

JOBS COALITION PATHWAYS

BUILDING PATHWAYS OF PROMISES MAR/APR 2019 VOLUME 17, ISSUE 2



PAULA RALPH, COO
D.C. Students Construction
Trades Foundation

MEET THE FUTURE 101: 2019 EDITION

More than a decade since the first Meet the Future luncheon, and the awards ceremony continues to celebrate the brightest students of the Academy of Construction and Design (ACAD) — those graduating with trade skills to also prepare them for alternative life pathways.

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. □



YOU'VE GOT CLASS The Academy of Construction and Design's Class of 2015 strikes a pose; (inset) journalist Jim Vance tells students to be better than 'good enough.'

THE BEST OF MEET THE FUTURE

2019 marks the 13th year of the Annual Meet the Future Luncheon and its celebration of student scholars at the Academy of Construction and Design. Each year brings a new class of graduates. But it also introduces a renowned guest speaker to share lifelong lessons, experiences and guidance to young people embarking on the next journey in their lives. In May, former NFLer Fred Smoot will take the stage for the second time as keynoter (his first turn came in 2017, when he talked hunger for the game, overcoming life's challenges and working consistently to achieve his dream). Ahead of this year's ceremony, *JOBS Coalition Pathways* revisits some of the best speaker moments since the event started in 2007.

By *Arnesa A. Howell*

JIM VANCE: 2008 + 2015

Celebrated journalist Jim Vance told stories of his youth, ones that many Academy students may have been surprised to hear. For one, his dream as a young man was not to go off to college but to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, who worked as a plumber. Vance got a taste of that trade during the summers and on weekends, he recalled, an experience that he "loved."

Ultimately, he attended Cheyney University in Pennsylvania and retained respect for those working in the field of skilled trades. "They were good men and my family — they were strong, honest, disciplined [and] honorable," he recalled in his 2008 speech. Other quotable insights the late journalist shared with students that day:

- "What counts is not whether you've been slapped down, or even how often you've

been slapped down, but whether you get back up."

- "Ain't nobody gonna give you nothing, and ain't nobody supposed to."
- "Be careful of the company that you keep."
- "Everyone makes mistakes — but don't make the same ones twice."
- "Believe in yourself and appreciate your value."

By the time the local news anchor returned to the Meet the Future Luncheon in 2015, he had even more golden nuggets for the newly-minted grads. He advised them to take on the work that is given without complaint. And when others demand more, strive to impress. "Honor yourself by the work that you do," he

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Meet the Future 101 *Continued from page 1*

“Fewer than one in five students go from high school through college and into a job related to their degree,” according to Paula Ralph, COO of the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation. “Eighty percent of students need alternatives, like the Academy of Construction and Design, that combine education and work-based learning, to help them build solid paths into viable careers.”

Newcomers to this event may have questions, including: Why is there a Meet the Future luncheon? How is it supporting student scholars? Here, we break down the basics of the event and highlight the latest developments with Ralph and Beth Moore, program director for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation.

How will this year’s Meet the Future luncheon differ from that of previous years?

Moore: We’re having our first Signing Day as the focus of this year’s Meet the Future event. Employers have been engaging with ACAD students during the school year, and will interview students over the next month to make job offers that will be announced at the event.

What is the purpose of the annual luncheon?

Ralph: Career and technical pathways lead to hundreds of high demand, high wage jobs. Our annual scholarship and awards luncheon celebrates students who complete this academic, technical, professional skills and leadership training to achieve success anywhere on the path — from entry-level to technical and professional careers.

How are students chosen for awards?

Ralph: Students in the Academy of Construction and Design are eligible for Meet the Future scholarships and awards based on their achievement in Academy programs, overall school performance and good citizenship in the school community.

Why is it important to recognize students in this type of celebratory environment?

Moore: For the industry and government, it’s important to continue to emphasize the value of both school to career or school to college pathways — both tracks lead to positive futures. And for our students, it’s an opportunity to show off the networking skills they have worked on and the connections made with industry leaders that can help shape their future careers in the industry.

How increasingly important have the business and construction communities been in this event?

