



THE FINAL FOUR The Apprenticeship Academy Class of 2015 with staffer (far left).

LIGHTING THE MINDS, FUTURES OF LICENSED ELECTRICIANS

For four years, registered apprentices participated in a special program to help them become licensed apprentices. They devoted their days to working as electrical apprentices, and evenings to learning in the classroom.

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. □



LEARNING CURVE ACAD alum and new teacher Krystal Boone shares a laugh with students.

HOME AGAIN: Academy Grad Krystal Boone Returns to Her Educational Roots

Just five years ago, Krystal Boone didn't know what her future held. As a new graduate of the Academy of Construction & Design that year, Boone was focusing on going off to college, where she planned to study business. But it had at times been a difficult road to get to this point in her life. When she started at Cardozo Senior High School in 2008, it wasn't where she wanted to be. So, she "acted out" – roaming the halls and skipping classes. That all changed when she discovered the Academy, where motivation and support from staff helped her believe in herself, stay in school and pursue a college degree.

By *Arnesa A. Howell*

"The Academy taught me skills more valuable and important than safety and carpentry – it taught me to value my education, and not to let it go to waste," she said at the time.

Now, Boone is working as a teacher at the Academy she graduated from in 2010, and sharing those same values and giving support to future generations of students. For students facing academic challenges, she is "constantly trying to motivate" them to "keep up morale and stay in school," encouraging them not to give up on themselves so they finish the year strong.

"It's a how-to-better-your-life focus to get them to make the right choices now instead of trying to correct all their bad choices junior, senior year," said Boone of the class she now teaches to mostly ninth graders enrolled in ACAD, a program that blends core academics like math and science with hands-on training

in skilled trades like carpentry and electrical. The program moved from Cardozo to IDEA Public Charter School at the start of the 2015-2016 academic school year.

Teacher on Board

As a new teacher for the "Intro to ACAD" class, Boone is responsible for more than 30 students across two classes. Her daily duties include tutoring students, taking the class on field trips to see the student-built micro-house, and of course, introducing students to the trades of carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) as well as the latest addition, architecture, already offered at IDEA.

The hybrid class combines the NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) core curriculum – a nationally

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Lighting Minds *Continued from page 1*

Each student focused on the same goals: completing 576 hours of classroom training and 8,000 hours of on-the-job training.

On June 10, four men reached that shared milestone as graduates of the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy.

“The students who completed the program stuck with it all the way through. We are proud of their commitment and how dedicated they stayed every day,” said Beth Moore, program director for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation, which hosted its sixth annual graduation ceremony at the Francis L. Cardozo Education Campus.

Upon completing the program, each received paperwork making him eligible to get a D.C. journeyman’s electrician license, which opens the door for new opportunities and training. The graduates can look forward to earning higher wages and jumpstarting their careers, from becoming foremen and superintendents within their companies to testing for their master electrician licenses and becoming future business owners. “It fast tracks them,” noted Moore.

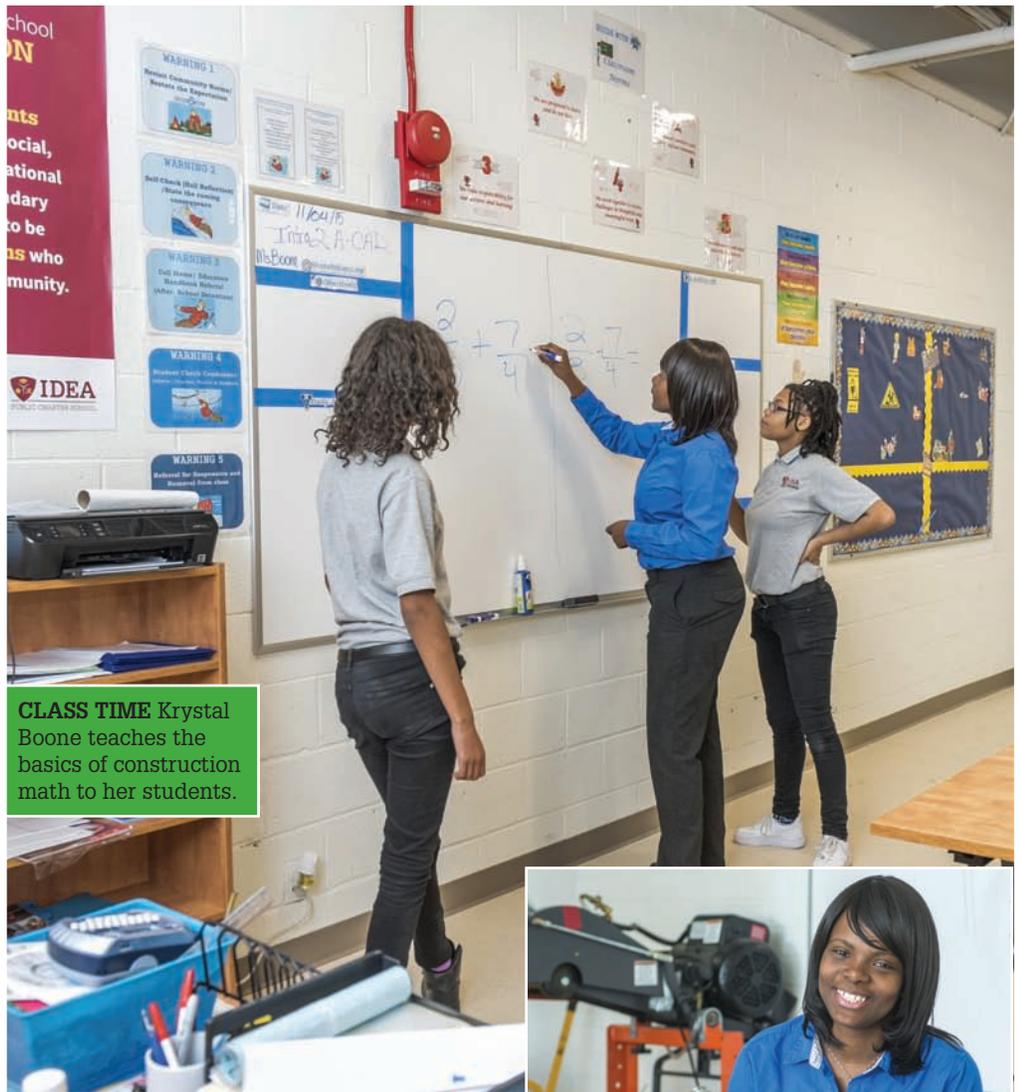
‘We Are Proud of Their Commitment’

