other team members included:

- Violette Otero
- Kenny Windham
- Michael Nee
- Tom McClymont
- Destiny Childress
- Hunter Vatile



Joe, OPHS teacher Doug Barrows, and former affiliate Chair Kimberly Hansen, were also in attendance. Mentors unable to attend include:

- Michael Compton, RS&H
- Ken Loefgren, Loefgren & Associates
- Marie Hurst, Nemours
- Mary Ellen De Marco, St. Catherines
- Tom Grogan, Haskell
- Fred Heyne, Heyne & Associates.

During the ceremonies, Joe was presented the Outstanding Mentor Award.



Teacher Recognition

We truly appreciate the dedication of the teachers who donate their personal time to the ACE Mentor Program. The following teachers were essential to the 2014-15 program success:

- Lee High School - Ms. Monique Bell
- Middleburg High School - Mr. Chise Apiata
- Orange Park High School - Mr. Doug Barrows & Mr. Ted Jahn
- Homeschool Facilitator - Ms. Kim Ebbers

"It has been a wonderful experience working with ACE this past year. To actually see students grow and take more accountability with their future career goals is something that inspires me to continue building this program at Middleburg High School. The ACE program helps students understand what it actually takes to perform in the construction field and how many parts are actually involved. Students see first-hand how everyone and everything works together. Overall, the experience has been a positive one, being able to collaborate with other schools keeps students pushing the bar higher and ultimately raising the caliber. I look forward to a productive year." - Chise Apiata



ACE Alumnus Explains Benefits

"I've participated in ACE since 2008 – through all four years of high school. I've gained so much more than construction skills and knowledge. ACE has truly made me a more well-versed young woman overall, through both the knowledge and principles presented. Because of those golden years, I decided to come back every year following high school to volunteer or mentor to share what I've learned and also to learn more. I'm still in college, and to have the opportunity to come back and be a part of such a phenomenal cause is amazing. As a mentor in ACE, I am honored to have the opportunity to help mold these current students. To see them transform just as I did is just beyond words! ACE taught me many of the tools needed to become more than ordinary. Many people think that ACE is just about giving students a look into becoming a construction professional and provide scholarships. Everyone should know that ACE is about so much more. ACE taught me principles and values that continue to follow me throughout my life. I have learned confidence through the presentations skills. I've learned the importance of teamwork, through hands-on activities. Through work on all of the projects, I've also learned creativity, the importance of following through and working hard. But most importantly, I've learned to be kind and grateful, through the time offered and caring nature of the mentors and ACE program. Although these things aren't openly expressed as the mission, these lessons are truly intertwined in the curriculum of ACE and have touched the lives of many. ACE alumni are a little more well-rounded, knowledgeable and ahead of our peers in college and the workforce. I truly hope that through my ongoing participation as a mentor, I can encourage students to realize and treasure all that ACE offers as they carry on to transition to Alumni and carrying out their individual lives." – Ashantae Green



IMPACTS STUDENTS, MENTORS AND FAMILIES!

Mentors and Students Volunteer for Habitat for Humanity

On April 18, 2015, members of the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida from Orange Park High School in Orange Park, Florida volunteered their time and talent to help the Clay County Habitat for Humanity Program. ACE Mentor, Ken Loeffgren, has been involved in ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida since its inception. Joe De Marco, ACE Exemplary Mentor for 2015 and Ken dedicated their time to lead this project. Students, mentors, and family members worked together to help renovate a home. Work included removing old kitchen cabinets, dishwasher, stove, counters, and even the kitchen sink. The old water heater and air handling unit were also removed. The team actually had to help remove the old air handler and compressor so they got hands-on experience on HVAC. Materials were loaded on a trailer and removed from the site to be sold, recycled or taken to the county waste management facility.

Besides the great design work they do throughout the 16 weeks during our ACE projects, it is great that these students also get hands-on experience like this while earning some community hours for high school.

Clay Habitat for Humanity strives to eliminate substandard housing in Clay County, Florida by working with families who are building their own home. Habitat for Humanity's vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Proud home owners were also very thrilled with the work our team did.



