



READY, SET, GO! Class of 2014 graduate Joshua Robinson gets face time during a three-minute session.

BOOTCAMP SKILLS, BUSINESS ATTIRE PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SPEED NETWORKING

Tucked away on a lower level of Cardozo Education Campus is the Academy of Construction and Design, a pathway to a promising future for many young men and women.

By Arnesa A. Howell

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MAKING STRIDES: JOBS COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □



BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD
The Academy of Construction and Design Class of 2014

DUAL ACCOLADES (from left) GCS Inc. President Michael Sigal, Sigal Family Foundation Award winner Treymane Chatman and Miller & Long's John McMahon.

BRIGHT FUTURES LIGHT THE WAY FOR 2014 ACAD GRADUATES

A community college. An entry-level job as a carpenter. A traditional four-year university. An electrical career. The graduates of the Academy of Construction and Design at Cardozo Education Campus are set to follow divergent paths in life after high school, but they share a common distinction: Class of 2014.

By Arnesa A. Howell

With more than two-thirds of the Academy's graduates having gone off to college and the remainder entering the workforce, those supporting the students and ACAD are hopeful about the futures of these latest grads. "We believe the Class of 2014 will go forth and shine," said Carol Randolph, chief operations officer for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation and co-founder of the Academy of Construction and Design.

Still others recognized the diversity of the students – and their chosen pathways to success. "There is a general belief that the only way to be successfully employed is with a college degree. I'm not saying don't go to college, but I am saying that a four-year degree ... is not the only pathway to career success," said Sheldon Shapiro, CEO of Shapiro & Duncan Mechanical Contractors and this year's luncheon chairman.

ACAD celebrated its latest graduating class at the May 16 Meet the Future Luncheon, where nine students were honored for their achievements throughout the academic school year. Five students also received special recognition for their academic excellence and commitment to professional and personal growth.

And the Award Goes to ...

This year's top honor for the Dreyfuss Scholarship Award – accompanied by a \$4,000 scholarship – went to Aunye Waller, 17, who plans to attend Delaware State University and pursue a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) curriculum to become a forensic scientist.

"It means a lot to me because I can use it towards my college tuition for school so that I can get my forensic science degree," said Waller

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WORK IT OUT Bootcampers go one-on-one with employers during speed networking.

With the sun shining through the skylight and down on students aspiring for brighter futures, a select group of Cardozo students prepped for the real world – with speed networking.

A mix of 2014 ACAD graduates and Saturday bootcamp participants, a speed networking event May 9 gave students the opportunity to flex their “soft skills” – from communication and professionalism to attitude positivity and networking – keys to success in the job search, and ultimately, the workplace.

With three minutes and newfound knowledge, the students rotated from table to table to meet with more than a dozen employers from the banking and construction industries. They practiced their elevator speeches (a brief pitch of the skills that make you the perfect fit for the job) and interview skills – while dressed in professional attire.

“It was an exciting new experience that helped me to meet new people and gain a little bit of [knowledge] from each person,” says Rodrigo Rosa, 18, among the students who attended the life and career skills bootcamp classes. “I pulled it off today. They told me, ‘Be yourself.’”

Rosa – dressed in a pale yellow shirt, tie and black slacks – has a five-year plan that includes going to community college, working to save money and finishing up his education in New York before opening a restaurant. He credits Shelly Karriem, director of the Academy of Construction and Design, and the ACAD staff for helping prep him for this day. And he was not alone.

Classmate Chester Broadway admits maintaining eye contact is a challenge for him. The Career Fluency Bootcamp, led by instructor Emille Robinson, taught him the importance of this nonverbal communication skill in reflecting a professional demeanor. So how did he supplement what he learned in class?

“I practiced eye contact with my dad,” shares Broadway, 18, adding that the bootcamp helped him get outside his comfort zone. He says that his dad, Chester Broadway Sr., warned him: “If you drop your eyes, you will be grounded for a day.” It proved just

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WHO'S ON FIRST? (from left) Academy Director Shelly Karriem, IDI Group's Norman Dreyfuss, first place Dreyfuss Scholarship winner Aunye Waller and Miller & Long's John McMahon.

ACAD PROUD Treymane Chatman steps up to accept a second place Dreyfuss Scholarship.

GIRL TIME Nicole Richbow takes third place honors for the Dreyfuss Scholarship Award.