Ralph: Historically, our organization was an early leader in the career academy model in D.C.’s

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TURN ON THE APPLAUSE

Academy students express congrats to the latest scholarship winners; (inset) the 2012 luncheon keynoter, author Nathan McCall, shares his truth.



Best of Meet the Future *Continued from page 1*

said that year. He also urged the young people to empower themselves by reading and knowing their history, and always taking responsibility for their own actions.

For more, visit the May/June 2015 issue of JOBS Coalition Pathways at: www.jobscoalitiondc.com

NATHAN MCCALL: 2012

Author and motivational speaker Nathan McCall brought “real talk” to the graduates that year, candidly discussing his turbulent life as a young man. He recalled at the age of 19 shooting a man (who survived) at point blank range, then getting a second chance in life by serving out the sentence on weekends because the judge discovered he was enrolled in college. But after violating his probation by committing an armed robbery, McCall received a 12-year sentence.

“When I took that fall, I thought my life was over,” McCall said at the time in 2012. “I found myself laying in my cell and wondering how I had drifted so far off track.”

He would go on to recount his struggles in the autobiography, “Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America.” McCall that day shared how literature and education proved



a saving grace for him, helping to turn his life around. While addressing the graduates, he also urged them to be reflective — all while preparing for something greater.

For more, check out the July/August 2012 issue of JOBS Coalition Pathways at: www.jobscoalitiondc.com

KOJO NNAMDI: 2014

Standing before the Class of 2014, radio host Kojo Nnamdi told each Academy of Construction and Design graduate: “Dare to dream.”

“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 while acknowledging the hard work of his parents — his mother

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STANDING PROUD It's the ACAD students who shine at the 2014 Meet the Future Luncheon; (inset) radio host Kojo Nnamdi urges grads to 'change the world.'



Best of Meet the Future Continued from page 2 worked as a seamstress and his father a shipping company clerk.

Along with encouragement, he also shared words of wisdom for a technology-driven world. "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.

He continued by talking about the dualities of life after high school. While there are challenges and new adult responsibilities to take on, there are also opportunities for each young man and woman to create a future that can change the world. Nnamdi gave a nod to previous generations that fulfilled their missions, and because of that, students have freedoms and rights today. He cited the Voting Rights Act, Civil Rights Act and Fair Housing Act as examples of those strides made and missions fulfilled.

The Academy, he said, had trained them to be the best and brightest. So they should always remember: "There is no one better than you."

For more, visit the May/June 2014 issue of *JOBS Coalition Pathways* at: www.jobscoalitiondc.com □

Meet the Future 101 Continued from page 2 public schools. Industry employers, who provide thousands of jobs, continue to work with us to increase opportunities for local youth.

What are their roles within this program?

Ralph: Our audience includes leaders of companies that are adopting new technologies and construction practices that are changing the industry. They are exceptional mentors for Academy students.

What are the benefits to the participating companies?

Moore: Beyond the event, our industry partners have the opportunity to shape the work we do by providing guidance on industry trends, insight into how these changes are impacting workforce needs, and direction on skills to include in our curriculum.

Ultimately, how do you measure success for Meet the Future?

Moore: The greatest success from my perspective is hearing the personal comments of the industry leaders that attend. Hearing their positive impressions of ACAD students is everything we work for. □

Find out the ACAD scholars that earned awards and job offers in the next edition of the *JOBS Coalition Pathways* newsletter.

JOBS Coalition Pathways

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

JOBS Coalition Legal Adviser: Roderic Woodson

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The DC Students Construction Trades Foundation invites you...

13th Annual MEET THE FUTURE Luncheon

Friday, May 17, 2019

11:30 a.m. Board and Executive Council Reception | 12:00 noon Luncheon
The Hamilton | 600 14th Street, NW | Washington, DC

*Annual scholarships and awards plus our first-ever Industry Signing Day event recognizing outstanding achievement in the **Academy of Construction and Design**, an accredited skilled trades career and technical education initiative serving students in the District of Columbia.*

For tickets and information, or to inquire about CTE sponsorship,
call **202.246.7662** or email meetthefuture@dcstudentsctf.org

www.dcstudentsctf.org • www.acadnewsdc.org

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.



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