2015 Field Trip

The blustery winter weather of early March and late school buses caused some on-the-fly adjustments to the annual field trip, but in the end, it was another successful outing. The students were able to visit two construction jobsites – Unity Plaza / 220 Riverside and the Jessie Ball duPont Center which are both high-profile projects in the urban core of Jacksonville. At Unity Plaza, the students saw the restaurant space and site amenities under construction, along with hearing about the vision for life enriching events every day of the year from Jen Jones, Unity Plaza Executive Director.

At the new Jessie Ball duPont Center, which is a renovation of the iconic Haydon Burns Library in downtown Jacksonville, KBJ Architects, Inc. and Danis Construction conducted the tour and students were able to observe many levels of construction within the project. The students saw how elements like the new roof garden and rainwater collecting cistern, newly equipped mechanical and electrical rooms, and high-end specialty finishes transformed the 50-year old building into a state-of-the-art facility to service Jacksonville's non-profit sector.

The subcontractor stop this year was to B3 Millwork where owner, Barry Bunker, walked the students through the shop showing the different pieces of equipment and what they did, even cutting a few samples. He illustrated how the in-house design team interfaces electronically to the various saws and machinery. Barry also made sure the students learned about positions available in the industry as well as how FSC certification is an important part of sustainability.

Haskell presented an overview on landscape architecture, safety and everything BIM (Building Information Modeling).

Finally, the Republic Services Recycling Center provided a

great overview of their role in over 60 sustainability initiatives, many related to the construction industry.



ACE MENTOR PROGRAM OF NE FLORIDA

Student Perspectives

"Being a student for ACE was pretty eye opening for me. Being able to meet different architects, engineers, and construction managers really helped me with deciding what to do after high school. I did not know of which STEM majors to go into; however, ACE helped me decide on majoring in Electrical Engineering, and I am not regretting it!" – *Ledarius Smith (Lee)*

"ACE gave me a great opportunity to connect with both peers and mentors who are currently working in the same fields that I am interested in. It was exhilarating to communicate with the different professionals from several different companies while conducting the research for my part of the team presentation. I also greatly enjoyed learning how to work in this sort of team environment and coordinating with my team members and mentors to prepare our presentation. I can't wait to return next year to expand my experiences in the ACE program!" – *Lexi Dunn (Homeschool)*

"I have been a participating student in the ACE Mentoring Program for four years, three of which I have been on the National Team. The mentors helped me decide on Mechanical Engineering as my major, and taught me valuable skills. I had networking opportunities with some of the nation's best at the CIRT event for the National Teams that made it to Washington D.C.

I have made amazing career connections and have professionals to vouch for my work ethic. But I have also made an extended family out of my mentors and team mates. I love ACE. The mentors are extremely friendly, funny and relatable. Whether or not I received a scholarship from the program doesn't matter, I plan on returning as a Junior Mentor to both the Regional and National teams to help them as individuals and as a team." – *Violette Otero (OPHS)*

Mentor Perspectives

"I chose to mentor with ACE because I wanted to share my knowledge and enthusiasm for the construction industry. As a young woman, I was lucky enough to get a job at a General Contracting firm immediately after high school. After working at the company for a year or so, I learned that I was really interested in the construction industry and my employer offered to reimburse me for college classes. I started at that company filing and making copies of plans and worked my way up to Assistant Project Manager. I was lucky enough to work under a female CEO and Project Manager during that time, but it made me realize that I had never been reached out to during high school about careers in construction. I want my ACE students to know that there are opportunities in construction for every gender and ethnicity. I am proud to say that two students in our group this year have been accepted into the College of Computing, Engineering, and Construction at UNF (my alma mater)." – *Ashley Sharpe, Winn Dixie*

"I have been part of the ACE Mentoring program for the past four years. The past three years, I have been lead mentor. As lead mentor, my primary responsibilities included making sure that we had guest speakers to talk about their expertise within the ACE fields and keeping the students and mentors advised on future events.

