



PHOTO CREDIT: Shelly Karrtem

## HELP THY NEIGHBOR: Students Earn & Learn at ACAD Summer Academy

It's just after 10 a.m. on a Thursday, and six students are cleaning up fallen tree debris at a home on the corner of 46th and Lee streets in Northeast Washington, D.C. "Somebody break that up," says one young man as he wrestles with a tangle of branches and vines. Another teen kicks at the limbs, snapping them into smaller pieces before tossing them into a nearby blue wheelbarrow.

"Ok, Karate Kid."

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. □



**THE TALENTED TWELFTH**  
The 12 graduates of the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy are poised for success.

## 'WE SALUTE YOU' DC Apprenticeship Academy Celebrates Class of 2016

A diverse group of 12 men are seated in the first several rows of the construction lab at the Academy of Construction & Design at IDEA Public Charter School. Draped around their shoulders are gold stoles representing the hard work done over the years as registered apprentices in electrical, carpentry and roofing. The magnitude of their accomplishments is in the numbers: completing 144 hours of classroom instruction and over 2,000 hours of on-the-job training in apprenticeships each year – all while working full time. Through their efforts, they have become the latest class to graduate from the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy.

By **Arnesa A. Howell**

"Few of us complete the journey of accomplishment alone," said Denise Crews, program manager for the Office of Apprenticeship, Information and Training at the Department of Employment Services (DOES), during her keynote address to the Class of 2016. And she was right.

Graduate James Jones credited Marshall Janifer for helping to keep him and his carpentry apprentice classmates motivated. Janifer, the former lead carpentry instructor, passed away unexpectedly in 2014.

Meanwhile, Beth Moore, program director for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation, introduced at the start of the

ceremony others who had supported this class in their journeys toward receiving their certificates of completion. Besides family and friends, Moore recognized apprenticeship instructors and staff, employers M.C. Dean, GCS Inc. and Gordon Contractors, and Foundation members.

"We thank you for supporting the apprentices in their quest to build knowledge and skills in the construction trades," said Moore at the June 8 ceremony.

### Lucky Seven

Sixty-three apprentices have successfully completed apprenticeship-related instruction since

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PHOTO CREDIT: Shelly Karriem

**AT WORK** (l to r) Alex Tillery and Tyron Gross remove tree debris.

**ACAD Summer Academy** *Continued from page 1*

**T**hese students are part of a small group spending their summer break working at the ACAD Summer Academy, a skill-building program housed at IDEA Public Charter School. Open only to students already enrolled in the Academy of Construction & Design at IDEA, the program mixes hands-on learning with academics and is designed to give young men and women “real world” work experience in career and technical education, all while learning the importance of community service.

On this July day, 10th-graders are cleaning up the yard of Deanwood community resident Rose Warren, chosen as the program’s first “Adopt-a-Neighbor” recipient.

“It makes me feel good to see young ones willing to help instead of getting into trouble,” said Warren, 90, who has lived in the neighborhood for 52 years. “I really appreciate them coming and cleaning, because without them helping, it wouldn’t get [done].”

She praised the program for teaching students responsibility, something about which they are equally proud. While admitting the hours are long, the work challenging, and the days hot, student Kyeon Ford said he “feels good” about helping Warren.

“It gives me that good-deed-of-the-week feeling,” said Ford, as he took off his gloves for a short water break.

**Math Matters**

Ford is one of 11 students – ages 14 to 16 – working with the Academy’s summer program at IDEA, a host site for the city’s broader summer youth jobs initiative. Because of the affiliation with the citywide employment program, ACAD students are paid for their efforts, \$5.25 to \$8 an hour, according to Shelly Karriem, director of the Academy of Construction & Design.

During the six-week program — running June 27 to Aug. 5 — students will be

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**‘PACE’ MAKERS** Denise Crews with DOES says contractors need skilled workers to keep up with the city’s construction development.

**DCAA Graduation** *Continued from page 1*  
the first graduation in 2010. Seven years later, the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy continues to build on its success.

This latest graduating class spans three trades: electrical, carpentry and roofing. Students completing instruction in the first two skills participated in a four-year program, with the latter being a three-year program. The electrical apprentices are now eligible for a license in D.C. with the credentials presented at graduation.

Graduate Andre Antonio Licorish, 36, works with M.C. Dean, and decided to pursue the electrical track so he could one day open his own business. While admitting the four-year program was a struggle (taking a pay cut and waking up at 4 a.m. to arrive on the jobsite by 5:30 a.m.), he said the end accomplishment made it worthwhile. “To see how far you can push yourself to get to another level, it is a good feeling of success. And, you can use that as an example for whomever is coming behind you,” he told *JOBS Coalition Pathways* after the ceremony.

Before presenting the graduates, Crews shared words of encouragement for the men who chose to strengthen their education and skills to improve life for themselves and their families.