2014 MTF Luncheon *Continued from page 1*

after receiving the award, named after Norman Dreyfuss, executive vice president of IDI Group and a D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation Executive Council member. “I’m very excited that I was able to win, and I appreciate everyone who invested their time and energy, not only in me, but in the construction academy as a whole.”

While she doesn’t plan to pursue a career in carpentry, she credits ACAD for helping her gain a skill that will stick with her for life. Simultaneously, the Academy taught her the importance of teamwork. “We’re like one family,” said the newly-minted grad.

Meanwhile, second place Dreyfuss Scholarship winner Treymane Chatman received a \$3,000 award. For Chatman, 17, the scholarship money will give a boost as he transitions directly into a carpentry career. “It will help me transport some of my tools because I can put a down payment on a car while I’m working,” he shared.

Before accepting his award, Chatman said in a video presentation, “The Academy of Construction and Design is a wonderful program for students, especially those who want to go straight into the field, to get all hands-on activities – and you learn a lot while you’re doing it.”

The honor roll student, who along with classmates traveled to Jamaica to build an elementary school, also took home the inaugural Sigal Family Foundation Award, bestowed with \$5,000 and a laptop. In announcing Chatman as the recipient, D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation Program Director Beth Moore said the award is given to a student who exhibits “character, quiet competence, good citizenship, competitive spirit and a drive to meet every challenge.”

She stated that Chatman “leads by example to encourage, challenge and support classmates and middle school students [and] sets high expectations of self and strives to meet them.”

Nicole Richbow, 17, rounded out the list of Dreyfuss scholarship winners. Richbow, who is graduating a year early to attend North Carolina A&T State University to pursue a career in health care, received a \$2,000 scholarship.

Academy alum and prior award winners returned to the Meet the Future Luncheon with promising careers in the military, law enforcement and construction, along with other alums who

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PICK UP SKILLS (from left) D.C. Apprenticeship Academy Manager Kavara McDonald, Miller & Long's John McMahon, \$250 Bright Futures Bootcamp award recipient Rodrigo Rosa and Career Fluency Bootcamp Co-chair Emille Robinson.

LEADING THE WAY ACAD graduate Chester Broadway accepts the Bright Futures Leadership Award.



Radio Host Kojo Nnamdi urges the graduates to be daring.

CREATE YOUR FUTURES, DREAM

In an era when social media rules and the workforce is ever evolving, journalist Kojo Nnamdi urged graduates of the Academy of Construction and Design at Cardozo Education campus to “change the world” and protect their online reputations.

Highlighting a cautionary tale, Nnamdi told students that the “stupid things we do online can last forever.”

“Be protective of your life online, be protective of your privacy because the stupid things we do today won’t necessarily define who we are tomorrow,” said Nnamdi, a journalist and WAMU radio host of “The Kojo Nnamdi Show” and “The Politics Hour.”

As the students ready themselves to embark on life after ACAD, Nnamdi cautioned them about what to expect: a sometimes dysfunctional world filled with challenges and the expected adult responsibilities. But he also presented the flip side: students would be entering a world that would be transformed by their being part of it, created and shaped by them building on the skills gained in the Academy.

“The future that you’re meeting here today is a future you’re going to create. You are going to change the world as we know it,” Nnamdi told the crowd at the 2014 Meet the Future Luncheon, where he served as guest speaker. “You are going to create, design and build structures to make this world look more beautiful, to make this world more livable.”

The grads have already taken that first step. As part of the “Build a House, Build a Future” program, the students started building a 160-square-foot micro-house, lauded as a housing solution to affordable community living.

‘Dare to Dream’

To see the strides of those who came before them, Nnamdi told the students they only had to look to the freedoms and rights they have today. The Fair Housing Act. The Civil Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act. Previous generations fulfilled their missions, and he suggested

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are succeeding in higher education. Reflecting on the winners past and present, IDI’s Dreyfuss expressed how “wonderful” it was to see young people helping themselves. “Every one of these young people joined this program because they wanted to improve,” said Dreyfuss. “It’s such a reward to see people that can make their own way.”

Leading the Way

Two Cardozo students were also acknowledged for their “commitment” and “initiative” as participants in a special series of professional development bootcamp classes. The Career Fluency Bootcamp program aimed to help students prepare for life in the workplace by strengthening their interviewing, résumé writing, office etiquette, networking and other skills important for future success. Emille Robinson, co-chair of the Career Fluency Bootcamp program, recognized Rodrigo Rosa, 18, with a \$250 Bright Futures Bootcamp Incentive Award, a nod to his “tremendous drive and commitment to grasp every opportunity we

have given him to learn and improve.” Meanwhile, fellow bootcamper and Class of 2014 ACAD graduate Chester Broadway, 18, got kudos for his “outstanding initiative” for traveling from Southeast Washington, D.C. to attend school and the Saturday bootcamps. “This person has steadily grown as a leader and a student during high school,” said Robinson in awarding Broadway the Bright Futures Leadership Award, which came with a laptop and \$250 cash award.