I believe that giving an overview of the ACE professions allows the students to be better prepared for college and may even assist in directing the student towards a specific profession. My favorite part of the program is watching the students grow throughout the year and presenting the project at the end-of-year event." – *Wayne Petrone, Peters & Yaffee, Inc.*

"Everyone has their own unique path that led them to their careers in the ACE fields. Generally, it is the people in our lives that influenced those occupational decisions. For me, my decision to enter into the construction industry was made in part because of a passion for creating things and because of life experiences during middle school and high school.

Our students are exposed to the diversity of possible careers—ranging from the various design disciplines, to roles in the construction industry, all the way to the construction attorney that handles the disagreements and disputes that happen in the construction process from time to time.

Most, if not all, of the students that my group mentored have now expressed a strong desire to pursue careers in architecture, construction or engineering, which is exactly what ACE Mentor is all about. Without ACE Mentor, who knows, they may have been lost to the liberal arts." – *Bryan Judah, Tritt & Associates, P.A.*

"I choose to mentor because I want to share this wonderful profession that I have called a career with students who are looking to find their inspiration in life. I want to encourage them to learn and explore and ask questions as they embark on their journey to become a contributing member of society. Even on the busiest, most frustrating day at my job, an ACE day is hands down one of the most rewarding ways to end the day on a good note. I am always amazed to see how well the students present themselves and their projects.

When I joined the Board of Directors for ACE, I saw another way to contribute to the ACE Mentor mission. The Board is responsible for advocating for the organization and recruiting both the mentors who are the backbone of the program, and also sponsors who support our scholarship program for our deserving ACE seniors. I have had the chance to experience following some of our students as they graduate and pursue their education towards an ACE career. There are several students that I worked with for 3 or 4 years in ACE that are now close to graduating college. Several of them have had an opportunity to become an ACE mentor themselves. In addition to the fact that this shows that the ACE Mentor Program is working to introduce students to the A/C/E industries, it is exciting to see our ACE alums speaking directly to the current students about why they chose an ACE career path and what they got out of the ACE program. I think it's exciting to be a small part of their journey, and I know these ACE students will be going on to do great and interesting things in their careers." – *Crystal Markley, USACE*

Parent Perspectives

"The ACE mentoring program is a wonderful way for high school students to learn more about the AEC fields. I am so grateful that the ACE Board put together a homeschool site this year. I had always planned to have a mentor or apprenticeship/shadowing program for my son, but I never dreamed that there would be a program like ACE, that brings all of the different professionals right to your student. That has been such a huge blessing to me. I was amazed that our students have been able to experience presentations from industry professionals, along with such a well done field trip day that is packed with wonderful learning experiences for our students. ACE is an amazing opportunity for a student to learn about the many different ACE fields of work before they commit to a major in college. The scholarship opportunity for seniors is icing on the already delicious cake!" – *Kim Ebbers, Homeschool Facilitator/Parent*

IMPACTS STUDENTS, MENTORS AND FAMILIES!

Year-End Event

The University of North Florida again hosted the annual End-Of-Year presentations for the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida on May 15, 2015. The program had the returning schools of Lee High School, Orange Park High School and Middleburg High School. We also had two teams competing from Homeschool students. The student teams had prepared since January to respond to an RFP for a new student activity center.

Floor plans and elevations were required, as well as a schedule and a budget. The teams had some flexibility after that, being able to select one engineering system to study, and developing interior finishes and sustainability strategies. They were carefully evaluated by this year's judges – Robert Fernandez from Danis Construction and ACE Board Member, Rafi Wartan, PE, LEED AP BD+C, from TLC Engineering for Architecture and Mark Macco, AIA from Mark Macco Architects (pictured left to right).



OPHS Students and Mentors



OPHS Students, Mentors and Mr. Barrows



OPHS Students, Mentors and Mr. Barrows



OPHS National Team Students and Mentors



MHS Students, Mentors and Mr. Apiata



MHS Students, Mentors and Mr. Apiata



LHS Students and Mentors



LHS Students and Mentors



Homeschool Students, Mentors and Ms. Ebbers



Homeschool Students, Mentors and Ms. Ebbers

The National team (Team Mark-O) from Orange Park High School gave their presentation on “Harmony Springs Health Clinic” to wrap up the event before lunch, mentor and teacher appreciation awards, and scholarship awards.



