

About The Building Trades Academy



- *Nationally recognized training program in operation since 1978.*
- *Over 26 years of experience in training economically disadvantaged, homeless at-risk youths and adults.*
- *Approximately 125 students trained and placed with member firms each year.*
- *100 percent of program graduates provided employment on graduation day.*
- *Built-in career ladder supports upward mobility and supports lifelong learning.*

“Why did I receive this newsletter?”

You are on our mailing list because you have referred students to us or hired graduates from us. Perhaps you participated in the Charity Golf Tournament, which helps support our training activities, or you serve on our Apprenticeship and Training Committee. You may have called to ask for information. You may get the newsletter because you’re someone who we hope shares our vision for improving the quality of life in our communities. We will send newsletters periodically throughout the year. If you’ve received duplicates or you would rather not hear from us, call Shannon Pfeiffer at 420-2566 and let us know. We appreciate your support and welcome your interest.

Apprenticeship & Training Committee

These Tidewater Builders Association members share their industry expertise and provide the direction for the Building Trades Academy.

Co-Chairs: Sam Cohen, Joey Corp., Jack Schoch, J. F. Schoch Building Corp.; Vice Chair Jim Jackson, Superior Equipment Sales

For more information about TBA Building Trades Academy, YouthBuild or any of the programs you've read about, contact Keith Curtis at 420-2566 or kcurtis@tbaonline.org.



Building Trades Academy graduate grows up in the industry

Building Trades Academy graduate **Eric Powell** has matured quite a bit since he first entered into the training program back in 1998. It’s been an interesting journey for Powell from where he was back then to where he is today, and he credits the Academy with starting him on that path to a career and into manhood.

Powell was 26 years old, a single father and just released from the criminal justice system when his mother learned about the Academy from a friend of hers. Powell also had a few friends who had gone through the program, so he knew that he could at least end up with a job after completing training.

Instructors initially tried to steer Powell towards a plumbing career, but he already

“Being a parent forces you to grow up and makes you see things from a different perspective,” said Powell. “I knew that I had to keep working towards my goal of becoming an electrician to provide the type of life I wanted for my son.”

In 2002 he applied to the apprentice program at the local electrician’s union and got in. After five years of hard work and dedication to his goal, Powell graduated this past June and is now a certified electrician.

“In the union apprenticeship program you have the opportunity to work at a lot of different companies,” explains Powell. “So your experience is diversified and you gain a broader knowledge of the trade.”

Powell is now employed with Blackwater Electric Company Inc. of Chesapeake and is currently working on a major electrical project at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek.

Also an entrepreneur, Powell is the owner of Good Works Handyman Service, which keeps him busy doing household maintenance jobs for customers including

electrical, painting, tile work and plumbing among other things.

Powell attributes much of his professional success to the foundation of knowledge he gained while at the Academy. And he also credits the program with a certain amount of personal achievement as well.

“I really believe that if I hadn’t been where I was in my career when I met my wife, I probably would never have had a chance with her,” says Powell.

Powell’s wife Lynell is a dedicated elementary schoolteacher who holds a bachelor’s degree from Norfolk State University and a master’s degree from Regent University. The couple has been married for a little more than one year and have a five-month-old daughter together in addition to Powell’s 15-year-old son.

“Many goal-oriented women with her level of education may not even consider a blue collar guy,” said Powell. “But she recognized



Powell

that I was as serious about my career as she was about hers, and being an electrician has afforded me more to offer to my family.”

Thanks to the stable income that he earns as an electrician, Powell was able to purchase a home in Virginia Beach, something he never would have dreamed of accomplishing in the life he was leading before becoming a student at the Academy nearly 10 years ago.

In the years since he graduated from the training program, Powell has grown and matured into a hard-working and responsible adult who knows the value of the training and experience offered by the Academy.

“A lot of young men who may be in a similar situation as I was may be intimidated by the thought of trying to get a job in electrical work or another construction field,” said Powell. “The Building Trades Academy gave me that knowledge and familiarity with the different tools and equipment used on the jobsite so when I got that first job, instead of starting from nothing, I was starting with something.”

“The training gave me the confidence to keep on with my work, like a true adult, and to pursue my goals,” said Powell.

And Powell doesn’t plan on slowing his pursuit anytime soon. He’s already looking forward to the day that he’s held his electrician’s certification for one year. At that time, he’s eligible to apply to the master electrician’s program and that’s exactly what he plans to do.

“The training gave me the confidence to keep on with my work, like a true adult, and to pursue my goals,”
– Powell

had an interest in becoming an electrician.

“I’ve always been fascinated with wiring and how it makes things work,” said Powell. “I was eager to learn more about it.”

Upon graduating from the program, Powell was hired by Watson Electrical and, after six months of employment, he entered into the journeymen’s apprenticeship program at the company. Powell spent the next three-and-a-half years at Watson Electrical learning his trade by working on residential wiring jobs all over Hampton Roads, from Chesapeake to Suffolk to the Williamsburg area.