While this year’s class proved smaller than that of previous years (10 graduates in 2013 and nine in 2014), Moore stressed that the latest numbers do not detract from the program’s success. She said enrollment reflects the construction marketplace, which has faced economic challenges. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for electricians is linked to the economy, with demand fluctuating during construction highs and lows.

“The fact that these four remained on the job shows they are high-performing apprentices,” said Moore.

As in past years, parents and other family members cheered for loved ones as they walked up to accept the papers that would propel them forward on their life’s journey. But next year’s class will have a different experience. The reason: the apprenticeship academy will be relocating to IDEA Public Charter School, where the program will continue to shape the minds of future licensed electricians.

The message to current graduates, said Moore, is that “hard work” and “effort” during the four years of apprenticeship pays off. These are lessons she said will pass down to future graduates, so they too will know the success awaiting them at the end of their apprenticeships. □



CLASS TIME Krystal Boone teaches the basics of construction math to her students.

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accredited construction training program – with a Youth Farmer’s Market (see related story, page 3) curriculum specifically designed by the D.C. Students Construction Trade Foundation, which oversees the Academy. The NCCER curriculum introduces students to career pathways before students specialize in a skilled trade, receiving credentials upon graduation.

Under Boone’s direction, the class completes a series of “modules” – including introduction to construction math, basic employability skills, and on-the-job safety – that prepare students to pursue a specialty area of choice, starting in 10th grade. Classes are a mix of hands-on learning activities, question and answer sessions, performance tests, and book-based curriculum. Meanwhile, with the anticipated launch of the farmer’s market in spring 2016, students will be conducting community outreach at churches in the Deanwood neighborhood to inform them about the fresh food options that will be available through the market. And students are already learning about the cultivation of fresh fruits and vegetables – all to be grown on the school’s grounds.

“They research what would actually grow in



IN HER ELEMENT Boone Nov. 4 at IDEA Public Charter School.



FLASHBACK Boone (left) with mentor Shelly Karriem during her 2010 graduation ceremony.

this area based on the weather,” explained Boone. “It’s a way for us to produce fresh fruits on our school property to give to the cafeteria to provide to our students, as well as to the community.”

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Students to Help Community, School With Youth Farmer's Market

Food deserts: "[U]rban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food," with convenience stores and fast food restaurants as go-to's when food shopping. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture

There are pockets of communities across Washington, D.C. designated as food deserts. And one of those, according to community members and leaders, is Deanwood in Ward 7. To address this problem, the Academy of Construction & Design in spring 2016 plans to unveil its Youth Farmer's Market at IDEA Public Charter School.

"This semester is the groundwork for the farmer's market in the spring," said Krystal Boone,

who is teaching the farmer's market curriculum as part of an introductory ACAD class. The market will be an important resource in a neighborhood where CVS pharmacy stores and fast food chains are more plentiful than access to healthy, fresh and affordable produce, Boone said.

"It's a way for us to produce on our property to give to the cafeteria and community," she said.

The farmer's market will be a collaboration

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Managing Editor: Arnesa A. Howell

Executive Editor: Carol Randolph

Copy Editor: Pam Ellison

Contributors: Arnesa A. Howell

Graphic Design: Jenn French Designs, LLC

Photographer: Imagine Photography

Board of Directors: Robert Braunohler, Bill Dean, Balchander Jayaraman, Eric Jones, John McMahon, Rev. Stephen E. Tucker, I. Margaret White

JOBS Coalition Legal Adviser: Roderic Woodson

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This effort, she continued, builds on the core values of the Academy to build bright futures – in this case, by students becoming stewards within the community and developing something new that helps the school and neighborhood.