Orange Park High School Mentors with teacher, Mr. Barrows (far left bottom row)



Middleburg High School Mentors with teacher, Mr. Apiata (far left)



Homeschool Mentors with Ms. Ebbers, Facilitator/Parent (second from left)



Lee High School Mentors

THANK YOU to Associated Builders and Contractors, Florida First Coast & ABC Women’s Council

ACE Mentor Program supporters and members of the Florida First Coast ABC Chapter came together in March for a fun annual event that features Vegas-style casino games and NCAA basketball. The “March Madness Casino Night” event is hosted by ABC Women’s Council and is the group’s primary fundraising event for its annual ACE scholarship contribution to the Northeast Florida Affiliate.

More than 60 attendees enjoyed black jack, craps, roulette and bingo at the event, playing with fun money that was converted into raffle tickets for prizes at the end of the evening. The event featured a tasty buffet, well-stocked bar and complimentary cigar bar. A silent auction offered tickets to Daytona Speedway races, casino cruise packages, art, spa packages and more.

ABC and ABC Women’s Council on Florida’s First Coast have contributed more than \$20,000 to ACE Mentor Program since 2008.



2015 Scholarship Awards

Student	Amount	School	Intended Major	Scholarship Sponsor
Ryan Merrill	\$1,000	OPHS	Architecture	Associated Builders & Contractors, Florida First Coast
Violette Otero	\$1,500	OPHS	Mechanical Engineering	ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida Founder’s Scholarship
Kenny Windham	\$1,200	OPHS	Architecture	Haskell
Abigail Ruby Nwaibube	\$1,000	Lee	Architecture	Integrated Construction
Tavarus Ervin	\$800	Homeschool	Mechanical Engineering	W.W. Gay
Amar Pekusic	\$1,000	Lee	Mechanical Engineering	Florida Healthcare Engineers Association
Michael Bretch	\$1,200	Lee	Architecture	American Institute of Architects Jacksonville
Seth Appelo	\$1,000	Homeschool	Engineering	Miller Electric Company
Dominic Berk	\$1,000	Middleburg	Architecture	Auld & White Constructors
Ledarius Smith	\$1,000	Lee	Engineering	Tritt & Associates
Boone Hatcher	\$800	Middleburg	Engineering / Architecture	ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida Founder’s Scholarship
Aaron Graczyk	\$1,000	Founders Year 2	Architecture	ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida Founder’s Scholarship
Charlene Xia	\$1,000	Founders Year 3	Engineering	ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida Founder’s Scholarship
Shanna Xia	\$1,000	Founders Year 4	Engineering	ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida Founder’s Scholarship
Ashantae Green	\$1,000	4 Years in HS, now Mentor at Lee	Sustainability	Associated Builders & Contractors, Florida First Coast Women’s Council

Ways You Can Support ACE

United Way of Northeast Florida



If you already donate to the United Way of Northeast Florida, would you please consider designating "ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida" to benefit from your donation? We would like to recognize and thank Daniel Brown of Miller Electric for leading the way in this effort. Miller Electric has donated more than \$15,000 to ACE since 2006.

Amazon Smile

Support Us when You Shop Amazon.com

Amazon.com has a new program for non-profits that will contribute 0.5% of your total purchase to our local NE Florida Affiliate of ACE Mentor. This is a fantastic opportunity to make small contributions to ACE throughout the year with your everyday purchases!

Please follow the link below and use your current Amazon.com log-in/password information.

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-5462738>

Products you wish to purchase and that are eligible for the 0.5% contribution will have the following statement on the item's information page (essentially items sold directly by Amazon.com):

Eligible  for donation

Complete your transaction as normal and ACE will receive the 0.5% contribution deposited to our accounts quarterly.

Thank you everyone and Happy Shopping!