Seated alongside Academy alumni and industry employers, students accepted accolades while reflecting on what they’ve learned – helping to renovate their high school, building an elementary school in Jamaica and currently constructing an efficient micro-house as part of the “Build a House, Build a Future” program. Instilled with newfound skills, these students are anxious to move forward in their selected paths. “I’m one of those students who will go straight into the workforce for carpentry,” said Chatman in videotaped remarks. “So, the Academy of Construction and Design was perfect for me.” □

JOBS Coalition Pathways

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The *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is the exclusive property of the JOBS Coalition, 633 Park Road, NW, Washington, D.C. 20010; 202-726-7400. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is dedicated to disseminating information that will help strengthen the city’s apprenticeship training and job placement programs, broadening the scope to reach the young, the underserved, the unemployed and the returning ex-offender. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is published by the JOBS Coalition.

Speed Networking *Continued from page 2*

the incentive the Class of 2014 ACAD graduate needed to make himself interview-ready.

He adds that the event was a “great” experience where he was able to push his nervous energy aside and focus on being calm and doing his best. Likewise, student Joshua Robinson, 19, also part of ACAD’s Class of 2014, overcame his anxiety to make the rounds with employers.

Calling the networking “challenging,” Robinson took a moment before the event started to regain his composure. Then, he stepped up and spoke to industry professionals from companies like M.C. Dean, which offers an electrical apprenticeship program. Robinson hopes to pursue a career as an electrician after high school, so he says the company caught his eye. The next step: following up.

Kojo Sidebar *Continued from page 3*

that the Class of 2014 is next. “It is the role of each generation to discover its mission and either fulfill it or betray it,” he said, repeating the statement for emphasis.

While he stressed the significance of gaining skills that can help get them employed regardless of the field, Nnamdi also urged the graduates to be adventurers so they can better understand the world in which they live. Travel to different countries and learn new languages, he advised, while taking ownership of your lives, communi-

For all the students’ efforts, employers took notice. “I was just blown away [by the students] – very prepared, very passionate and having a plan ... I wish I were that far ahead at their age,” says Aaron Anderson, a project manager with Shapiro & Duncan Mechanical Contractors, which focuses on mechanical engineering and construction.

Sheldon Shapiro, CEO of Shapiro & Duncan Inc., similarly praised the students he encountered at the networking session for being focused on their futures. “They were very professional, dressed very well,” asserts Shapiro, noting the students’ enthusiasm about their professional aspirations. “Maybe it’s not in the construction industry, but they all had a plan, and I was really, really impressed with them.”

While the ACAD team prepared the students for the event, it wasn’t a solo effort. The trade

ties and beyond.

Ultimately, Nnamdi called for the Class of 2014 to think bigger than themselves because the Academy has trained them to be the best and brightest. “Dare to explore the community around you, dare to dream. Most people who change the world didn’t come from rich or privileged backgrounds,” said Nnamdi, whose mother was a seamstress and father worked 49 years as a shipping company clerk, earning \$125 a month at the time of his retirement. “There is no one better than you.” – *AAH*

association Associated Builders & Contractors played a role as well. A small group of five to seven people from ABC National have been volunteering by participating in professional development “Lunch and Learn” sessions and helping students ramp up their résumés, social media and interviewing skills.

“[W]e wanted to get involved and help students with skills outside of construction,” says Karen Livingston, director of policy at ABC Inc., adding that by assisting students with these skills, they hope to help these young people further their educations, which will in turn help them find jobs.

Following the speed networking session, Karriem pointed out that the biggest challenge the students faced was getting into the mindset of dressing professionally. So, to help get them get appropriate job-ready looks, she and the ACAD staff pulled shirts, ties, shoes, dresses and other business attire from the “clothes closet” – for those needing an instant makeover. Many student outfits came courtesy of the clothes closet that day. Combined with the months of skills training, the clothes helped boost the students’ confidence as they worked the room. Many students introduced themselves by name as they greeted employers with handshakes.

Says Karriem, “The bootcamp gave them the training, but today gave them the experience of real life professional people.” □

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