“Graduates, your presence today fulfills Mayor



**CLAP BACK** The Class of 2016 applauds the guest speaker at the graduation ceremony.

[Muriel] Bowser’s pledge to create pathways to the middle class,” Crews told the crowd. “Mayor Bowser has strengthened job training programs, attracted new construction projects, and retained well-paying jobs in the District of Columbia.”

She continued by stressing that contractors need skilled and qualified workers to keep pace with the increase in construction development across the city. To emphasize her point, Crews switched to a call-and-response style in her speech:

“Any roofers in the house?”

To which the fellas responded with a round of claps and whoops.

“Any carpenters? What about electricians?” The same response erupted from the audience.

“You are now highly skilled, qualified and in demand,” she announced.

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**WE SUPPORT YOU** (l to r) Electrical instructor Alvin Pardo, DCAA Program Coordinator Lesley Harris, GCS Inc. carpentry instructor Jack Copeland and GCS Safety Director Erin Rush.

**DCAA Graduation** *Continued from page 2*  
 In a nod to their achievements, Crews outlined several “risks” the grads had taken to reach success. First, making the effort to go to DOES – whether walking, by bus or Metro – where apprenticeship training representatives provide detailed information about industry apprenticeships. Second, persevering despite not knowing if an apprenticeship would be a good fit. Third, showing up for the interview with the apprenticeship sponsor. And finally, arriving on that construction site early in the morning.

“The first day turned into a week, the weeks turned into months, the months turned into a year. And look at you now: credentialed carpenters, roofers and electricians,” she said to applause. “You have blown up the notion that unless you attend college, the pathway to middle class is unattainable.”

Crews closed by urging graduates to make a difference in their lives and that of their children, to exceed expectations at the worksite, and to take a portion of their increased earnings to invest. “There are plenty of opportunities for

everyone who dares to make a difference in their lives,” she said.

### Road to Success

Next, Lesley Harris, program coordinator for the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy, joined Moore, Crews, electrical instructor Alvin Pardo and Foundation Board President John McMahon in presenting the certificates to the graduates. This year, nine completed apprenticeships in electrical, two from carpentry and one in roofing.

The graduates walked to the front of the room, one by one, to receive the credentials that would make them eligible for journey licensing – a moment that could change their lives. For James Jones, 50, the acknowledgement meant more professional opportunities. While always striving to “lead by example,” he now is looking forward to taking what he’s learned and pursuing jobs beyond the foreman position he currently holds at GCS Inc. “I’ve got a leg up on someone who’s just getting into the field or who’s been in the field,” he said. As he spoke, Jones clutched the certificate in his hand – a reminder of what is yet to come. □

## JOBS Coalition Pathways

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**ACAD Summer Academy** *Continued from page 2* completing the interior of the micro-house project, a 160-square-foot tiny house. With the electrical and plumbing already finished, the next steps include installing wall insulation and constructing a drop-down table from leftover cedar planks from a separate landscaping project. An emphasis of the ACAD Summer Academy, however, is to reinforce basic construction math skills that may be lost when school's out.

"We really focus on the math because that's what employers of companies tell us they will need on the job site," explained Karriem, noting that the curriculum stresses addition, subtraction and measurements. The math component also stresses financial literacy, teaching students the differences between banks and credit unions, credit and debit cards, and checking and savings accounts. It also includes a primer on establishing credit.

But educating teens about job protocol is equally important. At the start of their summer jobs, students were given a code of conduct to teach proper workplace dress and behavior. "This is a real job. We don't want to hear from your mother," said Karriem, stressing that students need to call in themselves if they are running late or can't come to work.

Students also learn "soft skills" like how to communicate effectively with their peers and the value of teamwork, which is demonstrated through Adopt-a-Neighbor.

"During the school year, I didn't like to work with some people because they worked at a different pace," said Academy student James Grant, 15, donning a hard hat and safety goggles for the yard cleanup. "But this has helped me get along with different personalities."

And the biggest payback of all, added Grant: "It feels good to help out somebody." □

## JOBS COALITION PROMISES

- Provide opportunities for District residents to secure gainful employment.
- Remove barriers that prevent meaningful employment.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for all District residents interested in pursuing careers in various industries and trades.
- Work toward the creation of a comprehensive, fair, and more open system of training and hiring the underserved, unemployed and returning ex-offenders.
- Ensure that the training and educational skills being taught are relevant to the job market of today and tomorrow.
- Engage elected and appointed officials to support legislation and maintain appropriate oversight to ensure gainful employment for District residents, including the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.

## JOBS COALITION MISSION STATEMENT

**W**e will work together to develop a long-term strategy that creates an environment where aspiring District residents will have unprecedented opportunity to succeed. We strive to create a fair and open system, supported by government, industry, employers and the education and faith-based communities, which seeks to properly train today's apprentices while making an unparalleled commitment to educating students and others not yet in the workforce.



**JOBS COALITION**  
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