Your Sponsorship Dollars Matter!

In 2015, the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida awarded 15 college scholarships totaling \$15,500. Included was a \$1,000 scholarship for a college student who had participated with ACE during her high school years and returned to mentor alongside professionals from our industry. All scholarship recipients are pursuing a field of study within our industry.

Our local affiliate is 100% volunteer; our professional mentors and Board Members selflessly donate their time.

Financial support and mentors stream from local architecture, construction, and engineering firms, as well as professional societies and construction industry organizations. All financial support goes straight to affect the lives of students. We proudly acknowledge and sincerely thank our benefactors and want to let you know how your dollars are hard at work. With more mentors and financial support, the Northeast Florida Affiliate wants to reach more students and more schools in the future.

Please join us at next year's event on May 20, 2016 at the UNF University Center. You will enjoy witnessing the creative spirit of these talented students our industry should recruit. For a donation of \$1,000 or more, you can present a named scholarship on behalf of your organization. The sponsorship levels are:

\$1000+	Named scholarship, logo in all printed materials and website
\$500-\$999	Logo in printed materials and website
Up to \$499	Name only in printed materials and website

CALL FOR MENTORS

If this newsletter has piqued your interest and you would consider donating your time, please contact us!

The program always needs more mentors and we would love to plug you in and allow you to share our enthusiasm for our profession.

Please e-mail us at NortheastFL@acementor.org.

Help us change lives through our ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida.

Sincere Thanks to Sponsoring Companies and Contributors!

Your generosity makes the ACE Mentor Program possible, and positively impacts the lives of tomorrow's industry professionals and tradespeople.



FRIENDS OF ACE MENTOR OF N.E. FLORIDA

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AND THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PRIVATE SPONSORS!

Mentors: Lee High School

Brian Warfield, Team Leader, Haskell
Crystal Markley, Mentor Coordinator, USACE
Todd Crane, NAVFAC
Pete Cummings
Ken Duncan, Haskell
Tracey Friley, Haskell
Stephanie Gerakos, Matern Professional Engineering
Ashantae Green, FSCJ Student
Melanie Kleehammer, Haskell
Ashley Nettles, Bi-Lo Holdings
Jennifer Suharmadhi, Stellar
Andrew Zinck, Danis

Mentors: Middleburg High School

Tom Hanley, Team Leader/Mentor Coordinator, Elkins
Scott Fraser, Architect
Chuck Kohler, Civil Engineer
Doug Mercer, NAVFAC

Mentors: Orange Park High School

Tom Grogan, Team Leader, Haskell
Joe De Marco, National Team Leader, Fishman & Tobin
Lynn Ladd, Mentor Coordinator, NAVFAC
Michael Brooks, Clay County Building Division
Karen Campbell, NAVFAC
Michael Compton, RS&H
Mary Ellen De Marco, St. Catherines
Eric Denfield, NAVFAC
Renee Dudgeon, NAVFAC
Brock Durig, NAVFAC
Mercelin Etienne, Stellar
Fred Heyne, DB Kenyon
Marie Hurst, Nemours
Bob Lenoir, NAVFAC
Ken Loeffgren, Loeffgren & Associates
Doug Mercer, NAVFAC
Lee Merrill, NAVFAC
Bill Mills, Auld & White
Rebecca Morgan, bemorecreative, Inc.

Leslie Olson, Orange Park High School
Adrienne Wilson, NAVFAC

Mentors: Homeschool

Wayne Petrone, Team Leader, Peters & Yaffee
Ryan Snow, Mentor Coordinator, Gilbane
Jeff Auld, McVeigh & Mangum Engineering
Rafael Caldera, Arkest
Fred DeWitt, DDCI
Kim Ebbers, Homeschool Facilitator
Bryan Judah, Tritt and Associates
Dana Latino, NAVFAC
Joseph Nagy, Trane
Ryan Sitnik, Gilbane
Joshua Whitley, W.W. Gay



ACE MENTOR PROGRAM
ARCHITECTURE • CONSTRUCTION • ENGINEERING

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