Let's Hear It for the Girls

Unlike past years, Boone said girls are the majority in her classes. Out of 35 students, she estimates as many as 25 are girls. She credits the rise in skilled trades interest to knowledge. "It's the competitiveness of knowing you can do something that is typically [considered] a man's job," said Boone, who studied carpentry and electrical in the Academy. She added that a recruitment effort last year likely increased parental interest in career pathway options for their kids. She said her female students shatter stereotypes of not wanting to get their hands dirty.

"My girls pretty much are at the top of the class," Boone said. "They have some type of self-efficacy motto within themselves to push through the class."

Boone knows firsthand what a young woman can accomplish when she sets her mind to it. After graduating from the Academy, she attended Bennett College in North Carolina. She graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts and Science degree in interdisciplinary studies, combining early childhood education with arts and humanities.

Following graduation, she revisited her educational roots: working for her mentor Shelly Karriem, director of the Academy. As Karriem's assistant – a position she held from May 2014 to August 2015 – she helped students prepare for ACAD's key programs, including the annual Meet the Future luncheon and bootcamp. She also carried out administrative tasks, such as maintaining the alumni database. All these responsibilities helped prep her for her latest role.

When asked if she ever imagined Boone would return to the Academy as a teacher, Karriem swiftly responded: "I didn't."

She continued, "I did think she'd be a teacher because that was her goal."

Calling her a "go-getter," Karriem said Boone isn't afraid to delegate responsibility or look to others for help, even if that means reaching out to her and school officials for teaching tips, insight to getting along with others and personal assessments to ensure she's "on the right page."

And while she has the ability to be a "great" teacher, Karriem added that she'll undoubtedly face challenges along the way. Among them, the issue of maintaining the students' respect. "When they look at Krystal, they see themselves – so the respect level is not always

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there,” explained Karriem. “It can be a double-edged sword ... finding that balance between teaching and being their friend.”

And while Boone calls her own teaching style one of “tough love,” Karriem said her former student is still finding her way, finding that balance: “She’s more tough than love” – and still needs to soften up.

A Teacher’s Story

From the start, it was certain Boone would move with the Academy to its new home at IDEA. Less clear, however, was what her position would be, according to Karriem. A teaching demonstration before IDEA and Academy leadership soon clarified Boone’s role. Together, they tapped her for a new, different job. Boone, 22, officially joined the IDEA staff as an Academy instructor. It seemed a good fit, added Beth Moore, who has known Boone since she was a student at the Academy of Construction & Design at Cardozo.

“This is really a perfect fit for her,” said Moore, program manager for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation. “It’s an age group that she connects well with.”

In her new job, Boone transferred the organizational skills she used as an assistant to teaching. Now, she organizes lesson plans and meetings to discuss student progress. Much like her men-

tor Karriem, she works to “diffuse situations” between students before they escalate. She also tutors students in subjects such as math. Her focus has shifted from preparing students for college to getting her ninth graders ready to meet the challenges of the 10th grade: “In senior year, you’re motivating them to get out of high school. In freshman year, you’re motivating them to stay in school.”

Returning to work for a program that she graduated from has been an eye-opening and rewarding experience. Today, she understands how her teachers – like former carpentry instructor Marshall Janifer – felt when their students “messed up.”

“When my students mess up, it upsets me,” she said. “I understand why they got on our cases so much and how much they really cared.” Boone shares those same feelings for her own students, who she said “check in” with her and “want a hug” to “help them get through the day.”

It hits close to home for the former student, who reflected on her own disciplinary struggles before ACAD became part of her life. “I see how far I came because of the program,” said Boone, “and the people who invested in me when everybody else gave up and thought I couldn’t do anything or make anything out of my life. Now I’m able to give my students that same motivation and not quit on them.” □

Youth Farmers Market *Continued from page 3*
among classes. The architecture and design students will design raised flower beds, sheds, trellises and a greenhouse while the construction and technology class will build them. And then “ACAD I” will use these structures to grow nutritious foods for the school and community.

“We will grow fresh fruits and vegetables for our community because this is a food desert,” said Shelly Karriem, director of the Academy of Construction & Design.

Giving back to the community is one of the goals at IDEA, said David Owens, chairman of IDEA Public Charter School. So, planting and growing fresh fruits and vegetables will “certainly imbed [students] in the community and that’s critically important that they understand that they have a footprint in the community, and the community is supporting them as well.”

Those foods, in turn, would be sold to the community at “deeply discounted” prices, he added.

The farmer’s market would be an important step forward in serving the largely African-American community, a population that is disproportionately affected by diabetes, high blood pressure and other health conditions. “This program will encourage healthy eating,” Owens said. □



JOBS COALITION
702 Otis Place, NW
Washington, D.C. 20010