



ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc. is making a difference

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Will there be enough architects, construction managers and engineers to fill the industry's needs ten years from now? The ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc. is working hard to make sure there are. The program's mission is to enlighten and increase the awareness of high school students to career opportunities in architecture, construction and engineering and related areas of the design and construction industry through mentoring; and to provide scholarship opportunities for students in an inclusive manner reflective of the diverse school population.

ACE is a unique partnership among industry professionals – architects, interior designers, engineers, construction managers, college and university representatives, and other professionals from related corporations and professional organizations – who work together to attract young people to their professions. Industry professionals volunteer to become mentors to high school students in order to introduce them to the professions and encourage them to pursue studies and careers in these fields. In return, the industry get a much-needed boost of new talent.

How ACE Works

ACE is made up of affiliates that serve youth within a certain city or region. Each affiliate has a board of directors, a local coordinator, and a number of teams.

Teams are composed of 15-25 students and their industry mentors. Each team is set up to emulate an actual design team, with students guided through a mock design project by their architect, engineer, and construction management mentors. Several companies will be assigned to each team, each providing one or two mentors. Mentors guide the students as they work towards a final project, introducing them to the careers, industry vocabulary, and various roles companies play in the construction industry.

ACE runs for the duration of the school year. The teams meet for approximately 15 sessions, for about two hours after school. In addition to these team sessions, there are also all-team activities such as "College Night" and field trips to construction sites.

Each team meets on a specific day of the week, with varying meeting locations where possible. The meetings are held either in schools or at the offices of the firms to give the students as authentic an experience as possible. Transportation to and from the meetings is generally the responsibility of the students. Should transportation become an issue, meetings take place at the local high school that sponsors the students.

At the end of the year, all of the teams, in each location, gather for a final presentation night. Here they present their designs to other teams, their families, teachers, prospective mentors and the affiliate administrators so all can share in the students' accomplishments.

The students' involvement in the program does not end here, though. Many remain active alumni of the program through the scholarships they receive, relationships they develop with their mentors, and future employment opportunities they exercise – such as internships and post-college jobs.

The members and staff of the General Building Contractors of New York State have now been active with the ACE mentor program for the past 7 years.

For more information visit the ACE website at www.acementor.org or contact Brendan Manning at the GBC of NYS at brendanm@gbcnys.agc.org to become active in ACE.

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