Eventually, Watson Electrical was bought out by another company. Around the same time, a co-worker of Powell’s who was starting his own business asked him to come to work for his electrical company. Powell considered the offer, but realized that he needed to make a career move which would better benefit himself and his young son in the long run.

Tidewater Builders Association
2117 Smith Avenue
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Golf Greatness!

Record-breaking golf tournament raises \$30,000
for building trades students



TBA President John Ainslie Jr. congratulates the winners for the first flight of the morning: (left to right) Scott Huneycutt, Andrew Palmer, Eddie Holcombe and Dodd Brooks.



Who says golf is a man's sport? The women outnumber the sole man on the Clark Whitehill team. From left are JoAnn Fitchet, Ric Mills, Betty Tolson and Megan Tolson.



(left) Teeing off for a good cause is Adam Stephan of Premier Appraisal Group. (right) Jeff Brown of Alside Supply Center shows how to sink one in the canoe for a 50/50 pool, sponsored by Tower Benefit Consultants Inc. Brown was one of five to drop a ball in the canoe during the day.



The 2007 TBA Charity Golf Tournament brought together over 200 players at the Redwing Lake Municipal Golf Course in Virginia Beach for a wonderful cause — the TBA Building Trades Academy.

“The money raised from this event will ensure funding for the training of more students in the program,” said Keith Curtis, the Building Trades Academy staff vice president.

The Building Trades Academy provides training in the construction trades to economically disadvantaged students. The students receive a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on work experience to prepare them for jobs in the building industry.

Awards and prizes were handed out to tournament winners.

The BTA would like to extend a special thank you to the Charity Golf Tournament Committee members: Chairman Kryz Reid of Tower Benefit Consultants; co-chairman Dennis Graf of Graf Construction; Jean Brackins and Roger Garrett of AccuBanc Mortgage; Trent Dudley of Wachovia Bank; Robert Duval of Virginia Natural Gas; Elizabeth Kinard of Architectural Stained Glass; Jamie Iuliano of Area Builders of Tidewater; Steve Halsted of Bank of America; Steve Heishman of Bank of America; Tom Verderame of Optima Health; and Karen Wine of Stewart Title & Settlement.



Taking the top prize for the afternoon group are, from left: Big Country, Charles Lyon, and Buddy Huskey of Coldwell Banker Professional Realtors and Neil Phelan of Virginia Mortgage.

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Summer school for local guidance counselors

Thirty-six local middle and high school guidance counselors attended the second annual Hard Hat Camp, a partnership between the TBA Building Trades Academy, builder/developer firm Ainslie Widener, S.B. Ballard Construction Company, Associated General Contractors, Tidewater Community College and Paul D. Camp Community College.

The goal of this program is to educate area middle and high school guidance counselors and community college job coaches about the variety of career opportunities that can be found in the building industry. The camp aims to arm the participants with the necessary tools to assist them in their positions at the schools.

In addition to completing team building exercises, the counselors met building industry tradespersons and professionals and toured residential and commercial construction sites to gain better knowledge of the industry as a whole. They were given packets that included valuable information on the specific areas of the building industry, their training and experience



As part of the hard Hat Camp, Jeff Ainslie of Ainslie Widener Inc. shows the guidance counselors a home from the "inside out."

“Part of the objective of this program is to remove the stigma attached to jobs in the building and construction industry by giving the counselors important information that they can dispense to the students,”
- Jeff Ainslie

requirements and salary range charts.

dispense to the students,” said Jeff Ainslie of Ainslie Widener, one of the coordinators of the event and “tour guide” at the construction sites.

The U.S. Department of Labor has identified the construction trades as one of the top 10 areas of job growth over the next decade. The need for trained and experienced workers will be filled with the students of today, who have an interest in construction and are made aware of the array of occupations that the building industry has to offer through programs like the Hard Hat Camp.

“When people think of construction, most of them don’t realize the complexities of the industry and how many different jobs there are within it,” said Chris Murray of Ocean Lakes High School in Virginia Beach. “The camp has given me a wealth of information that I can share with my students.”

Many of the counselors echoed those sentiments and felt the information provided them with the means to offer informed options and direction to students who may or may not necessarily be college-bound. The Hard Hat Camp organizers received positive feedback on the two-day event from exit surveys and observations made as the participants toured the job sites.

Remarked Dee Wilson, a counselor from Indian River High School in Chesapeake, “This is an excellent avenue for all of us involved to learn about not only jobs, but career options for students.”

Tidewater Builders Association’s Building Trades Academy is one of five pilot projects nationwide, selected by the Home Builders Institute; the workforce development arm of the National Association of Home Builders, to increase recruitment into residential construction trades. This project was funded by a grant awarded under The President’s High Growth Job Training Initiative, as implemented by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administrations and by the Virginia Community College System.